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**Law ministry against presidential pardon**

UNB, Dhaka

The law ministry yesterday opined that though the President has the prerogative to grant mercy, it would not be judicious to pardon the condemned convicts of the Bangabandhu Murder Case.

Three of the condemned former army officers—Lt Col (ret'd) Mohiuddin Ahmed (artillery), Maj (ret'd) AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed (lancer) and Major (ret'd) Bazlul Huda—sought mercy from the President through the jail authority on Saturday.

The home ministry sent the three mercy petitions to the law ministry yesterday afternoon for legal opinion before forwarding those to the President.

Article 49 of the

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**BANGABANDHU MURDER VERDICT**  
**Huda, Mohiuddin, seek SC review**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two of the five detained killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman yesterday filed review petitions with the Supreme Court against the judgment confirming their death sentences.

Lawyers for convicts Bazlul Huda and AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed filed the petitions to the section concerned of the apex court.

The rest three death-row inmates in the Bangabandhu murder case are Syed Farooq Rahman, Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan and Mohiuddin Ahmed.

Anisul Huq, chief state counsel in the case, yesterday told The Daily Star that he would apply to the SC today or tomorrow for expeditious hearing of the review petitions.

He also said preparations for the executions will remain stalled until the review petitions are settled.

Meanwhile, Abdullah Al-Mamun, counsel for Bazlul Huda and AKM Mohiuddin, yesterday said his clients had not submitted any mercy petitions to the president of their own account.

He said their consent was taken under duress.

The same day, Huda's sister Mahfuza Pasha Reza and AKM Mohiuddin's wife Hosne Ara Mohiuddin told reporters at the SC that the two [convicts] had not filed any mercy petitions.

The claims come a day after Inspector General (prisons) Brig Gen Ashraf Islam Khan told the press that Lt Col (artillery) Mohiuddin Ahmed, Major Bazlul Huda and Major (lancer) AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed had sought presidential clemency through the jail authorities.

In another development, Jail Super Touhidul Islam yesterday afternoon handed the mercy petitions to Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder.

Talking to reporters at his ministry, the home secretary said the petitions would now be sent to the prime minister's office and then to the president's.

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Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus presents Binod Bihari Chowdhury with a medal on the 100th birthday of the veteran revolutionary at a programme in the port city yesterday.

**ATTACK ON TAPOSH**  
**Detained denied treatment, division despite court order**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite a court order three weeks ago, the jail authorities neither provided division status nor proper treatment to ailing freedom fighter Kamrul Islam Swapan detained in connection with a bomb attack on lawmaker Fazle Nur Taposh.

Swapan's wife Salma Haq alleged, "My husband was awarded the Bir Bikram title for his heroic role in the liberation war. But the Dhaka Central Jail authorities, ignoring all jail codes, detained my husband in a condemned cell where people on death row are kept."

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**TFI Cell at Pilkhana may be withdrawn**

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

The temporary Taskforce for Interrogation (TFI) cell, set up at the Pilkhana headquarters of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) after the February 2009 mutiny in the border security force, is likely to be shut down following allegations of torture of mutiny suspects there, sources in the home ministry said.

The cell, which is comprised of officials of different intelligence agencies and the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), interrogated several thousand BDR soldiers since the mutiny that had killed 75 persons including 57 army officers deputed to the force. The interrogations are still on.

A three-member committee has been formed with Additional Home Secretary Md Gulam Hussain as its chairman to arrange the disbandment of the cell. The other two mem-

bers of the committee are CID chief Additional Inspector General of Police Shah Jamal Raj, and BDR Director General Md Mainul Islam.

"The committee will meet next week to take the decision of shutting down the cell," a senior official of the home ministry told The Daily Star yesterday.

There are widespread allegations by human rights organisations that accused BDR soldiers were tortured during interrogations at the cell.

According to the rules, the interrogations are supposed to be held in presence of representatives from all relevant agencies including the police department, but in most cases it was not followed properly, alleged some home ministry officials.

Many of those who were interrogated at the cell later became ill. So far 67 accused BDR soldiers died in hospitals or committed suicide.

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**JS sitting resumes today**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Sangsad resumes sitting at 3:00pm today after a six-day recess with the main opposition lawmakers continuing boycott of the House.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shafique Ahmed is scheduled to place a bill in parliament for amending the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1998.

The bill seeks dropping a provision that allows courts to issue arrest warrants against editors, publishers, reporters or writers in defamation cases.

According to the bill, courts could only summon them instead of issuing arrest

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**Work hard to save people in distress**  
*Centenarian Binod Bihari calls upon youths*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Binod Bihari Chowdhury, the anti-British movement veteran who stepped on the 100th year of his life yesterday, called upon the young generation to become brave hearted and work for the distressed countrymen overcoming cowardice, weakness and selfishness.

"Courage is divine while cowardice and weakness are nothing but sin," he said replying to a grand reception accorded to him yesterday here at the Master Da Surya Sen Mancha at JM Sen Hall.

With the reception, concluded the three-day long celebration marking the 100th birth anniversary of the revolutionary. Biplobi Binod Bihari Janmoshatobarsha Udjapon Parishad organised the programme.

The veteran revolutionary expressed his wish to live more to work for the oppressed masses of the country.

