

Govt plans to amend Official Secrets Act, 1923

Moudud tells seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed yesterday said the government is considering to amend the Official Secrets Act, 1923 to uphold people's right to information.

"We have no plan to include any restrictive clause in the existing Official Secrets Act, but to make the old law up-to-date," he said while addressing a seminar in the city.

The seminar on the 'Right to Information' was organised by Dhaka University Journalists' Association at the TSC auditorium as part of its yearly event.

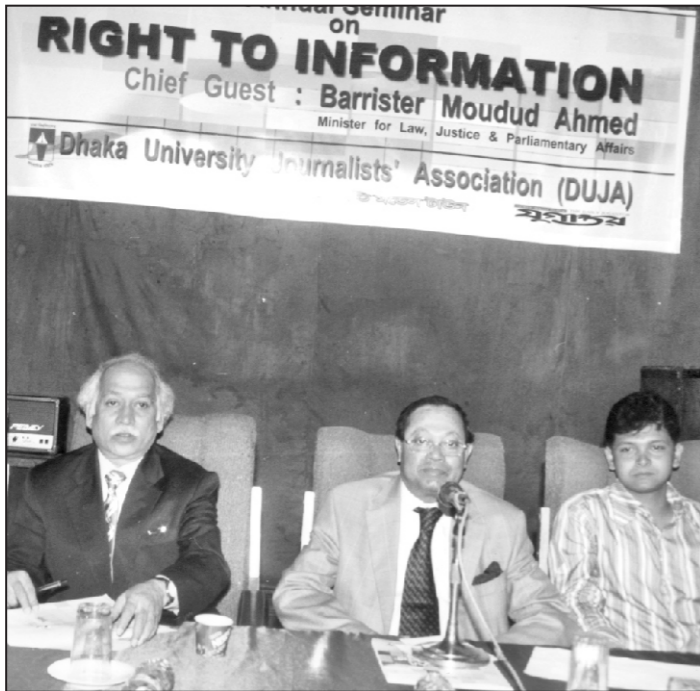
About the demand of enacting Right to Information Act, the minister said, "We are now scrutinising the law commission's review report on its draft. A pre-legislative consultation involving all stakeholders is also necessary before enacting the law."

Supporting the necessity of Right to Information act Moudud said, "National security is a different matter, but why there will be a secrecy about the management of the government, like how it processes a tender."

He, however, said, "Our neighbour India has no such law on right to information and what Pakistan did recently in this regard is a very weak law."

The minister observed that the current parliament is not fully active although laws are being passed there.

"It (parliament) is not fully active in a sense that opposition is not participating in the parliamentary



Law Minister Moudud Ahmed speaks at a seminar on the 'Right to Information' at the Dhaka University TSC auditorium in the city yesterday.

proceedings to make the government accountable," he said, adding "In absence of a responsible opposition, media has been making the government accountable everyday."

He suggested the newsmen to focus on achievements of Bangladesh in areas like increase of food production, and reduction of mortality rate and death rate of

children.

Prof Wahiuiddin Mahmud, noted economist, said people don't know how the government is running due to lack of right to information.

He said through providing information the government can empower people.

Dhaka University Vice-chancellor Prof SMA Faiz said some newspapers laid emphasis

on their own policies rather than presenting correct information. Even captions of news photos sometimes bring wrong information, he added.

Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, executive editor of the daily Sangbad, presented the keynote paper at the seminar describing in details the laws that restrict people's right to know.

National Press Club General Secretary Shawkat Mahmud criticised the major political parties for not mentioning anything about the right to information in their electoral manifestos.

"Political parties are not vocal enough to ensure legislative guarantee of the right to information," he said.

"Journalists are also facing different types of persecution including killing for providing information to people," Shawkat added.

Gaziul Hasan Khan, chief editor and managing director of the state-owned Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha, said irresponsible journalism has been developing in Bangladesh.

"What we are witnessing is not true journalism," he said adding, "Journalists have the right to know but that doesn't mean that they will distort information."

Deputy Editor of the daily Jugantor Shahjahan Sarder also spoke on the occasion.

Chaired by DUJA President Nurul Karim Bhuiyan, the seminar was conducted by its General Secretary Hasan Jahid Tusher.

