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Announcement

Star

LOVE BYTES

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Resist any move to dishonour independence, nat'l anthem

House condemns 'hasty sitting of HC at midnight'

By Staff Correspondent

Lawmakers at a general discussion in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday called upon the pro-liberation forces to unite and keep vigil against any move by the collaborators and fundamentalists to dishonour the independence, national anthem and national flag.

They were speaking on the publication of a parody of the national anthem in the daily Inqilab. However, the House did not take any resolution on the issue after nearly 80 minutes of discussion.

On Wednesday last, the House strongly condemned the hasty midnight sitting of a High Court bench to grant bail to Inqilab editor AAM Bahauddin in a sedition case for publishing the parody of the national anthem in its October 20 issue. Following another round of deliberation on the issue the day after, the House decided to have a full-length discussion on the matter later.

With Home Minister Mohammad Nasim coming under bitter criticism for his comments on the judiciary, the ruling party confined the discussion to the role of Inqilab only, sources at the parliament secretariat said.

They said a ruling Awami League lawmaker had earlier prepared a notice for discussion on the High Court's midnight session and the dishonouring of the national anthem by the daily.

But the party did not approve the move as it preferred to avoid triggering fresh controversy over the role of the judiciary, they added. Most of the MPs of the ruling party and its allies were also surprised by the change.

Leader of the House and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who seconded her parliamentary affairs adviser Suranjit Sengupta's proposal on the discussion on Thursday, was absent during yesterday's discussion.

The discussants comprised five ministers and two opposition lawmakers.

Blasting the Inqilab and its owners for their anti-liberation role, Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak said the daily has been designing to establish fundamentalism in the country. "They don't believe in independent Bangladesh, the national flag and the national anthem."

He blamed former president Ziaur Rahman for rehabilitating the anti-liberation forces to destroy the spirit of Liberation War by forcing changes in the Constitution. "They should have no right to do politics in the country," he added.

The minister told the House that Inqilab has been contriving such anti-state activities since it came into being in 1986. He urged the people and the freedom fighters to get united and resist the anti-independence elements.

Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed said people all over the world show respect to their national flag and national anthem. "National anthem is a pride for any sovereign nation," he said, "but we don't understand how a quarters can disregard national anthem by making a parody of it."

Referring to the court's bail to the person facing treason charges, the minister quoted a senior lawyer of the Supreme Court as saying that the nation could not but feel concerned at the reported "taped conversation"



Students of the forestry departments of the country's three universities passed their third day of fast-unto-death programme yesterday at the Central Shaheed Minar. Nearly 400 students are fasting since Monday demanding revision of the appointment to the BCS (Forest) Cadre. -- Star photo

Ransacking of courts: Bail for 20 lawyers extended

By Court Correspondent

The tribunal for prevention of public safety disturbance and crime, Dhaka yesterday extended bail for 20 lawyers accused in a case under Public Safety Act till January 8.

Sub-Inspector Siddiqur Rahman of Kotwali thana filed a case against 33 people, including 20 lawyers on August 22 for ransacking court rooms of Dhaka District and Sessions Judge, Metropolitan Sessions Judge and CMM on August 20 this year.

Judge Mohammad Shah Newaz accepted the appearance papers of lawyers and fixed January 8 for the next date of hearing.

The accused lawyers brought out a procession in the court premises protesting the murder of Advocate Habibur Rahman Mondal on August 20, and ransacked the court rooms.

The lawyers were granted anticipatory bail on August 24 by the High Court Division of the Supreme Court for 10 days from the date of order.

Later, the lawyers filed another bail petition with the High Court Division of the Supreme Court on October 26.

After hearing both sides, the court directed the accused lawyers to surrender before the trial court within seven days from the date of submission of chargesheet in the case.

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People's faith in army restored, says PM

Nat'l Defence College inaugurated

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked members of the armed forces to remain alert so that none can create disturbance in the armed forces in future, reports UNB.

"People's faith and confidence in you have been restored and you should remain alert so that this faith and confidence remain intact," she told senior defence officials at the National Defence College at Mirpur in the afternoon.

The Prime Minister inaugurated the National Defence College at Mirpur and addressed the 2nd graduation ceremony of the college.