"We have achieved geographical freedom but millions of homeless people still spend days and nights on the streets and suffer from hunger. We did not yearn for this sort of freedom,"

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**DEFAMATION CASE**  
**Moeen's plea for dismissal rejected**

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected a petition submitted by former army chief General Moeen U Ahmed seeking dismissal of a Tk 100-crore defamation case filed by former state minister for energy Iqbal Hassan Mahmood Tuku.

Judge SM Saiful Islam of Third Joint District Judge's Court passed the order after scrutinising the documents submitted by both the parties.

Besides, the court fixed January 31 for hearing on the petition filed by Tuku seeking attachment of Moeen's

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**Tension at Proshika as Faruque attempts to return**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tension arose at Proshika Bhaban in Mirpur yesterday as police were deployed in the morning to help former chairman of Proshika Qazi Faruque Ahmed enter the building.

But tension eased in the evening as Faruque did not turn up there.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Home Affairs in the face of Proshika employees' strong opposition cancelled a letter it issued earlier asking police for Faruque's security when he enters the office.

Earlier on December 22, Chief Executive Officer of Proshika Mahbulul Karim submitted a prayer for cancellation of the letter to the home ministry.

On December 6 last year, the letter was issued upon a

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Sri Lanka batsman Thilina Kandamby (L) falls short of his ground as Indian bowler Zaheer Khan dismantles the bails in their Idea Cup match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

**India amble into final**

SPORTS REPORTER

India coasted to a comfortable eight-wicket victory over Sri Lanka in their second meeting of the Idea Cup tri-nation tournament at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. Virat Kohli remained not out on 71 while Gautam Gambhir scored the same number of runs to chase down Sri Lanka's 213-run total with 17.2 overs to spare and 8 wickets in hand.

This win takes India into the final where they will meet the same opponents on Wednesday and dumps Bangladesh out of the tournament. Bangladesh will have the chance to salvage some pride when they take on India in a dead rubber today.

'Live by the sword and die from it' was probably the strategy adopted by Sri Lanka in yesterday's match. Having already confirmed their final berth with three comfortable wins in their first three

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**CRIMINAL CASES**  
**HC starts hearing under new rules**  
*Move taken to check anomalies in cause lists*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday started hearing and disposing of the new criminal cases maintaining serials of their filing numbers as per the new Supreme Court rule.

Chief Justice Md Tafazzul Islam on January 7 issued a notification asking the lawyers concerned to submit their criminal motions (new cases on which no order was passed yet) to the courts by January 10, so hearings could be held serially.

Additional Attorney General Murad Reza yesterday told The Daily Star the notification was issued to put an end to corruption and irregularities regarding cause lists of the courts.

Disposing of the cases serially is a good start for the judiciary, he added.

Meanwhile, some pro-BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami lawyers urged the chief justice to review the recent reconstitution of the HC benches by giving powers to the senior judges for hearing and disposing of the important cases.

The chief justice, on January 7, reconstituted some HC benches, changing the power that allows the junior judges to hear and dispose of the important matters, the lawyers claimed.

The senior lawyers, headed by TH Khan, met the chief justice at his SC office yesterday and requested him to reconsider the

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**Jyoti Basu slightly better**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Kolkata

Marxist patriarch Jyoti Basu's health condition was marginally better Sunday though he was still critical and on partial ventilator support. The 95-year-old leader was responding to

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**Zardari may transfer powers to PM**  
*Decision awaits draft 'constitutional package'*

ANI, Lahore/ Islamabad

The Pakistan People's Party has announced that President Asif Ali Zardari will transfer powers to the prime minister the moment the committee working on constitutional package finalises its recommendations.

The Dawn quoted PPP secretary-general Jehangir Badr as saying this while speaking at a book launch "Asif Ali Zardari, aik mudabar siyasatdan (a mature politician)" at Alhamra here on Saturday.

Badr praised Zardari for his sacrifices and contribution to Pakistan and democracy.

Speaking at the function, Sindh Chief Minister Qaim Ali Shah said Zardari became the PPP chief on the will of Benazir Bhutto and proved to be a good leader.

He added that Zardari bravely faced imprisonment and emerged as a mature politician.

He also said that Zardari and the PPP government would face conspiracies bravely and would not allow conspirators to succeed in their nefarious designs.

Meanwhile, PPP Baluchistan chief Lashkari Raisani has said that conspiracies hatched against Zardari are actually conspiracies against Pakistan.

Speaking at a book launch here, Raisani said

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**Iran's nuke facilities 'can be bombed'**  
*Says US commander*

AFP, Washington

A top US military commander responsible for the Middle East and the Gulf region said the United States has developed contingency plans to deal with Iran's nuclear facilities, insisting that they "can be bombed."

"Well, they certainly can be bombed," General David Petraeus, head of US Central Command, told CNN television as he commented on suggestions that Iranian nuclear facilities were heavily fortified.

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**OnlinePoll** ✓

Do you think it is the right way for a minister like Syed Ashraf to disclose at a roundtable sensitive information of a 'secret meeting' between Pervez Musharraf and Anup Chhetia during the BNP rule?

○ Yes (68.6%)  
○ No (30.7%)  
○ No Comments (0.7%)

**Total votes: 860**

**TODAY'S POLL**

Do you think BNP will cooperate with the government even if PM's visit to India brings success for Bangladesh?

Please cast your vote at [www.thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net)

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