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SPEAKERS' HOUSES AT JS COMPLEX

Court stops move to gag media, denies stay prayer

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

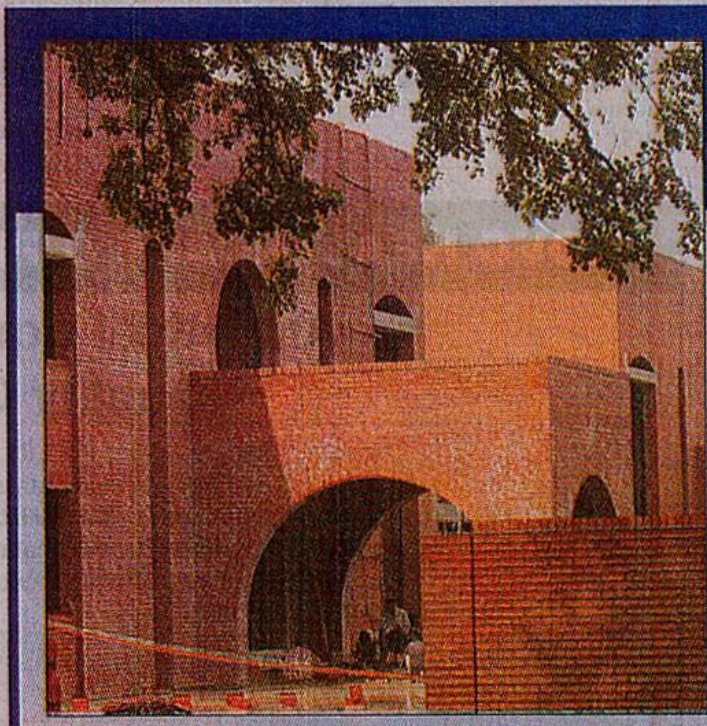
The Appellate Division yesterday turned down a plea to ban media reports on constructions on the Sangsad Bhaban complex minutes after it also did not grant another prayer for a stay on a High Court order declaring construction of the residences of speaker and deputy speaker illegal.

As soon as the bench declined to pass the order, the attorney general sought an embargo on media coverage of development work on the Sangsad Bhaban complex. The bench also declined to entertain the second prayer.

The High Court on June 21 declared the constructions illegal following a writ petition filed by Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) and the Institute of Architects, Bangladesh (IAB).

Bapa and the IAB in their petition said the construction of the two residential buildings on the parliament complex would greatly distort the Sangsad Bhaban's final

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The chronology of events centred around construction at the parliament complex.

26 October 2002
Foundation stone of Speaker's and Deputy Speaker's residence laid at the site adjacent to the National Assembly Complex.

31 October 2002
In face of strong protests and continued media coverage, construction work temporarily stopped.

December 2002
The construction work resumes amid protests and letters in newspapers.

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Auditor general lodges appeal with JS body for protection

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Comptroller and Auditor General (Cag) Asif Ali yesterday lodged an appeal with the Public Accounts Committee (Pac) of the Jatiya Sangsad seeking its protection against violation of the constitutional rights of his office by the Railway Division.

The parliamentary body is now examining the rules and regulations to dispose of the appeal, the first of its kind in Bangladesh.

"I received a letter from the comptroller and auditor general on the matter. We will discuss the appeal at the next meeting," Harun Al Rashid, chairman of Pac, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Earlier on July 5, the parliamentary body decided to summon the secretary of the communications ministry, director general of the Railway Division and officials concerned at its next meeting slated for July 20.

Asif in his letter said his constitutional rights were infringed on as the officials of the railway harassed his staff when they went to probe irregularities in railway's activities.

A team of Cag's office recently went to the railway division to check purchase documents, but the officials misbehaved with them and denied them access to the papers.

Record unapproved projects plague ADP

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

A record 38 percent of the schemes under the new Annual Development Programme (ADP) are unapproved ones, in blatant contradiction to the recommendations made by Public Expenditure Review Commission (Perc).

