

Saifur group

FROM PAGE 1
constitution, the HC writ bench cannot adjudicate matters involving internal disputes of a political party.

The court also referred to the judgment given by the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court that the HC cannot take any decision on a matter involving politics.

Earlier on November 18 last year, an HC bench issued a rule on the EC, Hafiz and six BNP standing committee members, and the government, asking them to reply why the EC's invitation letter should not be declared illegal.

Khaleda, prior to her arrest on September 3, expelled Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan from the post of secretary general of her party and appointed Khandaker Delwar Hossain to the post.

On October 29, the BNP standing committee appointed M Saifur Rahman and Hafiz Uddin Ahmed as the acting chairman and acting secretary general of the party.

On November 5, the EC invited Hafiz to the dialogue slated for November 22.

But the EC cancelled its invitation after the HC had stayed operation of the letter. The stay came in response to a writ petition filed by Khaleda challenging the legality of inviting the Saifur-led faction to the talks.

After 10 days of hearing, the court on March 24 fixed yesterday for delivering its judgment.

In the case, advocates TH Khan and AJ Mohammad Ali appeared before the court as Khaleda's counsels while Dr Kamal Hossain appeared for the EC. Dr Shahdeen Malik for Hafiz and Saifur, and Masood Reza Sobhan for Mannan.

After the HC verdict TH Khan told journalists that they did not challenge anything regarding politics but the legality of the EC letter to Hafiz.

"We had challenged the action of the Election Commission, but since Khaleda Zia is a former prime minister and a political figure, her case automatically became a political issue," Khan said.

Replying to a question, he said, "We will decide about filing any appeal after discussing with persons concerned."

He alleged that there is a conspiracy to destroy the BNP.

Welcoming the HC verdict, on the other hand, Dr Kamal said the writ petition was filed regarding BNP's internal affairs. According to the jurisdiction of an HC writ bench, it cannot dispose the matter, so the court discharged the petition, he said.

Shahdeen Malik said the petitioner filed the writ petition challenging the legality of the EC letter but the letter did not appear illegal to the court.

The court mentioned that as there is no law regarding the EC dialogue it cannot be said that the commission violated any law. Malik said, adding, "It means the Election Commission's letter was legal."

He said matters relating to which faction of the BNP is bigger are subject to witness and proof and it cannot be disposed in a writ case.

CEC'S BRIEFING
Commenting on the HC verdict, CEC Huda said, "I think the verdict of the court has paved the way for them [the BNP factions] to forget the past and come together."

The commission might informally talk with the two factions of BNP and ask them to resolve their disputes, Huda said when he was asked if the EC would take any initiative in resolving the differences between the factions.

"The country is going through a

critical time. We want elections as soon as possible to return to democracy and to overcome the present crisis," the CEC said.

About the tentative time of talks with BNP the CEC said they needed some time to organise the documents for the electoral reform talks. Replying to a query, he said the EC would try to complete their electoral reforms dialogue with the BNP before the planned talks between the government and political parties.

Asked whether the EC would again encounter difficulties if the Khaleda-led BNP filed appeal against yesterday's HC verdict, Huda said it would be very unfortunate if they do so.

The EC began electoral reform talks with political parties on September 12 last year. Ignoring the objections of Khaleda-appointed Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain, the EC invited the Saifur-led faction of BNP to the reform talks by sending the invitation to Maj (ret'd) Hafizuddin Ahmed, the secretary general of the Saifur-led faction.

The EC's electoral reform talks with the Saifur-led BNP could not be held on November 22 last year as the writ petition filed by Khaleda Zia prompted the HC to stay the operation of the invitation sent to Hafiz.

In February the EC completed its second round of electoral reform talks with 15 political parties except BNP since the matter was pending at the court.

The EC could not wrap up the talks within the timeframe specified in the electoral roadmap as it did not succeed in holding talks with the BNP.

The EC director general said the meeting will also discuss whether to stop biofuel production in the developed countries which are diverting foodgrains to make ethanol.