SHEBA TELECOM ROYALTY HC rule on govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued a rule on the government to explain why realisation of Tk 1,000 as royalty and Tk 100 as licence fee for each Sheba Telecom connection will not be declared illegal.

The respondents - Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), its chairman and assistant director (legal) and secretary of post and telecommunications ministry - will have to make their replies in two weeks.

The rule came after the managing director of Sheba Telecom filed a writ petition yesterday against realisation of the money.

The petitioner said the BTRC sent letters in 2002 to all cellphone operators asking them to pay yearly Tk 1,000 as royalty and licence fee for each connection.

The letter however mentioned the operators would collect the money from their subscribers.

The HC issued a rule and stayed the BTRC order after Shamsul Haq Kanchan, a subscriber, filed a writ petition.

However, the provision for realising the royalty and licence fee was cleared, as the HC did not extend the stay further.

The BTRC sent Sheba Telecom two letters in May and July this year and asked for the money.

The petition termed the BTRC demand discriminatory, as it had not asked Teletalk Bangladesh Ltd for any such payment.

The petition also mentioned there is no clause in the contract between Sheba Telecom and the BTRC about paying the royalty and licence fee, and termed the demand illegal.

Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud moved for the petitioner and Deputy Attorney General Adilur Rahman for the post and telecommunications secretary and Advocate Anik R Haq for the BTRC.



Authorities dug up a road at Maniknagar in the city to lay sewerage lines but left the work unfinished only to add to the sufferings of the people during the monsoon.

3 KASHMIRI BOYS SHOT DEAD MISTAKENLY Thousands protest against Indian army

REUTERS, Srinagar

Thousands of people protested against the Indian army in troubled Kashmir on Sunday, a day after security forces shot dead three teenagers mistaking them for militants, police and witnesses said. They said at least 5,000 people gathered near Kupwara town to grieve over the bodies of the dead boys and express their anger against the Indian army.

"We want freedom... Down with the security forces," the protesters shouted as they carried the bodies of the victims on their shoulders to a local police station to protest.

The Indian army said Saturday night's ambush for Muslim guerrillas in Kupwara district, south west of Srinagar, summer capital of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, had gone wrong and the three boys had been mistakenly shot dead. A fourth was wounded.

"It is a regrettable incident," army spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel V. K. Batra told Reuters.

"When the army's ambush party challenged the four boys, they did not stop. Instead, they started running. The soldiers then opened fire."

On Thursday, police used teargas to disperse hundreds of Muslims protesting the alleged killing of a teenager by Indian troops in south Kashmir.

Dhira gives sensational information

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Shahabuddin Lashkar alias Dhira, a Jamaat leader arrested in connection with the murder of Journalist Shaikh Belaluddin, has given sensational information during a remand in the detective branch of Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP).

The three-day remand ended on Sunday.

Dhira, a suspected mastermind behind the murder, admitted about his vast knowledge of making bombs and grenades, said a senior officer of KMP.

"We are checking and rechecking his statements to fix up our next course of action," the officer added.

Dhira was questioned as he was mentioned as mastermind behind the murder by the state minister for home affairs himself at a meeting of the monitoring cell in March last.

3 secretaries transferred, 2 made in-charge of ministries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday transferred three secretaries and made two additional secretaries in-charge of ministries, according to an official notification.

Secretary of the Ministry of Science and Information and Communication Technology Lutfar Rahman Talukder was transferred to the Parliament Secretariat, Education Secretary Faruq Ahmed Siddique to the Ministry of Commerce and Secretary in-Charge of the Ministry of Water Resources Abdul Aziz to the Education Ministry.

Dhaka Divisional Commissioner Mia Mustaque Uddin Ahmed has been made secretary in-charge of the Ministry of Science and Information and Communication Technology, while Additional Secretary of the home ministry SM Zahurul Islam has been made in-charge of the Ministry of Water Resources.

Official sources said much rancour has been created among the additional secretaries of the civil administration due to violation of seniority. They said many juniors have been made secretaries in-charge while their seniors are still serving as additional secretaries.



Awami League presidium member Suranjit Sengupta addresses a press conference on 'amnesty to a ruling party man sentenced to death in a double murder case' at the Dhanmondi office in the city yesterday.

Integrate disaster management with dev planning

Experts tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Disaster management should be integrated with development planning to ensure sustainable development, said the experts at a seminar on Sunday.

