

SSF security for B Chy withdrawn

STAR REPORT

The government has withdrawn the Special Security Force (SSF) services for former president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury.

This was made effective from midnight Thursday (October 31).

Talking to The Daily Star, Badruddoza welcomed the government decision saying, "This would reduce government expenditure and would allow me to move around freely again."

Badruddoza had to resign on June 21 in the face of a threat of impeachment motion by the BNP lawmakers. He became president on November 14 last year.

On July 15, the cabinet decided at a meeting that former presidents and prime ministers would get security services by the SSF for three months after their retirement or leaving their position.

As per that decision, SSF services for Badruddoza were supposed to be withdrawn in September.

Meanwhile, the government decided to continue SSF services for former president Shahabuddin Ahmad up to November 15, just

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Popstar James granted bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Second Special Court for Prevention of Women and Children Repression, Dhaka yesterday granted bail to pop star Faruk Mahfuz Enam alias James, accused of abducting and marrying a girl - Benzir.

Judge Kazi Rahamat Ullah passed the order upon a bond of Tk 50,000 with three guarantors.

The CMM's court earlier on October 26 rejected his bail petition.

The Special Court also granted Benzir's petition, seeking her own custody.

James and Benzir were arrested from Zia International Airport on October 24 on their return from the United States following filing of an abduction case against him by her father.

Benzir's father Iqbal Sajjad, a real estate businessman, filed the case with Uttara thana under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act for abducting his 15-year-old daughter and torturing her.

Earlier, Benzir gave a judicial

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AL demands snap polls

UNB, Dhaka

Opposition Awami League yesterday asked the government to call a mid-term election under a neutral caretaker administration for its "failure" to run the country.

"The government has deployed army failing to control law and order. Now we are demanding its resignation for its utter failure and mid-term polls under neutral administration," Dhaka City Awami League president Mohammad Hanif said addressing a protest rally at Muktangan.

City Awami League organised the rally in protest against arrest of AL leader Sheikh Fazul Karim Selim MP and opposition leader's political secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury by the army.

Presidium member Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Abdur Razzak, Abdul Jalil, Suranjit Sengupta, and party leaders Mohammad Nasim, Motia Chowdhury, Abdul Mannan, D

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PHOTO: AFP

Visitors take a close look at a cockatiel during a pet bird exhibition organised by the Bangladesh Cage Bird Breeder's Association in the city yesterday. More than one hundred types of bred birds were on display.

Caged beauty captivates bird lovers in city

SABRINA KARIM

You do not need a trip to some exotic land, neither do you need a long drive to the countryside to get a glimpse of some of the most beautiful creations of nature. Just drop in the same old premises of the Jatiya Press Club in the city and the winged beauty are there to soothe your eyes and calm your mind.

They are the cage birds gathered to offer you a respite from the chaotic chores of the urban life by showing a flash of their beauty. The long tails, curved beaks, the nuances of red, green, cobalt, mauve or even grey and the sound of chirping will make you feel being in a wonderland.

The Bangladesh Cage Bird Breeder's Association has arranged a three-day display of cage or pet birds that began yesterday to disseminate the idea that cage birds differ a lot from the wild birds.

At least 108 varieties of rare birds like African Grey Parrot, Macaws, Australian Finch, Senegal Parrot as well as the famous pet birds like

Lovebird, Diamond Dove and Java Sparrow can be seen in the display.

The handy, elegant Budgerigars belonging to the Parakeet families are very popular cage birds that always attract the visitors with its yellow wings.

There are birds that differ from its same specie in the forest in certain ways. Though the wild Cockatiels are always grey in colour, it changes the colour when once caged.

Attractive they may be, yet they can be very expensive at times. There is a Kakatoa which has a Tk 1 lakh price tag on it.

Although the fact remains that these birds are being deprived of the freedom to fly in the sky since they are confined to the cage, yet the breeding of the cage birds prevents the rare species of birds from becoming extinct, the organisers noted.

They mentioned that the wild Lovebirds are less in number since they do not mate with other species. The cage bird breeders helped to raise their number, they added.

The display is open for all from 10:00 am to 8:00 pm till November 2.

One million cases in court logjam

Reforms, monitoring needed to clear backlog, says Moudud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nearly one million cases are now pending with different courts in the country, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed told a workshop in the city yesterday.

Quoting latest records (till last month), the minister said, of the 9,68,305 pending cases, 3,44,518 are with judge courts, 3,95,905 with magistrate courts, 1,27,244 with the High Court Division and 4,946 with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

Concerned by the huge backlog of cases, the law minister said, besides legal reforms, a system for constant monitoring and supervision is needed to quicken trial of the cases.

"For delayed justice, people have lost confidence in the traditional system of dispensing justice,

which has also become corrupted to a some extent," he said.

The law ministry organised the workshop titled "Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR): In Quest of a New Dimension in Civil Justice Delivery System in Bangladesh" at Hotel Sheraton with Moudud in the chair.

Chief guest at the workshop, Chief Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury said elephantine backlog of cases is resulting in inordinate delay in administration of justice, which causes erosion of public confidence in the traditional legal system.

People become frustrated and they feel that this traditional system is not responsive to their needs.

"There is a real need for a mechanism such as the alternative dispute resolution to mitigate the difficulties in litigation in courts". One of the principle reasons for the

over-burdening of the legal system is said to be the adversarial court system, he said.

