

Tele-tapping legalised

Section 97 (2) of the existing act said if the president declares an emergency, the government may suspend any licence or certificate or permit issued under this act, or suspend any particular activity of, or a particular service provided by an operator, but the government shall pay compensation for the suspended service.

The proposed amendment also said if the president declares an emergency or if the government feels that the state's security and law and order situation are in danger, it can suspend or amend any licence or certificate or permit issued under this act, or suspend any particular activity of, or a particular service provided by an operator, and it will not have to pay any compensation for doing so.

Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud, vice chairman of Bangladesh Bar Council, apprehends misuse of the power. He told the Daily Star over phone last evening the power has created the opportunity to harass the people and certain political leaders.

The people will not even understand how their phones are tapped and feel harassed as a consequence, Rokan said.

Meanwhile, former law minister Abdul Matin Khashru said the government has promulgated the ordinance bypassing parliament and will harass the opposition and the people.

"This ordinance is ultra vires to the constitution being violation to the fundamental rights guaranteed

Bangladesh

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of the competition here at the People's Sports Complex Stadium yesterday.

Rookie striker Zahid Hossain Emily struck a 77th-minute equaliser with a sublime shot to cancel India's 1-0 first-half lead, given by midfielder Climax Lawrence.

Bangladesh emerged Group B champions with a superior goal difference after they finished level with their regional rivals on seven points.

The holders will play Pakistan in the second semifinal under lights after the first between India and last year's runners-up Maldives on Wednesday.

Argentine coach Diego Cruciani showed faith in his reserve bench but the inexperienced squad, without nine first-team players, were chasing shadows against a full-strength India.

A left-wing centre by Manju helped India break the 17-minute deadlock when Mehtabuddin nodded the ball near the penalty spot and an unmarked Lawrence blasted a volley into the back of the net.

Striving to win the ball in the midfield, the Bangladeshi reserves opened up the rival defence in the 39th minute for the first time but Abul, who dribbled past Manju into the box, saw his low drive partly blocked by Indian custodian Sandip Nandy before a defender cleared it.

Two minutes before half-time, centre-back Mehrajuddin, who had received his first booking on the half hour for kicking Ujjal in the face, was sent off with a second yellow card for arguing with Sri Lankan referee Hetikum Kamame.

After the break, Cruciani's boys reasserted themselves and began to enjoy superior ball possession. Ujjal saw his low drive saved by Sandip at the near post in the 31st minute but the Indian goalkeeper had no clue a minute later when Emily, taking a pass from left full-back Parvez Babu just inside the box, turned on his heel to fool two rival defenders and lobbed an angled right footer into the far corner for his second goal of the meet.

Victory Day plans

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Different political parties, socio-cultural organisations and professional bodies have not taken up as elaborate programmes as in the past to mark the two national days in the wake of the continuing spate of bomb attacks by suicide squads of Islamists in different places across the country.

Leaders of these organisations said they have cut their programmes considering the mounting public insecurity with the government failing to ensure of safety of lives of people in the face of attacks by the militants.

Every year, varieties of programmes including discussion, film show and exhibition of documentaries on the Liberation War, musical soiree, drama, dance and recitation at the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital and elsewhere in the country used to begin on the first day of December. These programmes highlighted the spirit of the war and recalled the supreme sacrifice of the martyrs for liberating the motherland.

But this year, such programmes are not being held as yet.

Sammilita Sangskritik Jote (SSJ), a leading cultural body, has taken up a three-day programme this time, instead of a 15-day one in the past, due to the rising militancy in the country.

SSJ General Secretary Golam Kuddus told The Daily Star that they have decided to hold their programmes at only those places in the capital - the Central Shaheed Minar, Dharmodhara Rabindra Sorobor and the TSC of Dhaka University - in lieu of eight places in the previous years.

Bangladesh embassy in Beijing sent a note verbal confirming the acceptance of the note from the Chinese government which will constitute an agreement between the two governments in this regard.

The products enjoying duty free access into the Chinese market include, ready made garments, textile, frozen food, leather, jute and jute goods, soap, plastic ware and photo accessories.

by article 43 (B)," he said, adding, privacy will be violated.

Earlier, leading jurist Dr M Zahid had also opposed the issue saying, "It will obviously hamper people's right to privacy and there is a possibility of its misuse."

Eminent rights activist and legal expert Shahdeen Malik said, "If the government thinks it necessary on security grounds or for investigations, it might have sought court permission to tap phones." He said necessity of such a law.

In a democratic society, these restrictions are very limited, he pointed out.

Outgoing President of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Kutubuddin Ahmed casts doubts over proper enforcement of the law. He said should be ensured that there is no scope for the law enforcement agencies to misuse it.

