



WAR CRIME TRIAL

Govt to seek evidence from Pakistan, US

UN names 4 international experts to help in probe

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

The United Nations (UN) has named four international war crime experts to assist Bangladesh in the trials of war criminals of 1971, responding to a request of the government, officials said.

The government has also taken initiatives to ask Pakistan and the US which supported Pakistan during the Liberation War, to provide Bangladesh with particular war related documents and evidence for the trial. The requests are being made under the International Crimes (Tribunal) Act 1973.

Pakistan in particular will be requested to send information regarding the Razakras (the collaborators of the erstwhile Pakistani occupation forces in Bangladesh), said the officials.

"We are going to request all, including Pakistan and the United States to provide documents and evidence relating to the genocide committed during the liberation war and about those who were involved in war crimes," State Minister for Liberation War Affairs ABM Tajul Islam

told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said although the evidence and documents Bangladesh already has, are enough to try the war criminals, more documents and evidence are required to make the trials acceptable worldwide.

The names of the four transitional justice experts sent by the local office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are Louis Bickford who is a political scientist and a member of the International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), Priscilla Hayner who is a co-founder of ICTJ, Bogdan Ivanisevic who is a Belgrade based consultant for ICTJ, and Alexander Mayer-Rieckh who is the head of ICTJ's security sector reform programme. Alexander Mayer-Rieckh was also the chief of the human rights office of the UN mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and worked in Rwanda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and East Timor. The names were sent to the law ministry.

Earlier on Sunday, UNDP Resident Coordinator Renata Lok Dessallien offered Bangladesh international experts

while discussing the issue of investigation, prosecution and trials of the 1971 war criminals under the provisions of the International Crimes (Tribunal) Act 1973, during a meeting with Law Minister Shafique Ahmed in Bangladesh Secretariat.

In a letter sent to Renata yesterday the law ministry appreciated the UN offer and sought all necessary assistance regarding the trials.

"The government deeply appreciates such offers and requests you to be so good as to provide such assistance so that the trial can be held in a proper manner and in conformity with domestic laws as well as international standards," reads the letter, signed by Law Secretary Kazi Habiburawal.

Back in January, Renata wrote to the law minister suggesting the government to invite some renowned experts in the field of war crime proceedings and truth commissions to share lessons and experiences from around the world.

"This will help the government to learn

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Suggestions of experts, UZ chairmen ignored

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

Ignoring experts' advice and the demand of newly-elected chairmen and vice-chairmen of upazila parishads, the House yesterday passed the Upazila Parishad Bill, 2009, giving local legislators power over upazila parishads.

Experts said the bill passed in the House establishes legislators' supremacy over the local government body, turns the upazila parishads into ineffective bodies, and makes the parishads' future uncertain.

A delegation of upazila chairmen, led by Harun-or-Rashid Hawlader, met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday afternoon and urged her to drop four provisions from the bill, proposed by the standing committee on local government ministry.

The provisions are: local MP's advice must be followed by the upazila parishad concerned, the parishad has to consult the local MP before it

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MPs retain power over UZ parishad

JS passes law making legislators' advice mandatory for the local govt body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parliament yesterday unanimously passed the much-talked about bill to reinstate Upazila Parishad Act 1998 allowing the lawmakers broad control over the crucial tier of the local government system.

Members of the House from both sides of the aisle greeted the bill's passage by thumping desks. They thanked LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam for 'returning their voice' in the running of upazila parishads.

Due to fierce opposition from the lawmakers, two proposals for amendments meant to cut back the MPs' sway over upazila parishads could not even be placed.

The bill says lawmakers will be advisers to upazila parishads in their constituencies, and upazila officials shall take advice from them.

Parishads will seek the local MPs' suggestions while finalising development plans. They shall inform the lawmakers before contacting the government about anything.

The upazila councils, which are getting back into operation after two long decades, must also send copies of their meeting minutes to the advisers.

The new provisions included in the bill following recommendations of the parliamentary standing committee on the local government will largely limit the independence of the parishads.

The bill titled 'Upazila Parishad (Reintroduction of the Repealed Act and Amendment) Bill 2009' was placed in parliament on February 24.

The following day the ordinances promulgated by the caretaker government in June last year to replace the local body laws ceased to have effect for not being ratified within the stipulated time limit.

The ordinances had been greeted with popular acclamation as they sought to strengthen the local government system.

The newly elected upazila chairmen and vice-chairmen have been opposing the bill, fearing interference from the lawmakers.

Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina assured them of doing something for them in this regard.

But their hopes were dashed within hours after their meeting with the prime minister as the bill got passed allowing the MPs sweeping

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GOVT EMPLOYEES New pay scale to be given in phases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday said the new pay scale for government staff as per recommendations of the Pay Commission would be implemented in phases.

"It's not possible to implement in one go as it is a huge bill," he told reporters at his secretariat office.

The army-backed caretaker

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Zillur accepts ACC chief's resignation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President Zillur Rahman yesterday accepted the resignation of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury.

