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Anti-graft body bill set to be passed on February 17

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A much-talked-about bill seeking to form an independent anti-corruption commission to cut graft is set to be passed on February 17.

The parliamentary standing committee on the law ministry yesterday finalised its scrutiny report on the Independent Anti-Corruption Commission Bill, 2003 with some amendments and decided to submit the report to the Jatiya Sangsad on February 15.

The bill was placed in parliament on July 10 last year before it was sent to the standing committee for scrutiny.

"After submission of the report by the committee, I will pilot the bill in the Jatiya Sangsad for passage on February 17," Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed told The Daily Star yesterday, emerging from the committee meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

The committee recommended

that cases under the law would be tackled in special judge's courts.

The commission will assign its officials to probe into allegations of corruption and its commissioners will also have the authority to investigate any alleged corruption.

"The investigation officers of the commission will enjoy the authority an officer-in-charge of a police station to investigate the cases," Khandaker Mahbub Uddin Ahmed, chairman of the standing committee,

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Role of civil society a must for change

WB review points at polls funding for corruption

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The World Bank (WB) believes the civil society and the media will have to play a major role in forcing a change in institutions of political governance like parliament as development of Bangladesh is impeded by poor governance and confrontational politics.

Reviewing the government's performance over two years, the WB says although the government tried to pursue options for addressing concerns about poor governance, it was not looking into the roots of the problems, which went deeper.

To overcome this situation, the government needs "a clear long-term vision, a determination to overcome entrenched vested interests, and a willingness to be engaged over the long haul," the WB feels.

It found fault with the funding of elections, saying, "Funding elections has made corruption an unavoidable consequence."

In its latest report titled "Bangladesh Development Policy Review", the WB said, "Where patronage is needed to win marginal voters and the cost of elections is high, incumbents use their time in office to recover their costs, and losers seek to destabilise them throughout, to have another chance at the spoils."

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

ICC U/19 CRICKET WORLD CUP BANGLADESH 2004

THE SHOW IS ABOUT TO START: The final rehearsal of the ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup's opening ceremony takes place at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. The 16-nation juvenile showpiece will be formally opened today, but the tournament proper begins across the country on February 15.

Newsmen assaulted, threatened with death

Hartal ends amid sporadic violence in restive Natore

ROVING CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Armed assailants allegedly of the ruling BNP assaulted a journalist with rifle butts and threatened two others with death in hartal-bound northwestern town of Natore yesterday, newsmen and witnesses said.

They said GM Iqbal Hasan, Natore correspondent of the Daily Janakantha, suffered serious head injuries and bruises all over his body in the attack for what the attackers said was reporting against Deputy Minister of Land Ruhul Kuddus Talukder Dulu.

The attack amid the dawn-to-dusk hartal, called jointly by the Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal and a local vigilante group, Lathi Bansi Shilpa Banik Samity, to protest the killing of Sabbir Ahmed Gama, Dulu's nephew, on February 7, shell-shocked journalists in the district.

"They attacked me as I exposed the arson attacks on the houses of 16 Awami League (AL) adherents by

BNP-men in my report," Iqbal claimed.

He said the attackers threatened him with an arson attack on his house if he did not regret in his newspaper's next issue for his report carried by the Janakantha yesterday.

Talking to The Daily Star, Dulu said he visited Iqbal's house in the afternoon and expressed his sorrow for the incident.

"He told me about the attackers and I've already directed authorities to take action against the guilty," he said.

Locals said 20 armed men went to the Alaipur house of Iqbal at about 10:45am and called him out saying a local journalist wanted to see him.

They took the 48-year-old journalist to the Public Health Engineering Department office, some 15 yards off his house, and beat him up savagely.

They attempted to slaughter the newsmen grappling him to the

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Dhaka should not stay out of deal for long

Observe business leaders, experts

STAR REPORT

Business leaders and trade experts yesterday said Bangladesh's not signing the framework agreement on a free trade area (FTA) of BIMST-EC may strategically be a right decision in the short term but there is no scope for it to remain isolated for long.

They stressed the need to conduct a study on possible gains and risks of such deals and take decision along that line about joining the free trade area.

Six south and southeast Asian nations India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan signed a framework FTA agreement on Sunday, keeping an option open for Bangladesh to join the deal at a later date.

Bangladesh pulled out of the FTA talks Saturday, demanding compensation for any revenue loss resulting from dropping of tariffs, ignoring assurances by other members that its concerns could be addressed within the agreement.

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Dhaka may sign FTA deal in July

Morshed says Bangladesh very much in the BIMST-EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh may sign the BIMST-EC framework agreement on a free trade area during or before the July summit in Bangkok, Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan said yesterday brushing aside the worry that Dhaka was apparently left out of the deal.

