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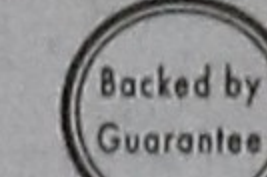
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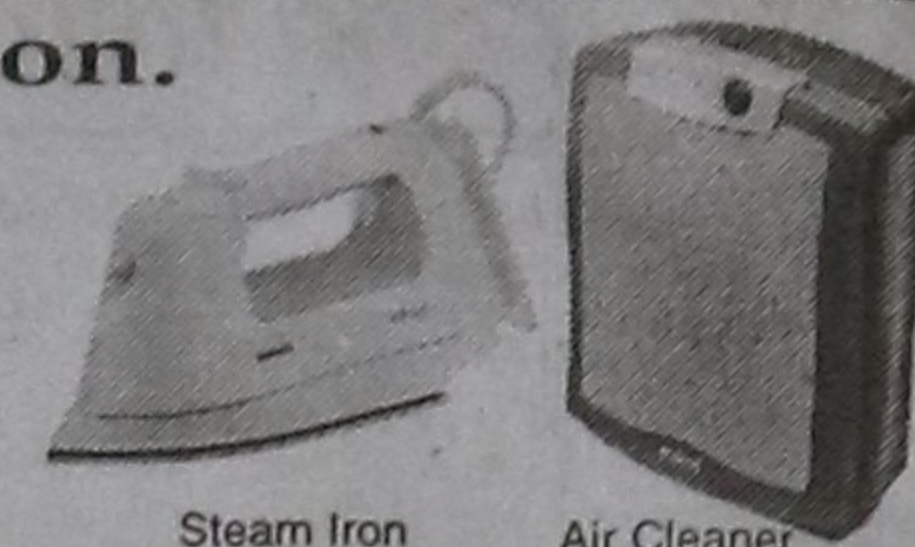
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A death-knell for Khan

Like thousands of others he doesn't know how to win battle against arsenicosis

By Naimul Haq

Thousands of villagers are still drinking water from arsenic contaminated tube-wells, contradicting the government's claim of a successful public awareness campaign about the danger.

M Abdur Rahman Khan, 54, is just one of the people affected by a problem the government declared a "national disaster" in 1996. He developed cancer after drinking water from a tube-well in his village of Izerapara, Sharishabari thana.

Khan said he doesn't know how long he has to live, or whether his family will win the battle against arsenic poisoning, also known as arsenicosis.

"I have been drinking poison for the last six years and no one told me about it," said Khan, a former freedom fighter. "I am also surprised the government's doctors in the thana health complexes couldn't tell the difference between cancer and a common skin disease."

"I have two daughters, one son and a wife. This dreadful disease affects them all and I have no money for their treatment. God help me, I want to recover."

Doctors at the Dhaka Community Hospital where Khan is undergoing free treatment said his chances of survival are very slim. Khan has already lost three fingers on his left hand, and his entire body is covered by black and white spots, a characteristic cancer's final stages.

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Arsenic victim Abdur Rahman Khan waiting for the end at Dhaka Community Hospital. —Star photo

Threat to special trading status

Dhaka should resolve TU issue without delay, says US

By Rafiq Hasan

Bangladesh should resolve the issue of trade unions in the EPZs as soon as possible or its special trading status with the United States could be cancelled, says a visiting U.S. official.

"The issue has been pending for quite some time and the U.S. wants Bangladesh to comply with the labour standards set by the International Labour Organisation," said Andrew James Samet, deputy undersecretary for International Affairs. "We would like to see a solution that is responsive to the concerns expressed by the ILO over the years."

Samet, who met with Minister of Commerce Abdul Jalil and Minister of Labour and Employment Abdul Mannan as part of a three-day visit to explore the possibility of co-operation between the U.S. and Bangladesh labour sector, did not provide a deadline for the decision.

Samet said the ministers assured him the government was starting to deal with the issue. However, he reiterated that Bangladesh should follow through on its commitment to make a decision.

"We urged them to continue the process, but the decision will have to be made by the government here in Bangladesh," said Samet. "The problem should be resolved for its own interest."

However, high level government sources hinted Bangladesh is unlikely to allow trade unions to operate in its export processing zones, despite the

United States' pressure. The sources said the government would try and convince the U.S. government that workers' councils or welfare committees could be used to protect workers' rights and ensure a congenial atmosphere in the zones.

