

CG decision to implement judiciary separation hailed

AL, NAP to place common proposals at EC dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Welcoming the caretaker government's decision to implement the separation of the judiciary from the executive, Awami League yesterday called for necessary steps to ensure that common people get justice from the independent judiciary.

"The Awami League government had taken the initiative to separate the judiciary as it believes in the independence of the judiciary. In consequence, this government is going to implement the separation of the judiciary. We welcome the move and thank the government for this initiative," AL presidium member Tofail Ahmed told reporters after a meeting with leaders of the National Awami Party (NAP) that also hailed the decision.

The meeting between the two parties was held as part of AL's series of meetings with the components of the AL-led 14-party combine and other like-minded parties with a view to taking a common stance on the dialogue with the Election Commission (EC) and the issues to be discussed there.

Chaired by NAP President Prof Mozaffar Ahmed, the meeting decided, in principle, that they would place common proposals

based on the 14-party's 31-point reform proposals at the dialogue with the EC.

They also called for creating an environment conducive to free, fair and credible elections free from the influence of black money, muscle power and fundamentalism.

AL leaders Tofail Ahmed, Motia Chowdhury, Syed Ashrafur Islam, Abdul Mannan, Akhtaruzzaman, Sultan Mohammad Mansur Ahmed and Abdul Latif Siddiqui and NAP leaders MA Gani, Enamul Haque, Shafiqur Rahman and Amina Ahmed attended the meeting at the residence of the NAP president at Segunbagicha in the city.

Talking to reporters, Prof Mozaffar Ahmed termed the EC's dialogue a childish step. There was no need to hold dialogues with the political parties over a stretch of three months, he said, adding that the people are wondering whether holding the dialogue is a tactic of wasting time.

Tofail praised Prof Mozaffar Ahmed for his contribution to all democratic movements from 1952 to 1971.

He said they would take part in the dialogue with the EC to help implement the electoral roadmap.

Motia Chowdhury said the coun-

trymen are satisfied with the government's decision regarding the separation of the judiciary. "The people now hope that the judges will ensure justice for all," she said.

Workers Party of Bangladesh

The Workers Party yesterday also hailed the government's decision to separate the judiciary.

The party leaders also termed the incidents of opposing the decision 'unwarranted'.

At a meeting of the party's politburo, the leaders observed that the main goal of the separation of the judiciary would not be achieved if the executive magistrates are given judicial power in some cases.

They also urged the government to take steps to put an end to corruption in the judiciary.

Party leaders Bimal Biswas, Haider Akbar Khan Rano, Anisur Rahman Malik and Fazle Hossain Badsha attended the meeting.

Bangladesh Bar Council Vice Chairman of Bangladesh Bar Council Khandokar Mahbub Hossain in a press statement welcomed the government's decision.

He said the people's aspirations for fair trial free from political influence and corruption would be fulfilled through the separation of the judiciary.

INDO-BANGLA TRAIN SERVICE

Dhaka clears position

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka cleared her position on operationalisation of the passenger train service between Bangladesh and India as a question arose in some sections of the press about Bangladesh's reluctance.

"The factual position is that discussions are ongoing on and a draft of the agreement on the passenger train service has been transmitted to the Indian authorities from the Bangladesh side," said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday.

A release issued by the ministry further said a response is awaited from the Indian side in this regard.

"It must, however, be understood that on this or any other negotiations with a particular country, Bangladesh will always seek to protect her perceived national interest," the ministry noted in clarifying its stand.

3 ten-storied library bldgs to be set up at DU

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka University will build three ten-storied library buildings equipped with modern library facilities to meet its growing demands.

Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) will provide assistance to build the buildings in three phases.

"KOICA authorities verbally agreed to assist us for the construction of three ten storied library buildings. After approval from the Ministry of Education, the project is now waiting for final approval of the KOICA," DU librarian Kh Fazlur Rahman said.

He yesterday submitted the proposal to the Korean Embassy for the approval of KOICA.

"The Korean organisation will construct the buildings of their own supervision and will provide necessary financial support," librarian Kh Fazlur Rahman said.

Kim Chang Sup, resident representative of KOICA Bangladesh office, visited the library and the new construction site and agreed to the 'Construction of a 10 storied L-Type building for the Dhaka University library' at a cost of about Tk 40 crore.

The university syndicate, the highest decision making authorities also approved the proposal on August 14, a syndicate member said.

After completion of the proposed ten-storied building, the other two buildings will be constructed demolishing the present library buildings.

