

'Confrontational politics brings no good'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law and Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed said yesterday confrontational politics cannot bring any good for the country.

The minister asked all to put national interest above everything else and move towards the politics of understanding, cooperation and tolerance.

Moudud was speaking at a discussion on human rights in Bangladesh organised by Bengali Section of the BBC World Service marking its 70th anniversary. Manashi Barua of BBC conducted the discussion.

The minister, former inspector general of police Enamul Haq, President of Bangladesh Manobadhikar Bastabayan Sangsha Sigma Huda and Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam participated in the panel discussion.

Responding to comments about the 34 custodial deaths during the ongoing anti-crime crackdown till December 15, the minister said should there be any incidents of torture in custody, the law enforcers responsible must be tried in line with the existing laws.

If anyone dies in police custody,

the on-duty official should take up the matter with the nearest magistrate. If the magistrate thinks he should go for a trial, he would immediately do so. The minister made the remarks when asked whether the government itself would lead any investigation into the custodial deaths and arrest of innocent people during the joint drive without waiting for people to lodge complaints.

Moudud however said custodial death is undesirable under any circumstances and every government must be concerned if such things occur.

Taking cue from the remarks about custodial deaths, the former police chief, "We may have to forgo small things to gain something big." But if there is any injustice, it must be thoroughly investigated, he added.

Asked when the army would be withdrawn, the law minister said the withdrawal would take place as soon their task is finished. But he did not speak of any timeframe as to when the task would be over.

Moudud said the country has many good laws but abuse of these laws by the law enforcers happens sometimes "since execution of t h e s e s e

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Railway defies PMO order to build roads along tracks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ignoring a directive from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) for construction of parallel roads along rail tracks in the city as per an earlier Rajuk plan, the Bangladesh Railway is constructing a perimeter wall on both sides of the tracks, which are set to block road links.

The PMO identified the 1990 Rajuk plan to construct 18-feet parallel roads on both sides of the tracks from Kamalapur to Abdullahpur as a 'priority project'.

In a letter on October 16, it directed the authorities concerned to implement it "as early as possible".

The plan, with provision for grill

fences to keep road links, was designed to improve the city's communication system and to ease pressure of vehicular traffic in Mouchak and Moghbazar areas.

The PMO's letter also involved the BR, among many other ministries and agencies, sources in BR said.

The sources said the perimeter walls are being raised from Khilgaon crossing to Mahakhali at a cost of Tk 2,262 crore to ensure safety of the proposed dual gauge rail tracks from Kamalapur to Joydebpur.

But residents say these will block road links between areas on both sides of the tracks.

Talking to this correspondent, a good number of residents at Peyarabagh, Moghbazar, Malibagh, Khilgaon, Arjotpara and Nakhlapara areas said they would be totally confined to their areas because of the walls.

They alleged that BR-engaged contractors are raising the walls in an unplanned way.

It will close all the lanes and by-lanes now running through the tracks and also block exits and entrances of buildings on both sides.

The walls without provision for fences for thoroughfares may also cause disaster from natural calamity

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PHOTO: PID

President Iajuddin Ahmed (left) and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia pay homage to the martyrs of the Liberation War at the National Memorial at Savar on the Victory Day on Monday.

Nation pays homage to independence martyrs

BSS, Savar

The nation on Monday paid glowing tributes to the memory of the valiant sons of the soil who sacrificed their lives during the nine-month War of Liberation in 1971.

At daybreak, thousands of people from all walks of life thronged the National Memorial at Savar with wreaths.

The bloody Liberation War, which began on the night of March 25, 1971, finally came to an end when the Pakistani occupation forces surrendered in Dhaka on December 16.

President Iajuddin Ahmed placed wreaths at the National Memorial at 6:28 in the morning and stood in a solemn silence for one minute to show respect to the independence martyrs.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, Speaker Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar, Chief Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury, ministers, diplomats, chiefs of three services and high civil and military officials were present.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia also placed wreaths at the Memorial with full state honour just after the President. Speaker Barrister

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Unite to fight anti-Bangladesh campaign: PM

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on Monday called for unity upholding the spirit of the War of Independence to fight the ongoing anti-Bangladesh smear campaign at home and abroad.

"A planned sabotage and information terrorism has been started against the people of Bangladesh. After 31 years of the War of Independence, we're now facing a new war at national and international levels," she told a Victory Day rally of children and juveniles here.

She called upon the Bangladeshis abroad to fight unitedly the propaganda campaign against the country and its people. "We have to win the war against sabotage and propaganda," she said.

Her speech as well as a colourful march-past and acrobatics by children and juveniles from different educational institutions and socio-cultural organisations was aired live by Bangladesh Television.

The Prime Minister called upon the people to work together to safeguard the country's independence, sovereignty, territorial integ-

riety, and maintain social stability and peace for continued progress of the nation.