High-ranking officials of the armed forces and high civil officials obtain degree from the National Defence College.

This year, 18 officers graduated from the second NDC course. Of them, nine were from army, two from navy, three from the air force and four others were civilian officers of the status of joint secretaries.

The Prime Minister said through a relentless effort the government has become successful in establishing armed forces which are now more strong and organised than ever before.

"We have been able to keep the army free from party politics and establish chain of command. We have kept the armed forces above political controversy. We have never used the army for cherishing political ambition."

Through their good works members of the armed forces have earned the confidence and love of the people, Hasina said urging them to maintain this in the greater interest of the nation.

She said recognising the importance of the armed forces, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman took the initiative to build up a strong defence force.

The Prime Minister praised the role of the members of the armed forces and said they are giving service to the nation by joining different welfare activities, including the Arayan project.

She also lauded their role during the natural disasters and in UN peacekeeping missions. "I feel proud of you when I go abroad and listen to your praiseworthy role in the UN peace keeping missions."

Hasina listed the development steps taken for the economic prosperity of the poor people and said that the country has achieved a growth rate over five per cent during her rule.

She said that per capita income has been increased and four consecutive bumper harvests have led the country attain food autarky.

Commandant of the National Defence College Major General Hasan Masud Chowdhury also spoke

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One gunned down, another stabbed to death in city

By Staff Correspondent

Two people were murdered in separate incidents in the city yesterday.

Unidentified gunmen shot dead an auto-rickshaw driver at Bhasantek in the city's cantonment area in the early hours of yesterday.

The victim was identified as Mohammad Abul Kashem, 26, son of Janab Ali of Bhasantek Sium.

Two people were also hit by bullets during scuffle between Kashem and his rivals. They were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital soon after the incident but they died in the morning, hospital sources said.

Police said Kashem, the autorickshaw driver, was involved in criminal activities in the area and he might have been killed by his rivals over sharing money of drug trading.

One Asgar Ali called Kashem out of his residence at about 8 pm on Tuesday. The family members informed Cantonment thana

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Germany unhappy over slow power, rail reforms

By Rafiq Hasan

Germany has expressed dissatisfaction over the slow progress of reforms in the country's power and rail sectors, according to finance ministry sources.

During the latest round of bilateral negotiations in the capital from October 31 and November 2, an eight-member German delegation made clear its disappointment with the slow-go corporatisation of the Ashuganj power plant.

The government informed the meeting that the Ashuganj Power Company had already been formed and would be registered very soon.

Germany had committed 25 million Deutsche marks for rehabilitation of the power plant.

Dr. Rainer Goederle, director, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany, led the German delegation at the negotiations while Abdur Razzak, joint secretary of the Economic Relation Division (ERD), the Ministry of Finance, led the Bangladesh side.

Recently, ERD secretary Dr Mashtur Rahman sent a letter to the finance minister, informing him of the German position.

According to sources, the German government has also pledged nearly 81 million marks for development of the rail sector, subject to speedy reforms in the rail sector.

Germany, however, agreed to continue to provide assistance to other projects and increase the volume of aid to Bangladesh.

Also, it would continue its financial and technical support for rehabilitation of signalling technology in the railway sector, sources said. Additional resources would also be diverted to other projects in the sector on a priority basis.

Under the bilateral agreement 2000, Germany has committed a total of 63.4 million Deutsche marks, equivalent to Tk 150 crore, in financial assistance, up nearly 20 per cent from previous year's DM 50 million.

This year's package contains DM 50 million and DM 11 million in financial and technical assistance respectively. Another 2.4 million marks would come as food aid under the World Food Programme through the German Red Cross.

Four projects will receive German financial assistance, with half of the total amount earmarked for the Myemensingh Power Station under the rural electrification programme. The health and population sector programme (HPSP) and programme for promotion of the private sector would get 10 million marks each while the remaining would go to the comprehensive primary education programme.

Five projects have been designated for the German technical assistance. These are comprehensive primary education programme (DM 2m), basic health services and community development in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (DM 1m), promotion of renewable energies (DM 4m), promotion of women's empowerment (DM 3m) and data bank and information system development for the FBCCI (DM 1m).

