

Speaker may cancel visit to Phnom Penh

By Staff Correspondent

Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury may cancel his visit to Cambodian capital Phnom Penh to attend the ensuing conference and general assembly of the Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace (AAPP) due to health reasons, some sources said.

It was not officially confirmed but Jatiya Sangsad Secretariat officials said the Speaker is likely to speak in this regard today. He has some health problems and underwent a medical check-up a few days ago.

Chowdhury was invited to the See page 11 col 2

SC stays ban on fatwa for six weeks

By Special Correspondent

The Supreme Court yesterday stayed for six weeks the High Court judgement on January 1 declaring all Fatwas (edicts) illegal.

Chief Justice Latifur Rahman, however, kept the stay non-operational in the case of housewife Shahida Bibi of sadar Upazila of Naogaon. Shahida fell victim to a 'Fatwa' given by local Moulana Haji Azizul Islam, forcing her to go for a 'hilla' (interim marriage with another person after divorce to remarry her husband).

The stay came upon a petition against the High Court judgement given by Justice Golam Rabbani (since appointed a judge of the Appellate Division) and Justice Nazmun Ara Sultana. Justice Rabbani did not take part in the hearing yesterday as it was on his verdict.

The petition was filed by Mufti Mohammad Abu Taiyab of Lalbagh Jamiya Ashrafiya Madrassah and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Chairman of Bangladesh

Masjid Mission.

The forced marriage had traumatised Shahida's life as her husband Saiful Islam declined to accept her after the 'hilla' marriage. The moulana claimed to have overheard Saiful verbally divorcing her three times over a family feud 18 months ago and gave a Fatwa recently that they could not live as husband and wife. For that she had to marry another man and obtain a divorce and remarry Saiful.

When Shahida's plight was reported in newspapers, the Division Bench comprising Justice Golam Rabbani and Justice Nazmun Ara Sultana issued a suo moto rule on the Naogaon district administration and gave the judgement on January 1.

But the district administration replied that Azizul Islam had already been arrested along with five others on charges under Narl-O-Shishu Nirjatan Act and relevant sections of the Penal Code.

Tofail blasts India for not allowing duty-free access to LDC products

By Staff Correspondent

Industry Minister Tofail Ahmed yesterday strongly criticised India and other big nations in South Asia for not allowing duty-free access to goods from least developed countries in the region.

"Whereas EU is going to give duty-free access to our goods, and US and Canada are providing quota facilities, our big neighbours are doing nothing for us," the minister said while address-

ing a dialogue on Agenda for South Asian Co-operation at the BRAC centre in the city.

"We have withdrawn all kinds of barriers and reduced duty and tariff rapidly. Even that was not reciprocated by the bigger countries, particularly India."

The South Asia Centre for Policy Studies (SACEPS), which was formally launched yesterday, organised the dialogue.

Tofail was chief guest at the second session of the dialogue titled Building a South Asian Free Trade Area. Around 20 delegates from six SAARC countries are participating in the dialogue. No representative has come from Bhutan.

Tofail said when the Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari See page 11 col 3

Jalal murder case

Suo moto rule on govt

By SC Correspondent

The High Court yesterday issued a suo moto rule on the government to explain why a new Public Prosecutor (PP) should not be appointed according to the informant's choice in Jalal murder case, 'discharging' present Public Prosecutor (PP) Quamrul Islam.

A Division Bench of the court comprising Justice Ali Asgar

Khan and Justice S K Sinha issued the rule and directed the Investigation Officer (IO) of the case to ensure security of the witnesses.

The Bench also asked the authorities concerned to produce documents of the case before it within 24 hours.

The court issued the rule tak- See page 11 col 2

HC rules on Morshed Khan's case today

By Special Correspondent

The High Court will give its order today on a petition by BNP Lawmaker M Morshed Khan seeking stay of the proceedings in a case against him and his son under the Public Safety Act (PSA).

A Division Bench of the High Court (HC) comprising Justice Abu Saeed Ahmed and Justice See page 11 col 6



After a long Eid vacation and an even longer holiday hangover, the capital is back in its elements, so suggests the familiar sight of a traffic congestion near the Purana Paltan crossing in the city yesterday. -- Star photo

PM asks armed forces to be ready for external attack

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has advised the armed forces to remain ever ready to resist any external attack to protect the country's independence and sovereignty, reports UNB.

"We should always remain ready to face any situation so that we can safeguard our sovereignty and independence," she said.

She did not indicate if there are any external threats. However, a neighbouring country has now massed troops on the frontier following a border dispute.

The Prime Minister, who also holds charge of the Defence Ministry was addressing the inaugural function of the Third National Defence Course and First Armed Forces War Course at the National Defence College at Mirpur in the city yesterday.

She said her government wants peace, not war. "We want local, regional and international peace and at the same time we will have to remain alert for neutralising any attack from external forces."

Only a stable democratic system in the country can

ensure protection of sovereignty. When democracy exists in a country, none can dare to attack it, she said, adding that socio-economic development is essential for combating external attacks.

Addressing the high civil and military officials, Sheikh Hasina said integration of the people with the armed forces is also important to win any war against the enemies.

She suggested the trainees of National Defence College, which imparts training to high military officials and gives guidelines for adopting national strategy, to involve all forces while taking up any strategy to protect national interest.

"For winning any war a joint warfare strategy is needed," the Prime Minister said suggesting involvement of all forces without any discrimination in this regard. United efforts of all and assistance of the civil and all democratic forces will help face any situation.

Hasina said usually a democratic country does See page 11 col 3

Khasru meets President, talks judges' appointment

By Special Correspondent

Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru had a meeting with President Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday and discussed a number of issues including appointment of new judges in the Supreme Court and the High Court.

According to sources, he also discussed the appointment of two See page 11 col 7

JS session resumes today

By Staff Correspondent

The winter session of the Jatiya Sangsad resumes at 10.30 am today after a three day recess.

The House is likely to have a general discussion on the Presidential address, delivered at the opening sitting of the 21st session on January 11.

The Business Advisory Committee has fixed 20 hours for the discussion.

Members from the ruling Awami League, the Jatiya Party faction lead by Communications Minister Anwar Hossain Manju and Jatiya Samanjantrik Dal (JSD) will take part in the discussion.

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