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WOMEN'S RESERVED SEATS IN JS HC asks govt why system not unconstitutional

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday in a rule on the government asked why the provision of reserved seats for women in parliament, made in the 14th amendment to the constitution, should not be declared unconstitutional.

The court order followed a writ petition the women-rights groups filed on Sunday challenging the constitutional amendment introduced to pave the way for 45 reserved seats in the Jatiya Sangsad for women. Parliament passed the provision on May 16.

The High Court division bench of Justice MA Matin and Justice Tarik-Ul-Hakim issued the rule after

hearing the petition. The rule is made returnable within three weeks.

Women leaders Farida Akhter, Tasneem Siddiqui, Alina Khan, Salma Ali, Sayeeda Akhter, Seema Dash Shimu, Sultana Akhter Ruby and Rokeya Rafiq Baby, representing different rights organisations, filed the petition.

The petitioners cited no fewer than 14 legal and moral grounds against the incorporation of the provision for 45 seats reserved for women in parliament.

They held the provision was made in violation of the constitution and an infringement of the constitutional rights of women as it allows indirect election to the reserved

seats for women, while the constitution provides for direct election. The petitioners also said the provision barred women, who do not belong to any political party, from contesting in the elections to the reserved seats, as the seats have to be proportionately distributed among the political parties who have an adequate number of seats in the House.

The petitioners said according to the constitution all of them are eligible to become legislator and they have long been fighting to establish women rights. But since they do not belong to any political party, they have been barred from becoming lawmaker.

They also argued the new provi-

sion leaves no room for independent lawmakers or parties having less than seven lawmakers to have representation in the reserved women seats.

The petitioners added both ruling and main opposition parties pledged in their election manifesto that they would make way for direct election of women to enhance women's representation in parliament, but they did not live up to their promise.

The counsel for the petitioners submitted that according to the constitution, parliament can make special provision in favour of women for their advancement but in this case the amendment did not

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Cabinet nods to bank law changes

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON

The cabinet yesterday approved amendments to the Bank Company Act 1991 to tighten the central bank's noose on loan defaulters, make every one from bank directors to bank union activists more accountable and check unruly activities.

The act has been amended in nine areas, some of which are very significant and some are just revision of word arrangements.

Loan defaulters have been redefined. Previously, a borrower failing to repay loan six months into the expiry of deadline became a defaulter. Under the new definition, a borrower becomes a defaulter as soon as the loan is marked as classified under the Bangladesh Bank rules.

The central bank marks a loan classified in case of failure to repay within three months of the deadline.

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Buildings for speaker, dy speaker illegal

HC asks govt to announce Sangsad Bhaban national heritage



PHOTO: STAR

Residences of the speaker and deputy speaker in the parliament building complex flout the law, as the government did not follow the National Building Code in construction and tampered with Louis I Kahn's original plan.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday declared illegal the under-construction residences of the speaker and deputy speaker in the parliament building complex, as the government distorted the original design of architect Louis I Kahn's 1973 masterpiece.

The court also asked the government to take steps to announce the parliament building as part of national heritage, in an order that came after the Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB) and Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) filed a writ petition against the tampering.

An HC bench of Justice Mohammad Iman Ali and Justice Shamim Hasnine described the

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POLICEMEN MURDER JCD leader, 7 others implicated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eight persons including a leader of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) Tanjilur Rahman Tanjil and dreaded criminal Shahidul Islam Idul have been implicated in the killing of two policemen during a gunfight at Motijheel Sunday.

Police filed a first information report (FIR) stating that Idul, Kiron, Tanjil, Azad, Leon, Piew, Sohel, Millat and four to five other unknown criminals fired on the police killing Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Aminul Islam and Havildar Liakot Ali.

Idul and his gang engaged the policemen Sunday to evade arrest after looting Tk 1.17 lakh from JA Money Changers Limited at Motijheel.

Police have launched a massive hunt for the criminals in Motijheel and picked up eight persons including two women for interrogation. However, the suspects are still out of the dragnet.

The picked-up persons are Idul's

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PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Rain or shine, policemen cannot afford to slacken their patrol, as a team bundled up in raincoat dares heavy showers to guard the Sangsad Bhaban area in Dhaka yesterday.

SSC results Saturday, to be posted online

KAUSAR ISLAM AYON

The results of this year's Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations held under all the nine education boards will be published simultaneously on Saturday, board officials said.

The results will be published for the first time on the web and can be accessed at www.educationboard.org.bd after 4:00pm the same day.

The secondary schools will receive the result sheets after 1:00pm on Saturday. However, students will get the same only after 4:00pm.

The board authorities have decided to award the original certificate

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Hasina ready to shun hartal on condition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Main opposition Awami League (AL) will consider scrapping hartal as a means of protest campaign if the ruling parties give an undertaking not to call hartal while in the opposition in the future.

AL President Sheikh Hasina said this while leaders of the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) yesterday met her with a request not to call hartal at least for the next one year to help the sector deal with the post-Multi Fibre Arrangement (MFA) situation.

