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Indian SC bans discharging factory waste into Jamuna

NEW DELHI, Jan 24: India's Supreme Court today banned thousands of factories from discharging untreated industrial effluents into the Jamuna River in New Delhi and the neighbouring state of Haryana, reports AFP.

Judges BN Kirpal and S. Rajendra Babu said river pollution in north India had reached an "alarming proportion" and had to be checked.

"We direct every industry in Delhi not to discharge their effluents either into the river or into drains leading to the river which have the effect of polluting the river."

The judges added that factories in the neighbouring state of Haryana would also have to heed the ban.

State-run pollution control boards welcomed the move.

"It is a major victory for us," said RC Trivedi of the Central Pollution Control Board, which has been waging a three-year-old campaign to reign in factories polluting the Jamuna, one

of the main rivers in north India.

"We supplied the apex court with studies to show the dangerous level of toxins released into the Jamuna every day by some 15,000 to 20,000 factories in Delhi alone," said the senior counsel.

Trivedi said small to medium size soap and detergent, textile, electroplating, small engineering, and auto factories were the main culprits.

"Tests conducted in our laboratories on water samples collected from the Jamuna show that toxin levels are dangerously high and as a result, the water unsafe for drinking."

Rajat Banerjee, from the Centre for Science and Environment said the ban would give "more teeth" to pollution-control agencies.

"State pollution control boards and the police can now crack down and seal thousands of hole-in-the-wall workshops and factories that are spewing

poison into the Jamuna," said Banerjee.

"It cannot be business as usual for them. This ban, if seriously implemented, will force businessmen of medium size factories to invest 500,000 rupees (1,820 dollars) to 100,000 rupees in water effluent plants."

Banerjee, however, said implementation was the tough part.

"It will not be easy to track down small-scale industries who discharge effluents slyly into municipal drains. Their whole business is covert," said Banerjee.

"Most of them are not registered establishments so they can close shop for a month or so if there is a crackdown and resurface later when the heat is off."

India's Water Act, 1974 has been amended several times to give government agencies powers to deal with growing river and ocean pollution. Almost all Indian rivers are polluted by untreated factory and human waste.

Bangabandhu Murder Case

Death references to be moved Sunday

The Bangabandhu Murder Case is expected to be moved in the High Court next week as the prosecution revised its plan at the last moment to follow the normal practice of the court, prosecution sources said yesterday, reports BSS.

Prosecution lawyers said they have revised their plan in pursuance of the normal High Court practice and for more preparations and decided to move it before a High Court Bench on Sunday next.

Court officials said according to the usual High Court practice, "death references" are moved in the High Court on Sunday.

"Since it is not Sunday today, we have now decided to 'mention' it on the first day of the next week, in line with the normal practice," Special Public Prosecutor Anisul Huq said.

Judicial experts said the hearing on the "death reference" and the appeals of the convicts were likely to be held simultaneously in the same bench.

The prosecution last week moved the case before a High Court bench comprising Justice Kazi Ebadul Huq and Justice Sikdar Mokbul Huq, which had advised it to "mention" the matter to another bench since it

Knife used in killing Nikunja recovered

By Staff Correspondent

The CID recovered yesterday a knife from old part of the city which they suspect was used in the killing of Joint secretary Nikunja Bihari Debbarma.

The knife was found hidden under a pile of bricks near a tinsmith house in Hosneydalan area, sources said. A pack of syringe was also found there.

The knife was recovered on the basis of Rana's statement, police said. Rana, one of the suspects in the murder case, is on CID remand.

Debbarma, 55, joint secretary of the ministry of LGRD, was stabbed to death by muggers near the Struggle for Independence Sculpture on the road intersection between the SM Hall and Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University in the morning of January 11.

Shukur Ali, also a suspect in the murder, had already made a judicial statement admitting that he and eight others killed here from Brahmanbaria.

"We have been bluffed repeatedly," he added.

There are about 92,000 teachers of non-government primary schools across the country whose initial salary is about Tk 13,000 a month.

President of the Non-Government Primary School Teachers Association Shamsul Alam said they had no response yet to the memorandum given to the Prime Minister on Saturday seeking nationalisation of their service that could ensure better and regular payment.

The CID is now interrogating six people including Mujib, Rana, Sohel, Din Islam, Shahinor and Morshed on the basis of Shukur Ali's confessional statement.

Shahinor and Morshed were taken on a fresh four-day remand on Monday. The rest will be produced before the court today with prayers of further remand, police said.

The four convicts appealed to the High Court against the lower court judgement.

But court officials said the defence so far did not appear in the High Court to seek hearing on their appeals.

Showcause on Biman, govt

By SC Correspondent

The High Court yesterday directed Bangladeshi Biman authorities and the government to show cause why the orders terminating First Officer Yasmin Rahman and giving retirement to Captain Ishfaqur Rahman should not be declared to have been issued without any lawful authority.