The proposal to form welfare committees was made by investors during a joint meeting between the government and U.S. embassy officials. United States Ambassador John C. Holzman agreed in principle to the initiatives but raised concerns about the committee formation process.

The government and investors wanted the workers' representatives to be "selected" while Holzman insisted the representatives should be elected.

Samet and officials from the U.S. embassy also held talks with the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association about child labour.

Association leaders discuss a number of their social and worker oriented welfare programmes, as well as plans to monitor programmes aimed at reducing child labour.

Samet praised the country for successfully resolving many child labour issues. He said it could serve as a "model" for others.

Samet said Bangladesh was a dynamic country with a lot of opportunity for progress. The United States could help the country to improve the health and working conditions of its garment workers, he added.

Use modern technology to face natural disasters

PM asks Red Crescent volunteers

COX'S BAZAR, Mar 2: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina announced today plan to develop massive structural and infrastructural facilities across the country to counter the serious natural disasters that haunt Bangladesh annually, reports UNB.

Inaugurating a three-day conference of Red Crescent volunteers, Hasina said Bangladesh is one of the most natural disaster-prone countries in the world and "the countrymen, especially those living in the coastal belts, have learnt to deal with such natural adversities."

She said people were still haunted by the devastating cyclones of 1970 and 1991, and the floods in 1998.

"Natural disasters will happen in Bangladesh often, but what we need is effective preparations to cope with the situation."

Hasina said her government's effective and quick steps helped Bangladesh make it through century's worst flood, which occurred in 1998.

The Prime Minister urged Red Crescent volunteers to gather more knowledge and preparation to face such disasters with available modern technology.

The Prime Minister said the government incorporated disaster-management chapters in school and college books in order to create public awareness.

The government also implemented a disaster-management project along the coast with the help of the UNDP and UNICEF.

She said the success of effective

Liquor kills 3 in Manikganj

MANIKGANJ, Mar 2: Three people were killed and an unspecified number fell sick after drinking poisonous liquor at a Urs Mahfil in Basudevpur, Gheor thana, Wednesday night, reports UNB.

The victims are Udbhov Shah, the 18-year-old son of Tarani Shah, Arshed Pagla, 65, and Shahidul Islam, 30, of village Char Mastul, Doulatpur thana.

Police and Narcotic Control Department sources said Udbhov and Arshed Pagla drank the poisonous liquor at the Urs Mahfil, which was held at Shahjahan Pagla's house. They died on the Mahfil premises while Shahidul was on the way to the hospital.

Local administration and officials from the Narcotic Control Department have visited the spot.

No arrests have been made in connection with the case.

AL jt meeting tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent A joint meeting of ruling Awami League's three top bodies — the advisory council, the presidium and the secretariat — will be held at 5 pm tomorrow.

4 held for bomb blast at hotel

By Court Correspondent

Four people arrested in connection with bomb blast at the parking zone of Sonargaon Hotel on Wednesday were sent to the Dhaka Central Jail after they were produced in the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate yesterday.

The arrested were identified as Rafikul Islam, 24, Azim, 22, Abdul Alim, 22, and Mojibul, 24.

Tejgaon Police arrested them in front of the Film Development Corporation soon after the incident.

Earlier police said, a gang boarding a car threw a bomb at the parking zone of Sonargaon Hotel at 4:42 pm, injuring a driver, Waliur Rahman, and damaging a limousine car for hire.

Another bomb was hurled at the outer entrance of the Sheraton Hotel at around 6 pm Wednesday. None was arrested in this connection with the incident.

Any wrong decision on oil, gas will be suicidal

Khaleda warns govt

SYLHET, Mar 2: Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia today accused the government of maintaining secrecy over the issue of natural gas and oil and cautioned that any wrong decision concerning this promising sector would be suicidal, reports UNB.

"We're now in an unfortunate situation where all decisions of national importance are being taken secretly without any discussion and review, even keeping the elected representatives in the dark," she told the concluding session of a 3-day conference of the Institution of Engineers Bangladesh.

Khaleda said people's opinion

has sharpened against the purchase of Mig-29 by spending huge public money in unproductive sector. She said various irregularities in buying these were discussed in parliamentary committee, newspapers published articles and finally it was dragged to court.