"There is option for Dhaka to sign the agreement at any time as per its wish...we will try our best to sign the deal before the BIMST-EC summit. If that does not happen, then it must be signed during the summit," he added.

"All states except Bangladesh signed the framework agreement, but there is a provision that any member can join the deal anytime. So there is nothing to worry about. There is no room for misunderstanding. We have lost nothing," he said.

Speaking at a briefing in the foreign ministry, Morshed said

Bangladesh could not sign the agreement at the ministerial meet in the Thai resort town of Phuket as the cabinet did not endorse it in its January 31 meeting and as some formalities were incomplete.

"We could not have signed the framework deal even if we had reached 100 percent consensus on the agreement because our cabinet did not approve it and other procedural agreement," he added.

The foreign minister said the commerce ministry placed only a summary of the agreement before the cabinet, but did not enclose the copy of the draft agreement with it, which prompted the cabinet to send the proposal back to the ministry.

Highly placed sources said Bangladesh was not ready to sign the agreement due to the cabinet's non-approval. Officials said cabinet approval is mandatory before any international, regional or bilateral agreement is signed.

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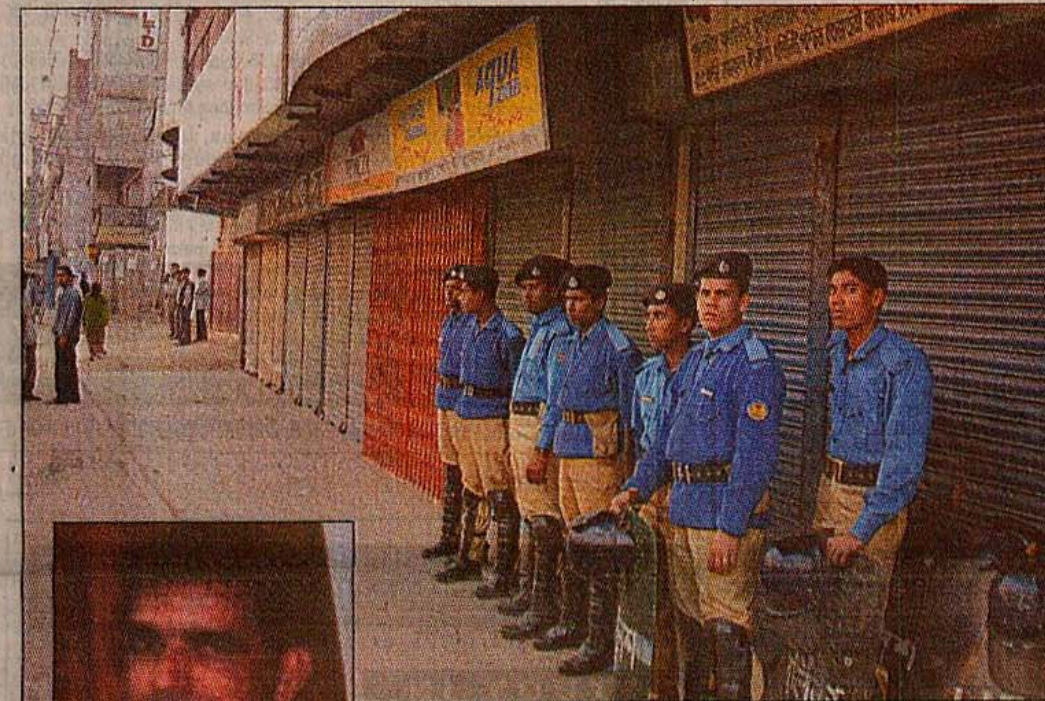


PHOTO: STAR

Police were deployed on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue in the city where shop owners pulled their shutters down protesting yesterday's murder of Mostafa Kamal (inset), owner of Shalda Travels.

Travel agent gunned down on toll refusal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Assailants killed a travel agent and injured two employees and a client in a hail of bullets at office on the bustling Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue in Tejgaon yesterday apparently over a denial to pay extortionists tolls.

A gang of extortionists demanded Tk 2 lakh from 35-year-old Mostafa Kamal, owner of Shalda Travels, before he was killed, his family said.

Witnesses said two armed attackers fled to Farmgate shortly

after 2:00pm in a CNG autorickshaw, parked 50 yards off the travel agency, after the shooting spree that prompted local businesspeople to bring out a procession demanding punishment to the killers.

Physicians described as critical the condition of 40-year-old Bazlu, admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with arm and abdomen wounds. He was the agency's client and worked for another travel agency in Banani.

