

News

Supreme Court incident Nazmul Huda refutes ministers' allegations

By Special Correspondent

Barrister Nazmul Huda, convenor of Sammilito Ainjibi Parishad, has refuted the allegations made by the Law Minister and Home Minister that he and other lawyers had created vandalism in the Supreme Court, demanded resignation of the Chief Justice and kicked the door of his office on Thursday.

"If the government file any case on the pretexts of such allegations against the 'Samgrami' (protesting) lawyers, it will have to bear the consequences," he told newsmen at a press conference at 1:30 pm yesterday in the Supreme Court Bar Association south hall.

His comments came in the wake of statements by ministers, including law minister in Parliament on Monday, demanding cases be filed against the lawyers including Huda. They said they staged unprecedented demonstration against appointment of two judges to the Appellate Division by indulging in vandalism, confining the judges and dis-

rupting the court proceedings. "If they do not stop making threats against us, we will be compelled to file cases under Public Safety Act (PSA) against the deputy and assistant attorney generals who attacked our peaceful protest on Thursday, and created vandalism," Huda said in the press conference.

The press conference was attended by, among others, Parishad leaders Khandaker Mahbub Hossain, Rafigul Islam Mian and Zainal Abedin.

Considering "them as our colleagues, we refrained from filing cases against them," Huda said, adding that "if the government continues to attack us with canards, we will also be forced to file defamation cases against them (ministers)."

He said they have already made their stand clear on the Thursday's events at the Supreme Court, "clarifying that the government lawyers had created disorder and the protesting lawyers did not kick the door of the CJ."

Dubey pleads zero-tariff

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Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil and MCCI President Latifur Rahman also spoke on the occasion. Leading entrepreneurs of the country were present. Commerce Secretary Golam Rahman also attended.

The problems and advantages Bangladesh may have after 2004, the terminal year for phasing out quota restriction on textile products, Dubey observed that Bangladesh would still be more competitive than many of its competitors includ-

ing India.

"I think Bangladesh would be able to yield twice as much benefit than any other country in a quota-free world," said the former Indian high commissioner in Dhaka.

Dubey, however, said Bangladesh has to take concrete measures for structural adjustment in textile sector by phasing out old textile units and modernising the sector.

Giving a brief history of trade negotiations, GATT and WTO, he said in the last 20-30 years, duty on goods has been reduced mostly in the interest of rich nations.

Dubey said time has now come for the LDCs and developing countries to make their point for drastically bringing down the export subsidies provided by the developed countries.

Hasina tells JS

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certain tasks in certain areas,

the PM told the House.

To another question, Sheikh Hasina said that the service entry age for the offspring of freedom fighters has been increased from 30 to 32 to fill the 30 per cent quota reserved for the freedom fighters in govern-

ment jobs.

The Public Service Commission has been asked to arrange a special BCS examination to fill more than 600 vacancies reserved under the freedom fighters' quota.

Japanese team

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Jamuna bridge and other bridges.

Khaleda said if BNP goes to power, an EPZ will be set up exclusively for Japan. "We hope Japan will not set up industries only in the EPZ. It will also set up heavy industries for the benefit of both the countries," she told Nojima.

She requested the delegation to urge Japanese investors and businessmen to set up more industries in Bangladesh.

In reply, Koji Nojima said the main objective of their visit is to study investment prospects in Bangladesh. On return home, the team will submit a report and apprise Japanese investors of the prospects in Bangladesh.

Nojima said Japan always gives due importance to Bangladesh because of its location, linking South Asia and South East Asia.

Khaleda Zia also sought Japanese technical cooperation for

Dhanmondi Lake Project

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comprehensive management policy for the lake. The government has formed two committees to run the business of the Dhanmondi Lake, informed the DC official.

The five-member executive committee, headed by the CEO of DCC, comprises chief engineer of PWD, chief engineer of DCC, additional chief engineer of LGED and an advisory engineer of Bhitti Statpahar Brinda -- consultants of the project.