Most of these were incorporated in the ADP not based on national priority but due to pressure from lobbyists and powerful individuals, sources say. A number of the unapproved projects are also very old, including some decade old ones carried over for years.

Such a high ratio of unapproved projects in the ADP also indicates that the government ignored the Perc report, in which it had advised against such schemes, as they lead to wastage and lack of relevance.

Like the previous years, the government this year will okay some of these unapproved projects, while a majority of them may not be considered at all by the approving authorities concerned, yet a good chunk of money will be spent against them, a Perc member apprehends.

At the first meeting on the new ADP, the Executive Committee on National Economic Council (Ecne) yesterday okayed 12 unapproved projects involving Tk 1,275 crore

including Tk 753 crore as project aid. With a total allocation of Tk 22,000 crore, this year's ADP has a total of 1,199 projects, with 455 unapproved projects.

The last year's ADP had 416 such schemes. Despite hard efforts of the government, more than one-third of those unapproved projects could not be okayed.

Among this year's unapproved projects, there are 330 new unapproved ones with a block allocation of Tk 1,812 crore.

Besides, there are 125 unapproved old projects with a total of Tk 1,817 crore allocation. In the past, the government spent Tk 8,380 crore against these projects without approval.

"Because of this way of handling such projects for years, they lose relevance or priority by the time the government tables them for approval," the Perc said in its report in December last. "But the government is compelled to finally approve them."

Because of the high number of unapproved projects, a Perc member terms this year's ADP a hoax. "The main ADP shows 869 projects. But, side by side, it kept 330 new unapproved projects. Therefore, from the face of it, it appears there are fewer unapproved projects, which is not at

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Khaleda doubts death threat to Hasina

Says probe reveals nothing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing doubt over reported threat to the life of Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday said people questioned its truthfulness as it was issued abroad when it could be given at home.

"I came to know the matter from newspaper reports, but questions have arisen among all as the threat came abroad," she said, adding, "We've launched a probe and found out nothing of its kind so far."

Khaleda said the government was trying to identify the people who made the phone calls, but nobody could be found out yet.

Replying to a question from Krishak Samik Janata League lawmaker Kader Siddiqui during the prime minister's question time, the leader of the house said adequate security measures, more than what Hasina deserves, were taken in the wake of the filing of a general diary on her behalf.

Taking a swipe at the main opposition Awami League (AL), she said during its rule it attacked opposition leaders and activists and the government did not take any security

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Unite to resist JMB

Speakers urge from Bhabaniganj rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Speakers from the Bhabaniganj rally against terrorism and communalism in Bagmara yesterday called upon people to build united resistance against the Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMB).

They also asked the masses to immediately take revenge for any further killing by fanatic Islamist followers of Bangla Bhai who they said were continuing terrorist activities with state support.

The speakers alleged the dreaded JMB operations commander, Bangla Bhai, was none but a communal terrorist created by the coalition government to do away with its political opponents.

The rally, called by Awami League (AL) and 11-Party Alliance to protest JMB atrocities in the northwestern region since April 1, was held amid tight security, as the JMB had announced Tuesday a counter meeting at Galkandi, 12km from

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Democracy helped, judiciary harmed

Larger bench of HC told of 13th amendment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 13th amendment to the constitution has helped democracy but harmed the judiciary, said Barrister Rafique Ul Huq yesterday before a larger bench of the High Court (HC) on the writ petition against the constitutional amendment dealing with caretaker government.

He made his submission as an amicus curiae (one who assists the court) during the hearing of the four-year-old writ petition filed by Supreme Court Advocate M Salimullah.

Barrister Rafique and another lawyer, Advocate Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan, however, supported the 13th amendment on the whole.

Rafique agreed with the writ petitioner's argument that the

amendment has made the office of chief adviser to the caretaker government too tempting for the former chief justices to take their eyes off.

The post of caretaker administration chief is so lucrative to the former chief justices that they now eagerly look forward to getting the coveted job.