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Shazneen case Proceedings adjourned till Jan 1

By Court Correspondent

The special court for prevention of women and children repression, Dhaka yesterday adjourned the proceedings of the Shazneen Tasnim Rape Case till January 1.

Judge Mohammad Shah Alam Miah adjourned the proceedings following a time prayer by the prosecution lawyers.

Special public prosecutors ABM Sharfuiddin Khan Mukul and Mahubul Ahmed submitted a time prayer before the court stating that Majibur Rahman, ASP of CID, the first prosecution witness as well as the complainant in the case could not appear in the court as his sister died on Tuesday.

After hearing both sides, the judge fixed January 1 for next hearing of the case.

Another cause for adjournment of the case was non-appearance of Shahidul Islam alias Shahid, the main accused in the case, during the proceedings. Shahid was produced in the court immediately after the adjournment.

Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, 15, youngest daughter of Latifur Rahman, Chairman of Transcom Group, was raped and murdered at their Gulshan residence on April 23, 1998.

Latifur Rahman filed a murder case with Gulshan thana on April 28, 1998 accusing Shahidul Islam Shahid, a domestic help at the house.

Mojibur Rahman, ASP of CID filed a rape case with Gulshan thana after four months of investigation.

Shahidul Islam is the principal accused in the case while contractor Hasan is the alleged mastermind.

All the accused Shahid, Hasan, Badal, Shaniram, Miru and Parveen were present in the court during the proceedings.

Special public prosecutors ABM Sharfuiddin Khan Mukul

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Post-graduate students of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University brought out a procession on the campus yesterday protesting the authorities' decision to replace the existing curriculum. -- Star photo

Liakat released on bail

By Staff Correspondent

Liakat Hossain, a central leader of Jubo League, was released on bail yesterday after a month's detention at the Dhaka Central Jail.

He was released at about 5:30 pm following a writ petition filed by his lawyer with the High Court Division of the Supreme Court recently. Liakat visited Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi soon after his release.

Liakat was arrested on the October 21 for his alleged involvement in snatching tender papers from the officials of two Chinese companies in the city on October 10. He was arrested under Section 54 of the Cr PC.

A gang of youths beat up some officials of the two companies and took away tender papers they were going to submit to the authorities concerned at Roads and Highways Building for a Tk 64 crore World Bank aided project. Liakat and his accomplices Hannan and Auranga are suspected to be involved in the incident.

Liakat's lawyer filed the writ challenging his detention. After hearing both sides, the court cancelled the detention order and granted him bail.

Liakat was also arrested last year on charge of extortion in the city and was released on bail.

We want development-friendly political atmosphere

Khaleda at BATEXPO closing ceremony

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia sought a development-friendly political atmosphere for the prosperity of the nation despite differences among the parties, reports UNB.

"We want such a political situation where there will be differences of political opinion but no confrontation and misuse of power," she said.

Khaleda said this while addressing as chief guest the closing ceremony of BATEXPO-2000 in the city yesterday afternoon.

Describing the current situation of the country as grim, she said it should not be the expectation of anybody a situation which pushes the nation and country into uncertainty.

The function, organised by Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), the sponsor of the annual apparel fair, was also addressed by former Finance Minister and BNP leader M Saifur Rahman, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Shamsul Islam, Morshed Khan and Nurul Huq Sikder. BGMEA president Anisur Rahman Sinha presided over the session.

The former prime minister said if voted to power, her government would form a different ministry named Garment and Textile Ministry for giving a further boost to this sector.

"All-out cooperation will be given," she told her audience from the apparel industry, the main export-earner for the country that is expected to fetch 5 billion US dollars this year.

"You (industrialists) fulfil our hopes and we will fulfil yours," she said.

Criticising discrimination in the facilities between industries in Export Processing Zones and outside, Khaleda said equal opportunities would be given in the future to those industries deprived under the present rule.

Painting a gloomy situation in the country, the BNP chief said each and everybody is the victim of worsening law and order.

"Terrorism, kidnap, killing, extortion and limitless politicisation everywhere created a suffocating situation in the country now."

Parliament has in fact been made ineffective, there is no scope to speak there on important national issues. "Parliamentary democracy is now at stake," she said.

