

SEPARATION OF JUDICIARY

Utilise court hours properly to reach benefits to all

Chief Justice urges lawyers

UNB, Gazipur

Chief Justice M Ruhul Amin yesterday called upon the lawyers to properly use the court hours to reach the benefit of separation of the judiciary to all spheres of the society.

Exchanging views with the lawyers at the local bar association, the chief justice observed that after the judiciary separation the deprived and distressed people of the society have now been coming more in numbers to the court with the hope of getting justice.

Obituary



Sohel Rana, chairman of Lighting World (Pvt) Ltd, died in a road accident on Dhaka-Aricha highway on December 28.

He was 37, says a press release. He was buried at his village home at Fasherbandi, Naria of Shariatpur.

His kulkhwani will be held today after Asr prayers at his village home.

"You should maintain properly the court hours to keep up with the judicial functions considering the desire of the justice-seekers," he told the lawyers.

Presided over by local bar association President Abdus Sattar, the function was addressed, among others, by District and Sessions

Judge Hassan Shaheed Ferdous, Deputy Commissioner Syed Mizanur Rahman and Police Super Alamgir Alam.

Later, the chief justice told the local media men that some more time will be required to get the full fruition of separation of the judiciary from the executive.

Doctor urges govt to send Hasina abroad for treatment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Syed Modasser Ali, personal physician to detained Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, yesterday urged the caretaker government to take her abroad immediately for better treatment.

The condition of Hasina's eyes and ears are not good at present, he said in a press statement.

"My opinion is that if she [Hasina] does not receive treatment in time, her eyes could sus-

tain permanent damage," Prof Modasser said and suggested taking her to the USA for treatment.

He also suspects that Hasina might have been suffering from kidney problems and other ailments.

"We had brought this matter to the attention of the jail authorities, but no initiatives have so far been taken in this regard. So, I am worried," Prof Modasser said, adding that it is necessary to discuss the issue of treatment with Hasina.

'Use of DNA technology to speed up judicial process'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Use of DNA technology in criminal cases would speed up the judicial process and help dispose of cases in time, former Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassir Husain said at a workshop yesterday.

Welcoming the technology introduced in Dhaka recently, Justice Mudassir said it is the responsibilities of the judiciary as well as the government to ensure speedy disposal of cases.

Delay in the disposal of cases often aggravates the situation, he added.

Women and Children Affairs Ministry organised the workshop on 'Use of DNA technology in judicial system' at Cirdap auditorium in the city as part of its 'multi-sectoral programme to prevent repression of women'.

At the workshop, the speakers said that using DNA technology would reduce the cost of cases. At the same time, they also called for amending the relevant laws in order to make it more effective.

The experts also said transparency in the process of DNA testing must be ensured so that vested quarters could not manipulate the results.

Project Director Abul Hossain said, "It costs Tk 35,000 to conduct a test and it needs to conduct three tests for each case. But we charge the people only Tk 5,000 for each test."

So far, 188 tests have been conducted using the DNA technology in 2006 and 2007.

The speakers suggested that the government should bear the costs of DNA tests. Only those who can afford to pay should be charged.

The experts said suspects of crimes could be identified easily through DNA testing of blood, urine, semen and cell samples.

Barrister AKM Shafi Uddin, Supreme Court lawyer Khan Saifur Rahman, Advocate Saleh Uddin and Sharif Akhtaruzzaman, national technical adviser to the National Forensic DNA Profiling Laboratory, also spoke.

Hundreds of Saudi-bound people stage protest for air tickets in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of Saudi Arabia-bound people, mostly Bangladeshi workers, put a barricade on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue near Hotel Sonargaon in the city yesterday after failing to get their return air tickets reconfirmed.

The blockade on the busy city roads caused long tailback of vehicles, much to the suffering of the commuters.

Witnesses said the Saudi-bound people who stood in a long queue from the early hours of yesterday got agitated as they failed to contact Saudia Airlines officials as all entrances to the office at Hotel Sonargaon were kept closed till noon.

At around 9:30am the people started a hue and cry and failing to get any response from the airlines' officials they took to the street at around 11:45am. Many of them even jumped over the fence to reach the office.

Later, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. The Saudia Airlines officials also later allowed people to get inside and gave them tokens asking them to come to the office on different dates.

A lot of people alleged that although their visa will expire soon, they could not even meet the airline officials despite repeated attempts on different dates.

"I am coming to the airlines' office for the last few days, but I did not even manage to get a token to meet the officials," Mizanur Rahman, whose visa will expire on January 21, said.

Hailing from Joypurhat, Mizanur has been staying at a residential hotel at Green Road for the last four days to get his ticket reconfirmed.

Like Mizanur, Mohammad Amir has also come to the office for four times to reconfirm his ticket. "Although I was on a six-month leave, my employer recently asked me to return as soon as possible," Amir, hailing from Comilla, told The Daily Star.