Without naming the US, Diouf said currently 100 million tonnes of cereals are being diverted for biofuel production in one country and the quantity is estimated to increase twelve-fold by 2017.

He said the world grain situation is at its lowest since 1980s. "The situation (food shortages) is due to a structural problem and a decision requires to be taken at the structural level across the world."

The rising income level of people in developing economies like China and India is an important factor in driving up the food demand. The supply of foodgrains has been affected by drought in Australia and Kazakhstan, flood in India and Bangladesh, cold temperature in China, besides climate change.

When asked for his suggestion to improve the overall situation, Diouf said it is essentially to increase food production through raising productivity level of crops, investing in rural areas and better water management.

When asked his views about GM crops to increase production, he said the member countries are divided on the issue. So far as GM issue is concerned, FAO follows the WHO and Codex standards of food products.

The starting time from Dhaka is 8:30am while from Chitpur, it is 7:10am local time. The trains from Bangladesh will have the capacity of carrying 418 passengers while those from India have 366 seats.

Darshana in Chuadanga district will be the immigration checkpoint for the passengers from India, while the outbound passengers will go through the checking in Dhaka.

The journey would take eight hours while customs and immigration formalities at Darshana in Bangladesh and Gede in West Bengal would take five hours more.

The first train from Dhaka on Pahela Baishakh will reach Kolkata at 9:00pm while the one from Kolkata will arrive in Dhaka at 8:30pm.

Communications Adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) Ghulam Quader and officials of Bangladesh Railway and communications ministry will see the first train off at Cantonment Station.

"It's a historic moment for us. Through the agreement, the rail communications have been restored," Communications Secretary Dr Mahbubur Rahman said after signing the agreement.

He hoped that the resumption of the service will help develop cooperation in all other areas of bilateral interest and more opportunities will open up in various sectors.

Terming the resumption as "beginning of a new chapter in connectivity in the region," Indian High Commissioner Pinak Ranjan said that it is not possible to achieve the goals on trade and commerce and people-to-people connectivity without the connectivity among Saarc countries.

Emon

FROM PAGE 16
directives from the home ministry not to disclose identities of those involved in the murder.

A police source said Emon did not participate himself in the confessional statement.

During an earlier interrogation by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Emon had confessed that he had heard that notorious criminal Khandaker Tanveerul Islam Joy has killed Prof Aftab.

Detective Branch (DB) Inspector Mohammad Hasan, who is also the investigation officer of the case, produced Emon at the chamber of Metropolitan Magistrate Habibur Rahman Siddiqui where Emon submitted his statement.

Emon's statement comes after 11 days on remand, in three phases.

Meanwhile, Emon has now been placed on a five-day remand in the Neon murder case filed with Mohammadpur police station. DB police last week filed a petition with a Dhaka court seeking 10 day's remand for questioning in the said case.

Prof Aftab succumbed to his injuries in city's Combined Military Hospital (CMH) on September 27 morning four days after assailants shot him in his residence on September 23.

Three unidentified youths shot Aftab after breaking into his Fuller Road residence, adjacent to the British Council on Dhaka University campus.

The then general secretary of Dhaka University Teachers Association (Duta) Prof M Akhtaruzzaman at a rally had said that he suspects the government intelligence agencies might have a hand in the killing.

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Power plant case

FROM PAGE 1
Qamrul Islam, one of the lawyers representing the former prime minister, said she has urged party workers as well as people to stay united and act cautiously since the country is in a crisis situation.

She, however, did not say anything about the government-AL dialogue.

"I was once told that I would get Tk 2,000 crore a year if I allow gas export. But I rejected the proposal right away since I cannot betray my people."

"I said I would export gas only if there is enough gas for public to use over the next 50 years," Hasina told her lawyers.

Replying to the prosecution's statement that an individual on trial cannot be paroled to be sent abroad for treatment, barrister Shafique Ahmed said, "It's not correct. She is on bail in every case filed against her. Besides, the High Court has said one of those cases was not even valid."

