

PSA scrapped, another harsh law proposed

ZAYADUL AHSAN

The cabinet yesterday approved a draft of a new bill aimed at quick disposal of cases related to disruption of law and order.

The cabinet approval coincided with the repeal of almost a similar lawthe controversial Public Safety Act (PSA) enacted in February 2000-- in the parliament yesterday. However, the parliament empowered the government to decide on the fate of the pending PSA cases.

The draft bill styled "Ain Srinkhala Bhangakari Oporadh (Summary Trial) Act, 2002" will make way for a tough anti-terrorism law that will remain in force for two years.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed told The Daily Star yesterday that the parliament is likely to pass the proposed act during the current session.

Almost all the offences, which were taken into account during the enactment of the PSA, have also found their way into the proposed stringent law. However, while the PSA had the provision for completion of the trial within 90 days, the new one has allows a maximum of

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Detention of 2 Proshika men declared illegal

BSS, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday declared the detention of Omar Tareq Chowdhury, Deputy Director and Azharul Haque, messenger of non-government voluntary organisation Proshika.

A division bench comprising Justice Mohammad Hamidul Haque and Justice Nazmun Ara Sultana gave the judgement after final hearing on a writ petition challenging the detention order.

Tareq Chowdhury and Azharul Haque were arrested on March 12 under Section 54 of Criminal Procedure Code. They were given a 30-day detention under Special Powers Act.

Govt to import 25000 tons of sugar

UNB, Dhaka

The government will import 25,000 tons of sugar to avert any shortage in the local market.

Official sources said the Cabinet Committee on government procurement in a meeting yesterday approved a proposal for import of sugar as a contingency measure.

Bangladesh Sugar and Food Industries Corporation (BSFIC) has been assigned to import the sugar at a rate of US\$224.19 per ton by July, meeting sources told UNB.

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The spoils of war
Column: Between Yourself and Me
KAS Murshid

Supplement 8

One page supplement on 'National Day of Persons with Disability 2002'

Announcement

Today's ~~The Daily Star~~ contains a special weekly page -- Star Chittagong. It is being published on page 10 every Wednesday.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Apr 3		6-15 pm
Apr 4	5-48 am	

Prayer Timings

Apr 3		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-00	5-30
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-20	6-25
Esha	7-45	8-15
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Fresh drive to follow new terrorism law

Army, BDR may be deployed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the teeth of growing incidents of crime and terrorism, the home ministry will launch a 'massive drive' to tackle terrorism soon after the passage of a new anti-terrorism law.

Meantime, highly placed sources said the home ministry has prepared both short- and long-term plans to detect the roots of terrorism, identify the godfathers of terrorists as well as to clamp down on the sources of funding for the terrorists.

The plans have been made on the basis of recommendations by the cabinet committee on law and order.

They said Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has already given the green signal to the ministry to take whatever

steps are needed to combat terrorism, extortion, snatching and kidnapping.

According to highly placed BNP sources, she is quite annoyed with the performance of the home ministry for its failure to contain crime, particularly in the capital.

They said the government is mainly concerned about the 'silent extortion' being carried out in major cities, specially in Dhaka, and incidences of snatching, forcible occupation of properties and kidnapping.

Official sources said the home ministry would soon launch a massive crackdown to arrest criminals under its short-term plan.

However, the ministry is keeping the plan 'top secret' so that the terrorists and criminals have no clue about it.

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PHOTO: A K M MOHSIN

Chittagong MA Hannan International Airport has been renamed Shah Amanat International Airport, as decided by the cabinet yesterday.

Hannan Airport renamed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-led alliance government has decided to rename the Chittagong MA Hannan International Airport Shah Amanat (RA) International Airport.

The decision was approved at a cabinet meeting yesterday, sources said.

The airport went into operation on March 24 last year. It was reconstructed and expanded at a cost of Tk. 612 crore with Japanese technical and financial assistance.

Mayor of Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury protested the cabinet decision.

"A situation of confrontation has been created due to renaming of the airport," Mohiuddin, a front ranking leader of opposition Awami League, told The Daily Star in Chittagong. "It is not a wise decision of the government as it has not been placed in power to change name only."

He said that MA Hannan was a

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Faulty DSE fault finder!

M SHAMSUR RAHMAN

A key manipulation surveillance software of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) has been found faulty and feeding misleading information over the years.

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) detected the fault on March 20 and served a show-cause notice on the DSE Chief Executive Officer Md Rezaur Rahman yesterday, asking him to explain why actions would not be taken against him under the Securities and Exchange Ordinance, 1969 for suppressing facts.

"At the very beginning, the DSE systems engineers detected the fault and informed the management about it. But the CEO continued to mislead the SEC when it made queries about the performance of the surveillance software," a top SEC official said.

Quoting the investigation report, he said the surveillance software generates wrong names of the top five volume leaders and gives out false trade volumes against the brokers.

"The investigators said the software was faulty since

its installation and at least on three occasions the concerned IT officials of the DSE reported it to the CEO. But he failed to take any corrective steps or inform the regulators about the fault," another official said.

He said though the software was installed in 1998, it was put into operation in March 2000. Meantime, its warranty expired in August 1998. "On April 4, 2000 the DSE Surveillance Department informed the then DSE CEO about the fault in the software and the CEO advised the IT director to contact with the software solution provider," he added.