Replying to the BGMEA's request Sheikh Hasina said first the government will have to stop the political

oppression that includes widespread violence and false cases against opposition leaders and workers. She also demanded all false political cases be withdrawn and perpetrators of the political repression be brought to trial.

The BGMEA leaders also requested the AL president to withdraw the daylong hartal slated for June 30, last day of the current fiscal year. Hasina said she would discuss the matter with her party's front organisations that called the hartal.

Hasina, also the leader of the opposition, said her party never wanted to resort to hartal, but the way the government repressed AL and curtailed its democratic rights, it has left AL with no other alterna-

tive but Hartal.

During the meeting Hasina also referred to her call when she was in power not to call hartal anymore. But it was ironic, she said, that the then main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) replied to the proposal by calling more and more hartals.

AL's Industries and Commerce Affairs Secretary Faruk Khan told these while briefing the reporters after the meeting.

Emerging from the more than two hours long close door meeting at AL's Dhanmondi office, BGMEA President Anisul Huq told reporters, "Garments industries would be benefited if there is no hartal at least

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5 slaughtered in Sirajganj, Pabna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five people, four of a family, were slaughtered, while a widow was knifed to death by miscreants in Sirajganj and Pabna on Sunday night.

Our Bogra Correspondent reported that a gang of miscreants slaughtered four members of a family at village Bachamara in Shahjadpur upazila at midnight on Sunday.

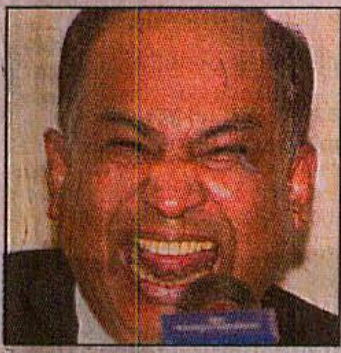
The victims are Rezaul Karim Bhutto, his wife Zingura Khatun, seven-year-old son Ashiq and three-year-old daughter Rini.

The assailants entered the house of Bhutto, a cloth trader, by making a hole through mud wall and slaughtered all the four inmates while they were asleep, according to police and villagers.

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OIC communal body: SQ Chy

He says Hindus shouldn't speak about it, offers to quit politics if opposition can prove vulgar remarks



Salauddin Quader Chowdhury

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, who recently lost the race for secretary general of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), yesterday said the OIC is a communal, Muslim organisation and the Hindus do not have any right to speak about it.

"The Hindu community cannot speak about the OIC. The OIC is a communal organisation, it is not for non-Muslims, it is an organisation of Muslims," said Chowdhury when

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ADB ready to give \$200m power credit

UNB, Dhaka

Asian Development Bank (ADB) is willing to provide \$200 million in credit for the development of Bangladesh power sector next year.

The fresh loan is in addition to \$286 million being provided by the ADB to Bangladesh for the development and implementation of reform programmes in the country's power sector.

A visiting five-member ADB delegation led by its South Asia region's Director General Yoshihiro Iwasaki showed his interest in the fresh funding at a meeting with State Minister for Power Iqbal Hasan Mahmood at the secretariat yesterday.

The meeting discussed all the current ADB-funded projects and

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Cops killing, Bangla Bhai patronisation spark debate in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday witnessed a stormy debate on Sunday's killing of two policemen by leaders of the ruling BNP's student wing, and activities of Bangla Bhai under the 'patronisation' of some ministers and ruling party lawmakers.

During the war of words for about half an hour, State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman and former minister and AL lawmaker Mohammad Nasim blamed each other for involvement in crimes.

LG and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and the

lone lawmaker from Krishak Sramik Janata League Kader Siddiqui also took part in the debate just as the House sat with Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar in the chair.

Bhuiyan, also secretary general of the ruling BNP, told the House the government is determined to nab the killers of the policemen. He was giving a statement when the opposition lawmakers demanded proper trial of the killers who, they said, are loyal to the BNP.

Bhuiyan said some quarters are trying to publicise that the killers belong to the BNP and that they could evade punishment. "They

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Dutch-Bangla Bank Foundation Scholarship for meritorious and needy students



Dutch-Bangla Bank Foundation has decided to attach priority in awarding its scholarship to the underprivileged students of rural Bangladesh (outside six city corporations area).

To implement this program, it has been decided that the students who have passed the HSC examination in 2003 from the institutions/colleges situated outside six city corporations area i.e. Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet may apply for DBBF scholarship fulfilling the following minimum requirements.

Academic Level	Minimum CGPA Science Group	Minimum CGPA Other than Science Group
HSC	4.30	4.20

Application in plain paper together with attested copies of certificates, mark sheets, income certificate of guardian, 1 copy passport size photograph, recommendation of the Head of Institution/Departmental Head is to reach the following address within July 15 2004.

Coordinator
Dutch-Bangla Bank Foundation
195, Motijheel Commercial Area (5th Floor)
Senakalyan Bhaban
Dhaka-1000



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