"There is no obstacle to sending her abroad, and it depends only on the goodwill of the government which is holding back her passport without any reason."

COURT PROCEEDINGS
The Special Court-1, set up at MP hostel on Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban complex, adjourned the hearing after the defence delivered submissions on the discharge petition for the third consecutive day yesterday.

The arguments in favour of the petition submitted on April 3 will resume on April 15.

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2nd ODI today

FROM PAGE 16
129 in their first game.

However, the team management might opt for a left-handed batsman in Zunaed Siddiqui to bolster the batting. In that event the axe might fall on middle-order batsman Rokibul Hasan.

The second match, also a day-night affair, will kick off at the Iqbal Stadium at 4pm Bangladesh Standard Time. Bangladesh Television and satellite channel Ten Sports will beam live coverage of the match.

Pakistan invited Bangladesh to take part in the five-match one-day series after Australia withdrew from their scheduled tour on security ground.

Zabiullah, wife

FROM PAGE 16
Masudur Rahman, and his wife Salma Rahman in a case for concealing information and amassing wealth beyond his known sources of income.

ACC Deputy Assistant Director AFM Zahid Hossain, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, submitted the charge sheet against Zabiullah and his wife to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, showing 23 people as prosecution witnesses.

The IO prayed for issuing arrest warrant against them and the order to attach their properties, as they have been absconding since the filing of the case.

ACC Assistant Director Helal Uddin Sharif filed the case against them with Ramna Police Station on November 5 last year for amassing wealth illegally and concealing information in the wealth statement submitted to the commission.

In the first information report (FIR), the complainant said Ismail accumulated Tk 1.30 crore beyond his known sources of income. He also concealed information about his wealth worth Tk 1.17 crore in the wealth statement.

His wife Ayesha Zabiullah was accused of abetting her husband. **CASE AGAINST MASUD**

ACC Assistant Director Zahangir Alam, also the IO of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the same court, showing 23 people as prosecution witnesses.

The IO prayed for issuing arrest warrant against them and the order to attach their properties, as they have been on the run since the case was filed.

The ACC filed the case against the couple with Ramna Police Station on November 30 last year for amassing wealth illegally and giving false information in the wealth statement submitted to the commission.

In the FIR, the complainant said Masud accumulated Tk 5.86 crore beyond his known sources of income and concealed information about his wealth worth Tk 67 lakh in the wealth statement.

His wife Salma was indicted in the case for abetting her husband.

GMG
FROM PAGE 16
GMG officials at Zia International Airport said Harun detained by Thai security Tuesday morning returned to Dhaka Tuesday night and has reached his village home in Jhenida.

"Harun actually suffers from tuberculosis (TB) and he was sad as he lost his job and everything in Malaysia," an official told The Daily Star quoting Harun who showed his medical certificate to GMG officials at the airport.

"We gave him money to go home as he did not have any," a GMG high official requesting anonymity told The Daily Star last night.

"Harun had no job for the last three months. Therefore, he was sad but he was not mentally disturbed," said another GMG official.

About cutting an apple with a knife on Tuesday's night, one GMG official quoting Harun said he did not know that carrying a knife was not allowed on flights.

"He remained silent through the journey as he did not feel good due to his disease," the official added.

The meeting also decided that the number of trucks being used for the OMS programme in the capital would be doubled to 100.

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54 Myanmar

FROM PAGE 16
opened the door to the storage box and fled, Kraitthong said.

"The people said they tried to bang on the walls of the container to tell the driver they were dying, but he told them to shut up as police would hear them when they crossed through checkpoints inside Thailand," he told AFP.

The bodies of the dead had been buried in temporary graves in a Phuket cemetery until they could be collected by relatives, he said.

The 46 people who survived without injury have been arrested, he said.

Colonel Narin Bussayawit, the deputy provincial police commander, said the container did have a ventilation system but it had broken down.