They said Bangladesh is a disaster prone country where proper management of disaster can ensure its progress and prosperity.

The speakers said massive poverty alleviation programme should be undertaken by the government to develop resilience of the

people against disaster.

They said an increase of income and employment will bring vast mass of poor people in the main stream of national development and disaster management.

The seminar titled "Disaster as an Opportunity for Development" was organised jointly by Japanese University Alumni Association in Bangladesh (JUAAAB) and Department of Urban and Regional Planning (URP) of Buet at its seminar hall.

Presenting the keynote paper Dr

SI Khan, former Disaster Management Planner of the United Nations, said although Bangladesh is a disaster prone country, its different measures to counter disaster have opened up new opportunities for advanced technology thereby accelerating development of rural infrastructure, electrification and other development activities.

"It has also contributed to increasing production in agriculture, fisheries, livestock and many other fields," he added.

"Most of the flood embankments, built above the flood level, are being used as part of national and regional road networks. These have facilitated round the year road transportation contributing to national development," Prof Khan said, adding, "It has become easier to construct electric transmission and distribution lines over the embankment-cum-road."

He said thanks to improvement of communication facilities the law and order situation has improved in the remote coastal embankment areas and increased the number of enrolment in different schools.

Prof Khan said cyclone shelters are being used as regular schools creating opportunities for education of the children who had previously no access to education.

Similarly the coastal afforestation programme has been helping in reclaiming the coastal land, he added.

JUAAB President Dr Mozammel Haque, Buet Prof Dr Sarwar Khan, former VC of Khulna University Dr Golam Rahman, URP Head Dr KM Maniruzzaman, and JUAAAB Coordinator Dr Khorsheed Alam Bhuiyan also spoke.

Yasuharu Sinto, first secretary and director of information and cultural section, embassy of Japan, and Prof Dr Roksana Hafiz, co-ordinator of the seminar committee, were present.

Two Myanmar nationals held: Arms recovered

BDNEWS, Cox's Bazar

Police yesterday arrested two Myanmar nationals and recovered arms and ammunitions from their possession in Ukha upazila of Cox's Bazar.

Police said the two entered Bangladesh territory through Falungkhali area at about 6:00am.

The Myanmar nationals told local people that they were members of the army of that country but were not happy with the force, police said.

On information, police of Falungkhali camp went to the spot and detained the Myanmar nationals. They identified themselves as Moyeng and Nitong of Chongu in Myanmar.

The law enforcers recovered one ME1 rifle, one 9mm pistol, 110 bullets of rifle and 15 bullets of pistol from their possession.

Local officials said they are trying to reach the Myanmar authorities to hand over their nationals through a flag meeting of border forces of the two countries.

Row over drinking water, four Ansars assaulted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four Ansars were beaten by the local youths at Borobagh temporary camp at Mirpur in the city yesterday when the law enforcers refused to give them water from the camp.

Local people said Ansars used to misbehave with them whenever they go to collect water from there as the locality has been suffering from acute water crisis.

The injured ansars are Amirul, 25, Mosharraf, 28, Bellal, 27, and Ripon, 28.

The injured were rushed to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) at 2:30pm and released from the hospital after treatment.

The Ansars at DMCH told the journalists that several local youths went to their camp on Friday night with a woman to stay there, which they refused. "They went to the camp again on Sunday evening and threatened to give us a good lesson as we refused them again," one of the Ansars said.

"Today's attack is a sequel to the previous incidents and a premeditated one," he added.

Mirpur police could not say anything about the incident. The duty officer said none came to complain about the incident.

Nabiganj pourashava upgraded

UNB, Habiganj

Nabiganj pourashava has been upgraded to a second class one.

A notification of LGRD and Cooperatives Ministry on Saturday said the pourashava has been upgraded to a second class one under Municipal Employees' Rule 3(1) kha, 1992.



Appeal for help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Alif Tahmid Priyam, a five-year-old boy, has been suffering from congenital heart disease and he needs immediate surgery.

Doctors have recommended an open-heart surgery for Tahmid, but the treatment involves a huge amount, which his parents cannot afford.

His mother Ziaunnahar Nasreen is an employee of BNSB Eye Hospital, Mymensingh, and his father Md Aminul Haq is a former officer of now-defunct Adamjee Jute Mills.

