

Govt set to file claims to UN on maritime boundary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni yesterday said the government is all set to file Bangladesh's claims to the United Nations (UN) on the maritime boundary in the Bay of Bengal.

"We made all preparations to file our claims before the UN much earlier than the deadline of 2011 for submission of such claims and we must refute all unlawful claims of other countries," she said while addressing a seminar as the chief guest.

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) organized the seminar titled "Maritime Security of Bangladesh" at its auditorium in the capital.

All the countries concerned in the Bay of Bengal have overlapping claims and

all must make necessary compromise to reach an equitable solution, the minister said.

Terming the issue of maritime boundary a matter of serious concern, Dipu vowed to protect the sovereign territory including territorial waters at any cost.

"We want a peaceful solution to the current problem in the Bay of Bengal and our claims are based on prevalent international laws," she said.

Issues related to the Bay of Bengal are crucial as over 90 percent of Bangladesh's trade is transacted by sea.

It has huge mineral and aquatic resources, which ensure the livelihoods of millions of people and it is also a potential energy source, speakers said.

Bangladesh should register protest against the claims of

India and Myanmar to have equitable share of the sea territory, said Commodore Khurshed Alam, former chairman of Mongla Port Authority.

"We should continue negotiations with the countries concerned for a solution," the written statement read out by Khurshed said adding that unresolved maritime boundary poses a serious threat to maritime security.

BISS senior research fellow Abul Kalam Azad, energy and mineral resources division's consultant Maqbul-E-Elahi, former ambassador to the UN Harun-ur-Rashid presented papers at the seminar chaired by former ambassador M Afsarul Quader.

Earlier, an annual publication of BISS titled "Whither National Security Bangladesh 2007" was launched.



An injured student is being taken on a stretcher to the emergency unit at Chittagong Medical College Hospital yesterday after a picnic bus of Chittagong Govt College fell into a hilly ditch in Bandarban last evening. (Story on Page 1)

Iran keen to set up hospital, university in Bangladesh

UNB, Dhaka

Iranian government has expressed interest in setting up a hospital and a university in Bangladesh.

Iranian Ambassador Hassan Farazandeh said this when he called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office in the city yesterday.

Press Secretary to the Prime Minister Abul Kalam Azad briefed newsmen after the meeting.

The envoy formally handed over a letter of felicitation from Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to Hasina on her assumption of office as the prime minister.

Appraising the PM of various development projects of Iran in Bangladesh, Ambassador Farazandeh said Iran wants to set up one hospital and one university in Bangladesh.

Besides, Iran is also interested to invest in larger volume in various development sectors here, he said.

Hasina and the Iranian ambassador recalled the glorious history of long cultural ties between Iran and Bangladesh and hoped that the friendly bilateral relations will be strengthened further in the days to come.

RESERVED SEATS IN JS AL asks women nomination seekers to collect forms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League has asked nomination seekers for reserved seats for women in parliament to collect nomination forms from the party president's office at Dhanmondi in the city from February 14 to 18.

The nomination seekers should collect nomination form and submit the filled-in forms from 10:00am to 4:00pm, says a party press release.

APPOINTMENT OF LAW SECY CJ to refrain from hearing appeals against HC verdict

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice MM Ruhul Amin yesterday decided not to hear further the appeals against the High Court (HC) judgement declaring illegal the appointment of Kazi Habibur Awal as acting law secretary.

Some lawyers present at the court said the chief justice decided to refrain from hearing the appeals following the submissions made by Awal's counsel Barrister M Amir-Ul Islam, who raised question on the neutrality of the chief justice with regard to the hearing of this case.

Now the four-member full bench of the Appellate Division without the chief justice will hear the appeals. The apex court yesterday fixed February 23 as the next date for hearing the appeals.

Earlier, the five-member full bench of the apex court headed by the chief justice held the hearing on the appeals for three days.

During the hearing in last three days, Amir-Ul Islam told the court that the chief justice on July 6 last year received a written statement submitted by the leaders of Bangladesh Judicial Service Association (BJSJA) on some demands, including the removal of Kazi Habibur Awal from the office of the law secretary.