President of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) Tipu Munshi said the ordinance would curtail the people's fundamental rights. The government should take necessary measures so that there is no misuse for political gains, he added.

Maybe 500 subscribers are misusing cellphones but eight million others cannot be penalised for them, said a top executive of a leading cellphone operator.

Twenty-eight eminent citizens under the banner of Sammiti Samajik Andolan (united social movement) on December 6 protested against the government move to tap telephones.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) and Jatiya Mukti Council yesterday condemned the promulgation of the ordinance and urged the government to withdraw it.

Biman

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Having passport No. 031164, he hailed from Sreepur village under Kotwali police station in Pabna.

Airport sources said he was scheduled to board the 576-seater chartered flight BG-801, which had been scheduled to take off at 5.45pm Sunday but it was delayed and rescheduled to depart at 7.00pm due to not having landing permission in Jeddah from the Saudi authorities. Finally the flight was cancelled altogether sparking anger among the waiting pilgrims.

CAAB officials neither allowed the journalists to enter inside to talk to the distressed pilgrims, nor did they allow the pilgrims to come out to talk to the journalists.

However, duty controller of Biman told The Daily Star yesterday that the BG-801 flight would take off from ZIA at 8:00pm yesterday as they secured the landing permission from the Saudi government in the afternoon.

BIMAN STATEMENT

Biman authorities in a press release yesterday said they had sent the 'ballottee' (under government management) hajj pilgrims of Sunday's cancelled flight BG-103 to Jeddah by BG-801 flight last night while the 'non-ballottee' (under private management) pilgrims were sent by flight BG-105 the same night.

The release claimed that Biman arranged hotel accommodations for the pilgrims whose flights had been cancelled, but Sujat Ali and many others did not prefer to go out of the airport.

Sujat Ali died of a cardiac arrest at the airport at about 1:30am while asleep, the release said.

The body of Sujat was sent to his village home through his relatives in a Biman vehicle yesterday.

The first Hajj flight of Biman took off from ZIA on Sunday morning with 274 'ballottee' pilgrims out of 2,621 of them.

The press release also said this year 45,000 people will go to Saudi Arabia to perform Hajj and five to six thousand of them will be ferried by foreign airlines.

China grants

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from July 1 next year, said a press release yesterday.

The Chinese ministry of commerce sent a note verbal to Bangladesh embassy in Beijing announcing its decision to advance the date to January 1.

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Asian Highway

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Dhaka also failed to persuade some neighbouring countries to propose amendment to the route before the next ESCAP meeting.

The proposed Asian Highway map shows two roads entering Bangladesh from two points on the Indian border - Benapole and Bangabandha. The roads then run over Dhaka to exit through Tamabil to India. Bangladesh wants an additional route to Yangon via Tenkaf to be part of the Asian Highway.

Dhaka has been hesitating to sign the agreement with the existing road map because of its political stand against giving transit to India. At last night's cabinet meeting, some ministers opposed the idea of joining the road network without getting assurance of changing the existing road map.

They observed that joining the current network would mean giving transit to India because both the proposed routes are coming from India and also exit to that country.

Experts, however, observed that joining the highway network under the current plan does not mean giving transit to any particular country. The Asian Highway is just a road network and separate agreements will be required to transport people and goods through the network. If Bangladesh does not want to give transit to India it can refuse to sign such agreements and yet it can join the network and upgrade its roads to the Asian Highway standards, they pointed out.

Speedy Trial

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Having passport No. 031164, he

hailed from Sreepur village under

Kotwali police station in Pabna.

The government enacted The Speedy Trial Act on April 9, 2002, for a two-year term. Upon its expiry on April 10, 2004, the act was extended for two years.

The Speedy Trial Act deals with offences like extortion, manipulation of tender bidding, obstructing the movement of vehicles, ransacking, mugging, creating toward situation and obstructing any public servant in his/her duties.

The meeting also approved the proposed list of holidays for 2006 for the government, semi-government and autonomous organisations.

Yadav's father,

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Das said the family could not perform the religious ritual due on the fourth day of her brother's death.

Central leaders of Bangladesh Puja Uddayan Parishad and Hindu Buddha Christian Oikya Parishad visited Yadav's home and expressed concern and sympathy to the family.

They also expressed dismay at the state minister's claim that Yadav was a 'Hindu militant'.

BNP MPs

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should quickly be implemented in Rajshahi, Natore, Naogaon and other areas where Bangla Bhai

established a reign of terror last year.

Besides, the government should keep keen watch on the constituencies along the border and belonging to Jamaat, they added.

A lawmaker from Pabna yesterday told The Daily Star if the government keeps surveillance on Jamaat's constituencies, the origin of militancy may be found.