They have appealed to the generous people to extend a helping hand to save their son.

Contributions can be sent to the following account: Ziaunnahar Nasreen, Savings Account No.-12048, IFIC Bank, Mymensingh Branch.

RAHIMA MURDER 2 get death

BSS, Dhaka

A Dhaka court sentenced two youths to death yesterday for killing a teenage girl after rape in Bishmail area near Dhaka-Aricha highway at Savar about five years ago.

The convicts are Siddiqur Rahman and Suman. They are the residents of Atiqpara at Savar.

Mohammad Mujibul Kamal, Judge of the Women and Children Repression and Prevention Tribunal-1, handed down the verdict in a crowded courtroom in presence of the convicts yesterday.

The prosecution story is that the convicts took the victim, Rahima Khatun, 18, to a bush near BMRI Industry in Bishmail area adjacent to Dhaka-Aricha highway on October 12, 2000 and strangled her after violating.

Before the incident, Rahima and the two youths were walking in the Dairy Farm area near Dhaka-Aricha highway. Later, local UP member and others caught the youths as the victim did not return home.

Victim's brother filed a case with Savar police accusing the two youths.

After examining nine prosecution witnesses out of 15, the judge pronounced the verdict.

Special Public Prosecutor Mohammad Abul Khayer appeared for the state, while Advocate Kazi Abdus Selim defended the accused.



Obituary

Rashida Huq, wife of Professor M Shamsul Huq, former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University and former chairman of University Grants Commission, passed away due to massive cardiac arrest at her residence in the early hours of July 24 at the age of 69, says a press release.

She left behind her husband, two sons, a daughter, four grandchildren and a host of relatives and friends to mourn her death.

She was laid to rest at the Banani graveyard in the city in the evening after namaz-e-janaza after Asr prayers at Dhanmondi Mosque.

Her kulkhwani will be held at her residence after Maghrib prayers tomorrow.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend the kulkhwani.

MA Majid

MA Majid, an ex-joint secretary of Cabinet Division, died of old age complications on Sunday, says a press release.

His friends and relatives are requested to attend the kulkhwani to be held at his residence, House No 78, Road No 18, Banani in the city after Maghrib prayers tomorrow.

Amena Khatun

BDNEWS, Chittagong

Amena Khatun, wife of former The Daily Azadi editor late Prof Mohammad Khaled, passed away due to stroke at a local clinic yesterday at the age of 78.

Her first namaz-e-janaza was held on the Jamiatul Falah mosque premises yesterday and second namaz-e-janaza was held at Raozan. She was buried at family graveyard.

Chittagong Journalists' Forum Dhaka- CJFD President Md Mostafa Kamal and General Secretary Enamul Huq in a statement condoled the death of Amena Khatun.

Death anniversary

Today is the 5th death anniversary of Dayyan Malik, the eldest son of Malik Abdullah Al-Amin Sadi, Director (Law), Privatisation Commission, says a press release.

He died of dengue fever on this day in 2000 at the age of nine.

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.



Tusher of Daily Star adjudged best DU reporter

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hasan Jahid Tusher, Dhaka University (DU) correspondent of The Daily Star, has been awarded the Shaheed Shah Chishti Helalur Rahman Memorial Award 2004 as the best DU reporter of the year.

Tusher got the award for his report titled 'Politics stops DU to honour professors' published on May 27, 2005.

He received a crest, a cheque for Tk 10,000 and a certificate from DU Treasurer Prof Syed Rashidul Hasan who was the convener of the award committee, yesterday.

Panel of judges were Tarek Al Naser, chief reporter of The Financial Express, Tarun Sarkar, reporter of BDNEWS and Prof Kazi Mannan, teacher of mass communication and journalism department of DU.

WEATHER TODAY

Light to moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over the country till 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy falls are expected at places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions during the period. Met Office, forecasting nearly unchanged day temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 35.3 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 24.2 degree Celsius at Rangamati.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:44pm today and rises at 5:26am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	33.2	25.5	65	62
Chittagong	34.0	26.0	64	71
Rajshahi	33.6	26.8	76	66
Khulna	32.5	26.7	77	92
Barisal	32.0	26.4	00	89
Sylhet	35.3	26.0	62	64
Cox's Bazar	00.0	25.8	76	00