

Demonstration at Supreme Court

PSA case against Nazmul Huda, Kh Mahbub, 14 other lawyers and Morshed Khan

By Staff Correspondent

BNP lawmaker Barrister Nazmul Huda, Khandakar Mahbubuddin Ahmed and 14 other "pro-opposition" lawyers have been sued under the Public Safety Act (PSA) for their involvement in Thursday's demonstration at the Supreme Court.

M Morshed Khan, another BNP legislator, was also named in the case, filed with Ramna police on Monday by a lawyer of the Supreme Court.

The other accused in the case are Abdur Rab Chowdhury, Jainul Abedin, Golam Kibria, Barrister Mahbubuddin Khokon, Golam Mohammad Chowdhury, SM Emdadul Haq, Humayun Kabir Bulbul, Golam Arshed, Ferdous Akter Wahida, Faisal Hasan Faiezi, Farid Ahmed, Asatun Noor Begum Panna, Mamun and assistant secretary of the bar association, Mithu.

Ramna police, however, remained tight-lipped about the case. When contacted last night, DMP Commissioner Motior Rahman told The Daily Star that such a case under PSA was filed, but refused to elaborate.

Sources in the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court confirmed that it received a copy of the FIR under Sections 10 and 12 of PSA from the Ramna police station yesterday.

Earlier on Monday, Law Minister Abdul Motin Khasru and three senior members of the Treasury Bench suggested in the parliament that a criminal suit be filed against the lawyers who had confined judges in the Supreme Court for more than two hours, kicked the doors of the Chief Justice's chamber and forced suspension of the court's functioning on January 11.

When contacted last night Barrister Huda, number one accused in the case, said that the government instigated filing of the case out of political motive. The case has been filed to harass the probable candidates in the next bar association elections, he added.

Barrister Huda dismissed the allegations levelled against them but said, "Now, we have to find out whether the charges in the FIR fall under the PSA."

Huda, however, said that the opposition lawyers are likely to meet today to decide the next course of action which might include filing of a petition for anticipatory bail in the High Court today.

A section of opposition lawyers staged unprecedented demonstration and went on a rampage following appointment of two new Appellate Division judges.

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Still they dare... passenger buses pull over and pick passengers at will near the Farm Gate footbridge, in complete dismissal of a veiled threat, as pronounced in the signboard, from Northern Traffic of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police. -- Star photo by

No plan to raise retirement age, Hasina tells JS

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday that her government had no plan to raise the retirement age of government officials and employees to 60 from the existing 57.

Nor does her government have any plan to permanently stop contractual appointments in government jobs, said the Prime Minister during her weekly question time in the House.

She said the age-limit for entry into government service was raised from 27 to 30 in 1991 considering session jams at the universities (that used to delay students' graduation).

But the retirement age has not yet been raised considering promotions of government officials and employees and availability of government jobs, she said.

About contractual appointments in government services, she said the practice is much less now than before. Such appointments are made considering the competence of some government officials for the sake of completing

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Dubey pleads zero-tariff for India's neighbours

By Staff Correspondent

Former Indian foreign secretary Muchkund Dubey has advocated that India should offer 'zero tariff access' to goods from Bangladesh and other small neighbours.

"I think, India should have really come forward and offered zero tariff access to its neighbours including Bangladesh and should also support the least developed countries' (LDCs) demand for zero tariff access of their products to the developed world" he said.

Muchkund Dubey was delivering a keynote speech on "Implications of the WTO for the South with special reference to Bangladesh" in the city yesterday. It was organised by the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) at its auditorium.

Dubey, also India's former permanent representative to the WTO, said that India would lift all sorts of non-tariff barriers on the import of agricultural and industrial products from April, 2001.

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Jan 17		5.34 pm
Jan 18	6-43 am	

Prayer Timings		
January 17		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-10
Zuhr	12-45	1-20
Asr	4-05	4-20
Maghrib	5-40	5-45
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

"Unrestricted access" of Bangladeshi goods to Indian market stressed

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladeshi goods should be given "unrestricted access" to Indian market.

