

Yunus verdict

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by Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haque adjourned the hearing to examine the HC verdict that on March 8 rejected two writ petitions challenging the removal order.

Appearing for the petitioners, Dr Kamal Hossain placed arguments before the apex court.

He told the Appellate Division that Yunus was appointed the Grameen Bank MD with the Bangladesh Bank approval in 1990.

The central bank conducted an audit into the Grameen at different times, but it raised no question about Yunus' appointment and his holding office as MD, the law expert said.

There was no need for further approval regarding his appointment from Bangladesh Bank, he added.

But the government felt that it was not right for Yunus to hold the office, it could have issued a prior notice seeking his explanation, he added.

Dr Kamal also said the HC has rejected the writ petitions without issuing any rule upon the government or Bangladesh Bank seeking an explanation over Yunus' sacking.

"We have placed interpretation of law before the High Court, and submitted to the court [the HC] relevant papers and information in support of the writ petitions, but the government placed no papers against the petitions," he said.

The Appellate Division should examine the HC verdict and also the ground on which it was delivered, Dr Kamal added.

At this stage, the court said it should examine the HC verdict and wait for the copy of the judgement and

Later, Kamal Hossain told reporters that the government should not take any action over his client's holding of the office, as the issue has become subjective.

"If the government makes any such move before disposal of the appeals, we can place an application before the Appellate Division for remedy," he said.

Grameen Bank is an organisation of over 80 lakh of the poor in the country, and that is why, it should not be left in a vulnerable situation, he said.

Meanwhile, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam said the SC did not stay the High Court verdict. The HC judgement is still in force and it should not be disobeyed, he said.

Yunus, the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize winner, was relieved of his duties at Grameen Bank on March 2 through a Bangladesh Bank letter saying that the 70-year-old micro-credit pioneer was holding the post illegally.

Yunus and the nine Grameen Bank directors filed separate two writ petitions with the HC on March 3 challenging the central bank's order.

After filing of the petitions on March 9, Chamber Judge Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain briefly heard arguments from both sides and sent the appeals to the full bench of the Supreme Court for a full-fledged hearing.

Mahmudul Islam, Rokanuddin Mahmud, Sara Hossain and Mustafizur Rahman Khan appeared for the petitioners during the hearing yesterday.

Law will take own course

Dipu Moni responds to US Congressmen's letter

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni yesterday said she does not know if there is any room for compromise on Prof Yunus' matter within the ambit of law.

Responding to 26 US Congressmen's letter to the Prime Minister on March 11 for a satisfactory compromise on Prof Yunus' matter, she said it is obvious that law will take its own course.

"An independent country will apply law independently," she added.

Replying to a question at a press briefing at the foreign ministry, Dipu Moni said, "I have not yet gone through the letter. Since the letter has been sent to the Prime Minister, she must have received it."

The foreign minister, however, declined to elaborate her comment since, she said, the matter is pending before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

On another question, if the political process has been exhausted to figure out a compromise between the government and Prof Yunus, she said the finance minister discussed the matter with Prof Yunus and later took the decision, and he (Yunus) later went to court to seek redress.

"The finance minister is in a better position to say whether the political process has been exhausted or not," she added.

The foreign minister further said Bangladesh is an independent country and its legal system has the international standard and is acclaimed everywhere.

"Some may be happy or unhappy by any legal decision, but it should be allowed to go its own course," she said.

Twenty-six members of the Congressional Caucus on Bangladesh sent the letter to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina urging to resolve the matter with Prof Yunus through a mutually satisfactory compromise that ensures the ongoing independence of Grameen Bank.

The letter written by members of the Congressional Caucus on Bangladesh, an organisation focused on strengthening the United States-Bangladesh relationship, said "we are troubled" by removal of Dr Yunus from his position at Grameen Bank.

then it adjourned the hearing that began at 9:05am.

Dr Yunus was present in the court.

4 more bodies of Bangladeshis found in Greece

AFP, Heraklion, Greece

Authorities on the Greek island of Crete said yesterday they found the bodies of four more young Bangladeshis believed to be part of a group that fled a ship evacuating them from Libya.

This brought to 10 the number of drowned Bangladeshis found near Souda Bay in the island's northwest, according to police who said they were continuing their search.

Three bodies were found in the same area Monday and another four Bangladeshis are still unaccounted for.

They are all believed to have come from the Cypriot-flagged ship Ionian King evacuating 1,280 people from Libya, most of them Bangladeshi nationals that sailed into Souda Bay on March 6.

Forty-nine of the passengers climbed down a rope when the ship anchored, prompting speculation that they did not want to return to Bangladesh.

Thirty-five were rescued at the time.

Driver killed

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village of Bhakurta union yesterday.

Savar police said a group of criminals in the guise of passengers hired the car from Hemayetpur bus stand in Savar for Keraniganj at about 9:00pm on Monday.

As the car reached Bhakurta, they stabbed Ali to death, left him on a roadside ditch and drove away with the car, they said.

The car owner Monir Hossain of Savar had been running his rent-a-car business by Ali Ahmed for the past several months.

Monir told police that before starting for Keraniganj, Ali had informed him about his trip at about 9:00am over cellphone.

"As Ali did not return with the car, I informed the matter to police," Monir said.

Following information by locals, police later recovered Ali's body at Jhauchar, he added.

BNP returns to JS, walks out

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"The country is in a deep crisis. There is no rule of law, democracy, independence of the judiciary and the media. The government has no success...," said Khaleda, the BNP chief.

She demanded discussion on various important issues in the House, adjourning its other scheduled business.

Opposition lawmakers already submitted notices to the Parliament Secretariat asking for discussions on different issues including share market crash, soaring food prices, and the sliding law order.

