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JS body okays bill for blanket WB immunity

Parliament may pass the controversial bill this month

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The parliament is likely to pass this month the much-talked-about bill proposing blanket immunity to the World Bank (WB) in Bangladesh, after a parliamentary watchdog yesterday okayed the bill amid strong opposition protest.

The representative of the main opposition Awami League (AL) in the parliamentary standing committee on finance ministry gave a note of dissent and walked out of the

meeting while the parliamentary panel was scrutinising the bill, terming it a violation of the constitution and democracy.

The committee later finalised the bill without bringing major changes and is to submit a report recommending its passage in the next parliament session slated for May 12, meeting sources said.

Once passed, the bill will put the Bretton Woods institution beyond any legal action, a privilege the multilateral lending agency enjoys

in no other country of operations. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) were given legal immunity earlier in 1972 and 1973. The WB was then given partial immunity.

Responding to the criticism from the AL lawmaker, committee Chairman Mushfiqur Rahman said, "If the move is against the constitution, then why did the previous Awami League government give

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Washington rules out any shift in ties with Dhaka

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Washington has ruled out any shift from its present relations with Dhaka regardless of how the bilateral relationship between the USA and any other country proceeds.

"No departure. No new paradigm. To the contrary, we have strong and positive and friendly and constructive relations with Bangladesh, in our relations with any country," said State Department's Deputy Spokesman Adam Ereli in a press briefing in Washington last week.

Ereli said: "The course and

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Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain makes a point as Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina listens to her former party colleague at the opening ceremony of the First National Convention of Engineers auditorium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

2 criminals killed in 'crossfire'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two criminals including a top cadre of outlawed Biplabi Communist Party (BCP) were killed in 'crossfire' between police and their accomplices in Dhaka and Kushtia yesterday.

Ramzan Ali Khan, 32, a listed criminal, was killed at Garan Chatbari in Mirpur in the capital.

His family, however, alleged three police informants helped the law-enforcers arrest and 'kill' Ramzan, 32, following a land dispute.

"Criminals led by informant Nizam grabbed unlawfully Ramzan's Mirpur house two years ago and have been threatening us with death since then," said his mother Shahida Khatun.

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Sit-in Tuesday if Faizee stays

SC Bar warns CJ

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) yesterday warned of a sit-in demonstration at the chief justice's entrance to the Supreme Court on Tuesday if additional High Court judge Faisal Mahmud Faizee is allowed to sit on his bench Monday.

The SCBA members yesterday marched around the Supreme Court premises for the first time ever in a procession carrying black flags to demand Faizee's removal.

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Mohammad Ali new Attorney General



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Additional Attorney General AJ Mohammad Ali has been appointed the 12th Attorney General of Bangladesh to replace Hassan Arif who resigned on Thursday.

Mohammad Ali will take over the charge on Monday as President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday appointed him the chief law officer of the state.

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KIBRIA KILLING CASE Court accepts charge sheet

Rejects bail move of the accused

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A Habiganj court yesterday accepted the charge sheet in the murder case of Shah AMS Kibria and four others.

Magistrate Aatur Rahman of the Habiganj Sadar Cognizance Court-1, however, rejected the bail petition and the verbal appeal of the accused for withdrawal of their confessional

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Decision on new pay scale deferred

Saifur buys time to assess resources, waits for donors' nod

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON

The secretary-level committee tasked with evaluating the sixth Pay Commission's recommendations and drawing an implementation proposal yesterday tabled four alternative pay scales for government staffs before a cabinet meeting

to choose from.

Yesterday's cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia discussed the proposal in detail, but decided to finalise the new pay scale in its next meeting, sources said.

A cabinet source said the decision was deferred, as the finance

ministry needs more time to check how much money it can arrange to meet the extra amount needed to implement a new pay scale.

According to another source, the government is deliberately foot dragging on setting a new pay structure for its employees to avoid too

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AHMADIYYA ISSUE Munshiganj bigots now threaten govt

BDNEWS, Munshiganj

International Khatme Nabuwat Movement, Bangladesh (IKNMB) yesterday demanded that the government declare the Ahmadiyya community non-Muslim.

At a press conference of the Islamist organisation, its General Secretary Hafez Maulana Monirul Islam Ashrafi read out a written statement that also demanded

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US lists Harkatul as terrorist group

State dept report dwells on its al-Qaeda link; hails Dhaka with concern

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Praising Bangladesh's role in the war against terror, the USA has named Harkat ul-Jihad-Islami, Bangladesh (HUJI-B) as a "terrorist group" operating in the country with links to the al-Qaeda network. The name of the Bangladeshi

group found its place in the list of "selected terrorist groups" in a US State Department report titled "Country Reports on Terrorism for 2004".

It said Bangladesh supports the global war on terror but its ability to combat terrorism is undermined by

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WORKERS' RIGHTS
May Day today
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today marks International Labour Day, traditionally known as May Day. This year the day will be observed across the

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Holiday Notice
The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed today on the occasion of May Day. Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow.

GHORASHAL PLANTS OVERHAULING PDB accepts junk from Russia

SHARIER KHAN

The Power Development Board (PDB) has accepted from a Russian company 1,400 tonnes of rusty power plant equipment, imported arbitrarily back in 2001, for rehabilitation of the 35-year-old Ghorashal-1 and 2 power plants.

These equipment lack guarantee of their builder, sources said.

The PDB will hold a meeting

tomorrow to discuss making the \$ 17.7 million contract 'effective' with the poorly performing Russian company Technopromexport or TPE. The contract remains suspended since it was signed in 2000.

Sources said the PDB is now preparing to pay the TPE several million dollars with retrospect effect from 2001 for import of the equipment.

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