This acts as a kind of lure to the former chief justices and creates an unhealthy trend, Rafique told the larger bench of justices Jaiul Abedin, Awlad Ali and Mirza Hossain Haider.

He however said the 13th amendment is needed for the interest of democracy and for free and fair vote.

Responding to the petitioner's complaint that the amendment has affected the preamble and articles 8,

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DHAKA-10 BY-POLLS Bikalpa men carry 'coffin' to HC to slate rigging

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

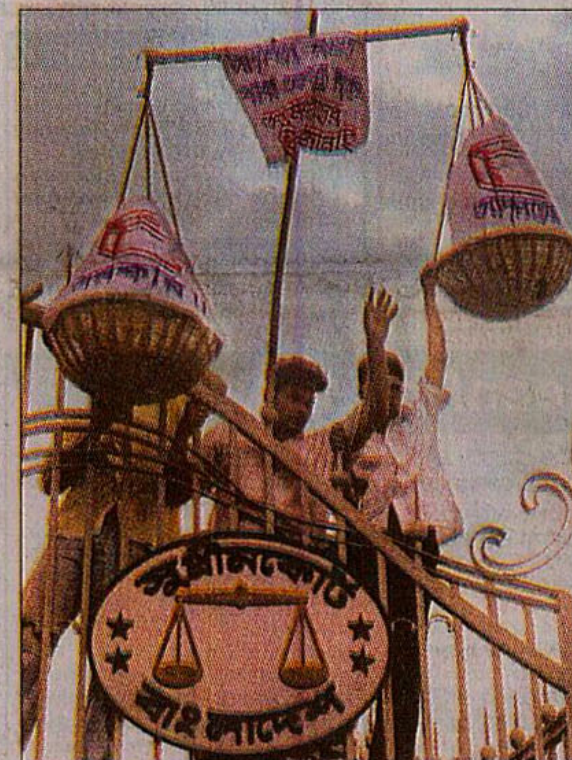
The Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) yesterday staged a demonstration at the entrance to the High Court (HC) building carrying a coffin and a scale to protest what it said were death of democracy and massive vote robbery in the recent Dhaka-10 parliamentary by-poll.

Several hundred BDB protesters carried a big bamboo-made scale, tilted heavily to one side, symbolising 'a more weighty government comparing to the High Court'.

"These are all about Dhaka by-polls. The coffin is the symbol of the corpse of democracy and the scale shows that the government wishes weigh more than the High Court verdicts," BDB lawmaker Mahi B Chowdhury told journalists.

The BDB demonstrators also

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Bikalpa Dhara activists, left, set up a bamboo-made scale, tilted heavily to one side, to symbolise a more weighty government than the High Court. Party Lawmaker Mahi B Chowdhury, in the middle of first row, along with party activists lies down at the main entrance to the High Court building to protest against vote rigging by the ruling alliance in Dhaka-10 by-polls.



PHOTO: STAR

22 soldiers, Maoists die in Nepal clash

BBC ONLINE

At least 22 security personnel and Maoist rebels have been killed in a prolonged battle in western Nepal, the military says.

The clash follows an escalation of attacks by the rebels since a ceasefire broke down last August.

Officials say a number of soldiers are still missing after they were ambushed by the Maoists.

Nine thousand people have died in the eight years since the rebels began their fight for a communist republic.

Eleven soldiers were shot dead on Tuesday by the rebels as they were trying to cross a river in the

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Speaker denies promised floor to AL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speaker Jamir Uddin Sirar yesterday promised Awami League (AL) deputies floor, but adjourned parliament half an hour later without listening to the main opposition acting under what the AL claimed was wastage of treasury benches instructions.

After disposing of call attention notices, Sirar announced a 20-minute break for Maghrib prayers, but changed his mind in a minute to adjourn the House until 4:00pm today, saying there were no business in parliament's in-tray amid angry shouts from the opposition benches.

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Tk 390cr edn plan approved

Project targets 20 lakh out-of-school children

STAR REPORT

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) yesterday approved a Tk 390-crore Reaching Out-of-School Children Project to provide primary education to some 20 lakh children, mostly from the disadvantaged and ultra poor section of the society.