"As my return date is much later, whenever I come they just tear up my token and ask me to come later. If I fail to return to Saudi Arabia soon, I will lose the job," a frustrated Amir, who works at a barber-shop in Riyadh, said.

An official of the airline office seeking anonymity said the crisis has arisen, as many passengers did not book their seats from Saudi Arabia. A lot of passengers are coming every day for early return although they have a long time in hand to return to Saudi Arabia, he added.



Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed presides over a meeting of the Council of Advisers at his office in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

No place in Iraq is safe

Says US military

AFP, Baghdad

Despite a drop in violence across Iraq, there is still no place in the country that is safe from attack by extremists, the US military warned yesterday.

"We have made no projections of peace at hand. We realise that security is very fragile and that at any moment any attack could occur at any place in Iraq," military spokesman Rear Admiral Gregory Smith told a news conference in Baghdad.

"There is no place in Iraq today that is safe from terrorism," Smith added.

"We still have car bombs, we still have suicide attacks. Taking the fight to Al-Qaeda in Iraq is still very much determined to use car bombs and other means of destruction against innocents."

Smith disputed claims by Al-Qaeda chief Osama Bin Laden in an audio tape released on Saturday that his terror network does not target innocent civilians.

"Their actions demonstrate otherwise. Continued bombings, car bombings, suicide... and other attacks of violence have all targeted innocent civilians."

Al-Qaeda's real intention, he said, was to turn Iraq into a regional power base but this ambition was being thwarted by Iraqi tribal leaders and local citizens who were forming "Awakening" councils across the country aimed at driving out the extremist group.

"These actions by the tribes and

the voluntary citizens have become a central concern to Al-Qaeda," Smith said, making reference to bin Laden's comments castigating as "traitors" Iraqis who have joined the Awakening councils.

The Al-Qaeda leader said those battling his group have "betrayed the nation and brought shame and scandal, that will be followed by damnation forever unless they repent," according to an excerpt translated from Arabic by SITE, a US-based institute that monitors extremist web forums.

Smith said bin Laden was trying to "nationalise" Al-Qaeda's setbacks and was ignoring "the most obvious fact that the tribes and citizens have

rejected Al-Qaeda ideology."

Despite bin Laden singling out Awakening groups in western Anbar province, where the first Awakening council was formed in September 2006, Smith said he did not believe the extremist network "has the strength to regain any capacity in Anbar."

The Iraqi interior ministry on Saturday trumpeted its achievements over the past year, saying that most of Al-Qaeda's networks in the country had been destroyed.

"We have destroyed 75 percent of Al-Qaeda hide-outs, and we broke up major criminal networks that supported Al-Qaeda in Baghdad," ministry spokesman Abdul Karim Khalaf told a news conference.

'Remain united against political killings'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) acting President Zillur Rahman yesterday said putting an end to political killings could only be possible if true democracy is established.

He also urged all to remain united against all political killings and criminal activities.

Zillur was talking to reporters after signing the condolence book opened at the Pakistan High Commission in Dhaka in memory of the slain former Pakistani prime

minister Benazir Bhutto.

Zillur said Benazir was a bold leader. She returned home to establish democracy although she knew that she could be killed, he added.

"We are deeply shocked over the assassination of Benazir Bhutto. We pray for her departed soul," said Zillur.

AL President members Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Motia Chowdhury and acting general secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam was also present.

EXTORTION CASE

Hearing on charge framing against Hasina resumes today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hearing on charge framing against detained former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and two others in a Tk 2.99 crore extortion case will resume in a Dhaka court today.

Earlier, the hearing was held on December 26. The court then fixed December 31 as the date for resumption of the hearing as the prosecution failed to produce some evidence and documents.

The defence is scheduled to come up with their submission today for further hearing.

Hasina's younger sister Sheikh Rahana, who lives in London, and her detained cousin and former health minister Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim are the two other accused in the case.

The case was filed with Gulshan Police Station on June 13 by Azam Chowdhury, managing director of a power company.

Trial of the case began on December 3 at the makeshift Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court after the government in a gazette notification allowed it on "security ground".

On the first day of trial, defence lawyers challenged the legality of the government order for the trial under special arrangements.

The hearing on charge framing had resumed on December 26 after the Supreme Court on December 13 cleared all barriers to the hearing of the case in the makeshift court.

Moni Singh's anniversary of death today

Today is the 17th death anniversary of Comrade Moni Singh, one of the organisers of the Liberation War and founder and former president of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), says a press release.

On the occasion, different organisations chalked out programmes including seven-day long Moni Singh fair at Durgapur in Netrakona.

CPB will pay tribute to the memories of Moni Singh by placing wreath at the monument of Moni Singh at Postagola crematorium.

CPB President Monzurul Ahsan Khan and General Secretary Muzahidul Islam Selim in a statement yesterday urged the countrymen to move the struggle of Moni Singh toward establishing an exploitation-free society.

Karachi train service resumes today

AFP, Karachi

Rail services from the southern Pakistani port city of Karachi will resume today, four days after rioters torched trains and uprooted tracks following the killing of Benazir Bhutto, a minister said.