The country, she said, is already incurring losses of crores of Taka because of this expenditure in unproductive sector and any mistake in oil and gas sector would be disastrous.

The BNP chairperson said the government is failing to utilize foreign aid and loan in development sectors because of inefficiency and corruption. The government has to borrow crores of Taka from bank to meet the public expenditure due to economic mismanagement, she said.

Khaleda said efficient people are losing interest in their work as incompetence, nepotism, regionalism and politicisation are overtaking efficiency and expertise.

Criticising the government slogan for poverty alleviation, she said doctors and engineers remain unemployed in a country where their number is too inadequate to meet the requirement. This contradictory situation must end.

Referring to the opposition's abstention from Parliament, Khaleda blamed the ruling Awami League for making Parliament ineffective by telling lies and uttering irrelevant words in the House. She said people have no trust or interest in "one-party Parliament."

The opposition leader said her party made all efforts to make Parliament working and project people's misery, but the government has turned the House into a party institution.

Referring to two past agreements with the government, she said BNP signed the second agreement even after the violation of the first one signed in presence of the Speaker. But the party in power violated all agreements without any hesitation.

IEB leaders including Mozammel Huq, Akhtar Hossain and MA Hannan also spoke at the function.

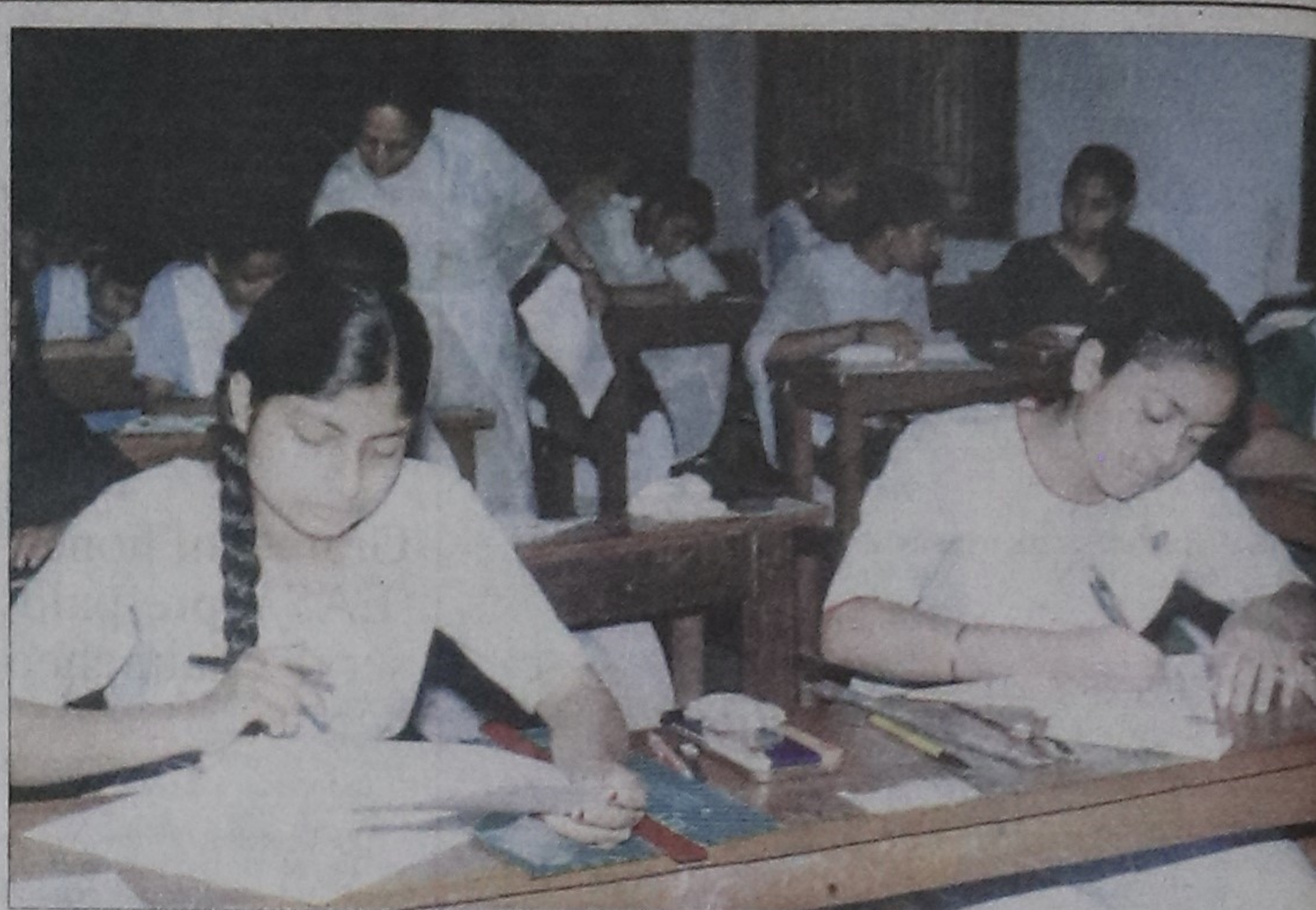
City Jubo League leader shot dead

By Staff Correspondent

A city Jubo League leader was shot dead by unidentified assailants in front of a hotel at East Goran under Khilgaon police station yesterday afternoon.

The victim was identified as Habibur Rahman, 25, son of A Rahman, and president of Ward Number 25 of Awami Jubo League. He was a resident of East Goran.

Habib was a student of Islamic Studies department at the Dhaka University. When contacted, Khilgaon police confirmed the incident but said none was arrested in this connection.



SSC examinees up to the task at a city centre yesterday.

—Star photo

5000 expelled on first day of SSC exams

By Staff Correspondent

A total of 5000 examinees were expelled for adopting unfair means in different examination centres under five education boards on the first day of the SSC examination yesterday.