As per advice of the software vendor, the DSE tried to upgrade its server, but that too failed to yield any result. The vendor later supplied the DSE with another "Risk Management Surveillance Software (RMS)". But the hardware supplier warned that the new software would conflict with the system and slow down functions unless the hardware was upgraded, the SEC official said.

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Israel offers 'one-way ticket' to Arafat, takes Bethlehem

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said yesterday that Yasser Arafat could be allowed to leave his besieged West Bank headquarters but only on a "one-way ticket", an offer turned down immediately by the Palestinian leadership.

The prime minister said that Arafat, who has been holed up in his headquarters in the West Bank city of Ramallah since the Israelis reoccupied the city on Friday, would have to go alone if he left.

Sharon laid down three conditions in a press conference during a tour of army positions in the West Bank.

"One, I have first to bring it to the cabinet to be approved. Second, he cannot take anyone with him because there are wanted (men) and murderers surrounding him there. The third thing, it's going to be a one-way ticket. He would not be

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PHOTO: AFP

An Israeli tank drives on a Palestinian car followed by a bulldozer (partially seen) during their incursion into the West Bank city of Bethlehem yesterday.

'Opposition should join parliament'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Canadian Secretary of State for Asia Pacific David Kilgour yesterday said the opposition should join the parliament and the reasons for its staying away are not convincing.

"During our meeting with the leader of the opposition, we reminded her that the international community and the overwhelming majority of election observers found the election free and fair, and that as such, she has an obligation to attend the parliament," the Canadian minister told a press briefing just before leaving Dhaka.

Canadian High Commissioner in Dhaka David Preston was also present during the briefing at Hotel Sonargaon.

The Canadian minister met Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina at her Dhanmondi residence yesterday morning.

In response to Kilgour's observation, Hasina highlighted the human rights violations and the government's crackdown on opposition

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Dhaka can play pivotal role in rebuilding Afghan army

David Kilgour suggests immediate gas export

M ANWARUL HAQ

Canadian Secretary of State for Asia and the Pacific David Kilgour believes that Bangladesh can play a pivotal role in rebuilding the national army and police force of Afghanistan.

With its democratic dispensation and vast military expertise achieved through international peacekeeping, the country can contribute immensely to rebuilding "a well trained army and police force in Afghanistan, which will have a democratic outlook".

"Evidently you would train the Afghan army and the Afghan police, and your NGOs too could play an important role," he told The Daily Star during an exclusive interview yesterday.

Kilgour admitted that Bangladesh's participation in Afghanistan was contingent on the United Nations Trust Fund and that there was no significant development in this direction.



David Kilgour

However, he assured that a forthcoming conference in Geneva on Afghan Reconstruction would seriously look into the matter.

Kilgour also suggested that Bangladesh should immediately go

for gas export. Gas export would be in the country's economic benefit, as it would help Bangladesh take a "quantum technological leap", he reasoned.

"There is a link between drilling and discovery of resources. There will be an incentive to prospect for more gas, and find more reserves, once you have begun exports."

In this regard, he cited his country's example. "Canada found more incentive to explore more gas once we started exporting. Gas export to the United States has allowed us Canadians to have better schools, better social system and better life."

"I would say that with your already proven reserves, you could start exporting gas. Export of gas would help the spin off of jobs, and more high-tech jobs too."

Kilgour said that Canadian companies were willing to invest in oil, gas and telecom sectors in

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Murder of schoolboy Manhunt on for masterminds

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police have launched a massive manhunt for Raju and Rubel, who allegedly masterminded the abduction and killing of schoolboy Khandaker Shihab Ahmed.

Officials of the Detective Branch (DB) said they seized a diary in which Raju, a Hafez-e-Qur'an, confessed his initiation into the crime world. "It was for the first time that I abducted and killed someone," he wrote.

Raju, who strangled Shihab, 13, before slicing him into pieces -- as confessed by other killers -- was a playmate of the schoolboy. They used to play cricket together and Shihab would often borrow Raju's bicycle. Raju taught him how to ride bicycle.

Police believe that the ransom-hungry youths conspired to abduct Shihab to get money from his father whom the killers thought of as a rich man. His father started constructing



Shihab

a building in the area.

A top DB official told newsmen that on the day of the incident Monir Hossain Liton, one of the abductors, took him to the spot -- where he was strangled and mutilated -- promis

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BAC presses graft charges against Nasim, 4 others

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Former home minister Mohammad Nasim, former home secretary and incumbent election commissioner Shafiqur Rahman and two others have been chargesheeted in a graft case.

The two others are former assistant secretary in the home ministry and incumbent senior assistant secretary in information ministry AW Mohammad Mostafa and Chairman of ACE Business Systems Abdur Razzak.

In the case filed with Ramna police station, it has been alleged that Nasim ignored the opinion of the tender committee and gave the work for supply of 10 lakh passport books to a bidder, causing Tk 81 lakh loss to the nation.

Mohammad Jalal Uddin Ahmad, Inspector of the Bureau of Anti-corruption (BAC), filed the case on December 11 last year, accusing six persons.

Jalal Uddin Ahmed, also the Investigation Officer (IO) of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka yesterday against the four. The two other accused former joint secretary Janibul Haq Chowdhury and former deputy secretary Mohammad Abu

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