A one-line letter reading, "resignation has been accepted" from the president's office was faxed to the ACC office yesterday afternoon, confirmed ACC sources.

Mashhud stepped down on

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Residents of a slum inside Janata Housing in Mirpur-2 in the capital try to salvage their belongings after a fire devastated around 100 shanties yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

PHOTO: STAR

87pc candidates exceed JS poll expense limit

TIB survey finds Tk 44 lakh average expenditure against Tk 15 lakh ceiling

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Candidates in the last parliamentary poll on an average spent over Tk 44 lakh, flouting the Election Commission (EC) set poll expenditure limit of Tk 15 lakh for each candidate, revealed a Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) report yesterday.

At least 87 percent candidates, who won the polls and became members of the parliament (MPs), spent beyond the limit fixed by the EC.

Only 13 percent of the elected MPs kept their electoral spending within the fixed ceiling, said TIB researcher Shadhan Kumar Das, presenting the report at a media conference in the National Press Club in the capital.

The findings contradict the poll expenditure reports recently submitted to the EC by Awami League (AL), BNP and Jamaat.

According to the poll expenditure reports submitted by the parties AL's total poll expenditure was around Tk 4 crore, BNP's was Tk 4.49 crore, and Jamaat's was Tk 74.72 lakh.

"The EC must audit the electoral expenditures of the candidates and punish the violators according to the law," said Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, chairman of TIB.

The report titled "Ninth National Parliamentary Polls' Process Observation" was prepared on the basis of a survey on 88 candidates from all six divisions, 36 of whom were nominated by AL, 36 by BNP, 5 by Jatiya Party (JP), 3 by Jamaat-e-Islami, one

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BHOLA MADRASA AMMO HAUL

Faisal finally shown held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) finally declared British citizen Faisal Mostafa, the main patron of Green Crescent Madrasa in Bhola, arrested yesterday after 10 days of mystery about his whereabouts.

The Rab claims the 42-year-old chemistry graduate was arrested along with his close associate Md Saifuddin Badal in the early hours yesterday in Bhogra on Pubail bypass road in Gazipur.

Additional Director General of Rab Col Rezanur Rahman Khan in a press briefing yesterday afternoon said no charges have been brought against Faisal and Badal.

"Md Russell Howladar, who was arrested at



Faisal Mostafa

Md Saifuddin Badal

Green Crescent Madrasa on March 24, gave the names of Faisal as the owner of the madrasa and Badal as Faisal's close associate," Col Rezanur said.

The elite force on March 24 unearthed a mini ammunition factory with huge arms and

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No job or no work permit for many

Excessive workers sent to Malaysia only to make quick money

PORIMOL PALMA, back from Malaysia

Unlicensed brokers from Bangladesh living in Malaysia for long have joined hands with some Malaysian companies for quick bucks by hiring excessive workers from Bangladesh only to leave them jobless and push them into penury.

These brokers influence the Malaysian employers or outsourcing companies to secure more job approvals from the Malaysian home ministry and also the Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur to attest those approvals.

Moreover, some of them who married Malays make their spouses or their relatives to set up companies to hire Bangladeshi workers and supply them to other employers to make easy money.

However, finally they fail to manage jobs for all.

"A large numbers of Bangladeshis have no jobs. Many also don't have valid work permits or even passports. And almost 100 percent workers have some sort of problems in Malaysia," admits a broker.

Since August 2006, around 4 lakh Bangladeshi fortune seekers went to Malaysia. Talking to The Daily Star at a Bangladeshi

restaurant in Jalan Hang Kasturi in Kuala Lumpur, the broker said, "From previous experience we thought we could manage jobs when workers arrive in Malaysia. But we have recently failed to do so."

According to brokers and other sources, there are around 5,000 such Bangladeshi brokers in Malaysia. Some of them maintain contacts in high levels including politicians and government high-ups.

"We ourselves told the companies to get more job approvals from the government. We told them we'll manage attestation of approval by the Bangladesh mission," says the broker, who terms himself a "representative".

These brokers also influence the employers that they would not need to pay levy to get approvals; rather the brokers would pay it for them.

As per the Malaysian rules, employers pay levy to hire foreign workers. Once the workers join work, they monthly pay it to the employers. But in the case of Bangladesh, the levy money is collected from the workers through recruiting agencies before they are employed.

Once employers secure job approvals and get those attested by the Bangladesh mission,

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AL mulls radical changes in BCL leadership

HASAN JAHD TUSHER

The ruling Awami League (AL) plans to change the leadership of its student wing Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) to pull the organisation out of the mire of factional feuds.

The recent spate of violence in educational institutions over control of campus, extortion and tender manipulation has

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NBR chief made OSD PDB gets new chairman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a latest reshuffle in the administration, National Board of Revenue (NBR) Chairman Muhammad Abdul Mazid was made officer on special duty (OSD) at the establishment ministry yesterday.

Acting secretary of housing and public works ministry Dr

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