About 9,29,704 students sat for English first paper examination under Dhaka, Chittagong, Jessore, Rajshahi and Comilla education boards yesterday.

At least six people, including three examinees, and a teacher were killed and more than 35 were injured in a stampede at an examination centre at Kalaroa thana in Satkhira district under Jessore Board on the first day of the examination.

Dhaka Board officials told The Daily Star last night that a total of 1347 examinees were expelled from different centres under the board.

Of them, 36 were expelled in

Narayanganj, 54 in Munshiganj, 71 in Manikganj, 429 in Tangail, 189 in Mymensingh, 92 in Sherpur, 97 in Kishoreganj, 115 in Netrakona, 59 in Faridpur, 21 in Gopalganj, 59 in Rajbari, 92 in Madaripur and 33 in Shariatpur.

Jessore Board official said about 743 examinees were expelled yesterday from different centres under the board.

Our Chittagong correspondent said around 300 students were expelled yesterday from different centres under Chittagong Education Board.

Of them, 93 examinees were expelled from different examination centres at Patiya thana.

Our Rajshahi correspondent said two teachers and 1552 examinees were expelled from different centres in 10 districts under Rajshahi Education Board.

Our Jheridah correspondent says: Some 104 examinees were expelled from different centres of the district on the first day yesterday.

Of them, one teacher and 101 students were expelled in Nao-gaon, one teacher and 150 examinees in Panchagar, 152 examinees in Chapainawabganj, 151 in Thakurgaon, 236 in Gaibandha, 73 in Lalmonirhat, 230 in Rangpur, 137 in Nilphamari, 146 in Pabna and 166 in Rajshahi districts.

According to Comilla Education Board officials, a total of 1065 students and nine teachers were expelled on the first day of examination.

According to our Gazipur correspondent, about 30 students were expelled from 19 examination centres in the district. No untoward incident was reported in the district.

Our Jheridah correspondent says: Some 104 examinees were expelled from different centres of the district on the first day yesterday.

Suspension of GSS governing body legal: HC

The Appellate Division upheld the High Court's verdict affirming that the suspension of the governing body of Gano Sahajja Sangstha (GSS) was "legally done" by the government, reports UNB.

The government in mid-1999 suspended the governing body of the NGO for alleged misappropriation of foreign fund, shifting of GSS fund in a private account and sexual harassment on female employees by the GSS Executive Director. The suspension order followed an inquiry by NGO Bureau.