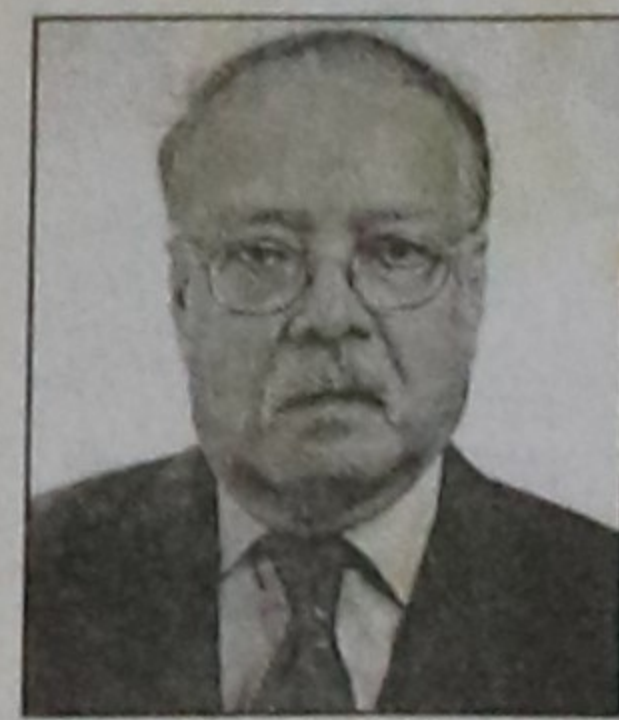
The chief justice accepted the memorandum in his administrative capacity, Amir-Ul Islam said and raised a question on whether he can try this case in his judicial capacity.

Barrister Ajmalul Hossain, counsel for the writ petitioner, told the court yesterday that the chief justice, as the head of the judiciary, can hear any case.

The HC on February 18 last year delivered its judgement declaring the appointment of Kazi Habibur Awal as acting law secretary illegal upon a writ petition filed by former District and Sessions Judge Aftab Uddin Ahmed.

The government and Habibur Awal filed separate appeals with the SC against the HC verdict.

The government appointed Awal as acting law secretary on June 28, 2007. He was later promoted to secretary.



AS Mahmud remembered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a memorial meeting yesterday paid tribute to media personality AS Mahmud, saying that he played a vital role in the expansion of the mass media, particularly the electronic media, in the country.

AS Mahmud Smrity Sangsad organised the meeting at the Bengal Gallery in the city to mark the 5th death anniversary of AS Mahmud, founding publisher of The Daily Star and founding chairman of the Ekushey Television.

Speaking as the chief guest, Finance Minister Abul Mal Abdul Muhith, a close friend of Mahmud, said, "Since his boyhood, Mahmud always tried to do something innovative and challenging. The Daily Star, the leading English daily, and ETV, the first private channel in the country, are perfect examples of his innovative ideas."

The minister also proposed the Smrity Sangsad publish a memorial book on the life and works of AS Mahmud.

He also underscored the need to continue the training system for journalists, which was initiated by AS Mahmud to make them more efficient.

Prof Syed Manzoorul Islam, Nawajesh Ali Khan, head of programme, ATN Bangla, and Nilufar Yasmin, wife of AS Mahmud, also spoke at the meeting chaired by Prof Dr Mustafa Nurul Islam.

Newly wed woman succumbs to burns

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A newly married housewife succumbed to her burns yesterday after fighting for life for seven days at The City Hospital in Dhaka.

The victim, Kamrun Nahar Sukhi, 23, sustained severe burns at the house of her husband Mukur Chowdhury, vice-president of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), at Balubari in Dinajpur town on February 6. She got married on January 9.

Her family alleged that her husband set her on fire. But the JCD leader denied the allegation.

But the police could not confirm whether it was a case of suicide or murder.

Quoting the domestic help of the house, the police said she saw Sukhi groaning in her bed while her husband wrapping her with a wet blanket.

Later, locals rushed her to Dinajpur Medical College and Hospital. She was shifted to The City Hospital the next day. Hospital sources said 75 percent of her body was burnt.

Our Dinajpur correspondent adds: The police told reporters that the blanket and the dresses of Sukhi smelled of kerosene.

Sukhi's family members alleged that Mukur poured kerosene on her and set fire to her following a quarrel between them.

None was arrested in this connection.

3 killers of Minu executed at Jessore jail

A CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Three men convicted of killing Minu, a housewife, were executed at Jessore Central Jail last night.