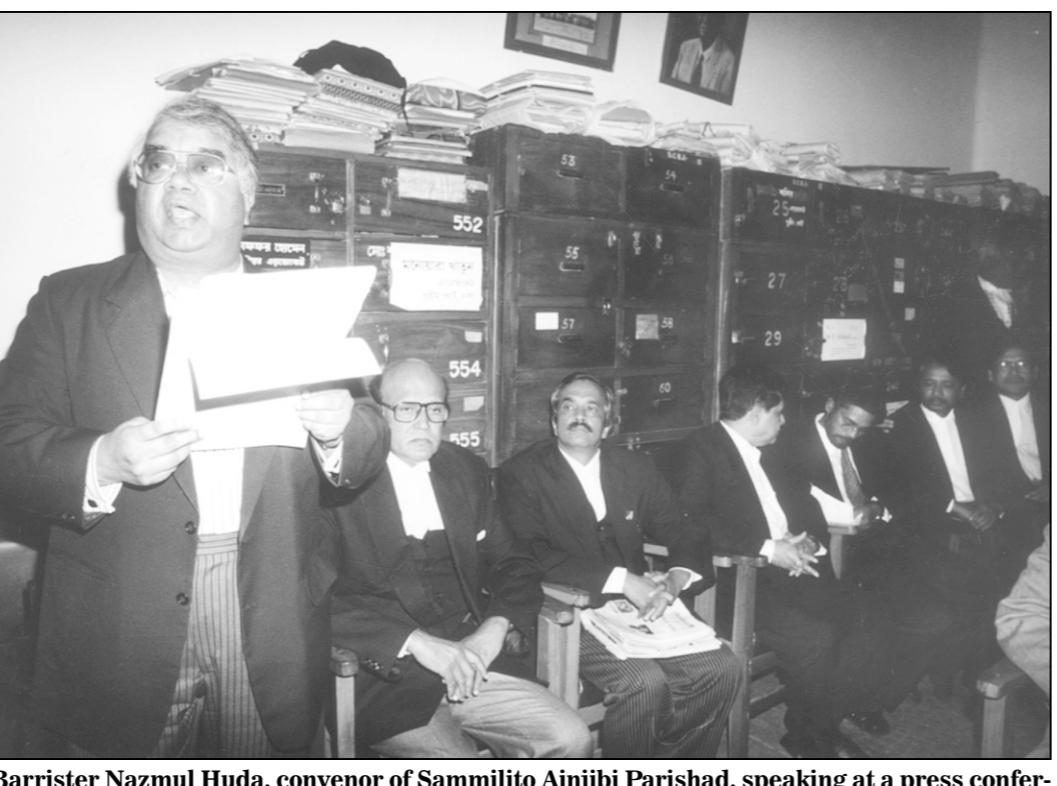
Huda added that responsibilities of the executive committee include leasing out 18 commercial components, operating management, conducting monthly inspection of the area, solving problems with other service agencies and also publishing a project-highlighting brochure.

Huda also said that the ten-member advisory committee of

the lake includes secretary of Local Government Division, CEO of DCC, managing director of WASA, chief engineer of LGED and four 'local' residents.

Sources informed that the three local residents of the Advisory Committee are Kafiluddin Mahmud, a retired bureaucrat, Kamrul Islam Siddiqi, secretary of the works ministry and Secretary of Dhanmondi Thana Awami League Fazlur Rahman Razu and Aiful Haque. Two other members of the advisory committee are a representative of the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum and that of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Memorial Trust.

"We'll soon float a tender to lease out 18 components separately," said Huda. "We look forward to starting the commercial activities by February 21."



Barrister Nazmul Huda, convenor of Sammilito Ainjibi Parishad, speaking at a press conference at the Supreme Court Bar Association south hall yesterday. -Star photo

ASP of CID cross-examined

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Moulavibazar district with

Shazneen along with her sisters and others went to their Marina Tea garden in Kulaura on April 3, 1998 and her parents went to India on April 2, he said.