She said repeated attacks were occurring on border areas and domestic industries and trade on the verge of ruination for widespread smuggling.

She said mills, factories and industries as well as people were suffering from power-gas-water crises.

"This situation cannot continue, should not be allowed to continue," she said.

Khaleda said: "As opposition leader of Jatiya Sangsad I want to

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High drama in US polls race

Court gives Gore final shot, Dick Cheney hospitalised

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. Nov 22: A spokeswoman for the Bush campaign, Karen Hughes, said Cheney was resting comfortably and the tests had shown nothing abnormal.

"He is now free of discomfort and remains in the hospital for further evaluation," she said.

In Florida, where the outcome of vote recounts in several counties will decide who wins the White House, officials resumed recounting votes in a desperate bid to meet a Monday deadline set by the Supreme Court on Tuesday.

However, the election board in Miami-Dade county suspended the full recount of presidential votes, putting the count there into confusion.

The state's highest court said on Tuesday that manual recounts should be added to the final count of the Nov 7 election, giving Democrat Al Gore a final shot at the White House and drawing cries of foul from Republicans who say the Democrats are trying to steal the election from Bush.

A crucial issue is whether so-called dimpled ballots when the holes in ballots are dented but not punched out can be included in the final tally.

Gore's team was due to file a court petition in a Palm beach court today, arguing that dimpled ballots should be accepted as indicating voter intent. The Republicans dispute this and say they should be discarded.

The Democrats believe that if these ballots are included in the recount, Gore's chances of passing Bush's slim lead in Florida will be boosted considerably, giving the vice president the key 25 electoral votes needed to clinch the White House.

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Boy stolen from DMCH

By Staff Correspondent

A minor boy was stolen from Gynaecology Department of Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday.

Sources said Jhorna Begum, 22, wife of late Nizamuddin Ahmed of Mirpur in the city, went to bathroom leaving her newborn son on the bed at about 9 a.m. but when she came back she could not find her son and started screaming.

She was admitted to the hospital on November 13. The following day she gave birth to a son at bed number 1 on the Baranda of Ward 15. She was sharing the seat with one Nargis.

The incident was informed to the authorities. Police from Ramna thana went to the spot. The DMCH authorities handed over to police Shajeda, a special female attendant for her alleged involvement in the child lifting.

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Lawmakers dismiss Fujimori: First Lady leaves palace

LIMA, Nov 22: Outraged lawmakers dismissed President Alberto Fujimori in a raucous session of Congress, ignoring his resignation and declaring him morally unfit for office, reports AP.

After more than 12 hours of debate Tuesday, lawmakers voted 62 to nine, with nine abstentions to oust Fujimori on grounds of "moral incapacity" as permitted by Peru's constitution.

The result in the 120-seat Congress exceeded the simple majority of lawmakers present and capped an emotional debate in which Fujimori loyalists walked out en masse moments before the vote began.

"The dictatorship has fallen!" Fujimori critics chanted in Congress, unfurling the red-and-white Peruvian flag from a balcony above the chamber soon after the vote total flashed on the electronic tabulation board.

Falling into disgrace since his flight last week to Japan, Fujimori said in Tokyo earlier in the day that he planned to stay in his ancestral homeland "for a long time."

As the debate raged Tuesday, Congress President Valentín Paniagua, a political moderate with opposition backing, emerged as the likely successor to Fujimori. His appointment was expected to ease the political turmoil set off by a corruption scandal.

Fujimori submitted his resignation in a letter sent Monday from Japan.

Meanwhile, First lady Keiko Sofia, the daughter left behind by Fujimori, has vacated the Government Palace with her stereo, a huge Garfield doll and two pet poodles in tow.

A symbol of his government, however, the official first lady is staying put in Peru even as her countrymen expressed a mix of outrage that her father fled to Japan and relief that the iron-fisted ruler was gone.

Asked by reporters Tuesday what message she has for Peruvians, she replied: "I ask you for peace. I ask you for tranquility. Peru is bigger than its problems."

Guido Luciani, Keiko Sofia's personal assistant, said the first lady knew "for a couple of days" that her father planned to

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Alberto Fujimori