

JAIL KILLING CASE
HC rejects writ
petition against
PP appointment

BSS, Dhaka

The High Court (HC) yesterday summarily rejected a writ petition challenging appointment of Metropolitan Public Prosecutor, Dhaka, Abdullah Mahmud Hasan, as prosecution lawyer for conducting the jail killing case.

The government appointed advocate Hasan after advocate Anisul Huq and others resigned as special public prosecutors.

A division bench comprising Justice Mohammad Zoynul Abedin and Justice Sharifuddin Chakladar passed the order.

Mohammad Nasim, son of Captain Monsur Ali, former prime minister and one of the four people killed in the Dhaka Central Jail, filed the writ petition.

Awami League leaders Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, Captain M Monsur Ali and AHM Qamruzzaman were killed in the Dhaka Central Jail on November 3, 1975.

A murder case filed with Lalbag Police Station is now under trial.

JCD demands closure of Sudha Sadan

DU CORRESPONDENT

Ruling BNP's student wing Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) staged a rally yesterday on the Dhaka University campus demanding closure of Sudha Sadan, residence of Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina.

The JCD leaders termed the Sudha Sadan a 'house of conspiracy against the country and the people', 'new Kashim Bazar Kuthi' (the historically infamous house where native conspirators plotted against Nawab Sirajuddowla), 'a factory for making bombs' and 'a heaven for criminals'.

"If the opposition Awami League does not give up politics of confrontation and close down the Sudha Sadan, the JCD will demolish it at any cost for the welfare of the countrymen," said JCD General Secretary Azizul Bari Helal. "(And) If they (AL) declare to besiege any BNP office in future, the JCD will demolish not only the Sudha Sadan but also all the AL offices across the country," he warned.

JCD President Sahabuddin Laitu said they wanted to lay siege to the Sudha Sadan to give a befitting reply to the AL's confrontational politics but withdrew the programme as 'out party does not believe such politics'.

DU unit President Amirul Islam Khan Alim and leaders Sultan Salauddin Tuku, Selimuzzaman Selim, Shafiul Bari Babu, DU unit General Secretary Hasan Mamun, among others, addressed the rally.

Earlier, leaders and activists of JCD's different units including Jahangirnagar University, metropolitan units, educational institutions brought out a procession from the foot of Aparajevo Bangla, also the venue of the rally.

Allegations were there that JCD's hall unit leaders forced the general students into joining the JCD procession and a student alleged that the JCD activists took him to the procession at gunpoint.

A hall unit JCD president however said the JCD central leaders asked them to stage the rally ion a big way. "We could not help but follow their order," he said.

The gates to all residential halls of the university were kept closed from early in the morning to make sure that no-one can skip the procession. JCD leaders guarded the hall gates and allowed no students to go out.

"I had an important class that I had to miss as our hall unit leaders forced me to take part in their procession," a student of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall said.

Political parties lack transparency, party chiefs don't follow democracy

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The political parties lack transparency and accountability and the party chiefs always dictate terms without following any democratic norm, said the speakers at a roundtable yesterday.

The people also do not have adequate access to information about the electoral process and candidates taking part in the election, they said.

The Centre for Democracy organised the roundtable at its office in the city, with its president and former foreign secretary Abul Ahsan in the chair.

The speakers said money and musclemen dominated the last three general elections although they were held under caretaker governments.

They called for reforms in the election process to ensure transparency and accountability of the candidates.

KC Sivaramakrishnan of

India, a former secretary, was present as guest speaker. Former ambassadors Waliur Rahman and Muhammad Zamir, former secretary Dr A M Shawkat Ali and Editor of The Daily Independent Mahbubul Alam took part in the discussion.

Abul Ahsan said that the political parties did not have any accountability in polls and party expenditure.

Though the election process has improved to a greater extent in recent years, election results sometimes were fixed behind the scene, he added.

The incidents of capturing election centres and snatching ballot boxes still take place, he said.

Regarding the election expenses, Abul Ahsan said that most of the parliament members did not fill up the forms given by the election commission.

Dr Shawkat Ali suggested maintaining data banks to keep a watch on the criminal records of the candidates.

Sivaramakrishnan explained the electoral system in India and its reforms that took place in recent years.

The electoral process was

made more transparent through the reforms, he said, adding that the judiciary and the civil society of India played a vital role in bringing about the reforms.

The reforms compelled the candidates to fill up a form disclosing personal information, including their assets and liability, educational background, political career and criminal records, he said.

These information are disclosed through the media and anybody can get it, he said, adding that the objective of the system is to inform the voters about the candidates.

8 students injured in roof collapse at RU hall

RU CORRESPONDENT

At least eight students of Shaheed Habibur Rahman Hall at Rajshahi University (RU) were injured in sleep, one of them seriously, as the ceilings of three rooms there collapsed on Tuesday.

Rooftops of room Nos. 277, 278 and 280 cracked and crashed down on the resident students shortly before midnight, witnesses said.

Moniruzzman Ripon, Zahirul, Nasir, Hakim, Sabbir, Riaz, Sayed and Badruzza were wounded in the roof collapse.

Ripon, a masters' student, was admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital and others were treated at the RU medical centre for minor injuries.

Professor Nazrul Islam, hall provost, and other senior teachers visited the hall and expressed concern while agitating students demonstrated against the incident.

Students alleged their demand for renovating the rundown rooms of the hall went unheeded in the last couple of months.

Established in 1972, the hall developed cracks in its roofing and

walls. Last year, four students were injured in a similar incident, prompting the hall authorities to evacuate residents from some rooms and declare them abandoned.

Despite repeated demands from general students and student organisations, the university authorities did not take steps to repair the damaged parts of the hall, many sophomores alleged.

The University Grant Commission sanctioned Tk 2 core for repairing the worn-out parts of the hall last year, but the work is yet to begin.

Helen Keller
Int'l hands
over Braille
textbooks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Helen Keller International, a non-governmental organisation, yesterday handed over Braille textbooks to the government for visually challenged students.

Japanese Ambassador Matsuhiro Horiguchi handed over the books to Akhter Hossain Khan, director general of Department of Social Services, at a function at Braille Press in Tongi.

Addressing the ceremony as chief guest, the Japanese ambassador hoped the books would help the students find the light of knowledge and cultivate their merit.

The government will distribute the textbooks among the students from class VI to X in 21 integrated schools in as many districts under the Integrated Education Programme.

Dora Panagides, country director of Helen Keller International, said the books, donated by Japan, Canadian International Agency and Plan International, are for 21 out of 49 functional integrated schools. The remaining 28 schools still need Braille textbooks and 15 should be made functional, she added.

Akhter said Bangladesh has 40,000 visually challenged children and about 90,000 children with blurred vision, whose access to education is limited, as most live in rural areas.

Describing the government initiative, he said the government will reserve 1 percent job for them.

The 2002 survey of Helen Keller International shows only 602 visually disabled children, two-thirds of them boys, are enrolled in classes from I to X in formal governmental and non-governmental schools.