Mukhtar Hossain, 25, a Shalda Travels staffer, was admitted to the

same hospital and Bidhan, a computer operator, was being treated at the Orthopaedic Hospital for thigh wounds.

"I heard gunshots in Kamal's room. I ran for cover as the gang shot me," said Mukhtar who spoke to The Daily Star from hospital bed, adding four of the seven travel agency employees went out for lunch before the gang launched the attack.

"I went to Shalda on business and was caught in the crossfire," Bazlu told the DMCH correspondent of

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BAIL FIX

Ruling bigwigs split over action

STAR REPORT

Policymakers are divided on taking action in line with the Supreme Judicial Council's recommendations against a High Court Additional Judge Syed Shahidur Rahman for misconduct.

Former chief justice KM Hasan, who headed the first-ever council

before his retirement, submitted its report to President Iajuddin Ahmed on January 27 with a recommendation to remove the judge, accused of taking bribes from a litigant, Nasima Sultana Kona, to bail her nephew out of a women's repression case.

The president sent the report to the law ministry with his note to

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Janajuddha men kill four

5 wounded in police-outlaws clash in Pabna

STAR REPORT

Armed operatives of the Janajuddha faction of the outlawed Purbu Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) shot and hacked to death four people, including a UP member and two rival outlaws, in Chuadanga and Jhenidah on Sunday.

The Chuadanga victims are Harun-or-Rashid, 35, and Mahidul Haque, 40, a member of Damurhuda Union Parishad. Police recovered the bodies yesterday morning, reports UNB.

Villagers said an armed gang abducted Harun and Mahidul at

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ICC U/19 Cricket World Cup Bangladesh 2004 আয়োজন উপলক্ষে

দেশবাসী ও বাংলাদেশ ক্রিকেট বোর্ড এর পক্ষ থেকে

সকল রাজনৈতিক দল সমূহের প্রতি

উদাত্ত আবেদন

আই.সি.সি এর সার্বিক তত্ত্বাবধানে ১৬টি দেশের অংশগ্রহণে যুব বিশ্বকাপ ক্রিকেট এর মত আন্তর্জাতিক অনুষ্ঠানটি সাফল্যমণ্ডিত করতে এবং বহির্বিশ্বে বাংলাদেশকে মর্যাদার আসনে অধিষ্ঠিত করতে আমরা বি.সি.বি এবং এদেশের ১৪ কোটি মানুষই একাত্মতা ঘোষণা করেছি। মাসব্যাপি এই আয়োজন সফল করার দায়িত্ব মূলতঃ এদেশের সকল সুধীজন, রাজনৈতিক দলসমূহ এবং প্রতিটি দায়িত্ববান নাগরিকের।

ICC U/19 Cricket World Cup Bangladesh 2004 এর ১০ই ফেব্রুয়ারী ২০০৪ উদ্বোধন হতে ৭ই মার্চ ২০০৪ সমাপ্তি পর্যন্ত সঙ্গত কারণেই হরতাল ও অবরোধ এর মত রাজনৈতিক কর্মসূচী দেয়া থেকে বিরত থাকবার জন্য সকল রাজনৈতিক দল ও মহলসমূহকে অনুরোধ করছি। আমরা দেশবাসী বিশ্বাস করি আমাদের জাতীয় জীবনের এই আনন্দময় গৌরবজনক অনুষ্ঠানটি সুসুজ্ঞল ও শান্তিপূর্ণ পরিবেশের মধ্য দিয়ে সু-সম্পন্ন হতে দিতে সকল রাজনৈতিক দল ও মহল সর্বাত্মক সহযোগিতা করবেন। সবাইকে শুভেচ্ছা।

দেশবাসী

এবং

বাংলাদেশ ক্রিকেট বোর্ড

Dutch-Bangla Bank Foundation Scholarship for meritorious and financially insolvent students



For convenience of the prospective applicants of DBBF scholarship on the basis of the advertisements published in The Daily Ittefaq and The Daily Star on February 9, 2004 for awarding 100 (one hundred) scholarships to Bachelor level students who have passed HSC examination in 2003, applications may be made as under:

Prospective students residing in those parts of the country where there is no DBBL branch may apply for Dutch-Bangla Bank Foundation Scholarship in A4 size plain paper (application should include, among other necessary information, present/permanent address, date of birth, parents' educational status, number of siblings who are studying or any other special information in support of getting scholarship) accompanied by all duly attested copies of certificates, mark sheets, income certificate of father/mother/guardian, a copy of passport size photograph and recommendation from Institutional Head/ Departmental Head.



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