The chief justice said the need for ADR as a supplementary to the ordinary court system is real and urgent. "ADR provides an opportunity to resolve dispute and conflicts efficiently, rapidly, effectively and amicably by finding self-made processes best suited for the parties."

In fact, he added, ADR is important for fostering social harmony. "The notion of disposing disputes without damaging relationship between the parties is better achieved through informal consensual arrangements than through adversarial atmosphere, which is endemic in the traditional system."

Communications Minister Nazmul Huda, State Minister for Law Shahjahan Omar, US

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Bangladesh below Kenya!

SPORTS REPORTER

Kenya pushed Test-babes Bangladesh down the ICC (International Cricket Council) rankings to secure the number ten place in the world one-day cricket.

Kenya are yet to achieve the full membership of ICC, but they have been acknowledged by many observers as a more enterprising and quality side than the tenth Test-playing nation, Bangladesh.

The one-day ICC ranking, released yesterday, showed Bangladesh trail Kenya by 11 points.

Bangladesh recently set a dubious world record of losing 23 one-day matches on a trot when they heavily went down in the last match of the three-game series against South

Africa early last month.

Bangladesh's losing sequence, which started after their upset win over Pakistan in the 1999 World Cup in England, exceeded the record they established when they lost their first 22 one-day matches before they became a Test nation in 2000.

RANKINGS

Team	Rating
Australia (1)	128
South Africa (2)	120
Sri Lanka (3)	117
Pakistan (4)	115
India (5)	106
England (6)	96
West Indies (7)	94
New Zealand (8)	91
Zimbabwe (9)	67
Kenya (10)	22
Bangladesh (11)	11

Police politicisation prompts army drive

Home ministry roundtable express concern at death in army custody

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Political interference in police administration and indifference to decriminalising political parties necessitated the ongoing army drive, said speakers at a home ministry-organised roundtable yesterday.

Expressing deep concern at the custodial deaths during the army operation, the speakers urged all concerned to discipline police and civil administrations so that any army operation is not needed to curb crime in future.

Former chief election commis-

sioner Justice Mohammad Abdur Rouf chaired the roundtable titled "Improvement of Law and Order and Secured Social System", which was joined by politicians of the ruling alliance, civil society members, academics, representatives of law enforcers and journalists.

Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury attended the roundtable at the ministry's conference room as chief guest and State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfuluzzaman Babar as special guest. Dr Aftab Ahmed of the Dhaka University (DU) delivered the keynote speech and Home Secretary Omar Faruq the welcome

address. At the discussion, Professor Emajuddin Ahmed, ex-vice-chancellor of the DU, said that had the 'party channel' controlled criminal elements in its own fold, there would not have been the need for any army drive.

Barrister Mainul Hosen aired a view that there were some people within the ruling BNP who obeyed neither the law nor the party leadership. "Politics must get rid of these bad elements."

Hosen thinks that arrest of some 80 to 100 criminal godfathers and

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PHOTO: STAR

Clothes traders run their makeshift shops on the sidewalk in front of the Baitul Mukarram Mosque in the city yesterday. Wayside trading bounced back after a brief lull, with Eid-ul-Fitr more than a month ahead.

Arrest of Bangladeshi Foreign Office summons Indian Dy HC

UNB, Dhaka

Indian Deputy High Commissioner Dilip Sinha was summoned to the Foreign Ministry yesterday to vent Bangladesh's concern at the denial of consular access to a Bangladeshi national who was arrested in New Delhi airport.

The Bangladeshi, named Ataur Rahman in his passport, was detained on his way from Dhaka to Lisbon via the Indian capital on charge of holding forged travel documents.

Director General (South Asia Desk) at the Foreign Ministry Humayun Kabir handed Dilip Sinha a note seeking consular access to meet Ataur Rahman, now in security custody of the Indian authorities.

The Indian Deputy High Commissioner took the note and assured that he would communicate the matter to New Delhi.

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Five die as quake rocks Italy

20 schoolchildren still buried under rubble

AFP, San Giuliano di Puglia, Italy

Four children and one elderly woman died and as many as 20 more children were buried under rubble of their school when a powerful earthquake struck Italy's southern Campobasso province yesterday, emergency workers said.

A desperate rescue operation was underway with officials saying as many as 20 more children and their teachers could still be trapped under the rubble after the quake brought down two roofs at a building complex housing a kindergarten and a primary school in the village of San Giuliano di Puglia.

Around 20 children and one teacher have been brought out alive by rescue workers, with eight of the children said to be in "serious" condition.

About 50 sniffer dogs have been deployed to help in the search. Rescue services described the situation as "very critical" after the quake measuring 5.4 on the Richter scale struck at 11:32am.

Authorities had earlier said that some 100 people could have been trapped

under ruins.

The body of an elderly woman was also recovered from a house in San Giuliano di Puglia, according to firefighters.

RAI television that another woman, in her 40s, also died in the quake, but there has been no official confirmation.

Images broadcast on RAI television showed the school building completely destroyed with emergency workers, along with a mechanical digger, working to free those trapped.

RAI reported that some 57 pupils, seven teachers and two other employees, were inside the building at the time of the quake.

The road into the village has been blocked to all traffic except for emergency vehicles.

The government declared a "state of emergency" in Campobasso province to speed the release of funds and other resources including army assis

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