Speaking anonymously, the MP said he believes Islami Chhatra Shibir, NGOs and some organisations run by Jamaat have direct links with militants.

The areas where Jamaat has strong organisational network like Khulna, Jessor, Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Pirojpur, Pabna, Dinajpur and Barisal should also be given immediate attention.

FRESH COMMITTEES

Party sources said 75 zilla committees have recently been asked to form the fresh committees as soon as possible and also to include locally respected persons and professionals in consultation with the lawmakers.

As many as 47 such committees have already been formed in the Jessor-3 constituency, the sources added.

Tariqul Islam, minister for environment and forest and lawmaker from Jessor-3, told The Daily Star yesterday they have already formed a number of new committees.

"Those who are bombing and killing innocent people in the name of Islam are people's enemy. We must fight these elements. BNP will have to find out where these militants are hiding," he said.

A number of senior ministers said besides administrative actions, the government is initiating a social movement to suppress militancy. The decision of forming the new committees at the grassroots level is part of that social movement, they told The Daily Star yesterday.

The ministers also emphasised that the opposition parties including the Awami League should also be involved in the government attempt to resist the militants.

"If a unity among all the political parties can be forged, the country will be able to get rid of these Islamist militants," a minister said asking not to be named.

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Local journalists said "heavenly

One dies a week

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organisations Greenpeace and FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights) in cooperation with Chittagong-based non-government organisation YPSA (Young Power in Social Action).

The survey by the three organisations suggested for an urgent enforcement of the environmental justice and human rights principles by the authorities concerned in the ship-breaking industries.

YPSA Advisor AMM Toha, Prof Dr Shafiq Haider Chowdhury of Chittagong University Zoology Department, Dr Afroza Begum of Public Administration Department, Chief Reporter of daily Suprothab Bangladesh M Nasirul Haque, Bhoror Kaggaj Bureau Chief Omar Kaiser and Staff Reporter of daily Independent Nazimuddin Shyamol discussed the report presented by YPSA Project Official Mohammad Ali Shahin.

"Such official or estimated figures, however, do not include casualties as a result of diseases related to the toxic fumes and materials the workers are exposed to the whole day work," the report mentioned.

It cited manifold difficulties in obtaining accurate data about casualties.

Most of the workers at ship-breaking yards, especially in Bangladesh and India, have little education and come from poorest areas of their countries and they fall easy victims of exploitation by the yard owners, the report said.

"The workers are being provided neither with the adequate training nor with the equipment to work in such a dangerous and toxic environment, although ship-breaking is considered by the International Labour Organisation as one of the heaviest and most hazardous occupations," it added.

Besides, almost all of the vessels condemned for breaking contain hazardous substances such as asbestos, oil sludge, paints containing lead, other heavy metal like cadmium and arsenic, poisonous biocides and even radioactive substances, the report stated.

In Bangladesh yard owners or authorities do not keep records of data about the ship-breaking workers and the only sources of information about those workers are the reports of local media, the report said.

"We are confident that the authorities will take a strong stand against these actions and take steps towards bringing the perpetrators to justice," said the World Bank, regretting the recent bomb attacks and sympathising with the families of the victims.

Fresh voter list

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Asaduzzaman Noor and Barrister Aslam-Ul-Islam for Abdul Jalil.

Both the petitions term the unilateral decision by the chief election commissioner (CEC) to go for a fresh electoral register illegal and a violation of the constitution. They seek a stay order on the EC activities in preparation for a fresh roll.

The Election Commission (EC), EC Secretariat, CEC, Election Commissioners M Munsef Ali and AK Mohammad Ali, and Secretary to the EC secretariat SM Zakaria were made respondents in the petitions.

The petitioners in their pleas described as illegal the appointment of 2,40,000 enumerators, 70,000 supervisors, 6,235 assistant registration officers and 83 registration officers.

The one filed by Jalil challenges also the legality of the recruitment of some 300 upazila election officers.

CEC MA Aziz on August 6 decided on his own to have a fresh roll, ignoring the opinion of the two other election commissioners who were in favour of revising the existing one. On his orders, the EC secretariat has completed all works preparatory to the task, ignoring the objections from the two election commissioners.

The EC secretariat has recruited some three lakh staff and printed about nine crore forms and manuals. It has even timetabled the preparation of the voter list to be done between January 1 and June 1.

Election Commissioners Munsef Ali and AK Mohammad Ali, however, did not approve the recruitment of the manpower. They gave note of dissent against the appointment and said the manpower can be appointed only for revising the existing list.

The two also have expressed their ignorance about the timetable.

From university

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Rapid Action Battalion 7 (Rab-7) for Rapid Action Battalion 7 (Rab-7) for

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