Maids Minu and Parvin were at the Gulshan residence of Latifur Rahman when Shazneen went to the tea garden.

Latifur Rahman along with his wife returned home on April, 18, 1998 and Shazneen along with her sisters and others came back on April 16.

Latifur Rahman told the court that he investigated the murder case and scrutinised the inquest report. Sub-inspector Shamsul Haq prepared the inquest report at about 3.45 am on April 25, 1998, he said.

Minu came to the residence of Latifur Rahman two months

before the murder took place. Mojibur said he did not know Minu's salary.

He said Parvin was brought to the house seven days before the incident to assist the killers in the planned murder. Latifur Rahman's wife had no role in appointing the servants, he said.

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 24, 1998, accusing Shahidul Islam alias Shahid, a domestic help at his house.

Mojibur had filed a rape case with Gulshan thana after six months' investigation into the murder case.

Shahidul Islam is the prin-

pal accused in the case while contractor Hasan is the alleged mastermind.

All the accused Shahid, Hasan, Badal, Shaniram, Minu and Parvin were present at the court during the cross-examination.

Special public prosecutors ABM Shafuddin Khan Mukul and Mahbub Ahmed appeared for the state while Advocates Mosarraf Hossain Kajol and M A Kamrul Hasan Khan Aslam appeared for the accused.

The murder case, pending with the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's court, Dhaka, was earlier stayed by an order of the Supreme Court. The order will remain valid till disposal of the rape case.

Agri Commission report

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tion growth in the country.

The commission, headed by Prime Minister's Agriculture and Food Advisor AM Anisuzzaman, completed its report on May 14, 1999. However, the government extended its tenure till December 1999 on the pretext of holding several workshops on the report in different agro-ecological zones of the country to elicit view from experts and public.

The workshops were never held, nor was the report ever made public. The Daily Star, however, published a summary of the report on September 21, 1999.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Agriculture Minister Md. Atiqur Rahman said that the government had earlier circulated copies of the commission report to all ministries concerned and incorporated many of their suggestions.

"In the last cabinet meeting, when we discussed the report, the prime minister herself set forth some suggestions," said Atiqur Rahman. "The special com-

mittee that the cabinet has formed would now review the report and work out ways and means to implement the recommendations made by the commission."

However, no specific timeframe was defined for the ministerial committee to complete its review, said official sources.

Finance minister, agriculture minister, industries minister, fisheries and livestock minister, and forest and environment minister and agriculture and food advisor to the prime minister are on the high-profile committee, sources added.

The Ministry of Agriculture claims that the government has already implemented the majority of recommendations on crop sector, while non-crop sectors have lagged behind.

But the experts who gave valuable inputs into the report considered that Bangladesh required a lot more to do for facing the future challenges in the agro-sector and achieving food-autarchy in a given year

should leave no room for complacency.

In its report the Agriculture Commission noted that if enough pro-agricultural activities were not immediately undertaken and agro-based industries not developed in the countryside, migration of unemployed farmhands to urban areas would put additional pressure on the already overburdened utility service network.

The commission also observed with grave concern that money saved from subsidy-cuts in agriculture was diverted to other sectors, whereas reduction of subsidy on agricultural inputs was initiated in the 1980s to support different sub-sectors of agriculture. It strongly pleaded for redirecting money to agricultural research.

Budgetary allocation for agricultural research in the country is one of the lowest in the world and subsidy to agriculture constitutes one-third of the volume permissible under the World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules.

FM opens D-8 Commission meet

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and said a strong and effective private sector partnership is vitally necessary.

He said the current decade would pose a greater challenge in politics and foreign policy than in science and economics.

"In international negotiations, whether in the field of environment, in genetically modified foods or in cultural affairs, science and economics now take a back seat to politics," he said.

Azad said that in this era of globalisation, plights and sufferings of the developing countries were mounting as they face increasing marginalisation in the world economy.

He expressed hope that under the umbrella of D-8, the member countries would share their diverse experience and expertise for production and meaningful cooperation.