The violence in the wake of Benazir's death has caused tens of millions of dollars in damage, the interior ministry has said, with hundreds of shops, offices and banks burnt out, along with rail stations and more than 70 trains.

"From Monday evening train service from Karachi for the up country will be resumed," railway minister Tariq Mansoor told AFP, referring to links to northern cities such as the capital Islamabad and Lahore.

Mansoor put the initial estimate of losses caused to the rail network at 12 billion rupees (19 million dollars), saying 20 train engines and 140 coaches were destroyed in unrest.

The railway infrastructure including communications and signal systems has been totally wrecked between Karachi and Sukkur, but makeshift arrangements will be made to allow the running of passenger trains, he said.



Hundreds of Saudi Arabia-bound people stage a demonstration on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue near Hotel Sonargaon in the city yesterday after failing to get their return air tickets reconfirmed.

PHOTO: STAR

Bodies of two youths recovered in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered bodies of two unidentified youths from Paltan and Sutrapur area in the city yesterday and on Saturday night.

Police said they recovered the decomposed body of a youth aged about 25, from inside a room of Bokshi Residential Hotel at Fakirerpool yesterday evening. The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Police picked up six hotel staffs for interrogation.

Police also recovered body of a youth aged about 30, from a private hospital at Tikatuli in Sutrapur on Saturday.

Quoting hospital staffs police said he was found dead inside a toilet of the hospital.

Police could not arrest anyone in this connection.



No change in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

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

Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins of the country during early morning, Met Office said, adding that night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Highest temperature 28.8 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 9.5 degrees Celsius at Jessore.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:22pm today and rises at 6:41am 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	25.3	15.4	74	64
Chittagong	26.0	14.8	92	75
Rajshahi	25.3	10.3	85	68
Khulna	24.5	12.7	89	79
Barisal	25.5	13.3	95	90
Sylhet	27.0	15.3	79	73
Cox's Bazar	28.8	17.5	92	77



Nurun Nabi speaks at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity in the city yesterday. The press conference was organised by the non-resident Bangladeshis (NRBs). (Story on Page 16)

PHOTO: STAR



Film director Badal Rahman speaks at a press conference on the 10th Dhaka International Film Festival at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right are Ahmed Mostafa Jamal and former secretary Syed Marghub Murshed. Rainbow Film Society organised the press conference.

PHOTO: STAR

New Darfur peacekeepers set to take over today

AFP, Khartoum

A beefed-up joint African Union-United Nations peacekeeping force in Sudan's Darfur is set to take over from the current under-manned AU force today in a bid to end years of bloodshed. The United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) -- the UN's largest -- will eventually consist of 20,000 troops and 6,000 police and civilian personnel although only around 9,000 troops and soldiers are currently in place.

The bulk of the current force comes from the 7,000 AU troops who have been trying to bring peace to the troubled western Sudanese region for the last three years, a joint AU-UN statement said yesterday.

During that time 50 African troops have died, including 12 in the deadliest attack on an AU base of Haskanita in September in an attack widely blamed on Darfur rebels.

The bolstered force was authorised by the UN Security Council in July but it will not be fully operational until well into 2008 amid accusations Khartoum is stalling on the deployment and that contributing countries are not supplying enough hardware, in

particular helicopters to patrol the vast region.

An official handing-over ceremony will take place on Monday, attended by Sudanese officials, during which the AU troops will swap their green berets for the blue of UN-mandated missions.

Current troops on the ground are mainly Rwandan, South African, Nigerian and Senegalese, accompanied by Kenyans, Gambians and a Chinese engineering company as well as 1,000 police from over 25 countries.

Additional soldiers from Egypt, Pakistan and Ethiopia as well as police from Nepal are to deploy in the next two months, the joint statement said.

"The situation in Darfur will not be transformed overnight," UNAMID head Rodolphe Adada warned.

"However we are optimistic that the deployment of UNAMID will help to begin to improve the security situation in Darfur and create a climate favourable to the achievement of a negotiated settlement of the conflict."

Efforts at brokering peace in Darfur have consistently stumbled.

No major rebel group attended the latest peace initiative in Libya in October.

One faction of the Sudan Liberation Movement signed a peace deal with Khartoum in 2006 but other groups have demanded a restoration of security in Darfur before any agreement can be reached.

The conflict erupted in February 2003 when ethnic minority rebels rose up against Khartoum to demand an end to the political and economic marginalisation of their huge region the size of France.

Khartoum's response was to back the Arab Janjaweed militia and give it free rein to crack down on the rebels and their backers.

Darfur rebel groups continue to carry out attacks, also accusing Sudanese forces of continued violence.

The rebel Justice and Equality Movement has carried out two attacks on oil fields in the neighbouring region of Kordofan, demanding that the Chinese stop doing business in Sudan.

China is Khartoum's main arms supplier and also the biggest buyer of Sudanese oil.