The five-year project to be implemented in phases till 2009 aims to

reduce the number of out-of-school children across the country and help achieve the government goal of 'Education for All', officials said.

About 30 lakh children aged 6-10 are not in schools and about 8-10 per cent children or about 17 lakh attend non-formal schools across the country, according to an estimate by the World Bank (WB).

The WB will provide a grant of \$51 million and Swiss Agency for

Development Cooperation (SDC) \$6 million for the project while the government will provide the rest.

Under the project, 19,48,127 out-of-school children will be enrolled in 52,065 Learning Centres (LCs) or non-formal schools to be managed by communities with support from non-governmental organisations (NGOs), sources mentioned.

To attract students to the LCs or

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Marine academy seamen to be allowed to take job in Greece

RAFIQ HASAN

Manpower export to Greece is likely to begin soon as the tussle between two ministries that stalled the process ended yesterday.

Minister for Shipping Akbar Hossain and State Minister for Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Mohammad Quamrul Islam discussed the issue and

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'Rescue team' heads for Ctg to fix F28 engine

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Biman Bangladesh Airlines yesterday sent a 'rescue team' of nine engineers and a spare engine to Chittagong Shah Amanat International Airport to fix the newly procured F28 aircraft engine that went out of order on Tuesday minutes before taking off for Dhaka.

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Announcement

In view of changed international security situation, The Daily Star has decided to bring out a new page titled "Strategic Issues" on alternate Fridays, starting from tomorrow, 9 July 2004.

The page will cover various strategic and security topics related to national, regional and international issues directly or indirectly affecting Bangladesh. Strategic and defence experts are invited to contribute.

শোক সংবাদ



গভীর দুঃখের সঙ্গে জানাচ্ছি যে বেগম ফজিলাতুন নেছা স্বামী বিশিষ্ট শিল্পপতি, শিক্ষা অনুরাগী ও ক্রীড়া সংগঠক জনাব মোজাম্মেল হক, ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক, জনতা জুট মিলস লিমিটেড, চেয়ারম্যান সাদাত জুট ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজ লিঃ এবং প্রতিষ্ঠাতা চেয়ারম্যান জেনিন কোন্ড স্টোরেজ লিঃ, সাবেক পরিচালক উত্তরা ব্যাংক লিঃ, প্রাক্তন সভাপতি ও আজীবন সদস্য ভিক্টোরিয়া স্পোর্টিং ক্লাব, প্রাক্তন সভাপতি বাংলাদেশ সঁতার ফেডারেশন ও প্রতিষ্ঠাতা ফজিলাতুন নেছা ও মোজাম্মেল হক শিক্ষা ট্রাস্ট, গতকাল ৭ জুলাই, ২০০৪ইং বেলা ১০-৩৫ মিনিটে নিজ বাস ভবনে শেষ নিঃশ্বাস ত্যাগ করেছেন। (ইল্লা রাজেউন)। মৃত্যুকালে তাঁর বয়স হয়েছিল ৭৪ বছর। মরহুমা দুই পুত্র, এক কন্যা ও নাতী-নাতনীসহ অসংখ্য আত্মীয় স্বজন ও গুণগ্রাহী রেখে গেছেন। বাদ মাগরিব জানাজা শেষে তাঁকে বনানী গোরস্থানে দাফন করা হয়।

আগামী ৯ জুলাই শুক্রবার বাদ মাগরিব ধানমন্ডি বাস ভবনে এক দোয়া মাহফিলের আয়োজন করা হয়েছে।

সকল আত্মীয়স্বজন, গুণগ্রাহী ও শুভানুধ্যায়ীদেরকে উক্ত দোয়া মাহফিলে উপস্থিত হয়ে মরহুমার রুহের মাগফেরাতের জন্য দোয়া করতে অনুরোধ রইল।

- শোক সন্তপ্ত পরিবার