They are Minarul Islam Mina, a husband of Minu, and his accomplices Ekramul and Shukur Ali. All of them hailed from Hathazari village in Chuadanga.

Minarul and Ekramul were hanged at 11:01pm while Shukur was hanged 45 minutes later, jail sources said.

According to the case statement, Minarul and his two accomplices killed Minu after violating her and dumped the body into a well at Boalmari village in Chuadanga on September 1 in 2000.

PSC introduces new system for BCS exam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Public Service Commission (PSC) is going to introduce a new system for form collection, submission and issuing admit card for BCS examinations to cut in the time limit for procedural matters.

As per the new system, candidates will collect application forms from the designated branches of the Sonali Bank located under their desired examination centre.

After completing the application forms with necessary documents, the candidates will submit them to deputy commissioners who will issue the admit card on the same day.

Speaking at a workshop yesterday, PSC Chairman Dr Saadat Hussain said this new system will be applicable from the upcoming 29th Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) Examination.

The application forms for this examination will be available at 30 branches of Sonali Bank across the country from March 10 to April 26.

Earlier, around six to nine months were needed for selecting the forms and distributing the admit cards. But now PSC can save this time as deputy commissioners will receive application forms after checking all documents and issue the admit card on the same day," said the chairman.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) organised the workshop at Biam auditorium in the capital where many deputy commissioners were present.

According to the new system, six examination centres will have separate colours and registration numbers for the application forms.

The colour of application forms for Dhaka centre will be green, for Rajshahi yellow, for Chittagong pink, for Khulna blue, for Barisal violet and for Sylhet orange.

Similarly, the registration number for Dhaka will be from 000001 to 2,00,000, for Rajshahi from 2,00,001 to 3,00,000, for Chittagong from 3,00,001 to 4,00,000, for Khulna from 4,00,001 to

5,00,000, for Barisal from 5,00,001 to 6,00,000 and for Sylhet from 6,00,001 to 7,00,000.

Meanwhile, the PSC has published the circular of the 29th BCS examination at different national dailies in last month and invited applications for 1,581 vacant posts.

Of them 401 posts are in general cadre service and 1,180 posts in technical cadres.

The aspirants will have to collect forms from designated banks paying Tk 200 for each form.

The PSC chairman said those candidates whose age is now over 30 years but passed the written examination under the 27th BCS examination can also apply for the 29th BCS examination.

"Following the direction of the government, we have introduced this rule only for the examinees of the 27th BCS examination who passed the written test," he added when asked about the agitating candidates of the 27th BCS examination.

Lack of coordination between agencies responsible for poor traffic system: Khoka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lack of coordination between agencies concerned is the main reason behind the miserable condition of traffic system in the capital, said Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka yesterday.

"The system of keeping various agencies involved in the city's traffic management must be abolished," Khoka said at a workshop on 'Traffic Congestion in Dhaka City: An Impediment to Prosperity' at the DCC.

Traffic Engineering Department of DCC and Bangladesh University of

Engineering and Technology (Buet) jointly organised the workshop.

An integrated body should be formed to implement the Strategic Transport Plan (STP) for resolving the problem of traffic congestion in Dhaka city, he said.

Khoka said the traffic police in the capital must work under the DCC so that they can function effectively.

The DCC mayor also criticised the ongoing Hatirjheel development project terming it a 'waste of public money'. Instead, the government should set up a couple of underground tunnels at airport road intersections, he said.

He suggested that the government should take those projects that will instantly help ease traffic congestion in Dhaka city.

Immediate implementation of the 20-year STP is crucial to an integrated transport system in Dhaka and resolving perennial traffic congestion, said Dr SM Salehuddin, additional executive director of Dhaka Transport Coordination Board.

Rashed T Islam, a Texas-based traffic engineer, in his presentation on Dhaka's transport system and traffic problems recommended utilisation of the existing roads, eviction of illegal settlements in public thoroughfares and regulated car parking system.

Jasim Uddin, joint commissioner (Traffic) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, in his presentation put emphasis on traffic education and engineering, enforcement of traffic rules and proper management of car parking.

Md Abdul Motaleb of Jahangirnagar University in a presentation recommended a mass rapid transit (metro rail) system from Pallabi to Sayedabad.