She referred to the killing of some innocent people in the recent cinema bomb blasts in Mymensingh and said that her government was firm to find out the people involved in the heinous act and punish them as per the law of the land.

She prayed for the departed souls, conveyed sympathy to the bereaved families and wished early recovery of the injured.

The Prime Minister said the Victory Day is a day of joyous and painful memories.

She recalled with respect the martyrs of the War of Independence and greeted the victorious heroes.

Khaleda Zia told the children that Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman had a deep love for them. "Shaheed Zia did many things for you. He introduced this Victory Day assembly for you," she told the children.

Earlier, on her arrival at the National Stadium, the Prime Minister was received by Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury

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PHOTO: STAR

People from all walks of life throng the National Memorial at Savar to pay tributes to the Independence War martyrs on the Victory Day.

High Court hamstrung as 2 judges go on leave

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two important benches of the High Court Division has become non-functional, as two judges went on leave from yesterday. The duration of their leave was not known.

One of these benches was hearing the writ petition related to the army raid on the Centre for Research and Information (CRI) of the Awami League, while the other was hearing petitions on writers Shahriar Kabir and Prof. Muntasir Mamun.

These two benches handle bail prayers, and writ petitions against detention orders.

Meanwhile, the winter vacation of the Supreme Court begins from Thursday and the Court will resume on January 4.

With only one working day left to handle the cases, lawyers and all others concerned are rather frustrated.

In this context, the Supreme Court Lawyers Association yesterday held an urgent meeting. Following the meeting, the association formally requested the Chief Justice to assign two judges in place

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1996 share scam SC upholds lower court ruling

M SHAMSUR RAHMAN

The Appellate Division yesterday upheld judgements of the Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court on cases related to the 1996 share scam.

Earlier on June 23, 1999, a division bench of the High Court rejected the judgements.

In an order yesterday, the Appellate Division disposed of 11 appeal petitions filed by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) against HMMS Associates Directors Mustaque

Ahmed Sadeque, Sharif Ataur Rahman, Syed Mahub Murshed, Hemayet Uddin Ahmed and Ahmed Iqbal Hassan, Nurunnabi of Rupon Oil and Feeds, Imtiaz Husain of Imtiaz Husain & Company, Rizwan Bin Farouk of First Capital Securities and Abu Tayeb, Rakibur Rahman and ASM Shahidul Haque Bulbul of Chittagong Cement.

Justice Ruhul Amin presided over the session while the two other judges on the bench were Justice KM Hassan and Justice Mohammad Fazlul Huq.

After three days of hearing, Justice Ruhul Amin yesterday pronounced, "The appeal is allowed."

The Appellate Division order means the eight persons, including two former chairmen and the incumbent chairman of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), indicted for share market manipulation in 1996 will face trial in the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court.

The order also sets aside the High Court judgement that directed the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court to fix a date for action under the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and ask the prosecution to open its case by describing the charges and stating the evidence on the basis of which it proposed to prove the charges.

The High Court division bench of Justice Golam Rabbani and Justice Latifur Rahman passed the order against the Sessions Court's ruling.

The High Court judgement on the eight directors of four companies observed that the Metropolitan

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PHOTO: STAR

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina along with senior party leaders places wreaths at the National Memorial at Savar on the Victory Day.

Joyal murder HC confirms death sentence of Ershad Shikdar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A High Court bench yesterday confirmed the verdict of a trial court that awarded death sentence to Ershad Shikdar, a notorious criminal of Khulna.

The bench comprising Justice AK Badrul Huq and Justice Abdul Hai yesterday endorsed the verdict of the lower court.

The case was filed against Shikdar for the murder of one Jainal in 1996. Additional Sessions' Judge of Khulna M Hasan Imam in his verdict on February 20, 2000 sentenced Shikdar and his accomplice Jamai Faruq to death. The judge also pronounced life imprisonment

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Hasina blames cinema blasts on govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) President and opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday blamed the recent Mymensingh blast on the government and demanded that probe into the blast start from Hawa Bhaban.

She referred to strings of bomb blasts that rocked the country during her regime and held the then opposition parties accountable for the incidents. "It's not unlikely that they (the ruling coalition) might have carried out these recent acts."

"A charge-sheeted accused in the Udichi bomb blast in the Jessore town is now a member of Prime

Minister Khaleda Zia's cabinet," Hasina added to substantiate her apprehension.

"They have created a situation by blasting bombs and killing people and now they are arresting innocent Awami League workers to break up the opposition party," Hasina told the newly elected office bearers of Jhenidah Bar Association at the AL's Dhanmondi office in the capital.

"Who would provide security to life and property where the government itself is criminal and killer and plots bomb blast?" Hasina asked.

She urged the peace-loving, democratic-minded people to stand

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