The Bangladesh foreign minister stated that the sphere of cooperation has been gradually expanding under the D-8 and the private sector is being drawn into its fold.

The foreign minister appreciated the initiative of Egypt to convene the first business forum of the D-8 group prior to the 3rd summit in Cairo and welcomed the proposal of Iran for easing of visa restrictions among the member countries.

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Commerce Minister M A Jalil in his speech expressed the hope that cooperative endeavour

among the D-8 countries would help overcome the common concern in global trade, agriculture and poverty alleviation. He said the D-8 vision transcends trade and makes it a stepping-stone to improve the standard of living of the peoples of its member countries.

Welcoming the participants, Foreign Secretary Shafiq Sami expressed the hope that development of the forum of the eight countries would cement the foundation of cooperation among them to improve the living standard of 800 million people who share common religion, culture, and social and economic issues.

Executive Director of D-8, Ayhan Kamel praised the role of Bangladesh in the forum activities and said Bangladesh has so far presided over 24 expert-level meetings out of 34.



Maj Gen (retd) Kabir joins BNP

Opposition leader Begum Khaleda Zia asked her party men to take all-out preparations to resist any evil design of the ruling Awami League to return to power through terrorism, reports UNB.

Her call came while Maj Gen (retd) M Anwarul Kabir Talukdar of Sarishabari, Jamalpur, joined BNP yesterday.

Kabir is the nephew of former secretary general of BNP Abdus Salam Talukdar.

Scores of BNP leaders, workers and supporters from Sarishabari were present at the function at 29 Minto Road.

Branding Awami League as terrorist, Begum Zia cautioned her workers that they could indulge in any kind of terrorism. "Thwart their evil design. Our victory is certain, Inshallah."

She asked the party activists to work united to achieve the goal of victory in the next general election.

Cassette case

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On behalf of Ershad, his counsel Khandaker Mahbub Hossain, Barrister Mainul Hosein, President of Supreme Court Bar Association, for the Daily Ittefaq, Deputy Attorney General Bazlur Rahman Chhaha and Barrister Shelly Rahman for daily Manob Jamin listened to the tape.

Bangladesh booters

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ain Sasa Illic in the 18th and 34th minutes. Bangladesh fought hard to keep the marauding Yugoslavs at bay but eventually gave in during the dying minutes of the match. Both goals were scored in 78th and 87th minutes.

Bangladesh lost their opening match to Bosnia 2-0 on Friday.

Split verdict

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two judges of the Death Reference Bench, in his judgement acquitted five of the 15 accused.

The other judge, Justice ABM Khairul Huq, confirmed the death sentence of all the 15.

Four of them are in the death row at the Dhaka Central Jail. The others are absconding, most of them are believed to be out of the country.

The 15 were sentenced to death by a trial court on November 8, 1998 for murdering Bangabandhu and most of the members of his family on August 15, 1975.

Quorum crisis

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Incidentally, the House saw the presence of exactly 60 lawmakers, the minimum required strength for a quorum, when the day's sitting ended at 12:40pm.

On the opening day, absence of quorum also marked the yearly address by the president.

The quorum crisis -- presence of less than 60 members in the 330-strong House -- is an old phenomenon in the present parliament, but the crisis worsened since the BNP-led opposition parties started boycotting the proceedings 18 months ago.

Nevertheless, the House continues to function these days, as the absence of quorum is not brought to the notice of the Speaker, a practice usually done by the opposition.

The Rules of Procedure allows the Chair to continue to run the House even without a quorum unless a member brings the issue to his notice.

Rab murder

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Hitler named an industrialist and his younger brother, a former Mayor of KCC and some others as masterminds in the killing.

When asked, the complainant termed Hitler's statement a "cooked-up" story full of lies to damage the case to saving the FIR-named persons".

When asked, former mayor Kazi Aminul Huq denied his involvement in the murder. He claimed that Hitler had demanded a huge amount of money from him in October last year and threatened him for non-compliance