An Appellate Division bench comprising Justice Bimalendu Bikash Roy Chowdhury, Mahmudul Anin Chowdhury and Kazi Ebadul Huq upheld the suspension order by dismissing a leave petition. The leave petition was filed against the High Court's judgement.

The High Court gave the judgement on November 11, 1999, affirming the suspension order after hearing on a writ petition filed by suspended

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Sharif asks lawyers to end boycott

KARACHI, Mar 2: Ousted Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif today asked his lawyers to end their boycott of his trial and defend him against charges which could leave him facing the death penalty, reports AFP.

"I need you as you have been contesting the case since its beginning, so it is very important (you come back)," advocate Khwaja Sultan quoted Sharif as telling lawyers who met him in a Karachi prison.

"We will have little faith in new lawyers and we do not want to have the services of state counsel either. You know the case better than anybody else," Sharif told the lawyers.

The prison meeting took place after an anti-terrorism court judge on Wednesday ordered Sharif to find a team of lawyers.

All his lawyers, including Sultan, withdrew from the case early this week protesting a decision by Judge Rehmat Hussain Jafrri which could keep the

former prime minister's testimony private.

"There is an immense moral pressure on us from our clients. We are sympathetic about it but we have not taken a final decision yet," Sultan told AFP after the meeting.

On Wednesday the judge adjourned the proceedings until Monday but told the accused to inform the court by Saturday whether defence lawyers had been found.

Sharif expressed his faith in the judge and court but asked for time to persuade the lawyers to come back or to find new lawyers.

The former prime minister, his brother Shahbaz and five other officials have been charged with hijacking, abduction, attempted murder and terrorism in a case based on events during the night of the military coup on October 12.

All the accused have pleaded not guilty but face the death penalty if convicted.



It's a dirty job, but the bureaucrats in the DCC were elected to make sure the streets were clean (above) and free of death traps (below). Star photo: Sk Enamul Haq

বাংলাদেশ পোশাক প্রস্তুতকারক ও রপ্তানিকারক সমিতি

বিটিএমসি ভবন, ৭-৯ কাওরান বাজার, ঢাকা

নতুন বস্ত্র লাইসেন্স জারী সংক্রান্ত

জাতীয় রাজস্ব বোর্ড ও বিজিএমইএ'র মধ্যে ১১.১০.৯৮ তারিখে অনুষ্ঠিত সভার সিদ্ধান্ত মোতাবেক সকল সম্মানিত সদস্যকে এ বছর নতুন বস্ত্র লাইসেন্স গ্রহণ করার জন্য বিজিএমইএ হতে বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং ১৪/২০০০ তারিখ ০১.০২.২০০০ মারফত নিম্নোক্ত কাগজপত্র দাখিল করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হয়:-

- ১। প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিজস্ব প্যাডে ৪ (চার) টাকার কোর্ট ফিফর (দুই সেট)
- ২। লাইসেন্স ফি বাকদ ৫০০০/- টাকা যথাযথ খাতে জমাদানের স্বপক্ষে ট্রেজারী চালানের মূল কপি (কোড নং ১/১১৩১/০০০/০৪২১)।
- ৩। বস্ত্র লাইসেন্স এর মূল কপি।
- ৪। বিজিএমইএ এর সদস্য সনদপত্রের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি।
- ৫। ট্রেড লাইসেন্স ও মসক নিবন্ধন পত্রের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি।
- ৬। আমদানি (শিল্পখাত ভুক্ত আইরিসি) ও রপ্তানি নিবন্ধন প্রত্যয়ন পত্রের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি।
- ৭। কিংডম মেয়াদের আমদানি-রপ্তানি কার্যক্রম বিবরণী এক বাহক পিআরসি।
- ৮। ১০০০/- টাকার নন-জুডিসিয়াল স্ট্যাম্পে যথাযথ ব্যক্তি কর্তৃক স্বাক্ষরিত ০৩ (তিন) কোর্ট টাকার জেনারেল বন্ড।

এমতাবস্থায় উল্লিখিত ফি এর চালান ও দলিলাদি আগামী ২০শে মার্চ ২০০০ সালের মধ্যে সদস্য প্রতিষ্ঠানের অবস্থান অনুযায়ী ঢাকা ও চট্টগ্রাম বিজিএমইএ অফিসে জমা দেয়ার জন্য বিশেষ অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

সচিব

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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