

JS debate on law & order deferred till today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar yesterday deferred a Jatiya Sangsad discussion on "deteriorating law and order situation" in the country following a request by the opposition. The opposition had earlier submitted a notice for discussion on the issue.

The Speaker after hearing a 25-minute debate in the House on the deferral ruled that the proposed discussion would be held today.

"In view of the request by honourable Leader of the Opposition (Sheikh Hasina), I would like to allow the discussion on law and order tomorrow. The discussion on dengue fever will also be held tomorrow," the Speaker told the House amid applause by opposition lawmakers.

He also announced that the discussions on the two topics would follow the one-hour question-SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Criminal justice system anti-poor, says UNDP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has termed the country's criminal laws dealing with human security "hostile to the poor and the disadvantaged sections of the society".

"Many laws and practices of the criminal justice system are anti-poor having a more harmful effect on the poor and disadvantaged," said a UNDP report, titled 'Human Security in Bangladesh: In search of Justice and Dignity', which was formally launched yesterday.

The report says that the costly justice system is unaffordable for most people in the country. Besides, frequent delays and lack of access to legal aid results in making most priced out of the justice system.

The UNDP report also says the Special Powers Act, 1974, should be repealed, as the Bangladesh Penal Code and other laws have provisions for most offences under its coverage.

Besides, the act is routinely abused for preventive detention against innocent people when it should be used against criminals, it observes.

"Most preventive cases never reach the courts; however, of those that do, almost 90 per cent are to be illegal or to have been processed without lawful authority," the report observes.

At the launching ceremony, UNDP Resident Representative Jorgen Lissner said there was "no significant increase or decrease in the crisis of human security in Bangladesh for a long time."

"It is not the crisis of any political party but the crisis of a nation," he added.

The report also says the poor are being deprived from any assistance of the police since their responsiveness towards them is not up to the mark. Moreover, inadequacy of awareness on human rights among police is another reason behind the violation of human rights in

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Prime Minister Khaleda Zia visits a display stall at the Small and Medium Enterprises Fair-2002 organised by the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday. (Story on page 6)



PHOTO: STAR

Saidur Rahman Shahid (R), an accused in multiple murder cases, is sworn in as commissioner of the ward no. 83 of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) after his one-hour release on parole from the Dhaka Central Jail yesterday.

Alleged killer takes oath as DCC commissioner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League leader and an accused in multiple murder cases, Saidur Rahman Shahid yesterday took oath as a ward commissioner of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC).

He was released from Dhaka Central Jail on parole for an hour to take oath. After the oath-taking at the DCC building, he was sent back to jail at about 11 am.

Contesting from jail, he was elected commissioner of ward No. 83. The election was held in April.

Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested him from his Shahidnagar residence in the city on February 12 this year.

He is accused of committing or masterminded over 12 murders.

Yesterday, police also showed him arrested in connection with the killing of a young man - Azizur Rahman Khokon - in Sutrapur area in Old Dhaka on January 25.

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Draft proposal for HR commission finalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet committee on human rights yesterday finalised a draft proposal for the much-talked-about independent human rights commission.

The proposed five-member commission will have a three-year tenure and be made of a retired Supreme Court judge, a woman and three others who have major contributions to human rights activism. The president will appoint the chairperson and other members of the commission on the prime minister's advice.

Earlier, four proposals were drafted for constitution of the human rights commission, with three of these contemplating the appointments by the president on the chief justice's advice.

The other, which was approved by the cabinet but never tabled in the Jatiya Sangsad, called for

formation of a committee - comprising the prime minister, the leader of the opposition, the chief justice and the law minister - that will advise the president on the appointments.

The commission, to be formed under the National Human Rights Protection Act, 2002, will be mandated to uphold constitutional provisions that deal with protection and promotion of human rights. It will review existing laws related to human rights and recommend ways to effectively implement these.

Whoever the commission makes recommendations to, the individual or the institution has to report on the follow-up actions. Should the individual or the institution fail to do that the commission will report the incident to the president, who, in his turn, will arrange for the matter to be placed before the parliament.

"The draft for the human rights

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No trace of kidnapped schoolboy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police have made no progress in their search of Shaheb Ali, the 11-year-old schoolboy who was kidnapped on his way back home from the Narinda High School on Saturday afternoon.

