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9 new HC Judges appointed

STAR REPORT

President Shahabuddin Ahmad yesterday appointed nine judges to the High Court Division of the Supreme Court.

The fresh appointment is being regarded as a move to make the Supreme Court more functional to dispose of tens of thousands of pending cases.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru confirmed last night that the new judges were appointed to the HC Division. The newly appointed judges are likely to take oath on Thursday.

The judges are: Law Secretary Abdul Hai, Solicitor Abdul Razzak, Registrar of the Supreme Court Marziul Haq from the Judicial Cadre, Deputy Attorney General Altaf Hossain Khan Arun, and Iman Ali and Mahmud Hossain from the office of the Attorney General, and Shamsul Huda Manik, Hasan Faez Siddique and Faruk Ahmed from the Supreme Court Bar Association.

With the new appointments, the number of judges in the High Court Division stands at 49. But, people involved with the judiciary said more number of judges is required to dispose of thousands of cases pending with the SC.

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Students of Bangladesh Institute of Fine Arts brush up floral designs on the terraces at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday.

Ekushey returns to inspire nation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nation pays homage to the martyrs of the historic Language Movement on the Shaheed Day today, renewing its pledge to draw inspiration from the glorious memories of Amar Ekushey, and give democracy institutional shape and ensure economic emancipation for the teeming millions in the country.

On this day 49 years back, heroic sons of the soil Salam, Jabbar, Rafiq, Shafiq and Barkat embraced martyrdom to establish Bangla as the state language of the erstwhile East Pakistan.

They were killed when police had opened on unarmed students, demonstrating under the banner of

All-Party Students Action Committee against the conspiracies of Pakistani rulers to declare Urdu as the only state language. Fearless students in their thousands took to the streets to foil a heinous move to undermine Bangla, the language of the majority, five crore people who lived in the then East Pakistan.

The day is also being observed as the International Mother Language Day in 188 countries across the globe. On November 17, 1999 UNESCO declared February 21 as International Mother Language Day.

The Language Movement was a giant step towards

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Ekushey Padak 2001 announced

UNB, Dhaka

Eleven personalities and one organisation have been awarded Ekushey Padak-2001 in recognition of their outstanding contribution in their respective fields.

The personalities are: Abdul Matin (Language Movement) Prof Rafiqul Islam and Shamoli Nasrin Chowdhury (Education), Mohadev Shaha, Zia Haider and Nirmalendu Goun (Literature), Golam Mustafa (Film), Ataur Rahman (Drama), Kabial Fani Barua (Music), Abdul Karim Shah (Folk Song) and Binoy

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Shafiullah should have been an accused, not witness

Judge blasts ex-army chief during hearing

BSS, Dhaka

Former army chief General Shafiullah and chiefs of other armed forces came under fire as the prosecution yesterday ended presentation on testimonies of witnesses in the Bangabandhu Murder Case.

"He (Shafiullah) should have been made an accused" instead of a witness in the case, Justice Muhammad Fazlul Karim commented as the prosecution quoted witnesses' testimonies in the hearing on the split judgment of a previous High Court bench.

Justice Karim added that Shafiullah's failure to respond to the President's urgent call was not "an inefficiency but a gross mistake" since he was in command of the entire army.

The judge also blasted the then army chief for succumbing to the pressure of Major Dalim, a fugitive

convict in the case, and for following him to the Radio station to express his allegiance to the administration installed by the August 15, 1975 plot leaders.

The judge's comment came on the fourth day of the hearing of the case in the second bench when the prosecution ended their submission on the witnesses' testimonies and cross-examinations involving the six accused, acquitted by one of the two judges of the previous bench.

Justice Karim also questioned the role of the then BDR chief Major General Khalilur Rahman and navy and air force chiefs, saying they all deserved to be accused in the case.

Justice Karim commented that General Shafiullah also accepted foreign postings after August 15, 1975 like most other plot leaders.

The prosecution, however, apparently tried to defend General Shafiullah and other service chiefs,

calling their role as "inefficient."

During the past four days of hearing, the prosecution cited testimonies of witnesses to establish the charges against the six accused and to explain the background of the entire case.

The case came for hearing before a third judge in line with the legal provisions because of the split verdict on December 14 last year by Justice Mohammad Ruhul Amin and Justice ABM Khairul Haque.

The judges were unanimous on the death sentence of ten accused but were divided on the fate of the rest five. They also could not reach consensus on the charge against one of the ten accused, fugitive former Captain Majed, though they agreed

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Meeting with abductors today at 'unknown' place

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

There will be a formal meeting between the authorities and the armed tribal group today somewhere in the forest between Rangamati and Khagrachhari in Chittagong Hill Tracts to negotiate release of the three Europeans abducted by them, highly placed sources said yesterday.

The yet to be identified group holding two Danes and a Briton hostage in the Kalapahar range since Friday yesterday conveyed its readiness to have talks with the authorities today to resolve the

problem.

They have agreed to sit for talks without any pre-condition, our Staff Correspondent Abdullah Al-Mahmud reported from Rangamati quoting Kalparanjan Chakma MP who briefed newsmen on the issue.