Moderate earthquake felt

BSS, Dhaka

An earthquake of 'moderate intensity' was felt at 01 hours 56 minutes 42 seconds (BST) yesterday.

The epicenter was 3,036 kms from the Dhaka Seismic Centre at Agargaon and 2,816 kms from Chittagong Seismic Centre at Ambagan.

The intensity of the tremor was 5.7 on the Richter scale, said a Met office press release yesterday.

The location of the earthquake could not be identified due to insufficient data, the release added.

4 get 3 years' RI in extortion case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A court in Khulna has sentenced four people to three years rigorous imprisonment (RI) and fined them Tk 5000 each, in default, to suffer six months more imprisonment in an extortion case.

The judgement was delivered yesterday by Metropolitan Magistrate Md Kamal Hossain who tries cases of Khulna Speedy Trial Court.

The convicts are Kamrul Islam alias Angul Kata Kamrul, Firoye Chokdar, Delwar Howlader and Ruhul Amin.

Kamrul, owner of a shrimp enclosure, was a Dakop upazila correspondent of the now-defunct Aker Kagoj.

The prosecution story in brief is that the convicts snatched a sum of Tk 1.8 lakh on August 10 last from four owners of fish farms at Khejuria under Dakop upazila of Khulna district.

One of the victims Shafiqul Islam lodged a case with Khulna Speedy Trial Court as complainant on August 13.

Sub-Inspector GM Shamsun Noor of Dakop Police Station, who investigated the case, pressed a charge sheet to the court against all the four FIR-named accused on August 21.

The accused were tried in absentia.



Ambassador of the European Commission and delegation head Dr Stefan Frowein makes a courtesy call on President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday.

Goods worth Tk 2 cr gutted at factory of Akij Cement

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Goods worth Tk 2 crore were gutted in a massive fire at the Akij Cement Factory in Narayanganj yesterday.

No one was injured in the incident.

Preliminary investigations found that an LPG gas cylinder burst in the factory workshop after the fire originated from an electrical short circuit in the same room, factory officials say.

The fire then slowly spread to other sections of the factory, with its tin-roof warehouse suffering most of the damage.

Factory General Manager Mizanur Rahman said although the exact figure of the damage is unknown at this point, preliminary estimates put the damage figure at around Tk 2 crore.

The fire was brought under control after two and half hours by six units of the Narayanganj Fire Department.

Arms smuggler, drug peddler arrested

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

An arms smuggler was arrested with a foreign-made pistol, a bullet and a dagger from Gatipara village in Benapole yesterday morning.

Acting on a tip-off, the police arrested Jamal Hossain Mintu, 35, from his house. Jamal had been smuggling arms from India and selling them in different parts of the country, police said.

A case has been filed with Benapole Port Police Station.

Meanwhile, Detective Branch (DB) of police picked up a drug peddler with 500 grams of heroin from Gazipur village in Benapole.

Acting on a tip-off, the police raided the house of Delwar and found the narcotic drug worth about Tk 50 lakh.

Three jailed in Ctg for keeping illegal arms

BSS, Chittagong

The Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge Court yesterday sentenced two people to seven years' rigorous imprisonment each and another to 10 years imprisonment for keeping illegal arms.

Judge Mohammad Ekramul Haq Chowdhury delivered the verdict. The convicts are Mohammad Robin alias Rafique, son of Abdul Kader of Gaibandha, Nazrul Islam, son of Anwar Hossain of Bagerhat and Sumon Das, son of Babla Das of Raozan upazila of Chittagong.

Of the convicts, Robin was awarded 10 years rigorous imprisonment, court sources said.

According to the prosecution story, Bandar police recovered one LG loaded with a cartridge and one knife from the possessions of the convicts at Kolshidigir in the port city on January 21, 2005.

RMG factory shut as workers strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The authorities of a garment factory at Tejgaon Industrial area in the city have closed the factory indefinitely in the wake of work abstention by workers demanding release of their six fellow workers.

The workers of Nassa Mainland factory have been remaining absent from their work for the last two days demanding immediate release of six workers who were arrested during Eid holiday.

Police said they arrested the workers for staging demonstrations and damaging several factories on October 23 after the owners had shut down the factory following workers' unrest for increased iftar allowance and Eid bonus.

A notice announcing indefinite closure of the factory was hung on the gate of the factory yesterday morning.

The notice said the authorities have closed the factory with immediate effect as the workers did not join their work despite repeated reminders through notices.

Under the circumstances the authorities have been compelled to shut the factory for indefinite period under section 13 (1) of Bangladesh Labour Law 2006.