This was suggested by some eminent personalities from both the countries at a two-day dialogue that concluded here yesterday. Participants in the dialogue included politicians, economists, former diplomats and researchers.

Concrete steps should be taken to boost mutually beneficial bilateral economic cooperation and to reduce Bangladesh's huge trade deficit with India, they said.

The dialogue on Bangladesh-India Economic Relations also identified a number of problems in boosting bilateral trade. It was organised jointly by the Centre for Policy Dialogue of Dhaka and the Centre for Policy Research of New Delhi.

Briefing newsmen on conclusion of the dialogue, CPD Chairman Prof. Rehman Sobhan said, trade with India comprises a very important component

of Bangladesh's global trade relations.

"Neighbouring countries tend to trade more. This is a global phenomenon. But what is of utmost concern here is the growing trade deficit which has grown to almost ten times over the decades and Bangladesh's inability to enter into the huge market of its neighbour."

He said sharing of waters of common rivers was the second most important issue discussed at the dialogue.

The participants noted that under the Ganges Water-Sharing Treaty, Bangladesh got its share in 1998, 1999 and 2000. There should be long-term agreements on sharing waters of other common rivers and Nepal and Bhutan should be included to harness and utilise water resources in the region, they said, according to Prof. Rehman Sobhan.

Indo-Bangla political and security issues were

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Akhtaruzzaman says Real killers of Humayun Zahir escaped punishment

CHITTAGONG, Jan 16: Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury Babu, who was the main accused in Humayun Zahir murder case, said today that the 'real killers' of the industrialist and banker were not arrested and they escaped punishment.

Babu, acquitted in the case by trial court recently, was exchanging views with journalists at Chittagong Press Club.

He said, 'As my conspirators wanted to destroy me politically, socially and in business field by

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Govt acts slow on Agri Commission report Review committee formed 20 months after its submission

By Reaz Ahmad

The government formed a ministerial committee Monday to review a comprehensive Agriculture Commission report, some 20 months after it was submitted, official sources said yesterday.

At its last meeting on Monday, the cabinet took up the report for discussion and formed a ministerial committee to work out the methods to implement the commission's recommendations upon review of the report.

Earlier, the commission headed by a prime ministerial advisor had expressed frustration

over the government's indifference towards implementation of its recommendations.

The government took up the issue for review against the backdrop of successive bumpers in cereal production over the last four years and attaining of food autarky in the 1999-2000 fiscal.

The commission was constituted on November 9, 1996, with a mandate to prepare policy recommendations towards enhancement of food production commensurate with the popula-

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Split verdict to come up in Third Judge's Court today

By Special Correspondent

The split verdict in the Bangabandhu Murder Case will come up in the Third Judge's Court today.

It will come up in the cause list for today between 10-30 am and 11-30 am for necessary order by Justice Fazlul Karim for the date of hearing on it.

Chief Justice Latifur Rahman sent the references of the split verdict in the Bangabandhu murder case to the Third Court of Justice Fazlul Karim on Monday.

Earlier on Sunday, the copies of the split verdict were sent to the office of the Chief Justice by the Death Reference Bench that heard the Bangabandhu Murder Case.

Justice Ruhul Amin, one of the

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Hearing of cassette case not held

By Special Correspondent

The hearing of the cassette case containing an alleged conversation between jailed former President H M Ershad and a High Court judge and contempt charges against four newspapers could not take place at the High Court yesterday.

It could not take place because the lawyers and state attorney met in the chamber of Justice Syed Amirul Islam to listen to the audio cassette for nearly three hours.

They all took notes and would compare them to make an agreed transcribed copy of the tape at 12 noon today, court sources said.

