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BANGABANDHU MURDER No move for hearing despite having adequate judges in SC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There has been no move for hearing of the Bangabandhu Murder Case in the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court (SC) in last three months despite having adequate judges for the hearing.

Earlier the historic case had remained stalled for about six years for want of sufficient number of judges who could hear it.

Former special public prosecutor of the case, Anisul Haque, said there is no legal roadblock to resume hearing of the case. "It only needs an initiative to have the case back on the cause list and begin the hearing proceedings," he said.

The hearing on petition for leave to appeal against the High Court's verdict has remained held up since August 2001 due to shortage of judges who could hear the case. The problem seemed to be resolved on March 20 when Justice M Hassan Ameen was appointed to the Appellate Division.

But, there is no sign of hope so far due to lack of moves either from the law ministry or by the court for resuming the hearing.

Earlier, the attorney general's office told newsmen that they would consult with the law ministry about the process to resume the case that needs reconstitution of a bench that could hear the case. A source in the Attorney General's office said they have consulted with the law ministry regarding beginning of the case's hearing, but did not get any positive result so far.

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Killer Mohiuddin sent to jail on arrival

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed, condemned to death for killing Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family on August 15, 1975, was brought back to the country yesterday, after over a decade on the run in the United States.

Immigration police arrested him on his arrival at Zia

International Airport (ZIA) at 12:18pm and took him straight to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka. From there, the ex-army major who was tried in absentia for his part in the gruesome August killings was sent to Dhaka Central Jail.

The US Homeland Security got him on board a flight to Dhaka after a district court in Los Angeles on June 14 ruled that it could not

overturn an immigration judge's order for his deportation.

The immigration case dragged on for years as he appealed the deportation order issued against him in 2002. On February 27, a judge in the 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco allowed the order to stand.

The US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials arrested Mohiuddin at his



house in Los Angeles on March 13. Since then, the government has been after bringing him back to the country.

SCENES AT ZIA

Sentenced to life also for aiding and abetting the killing of the four national leaders on November 3, 1975, Mohiuddin was taken out of the Thai Airways flight TG 321 amid tight security.

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No initiative yet to bring back killers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is no government move for bringing back the convicted killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman absconding abroad as it was overlooked by most of the previous governments.

The taskforce formed in 1999 during the Awami League (AL) rule to have the killers extradited was dissolved after the BNP-Jamaat led coalition took office in 2001.

During its five-year rule till 2006, the BNP-Jamaat government did not make any efforts in this regard. Many believe that both BNP and Jamaat are beneficiaries of the killing.

Even the caretaker government did not take any steps in the last five months in this regard. It also did not take any action to bring back Mohiuddin Ahmed, one of the convicted killers, who returned home yesterday as the US government had rejected the killer's appeal for political asylum there and deported him.

"There is no government role in the process of Mohiuddin's return. He is forced to come back as he was extradited by the United States government," a government source said.

The foreign and home ministries are now tight-lipped about the

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AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed, condemned killer of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, being taken to a Dhaka court yesterday following his deportation from the US.

Reformists now want Hasina in the move

HASANIAH TUSHER

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina's readiness to delve deeper into party reforms going beyond the 21-point proposal by some senior party colleagues seems to have prompted many of the pro-reform party leaders to communicate with her, saying they want reforms with her at the helm.

Most of the reformist leaders, who had planned to challenge Hasina's leadership if she does not agree with the 21-point proposal drawn up without her involvement, have apparently softened their stance.

This followed the AL chief's

assertion that one group of people should run the party and another set should run the government.

AL Presidium Member Suranjit Sengupta yesterday said they want to bring reforms by keeping Hasina as the party chief. He had earlier said they would remove her from the post of party president, if necessary, for reforms.

Suranjit told a private television channel that they have now finalised the 21-point proposal by curtailing unilateral decision-making power of the party chief and introducing joint leadership in the party.