The HC also ordered stay of the order for retirement of Captain Rahman.

Division Bench of the HC comprising Justice MM Hoque and Justice Md Abdur Rashid passed the orders upon two separate writ petitions.

Yasmin Rahman in the younger sister of Col (rd) Faruq Rahman who has been sentenced to death in the Bangabandhu murder case and Captain Ishfaqur Rahman is her husband.

Biman authorities terminated Yasmin on January 4 with notice pay instead of serving three months' notice on her.

On the same day, her husband was given retirement with all benefits as he completed 25 years of service.

Hons exam held peacefully

By Staff Correspondent

The 1998 honours part-III examination under National University was held peacefully yesterday, despite threats from certain students to foil the examination.

"According to the information we have received, the first day of the honours part-III examination held peacefully all over the country," said Aman Kanti Sen, an examination section official.

About 25,000 students from 131 honours colleges took part in the exam, which was held at 90 centres across the country.

The exam was supposed to be held on Nov. 11, 1999, but was rescheduled to December 11 after protests by students who wanted more time to prepare.

The students claimed they didn't have enough time to prepare, since the results of the previous Honours part-III examination were published on December 23.

Authorities at the National University decided to hold the Honours part III examination in June 2000 to give more time to the less prepared students.

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Non-government primary school teachers continued their sit-in at Osmany Udyan in the city yesterday.

—Star photo

FM tells newsmen on return

Barbed wire fencing by India to affect ties

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad yesterday said erection of barbed wire fence along the border by India would "affect the relations between the two neighbouring countries," reports UNB.

"Death is inevitable. We shall die here but not return home without realising our demand of nationalisation of our service," said Khairul Alam, a 40-year old teacher who came here from Brahmanbaria.

"We have been bluffed repeatedly," he added.

There are about 92,000 teachers of non-government primary schools across the country whose initial salary is about Tk 13,000 a month.

President of the Non-Government Primary School Teachers Association Shamsul Alam said they had no response yet to the memorandum given to the Prime Minister on Saturday seeking nationalisation of their service that could ensure better and regular payment.

The Foreign Minister was addressing a press conference in his office on return from Oman where he attended an extra-ordinary meeting of the Council of Ministers of Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation.

He said he had talks with his Indian counterpart Jaswant Singh in Muscat who expressed the desire to lead his country's delegation to the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Economic Commission meeting in Dhaka, which has not held during the last 3 years.

"We agreed when we met in Oman that the commission should meet immediately in Dhaka at a mutually convenient time," Azad said.

On SAARC Summit that was postponed late last year at the behest of India, Azad said.

"Some uncertainties looms large". However, Bangladesh and other members were trying to find ways to hold the summit.

Constitutionally the summit can only be held with participation of all the seven member states. The situation in Pakistan is a matter of discussion. Both United Nations and Commonwealth have condemned the military take over there. Azad said, "It is baseless and a cooked up story."

About the meeting of the council of ministers of the IOR-ARC, Azad said it as "highly successful."

For the first time Bangladesh formally joined the meeting of IOR-ARC since it was floated in March last year.

About Dhaka's membership of the IOR-ARC, Azad said every organisation had its objective and purposes, and none overruled the other.

He said the IOR-ARC is basically an economic grouping, whose main objectives are to promote sustained growth and balanced development of the region.

According to a source, 400 cases were under trial till January 23 in the Additional District and Sessions' Judge (first court). Of these, trial of only 30 cases are at final stage.

The District and Sessions' Judge, Khulna has also ordered for transfer of all but the 30 cases to other courts.

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Tk. 3000.00 (Twin Cabin)

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Hotel Abakash 8.15 am

Sonargaon Hotel 8.25 am

Sheraton Hotel 8.30 am

For booking and tickets please contact

Tours Division, Head Office : 327842, 8118658

Tourist Information Centre, Head Office : 8119192

Hotel Abakash : 8821548, 8811109

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Opposition to observe 'Democracy Killing Day' today

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance will observe "Democracy Killing Day" across the country today to mark the introduction of BKSAL system.

On this day (Jan 24) in 1975, the then Awami League government had introduced one-party BKSAL system abolishing all other political parties and closing down newspapers, excepting four 'national dailies'.

To mark the day, the BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote will organise separate discussion meetings in the city.

Mainstream opposition BNP will hold a discussion meeting at the Jatiya Press Club auditorium at 3 pm. BNP central leaders and professionals will address the function.

JP will organise a discussion meeting at its central office Kalabagan at 7 pm today. City JP president Salfur Rahman and general secretary Tajibur Rahman in a statement have asked party's leaders and activists to attend the programme.

Jamaat will arrange a discussion meeting at its city office at 4:30pm today. Jamaat secretary general Matiur Rahman Nizami will address the function as chief guest.