A huge contingent of police has been deployed around the factory apprehending further unrest.

Army and Rab personnel were also found deployed near the factory yesterday.

Workers like other days came to the factory, but returned home founding the closure notice of the factory where around 2500 workers were working.

A UNB report from Savar adds: Workers at Shanta Industries Ltd, one of the largest export-oriented industries in Dhaka Export Processing Zone (DEPZ), also observed work abstention yesterday to press home their 8-point demand including "unconditional" release of their arrested colleagues.

Police and sources concerned said before Eid-ul-Fitr, the workers ransacked the factory over festival leave.

Later, a case was filed against over 50 workers and six of them were arrested.

The labour unrest re-erupted yesterday as the owners sacked one worker named Kanchon and

handed him over to police.

In the morning, hundreds of workers in four busses started for BGMEA office in Dhaka to press their demands.

When they reached Bypile Bus Stand, police halted the caravan and arrested five of the protestors Jahangir, Bidyut Kumar, Zahidul, Shamim and Malek.

Later, the workers placed their demands to the managing director of the factory.

The demands included withdrawal of the case and unconditional release of the arrested workers, granting all government leaves, reinstating and providing compensation to the retrenched workers, a 10 percent increase in salary and doubling of overtime allowance.

3 car lifters held, 3 stolen cars recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective police arrested three car lifters from different places in the last three days and recovered three stolen private cars following their information.

The arrested are Mohammad Shamim, an alleged leader of inter-district car lifters, and his two accomplices Mohammad Harun and Jahangir.

Masudur Rahman, additional deputy commissioner of the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), told The Daily Star that Shamim was arrested from Sonadanga truck stand in Khulna on October 22 and following his confession his accomplices were arrested from Cheralagi in Tongi on Tuesday evening.

Following their information, the DB police recovered two stolen private cars F Premo and X Corolla from Pallabi in the city.

They recovered another new G Corolla private car from Balurtek in Keraniganj at around 3:00pm yesterday.

DB police said the cars are worth about Tk 50 lakh.

RUJ secretary arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court, Rajshahi yesterday sent journalist and human rights activist Jahangir Alam Aakash to jail custody after the police produced him before the court showing him arrested under Section 16 (2) of the Emergency Power Rules.

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested Aakash, general secretary of Rajshahi Union of Journalists and Rajshahi bureau reporter of the Sangbad and the recently closed CSB News, in the early hours of yesterday in connection with a fresh extortion case filed with Puthia upazila police station.

Aakash was recently granted an interim bail by the High Court in another extortion case.

According to the two general diaries (GD) the Rab filed with Boalia Police Station, a Rab team picked up Aakash when he was roaming the area suspiciously.

Aakash tried to flee when the Rab members challenged him, the Rab said in the GD.

Abdul Jalil, son of Kalimuddin of Kandra areas in Puthia, filed the extortion case against Aakash on Tuesday.

In the case, Jalil alleged that Aakash demanded Tk 1 lakh in toll from him on April 27 in 2002 and threatened to publish a report of a 'false rape incident' against his son Harun if he fails to pay.

The plaintiff also mentioned that he gave Tk 30,000 to Aakash following more threats.

He also alleged that the journalist also put pressure on him on January 29 in 2003 to pay Tk 90,000.

Mahfuzul Haque Loton, vice-president of Rajshahi Awami League, lodged the other case against Aakash with Boalia police station on August 20 and the case was recorded on October 2.



Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Alhaj Mir Mozammel Hossain, a freedom fighter and collection manager of the daily Ittefaq, died of a cardiac arrest at Birdem Hospital in the early hours of yesterday at the age of 67.

He was the founder and former secretary general of Bangladesh Sangbadpatra Karmachari Federation.

He is survived by his wife, two sons and four daughters.

He was buried at his home village at Chhatkil with state honour.

His quikhwani will be held on Friday after Asr prayers at 228 Alambagh, New Jurain, in Dhaka. Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend the quikhwani.

President of the Daily Ittefaq Karmachari Union Kazi Bazlur Rahman and General Secretary Jahanara Begum, President of the Daily Ittefaq Workers' Union Fazle Imam and General Secretary Alamgir Hossain and the Ittefaq unit of Dhaka Union of Journalists have expressed deep shock at the death of Mozammel Hossain.

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar

The Leprosy Mission International organises a national advocacy seminar on the rights of leprosy-affected people. Venue: YWCA Bhaban. Time: 8:30am.