US Embassy closed on Sunday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The American Embassy, including the Consular Section and the Public Affairs Section with the Archer K Blood American Centre Library and the Student Advising Centre, will remain closed on Sunday in observance of former US president George Washington's birthday, an American national holiday, says a press release.

MONIPUR HIGH SCHOOL Removal of head teacher demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Guardians of the students of Monipur High School at Mirpur in the city yesterday put up barricades on the roads in the nearby areas for about three hours demanding removal of its head teacher.

They also demonstrated on the school premises.

The guardians alleged that Head Teacher Ahad Ali misappropriated several lakhs from students' admission process and tuition fees defying admission rules.

They also alleged that Ahad's son was also involved in admission business by running a coaching centre near the school.

Khadija Begum, a guardian who was also a member of the school governing body, alleged Ahad Ali is illegally residing inside the school with his family.

Since Ahad is involved with Jamaat, he did not allow women guardians to be voters last year, she added.

However, Ahad was not available for his comments despite repeated attempts.

Chevron staffs take part in house-building programme

METRO DESK

A group of 22 employees from the Dhaka office of Chevron Bangladesh joined hands with Habitat for Humanity recently in a two-day house-building programme at Madhupur in Tangail with a view to supporting the underprivileged to build low-cost but durable homes.

Under the auspices of this programme -- held on February 5 and 6 -- Chevron volunteers supported professional builders in their efforts to build three houses in that area, says a press release.

The spontaneous and sincere participation of the employees demonstrated Chevron's objective of promoting corporate social responsibility and team building, as well as safe and efficient work practices.

DHAKA TODAY

- Reception**
Language Movement veteran Abdul Matin will be accorded a reception. Venue: National Museum auditorium. Time: 4:00pm.
- Founding anniversary**
Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) organises a programme to mark its 34th founding anniversary. Venue: DMP Headquarters. Time: 4:00pm.
- Math Olympiad**
National Math Festival 2009 and the 7th Bangladesh Math Olympiad will begin. Venue: St Joseph Higher Secondary School. Time: 9:00am.
- Discussion**
Rural Journalist Foundation (RJF) will hold a discussion on the expectations from the government on the Muladi issue. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:01am.
- Book launch**
The launching ceremony of 'Memories of London' authored by Mahmud A Rouf will be held. Venue: Hotel Purbani. Time: 6:00pm.
- Prize giving ceremony**
The prize giving ceremony of National Children's Award Competition 2009 will be held. Venue: Bangladesh Shishu Academy auditorium. Time: 2:30pm.
- Reunion**
The reunion of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) Alumni Association will be held. Venue: Sangsad office, 393 New Eskaton Road. Time: 4:00pm.

- Buet playground. Time: 8:00am.
- Seminar**
A seminar on 'Global climate change and climate refugee: Urbanisation problem and remedy' will be held. Venue: Novo Convention Centre, Tejgaon. Time: 9:00am.
- Conference**
The concluding ceremony of a conference on trafficked and molested children organised by Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) will be held. Venue: Brac Centre Inn. Time: 6:30pm.
- Art contest**
The Liberation War Museum organises a children's art contest to mark the death anniversary of Sergeant Zahurul Haq. Venue: Museum premises. Time: 10:30am.
- Roundtable**
Bangladesh Government Secondary Teachers' Association (BGSTA) organises a roundtable titled 'The quality of secondary education and the social status of the teachers'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3:00pm.
- T-shirt fest**
A three-day Bangladesh T-Shirt Fest 2009 begins. Venue: Aziz SuperMarket. Time: 10:30am.
- Discussion**
Bangladesh MuktiJoddha Sangsad will hold a discussion to mark its 37th founding anniversary. Venue: Sangsad office, 393 New Eskaton Road. Time: 4:00pm.

WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

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

Light fog may also occur over the river basins of the country during late night till morning. Met Office said, predicting nearly unchanged night temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 29.8 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Dhaka and lowest 12.4 degrees Celsius at Srirangal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:52pm today and rises at 6:32am 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	29.8	16.8	53	48
Chittagong	27.8	16.5	90	51
Rajshahi	28.2	16.0	98	72
Khulna	29.0	18.2	89	57
Barisal	28.4	19.3	-	71
Sylhet	29.3	16.1	73	57
Cox's Bazar	29.0	17.5	78	66



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