Sutrapur police, meanwhile, continued interrogation of Raju who they suspect as the mastermind behind the abduction. However, till

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Govt in for donors' flak at BDF review today

SHAHRIAR KARIM

The donors sit with the government today with a critical view on the law and order and governance in a joint-appraisal of what has been done so far in different sectors in line with the commitments made by the government at the Bangladesh Development Forum (BDF) in Paris.

Barring some peripheral achievements, the donors are unhappy over the law and order and governance. They will make their views known to the government during the meeting, according to sources.

The meeting, better known as mid-term review, will be held at the National Economic Council (NEC) conference room at the planning ministry in the city. Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman will preside over the meeting scheduled for a 10:30am start. Country representatives of all bilateral and multilateral development partners are expected to attend the meet.

There are two issues on the

official agenda -- progress of Bangladesh Country Memorandum placed at the BDF and Interim-Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP).

The government will table the final draft of the I-PRSP, a donors' recipe which they say will be the basis for future aid flow.

However, corruption and law and order may well overshadow the official agenda, officials said, speculating over proceedings of tomorrow's meeting. The Local Consultative Group (LCG), a forum of the representatives of the donor agencies and countries working here, have prepared separate papers to table at today's meeting.

In one paper, the donors listed the commitments the government made during the BDF meet in March in the French capital of Paris and the headway made in those areas.

As regards governance and the law and order, checking corruption, waste and inefficiency in the public sector, reforming the financial

sector and enhancing project-implementation capacity were among the things the government assured the BDF of focussing more on.

The government also prepared papers on the progress made so far in line with its commitments at the BDF meet. It also prepared a separate paper on the law and order where it blamed the criminal incidents and violence on a certain political party, according to sources.

Donors at the Paris meet had said Bangladesh's immediate priorities were improving governance, particularly to arrest downside in the law and order and curb corruption, and implementing decisive reforms faster. They also said they were looking forward to early evidence of implementation of promised reforms and good governance.

Now, the donors think there has been little progress to effectively combat pervasive corruption.

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For crossing quota limit

Apparel worth over Tk 87cr stuck at US ports

MONJUR MAHMUD

The issuance of quota for apparel beyond the US market limit has put Bangladeshi exporters in a precarious position.

According to the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), garment items worth US\$15 million (Tk 87 crore) are stuck at different US ports. The US did not allow excess products to enter its market because the quota was fulfilled much earlier.

But a rough estimate by some exporters put the amount at around Tk 300 crore.

Apparel manufacturers who had been allocated quota for the current year and who imported raw materi-

als on back-to-back L/C but could not ship their products are also facing a huge loss.

The incident may leave a stain on the country's image, resulting in erosion of confidence of the US buyers in Bangladeshi exporters, said a leading exporter.

Commenting on the problem

facing the apparel sector, Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury said he got a positive response from the US that would take a decision on the issue Monday.

BGMEA President Kutubuddin Ahmed said he also received a posi-

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PHOTO: AFP

Teammates congratulate Glenn McGrath (second R) after the Australian strike bowler dismissed New Zealander Jacob Oram in yesterday's ICC Champions Trophy match in Colombo. (Story on sports page)

Announcement

In our today's edition letters to the editor are published on Page 9 instead of Page 5.

Nine-day boycott cripples Chittagong labour court

SHAHIDUL ISLAM, Ctg

A deadlock in the judicial activities is prevailing at the First Labour Court here for the last nine days following a boycott of the court by the Chittagong District Bar Association since September 7.

The lawyers have been protesting the appointment of judge Md. Abdur Rashid Miah as new chairman. The members of Chittagong Bar Association in an emergency meeting on September 4 had protested the appointment.

Over 100 members including President of the association Shafiqul Alam attended the emergency

meeting of the Bar.

The absence of lawyers have caused hearing for about 500 cases, both running and pending, to be either suspended or delayed quite a few times at the First Labour Court. This has caused harassment to lots of people, sources said.

Besides, hearing or judgement of not even a single case could take place until yesterday because of the boycott, sources said.

This correspondent during a visit to court building premises yesterday and Saturday morning found none except judge Abdur Rashid Miah, Registrar Jahangir Ali Khan and some other staffs.

The association members unanimously decided to boycott the court of judge Rashid from the date of his joining and declared him unwanted.

The bar association had informed the minister and secretary of the ministry of law, justice and parliamentary affairs, and to the registrar of the Supreme Court of their decisions.

Advocate Sukhamoy Chakraborty, who attended the meeting, said, "We have specific reasons to be unhappy about judge Rashid's appointment as we have evidences of some unfair activities of this judge."

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