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Row over definition of defaulter

JS body suggests a compromise formula

By Inam Ahmed

After months of negotiations and criticism from different quarters, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance Ministry yesterday suggested a compromise solution to the problem centring the proposed amendment to the definition of loan defaulters.

According to the proposed amendment, a person or a company will be considered a defaulter if loans or advances taken by the individual or the firm become overdue by six months.

The new proposal is in fact an improvement on what the finance ministry had earlier proposed for the amendment to the definition of defaulters. The ministry's original proposal was that a loan should be dubbed as defaulted only if it is classified as bad loan.

According to their nature, loans become classified at different time frame. For continuous loans like LC facilities, a loan becomes substandard if it is overdue by three months, doubtful by six months and bad by one year. But in case of a term loan for up to five years, it becomes substandard by being overdue by six months, doubtful by one year and bad by being overdue by 18

months. As regards a long term loan, it becomes substandard after becoming overdue by one year, doubtful by 18 months and bad by 24 months.

"According to present practice, loans are termed defaulted if they are classified as sub-standard. So, our new proposal in fact gives some relief to the continuous loan receivers without giving any concession to other types of borrowers," said a standing committee member.

Earlier, the finance ministry's proposal for amendment to definition of defaulters evoked bitter criticism from bankers, the central bank, donors specially the World Bank and professionals who saw it as a soft stance to favour the defaulters who are politically powerful. They said if the amendment is made, it will increase the default rate in the banking system.

Former finance minister Saifur Rahman also criticised the proposed amendment at a meeting of the standing committee.

Following such developments, the proposed bill was sent back to the ministry and the p a r l i a m e n t -

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JS still in quorum crisis

By Staff Correspondent

The crisis of quorum is back again in the Jatiya Sangsad that went into the New Year's maiden session on Thursday. In fact, the absence of quorum emerged on the very first day of the current session and returned on the second working day yesterday.

The House lacked quorum as soon as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina took a short break two hours after the day's sitting began at 10am and the situation continued even after she returned after some 15 minutes.

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Bangladesh booters out of Sahara

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh crashed out of the Sahara Millenium Cup football tournament after going down 4-1 to fancied Yugoslavia in their final Group A match in Cochin, India, last night.

Bangladesh however took the lead as early as in the fifth minute with Titu converting from the spot. But the Balcan team roared back into the match with two goals from their mercurial cap-

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50 hurt as lawyers clash with govt staff at Sirajganj

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 16: At least 50 people were injured in a clash between the lawyers and employees of the local administration over a trifling matter on the DC's office premises here today.

Police and witnesses said the trouble began at about 10 am when a grade III employee of the Deputy Commissioner's office took a glass of water supplied for

a lawyer, Swapan, at the canteen.

There were exchange of heated words and scuffle between the lawyer and the employee. Later, other employees rushed to the spot and took the lawyer to the Additional Deputy Commissioner's room on the first floor.

As news of the incident spread, about 500 lawyers and their

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Shazneen murder case

ASP of CID cross-examined

By Court Correspondent

Mojibur Rahman, ASP of CID, first prosecution witness as well as complainant in Shazneen rape case, was cross-examined in the Special Court for Prevention of Women and Children Repression, Dhaka yesterday.

After two hours' cross-examination by layers of accused Minu and Parvin, Judge M Shah Alam Miah adjourned the proceedings till February 11. Mojibur will be cross-examined again on that day.

During the cross-examination, Mojibur Rahman said that he did not know when Latifur Rahman used to leave his Gulshan residence for office.

He said Latifur Rahman and his wife were at their residence

on April 1 and 2, 1998. They have four sons and daughters including Shazneen. Their only son Arshad Oliur Rahman Riaz and his wife reside at a separate residence.

Mojibur said Riaz had good relations with Shazneen, who was also in good terms with her sister-in-law.

The witness said he could not remember the names of husbands of two other daughters of Latifur Rahman.

He said he could not remember whether house maids went to Latifur Rahman's Merino Tea Garden at Kulaura in

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