Another pro-reform leader AL

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Pro-reform BNP leaders agree to ask Khaleda to quit as party chief

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

Pro-reforms leaders of BNP have agreed on principle to ask BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia to step down from the party-chief position. Simultaneously, they are also trying to lobby the councillors, the leaders who can bring changes in the party constitution.

Highly placed BNP sources said the pro-reforms leaders of BNP had a number of meetings with BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan at his Gulshan residence

to discuss reforms in the party and decided there to ask the party chief about resigning.

A number of high-ranking BNP leaders including BNP standing committee member M Shamsul Islam, former minister Osman Faruk, former minister MK Anwar, former lawmaker Shakawat Hossain Bakul and Dhaka City Mayor and Dhaka City Unit BNP President Sadeque Hossain Khoka met Bhuiyan yesterday. Bhuiyan also met several other leaders over

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Khaleda welcomes reform proposals

Tells The Daily Star she never made decisions unilaterally

ZAYADUL AHISAN and
RASHIDUL HASAN

BNP Chairperson and former prime minister Khaleda Zia has said she would welcome any suggestions from her party leaders and workers across the country to reform the party.

"All reform proposals would be discussed openly in party forums and council sessions," she said in an exclusive interview with The Daily Star yesterday.

About the demand for her leaving from the top post of the party,



she said, "I am an elected chairperson by the council and the council is the supreme body to implement any reforms in the party."

The former premier categorically denied that she always made decisions unilaterally and said she used to consult the senior cabinet leaders and the standing committee to run the country as well as the party.

When The Daily Star recently tried to interview the BNP chairperson, she suggested sending a written questionnaire, as journalists have no access to her

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Chaktai canal recovery drive starts

CU CORRESPONDENT

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) and Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) started a joint eviction drive against the encroachers of the Chaktai Khal (canal) yesterday.

Illegal occupiers of nearly five and a half kilometres area stretching from Karnaphuli estuary (Chaktai Chandra Gadam Bridge) to Bahaddar Hat would be thrown out in the drive.

On the first day, at least 15 illegal structures, mostly semi-pucca shops, were bulldozed while some encroachers removed their structures themselves.

Metropolitan Magistrate Habibur Rahman and CDA

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POSSESSING LIQUOR Charges framed against Moudud

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday framed charges against detained former law minister barrister Moudud Ahmed in connection with a case filed for possession of 32 cans of beer and 16 bottles of other alcoholic beverages.

The same court adjourned the proceedings of a graft case filed against barrister Nazmul Huda and his wife for taking Tk 2.40 crore bribe from a construction firm owner until Thursday following a time petition by the defence lawyers.

Huda showed his anger towards the prosecution after the charges

were cited during the hearing of the case.

Besides, former health minister Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, former state minister for communications Salahuddin Ahmed and ntv managing director (MD) were remanded yesterday on different terms.

MOUDUD CASE

Judge Mohammad Azizul Haq of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court rejected the discharge petition submitted earlier and framed charges against Moudud in connection with the case filed with Gulshan Police Station.

Moudud pleaded not guilty and

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NGOs want EC to relax draft rules for officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of non-government organisations (NGO) at a meeting with the Election Commission (EC) yesterday opposed its draft proposal imposing restriction on NGO officials to contest parliamentary election within three years of their retirement.

A delegation of the Federation of NGOs in Bangladesh, a platform of about 1,000 NGOs, asked the EC to reconsider the proposal. It also opposed another proposal that allows an NGO to donate funds to political parties.

In its draft proposals for electoral reforms, the EC said a person shall be disqualified from being elected as and from being a member of parliament if he has resigned

or retired or he is terminated as an official or employee of a non-government organisation that receives donation or fund from any foreign country, unless three years elapsed since his resignation, retirement or termination.

The same provision is also applicable to government officials. At the meeting with the EC, the NGO leaders argued that they don't have any scope to influence the election process while in service. Government officials may have such scope, they said.

"We think the proposal is not reasonable. We requested the Election Commission to reconsider it," Chairman of the federation and head of the delegation, Dr Mohammad Ibrahim told reporters later.

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