The abductors sent a note to the authorities through the tribal leaders working as mediators. They went to Kalapahar yesterday morning and returned in the afternoon.

The authorities dealing with the hostage crisis then held a closed door meeting at Rangamati Circuit

House to prepare a reply to the kidnapers' note and it was dispatched immediately through the mediators.

Earlier, the team had taken a note to the abductors yesterday morning with the government offer for talks.

The hostages were sent mosquito nets, quilts and other personal effects on Tuesday. They were supplied with food, water, medicine and toiletries on Monday.

The three victims-- Torben Mikkelsen and Nels Hulgard of

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HOLIDAY

The offices of **১৭** will remain closed today (Wednesday) on the occasion of Shaheed Day.

Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow (Thursday).

INSIDE TODAY

ARTICLE 4

Language education and policy: Some reflections
Dr AR Chowdhury

SUPPLEMENT 17-20

A four-page govt sponsored supplement and a two-page in-house supplement on 'Shaheed Day'

BUSINESS 7&8

BGMEA polls tomorrow, free market access tops agenda

DSE, CSE price quotations

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Feb 21		5.57 pm
Feb 22	6-26 am	

Prayer Timings

February 21		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fazr	5-30	6-00
Zohr	12-45	1-30
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-00	6-05
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

Hosts just not good enough

SPORTS REPORTER

The high-flying Bangladesh cricketers were brought down to earth when Pakistan crushed them by 77 runs in their final Group B match of the GrameenPhone Under-17 Asia Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Although the outcome did not stop Bangladesh from attaining a place in the semifinals of the juvenile tournament, it still exposed enough to suggest that our cricket is

not yet close to the standard of the established countries of the game.

Bangladesh will now take on defending champions Sri Lanka at the Bangabandhu National Stadium while Pakistan face their bitter neighbours India at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP) in the two semifinals to be held tomorrow. The Bangladesh Television will provide live coverage of the semifinal at the BNS.

Sri Lanka, the most impressive

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Who's running the ministry?

NAIMUL HAQ

Who is running the affairs of the health wing of the Ministry of Health and Family Affairs?

A number of top health ministry officials are now on official tours to different countries to attend seminars, meetings and bilateral talks, leaving administration in the hands of junior officers.

At the same time, two top posts fell vacant following promotion of Additional Secretary Dhiraj Kumar Nath and retirement of Joint Secretary Golam Sarwar Ali.

Health Minister Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim left Dhaka for New Delhi on February 13 to attend a WHO conference and is currently on a private trip to the Russian capital of Moscow. He will be away till February 24.

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February, the 'lost' month

STAR REPORT

The shortest month of the year, February has been shortened further to a week in terms of work-days, thanks to hartal and political violence, with working people 'enjoying' holidays.

There has so far been ten hartals in Dhaka and nine in Chittagong. At least 18 people have been killed and several hundred injured in hartal-related violence over the first 20

days of the month.

The month has had nine days of official holidays, including week-ends and the Ekushey February. However, there have so far been seven countrywide hartals. Moreover, Chittagong and Brahmanbaria have had two more hartals each. The four-party opposition alliance has also designated February 25 and 26 for countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartals.

Frequent hartals have disrupted

socio-economic activities across the country. The eventful month began with a hartal, called by the leftist political parties. That day a procession led by State Minister Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya attacked a CPB rally.

Two days later on February 3, religious fundamentalists called a hartal in Dhaka division to foil a grand rally of the NGOs. Fundamentalists killed a police

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Nadia Zampeni, the Austrian woman who barged into Gulshan-2 branch of American Express Bank claiming she had explosives on her person and demanded to talk to embassy officials and the press, relates her ordeal to a police officer.

1997 textbook scam BAC sues ex-NCTB chief, 3 others

STAR REPORT

The Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAC) has filed a case against former chairman of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board M Sayedul Huq, former member Mofizuddin Uddin and two officials of the NCTB for alleged embezzlement of over TK 57 lakh in the process of procuring paper for printing of primary level textbooks in 1997.

The two officials are M Aman Ullah, Senior Store in Charge and Md Abdur Rashid Miah, Store Officer.

According to the First Information Report (FIR) filed with Motijheel thana, the NCTB had signed a deal with Hindustan Paper Corporation Ltd (HPCL) for procuring 8,630 tonnes of paper priced at Tk 227.56 million. It was a project under a Norwegian grant of about 35 million Kroners or about TK 23 crore for supply of 'wood-free printing paper' for printing of textbooks for the year 1997.

The HPCL supplied only 3733.99625 tonnes of paper out of 8,630 tonnes. Besides, many bundles contained less than the specified quantity of paper

Drugged or deranged?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An Austrian woman barged into the American Express Bank at Gulshan-2 at around 1:15 p.m. yesterday, announced that she had explosives on her person and demanded to talk to her embassy staff and a reporter from The Daily Star.

The bomb scare turned out to be a hoax though, after Gulshan thana sub-inspector Rebecca Khanom entered the already deserted bank premises and forced her out to board the waiting police car. Police could only find few of her personal belongings in the bag she was carrying.

Nadia Zampeni, 35, told the police and Star reporter at Gulshan thana that she had been 'drugged' for several days before she could