Workshop

Bangladesh Network Office for Urban Safety (BNUS) and LRNE, Sri Lanka will jointly organise a workshop on sharing knowledge on disaster warning. Venue: ITN centre, BUET. Time: 9:00am.

Discussion

Bangla Academy will hold a discussion to mark the 136th birth anniversary of litterateur Abdul Karim Sahitya Bisharad. Venue: Bangla Academy. Time: 4:00pm.

World Rural Women's Day

National observance committee on World Rural Women's Day will organise a seminar on the occasion of the World Rural Women's Day. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:30am.

Cultural programme

National observance committee on World Rural Women's Day will organise a cultural programme to mark the World Rural Women's Day. Venue: Manik Mia Avenue. Time: 4:00pm.

DISCHARGE PETITION OF 40 SYLHET AL LEADERS Next hearing Dec 10

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The Sylhet Sadar Cognizance Magistrate's Court yesterday deferred the hearing of discharge petition of 40 Awami League (AL) leaders, who were held under emergency regulations from a house in the city suburb on May 14 this year.

The court fixed December 10 for hearing the discharge petition.

Yesterday, 28 leaders including Sylhet city AL General Secretary Misbahuddin Siraj, UK AL's Joint Secretary Shafique Chowdhury, city Jubo League chief Advocate Syed Shamim Ahmed and district Chhatra League chief Zaglu Chowdhury appeared before the court of first class Magistrate Alamgir Hossain.

The joint forces picked them up for holding political gathering. They however claimed that it was a social gathering only.

Of them, 26 leaders including some expatriates were released on bail from the High Court on May 24, while another 13 were released on bail on October 4.

Joint Secretary of Sylhet city AL and Ward Commissioner Abdul Khalique remained detained.

Meet to condole death of poet Shimul today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Poetry Council will hold a condolence meeting at Dhaka University today commemorating the death of poet Shimul Mohammad.

A number of eminent poets, intellectuals and cultural activists are expected to attend the condolence meeting at Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) at 4:00pm with poet Habibullah Siraj, president of the council, in the chair.

People have been requested to attend the meeting to pay tribute to the poet.

The poet passed away due to liver cirrhosis at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University on October 20.

One of the key figures in the cultural movement waged against the autocracy and fundamentalism in the 80's, Shimul Mohammad was born in Dhaka on December 25, 1963.

A poetry collection of the poet titled 'Swapno Biddho' was published as a joint publication in the Boi Mela of 1986.

Road accidents kill 4

STAR REPORT

At least four people were killed in separate road accidents in Chittagong, Noakhali and Sirajganj yesterday and on Tuesday night.

BSS from Chittagong adds: Two pedestrians were killed in a road accident on Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Baroia area under Sitakundhu upazila in the district on Tuesday night.

The accident occurred when a Chittagong-bound truck knocked the victims, police and hospital sources said.

One of the dead was identified as Shartullah, 35, son of late Amir Hossain, of Sitakundhu upazila. The identity on another could not be known immediately.

Local people and police rushed the two to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) in critical condition where the attending doctors declared them dead.

UNB from Noakhali adds: A bus rammed into a CNG-run auto-rickshaw in Senbagh upazila on Choumuhani-Feni road yesterday, killing one and injuring

two others.

Local sources said the accident took place near Kalyandi bazar area at about 1:00pm, killing an unidentified passenger of the three-wheeler, aged about 19, on the spot.

The injured were rushed to hospital.

Our correspondent from Sirajganj adds: A man was killed and two others were injured in a road accident on Sirajganj-Kazipur Road in the district yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Amzad Hossain, 35, of Shalavita village.

Police and witnesses said the accident occurred at around 3:00 pm when a Sirajganj-bound bus from Kazipur hit him from behind leaving him dead on the spot and injuring two other pedestrians.

The injured were admitted to Sirajganj Sadar Hospital.

Police recovered the body and sent it to the hospital for post mortem.

A case was filed with Sadar Police Station in this connection.



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 33.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakundhu and lowest 18.5 degree Celsius at Rangamati.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:25pm today and rises at 6:01am 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 | 31.5 | 20.9 | 67 | 70 |
| Chittagong | 30.6 | 21.0 | 73 | 70 |
| Rajshahi | 30.6 | 20.6 | 88 | 81 |
| Khulna | 30.5 | 22.2 | 90 | 88 |
| Barisal | 31.0 | 21.2 | 81 | 83 |
| Sylhet | 31.3 | 20.3 | 64 | 73 |
| Cox's Bazar | 32.8 | 23.5 | -- | 80 |