"The government and parliament will benefit if discussions are held on those important issues," the opposition leader said urging the government to "work to save the country".

After Khaleda's speech, Speaker Abdul Hamid said, "I will accept notice for holding discussions, if necessary, but you will have to keep coming to the House."

BNP lawmaker Moudud Ahmed then said they were happy with the speaker's assurance and he would speak today about the issues they want to be discussed in parliament.

After being out for 74 consecutive sittings since June last year, lawmakers belonging to BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami and Bangladesh Jatiya Party entered the House moments after the day's proceedings began at 5:04pm.

Earlier, the opposition lawmakers boycotted the House in June, 2009 and returned on February 11 last year, remaining absent for 64 consecutive sittings.

On return, they had to face criticism that they returned only to keep their memberships in parliament.

According to the constitution, a lawmaker's seat falls vacant if he remains absent from parliament, without prior permission from the Speaker, for 90 sittings at a stretch.

However, the opposition leader taking the floor shortly after returning to parliament said they returned to speak for the people and to save the country.

In her one-hour speech, Khaleda Zia launched a blistering attack on the government and said the government has failed in every sector.

"People are passing a critical time due to the worsening law and order, price hike of essentials, tender manipulation by ruling party men and acute shortage of power and gas," she said.

The former primer said thousands of crore of taka was taken away from the share market making 33 lakh people penniless.

She said the government has politicised the administration and turned the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) into a "partisan commission" to exempt ruling party men from graft charges.

"Is the government allowing its officials to engage in corruption frequently?" Khaleda said referring to the proposed amendment to the ACC law.

As per the amendment, filing a graft case against any government official will require prior permission of the government.

The opposition leader also blasted the government for removing Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus from Grameen Bank.

The government has damaged the image of the country by dishonouring honourable people like Prof Yunus, she said.

"People of the entire world respect Dr Yunus. You [the government] should behave well with him to uphold the country's dignity," Khaleda noted.

She said the country is at a critical juncture, and urged the government to hold a mid-term election.

"A single person is running the government, the administration, the party, and discharging the duties of the Speaker and the chief justice. In the past, the country was ruled by one party, and now by one person," Khaleda said referring to her arch rival Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

She demanded that BNP lawmaker Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, detained on war crimes charges, be allowed to

participate in parliament. Khaleda said her party favours holding war crimes trial but it must maintain the international standards.

After her speech, the sitting was adjourned for 20 minutes for magrib prayers. Opposition parliamentarians returned after the break but Khaleda did not.

OPPOSITION STORMS OUT

The opposition legislators stormed out of the House yesterday evening protesting against a minister's remark that late president Ziaur Rahman had a role in the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

As soon as Jute and Textile Minister Abdul Latif Siddiqui made the remark, the opposition lawmakers stood up and started shouting.

Latif was speaking on the thanks-giving motion on the president's address.

Without microphone, they demanded that the Speaker expunge the minister's remark about Ziaur Rahman, the founder of BNP. Some of them gathered in front of the Speaker's podium chanting slogans in this regard.

Deputy Speaker Col (ret'd) Shawkat Ali, presiding over the sitting, did not say anything.

Led by the opposition chief whip they staged the walkout at 8:15pm.

The minister finished his speech after the walkout. The opposition did not return yesterday.

After the walkout, the opposition lawmakers at a press conference at the parliament's media centre blasted the jute and textile minister for his comment and for compelling them to walk out of the House.

They will return to the House today.

Interestingly, at the beginning of the discussion on the thanks-giving motion, Speaker Abdul Hamid said, "Please, do not deliver any speech attacking others. If you have any information on the wrongdoings of the present or the past governments, please use the information in a decent way."

The Speaker urged all lawmakers due to his bitter experience in the past. The parliament witnessed uproar of lawmakers in past following the use of "aggressive" and "indecent" words against national leaders.

Yesterday the Speaker even expunged the speech of Shawkat Momen Shajahan, chief of the parliamentary standing committee on agriculture ministry.

Shajahan began speaking to counter the opposition leader's speech even though he was given the floor to place a committee report on the scrutiny of a bill.

The speaker interfered and said the committee chief cannot give any speech as he was given the floor only to place the report. "Everything that you spoke of during this time will be expunged from parliament proceedings," Hamid said.

After the committee's report was placed, the discussion on the thanks-giving motion began.

Opposition lawmakers belonging to BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami and Bangladesh Jatiya Party refused to take part in the discussion on thanks giving.

"We are not prepared to speak today. We will hear today and speak tomorrow," Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abidin Farroque said in response to the Speaker's repeated call to have names of opposition lawmakers who want to take part in the discussion.

"I fail to understand why you are doing this. Some of the opposition lawmakers are able to speak without any preparation," the Speaker said.

Population

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Statistics (BBS) is conducting the census which will continue till March 19.

For the first time, the government is going to use digital enumeration map to ensure that every part of the country comes under the census.

The floated people have been counted in the first six hours from midnight on the first day of enumeration.

"If anybody is left out of the enumeration, he or she will have to go to the nearest census office to get counted," said Planning Minister AK Khandaker while observing the enumeration of floating people at Kamalapur Railway Station in the city at about 12:30am.

He urged all to get counted and help others to be counted.

The minister said people living in enclaves are being counted as per a special measure. "There is an agreement with India in this regard," he added.

Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 1
Moni informed the media about the government's decision at a press briefing held at the foreign ministry yesterday afternoon.

The Bangladesh mission also issued a consular advisory for 12,000 Bangladeshi expatriates to stay in safer places free from nuclear radiation, said the minister adding, around 6,000 have been advised to move from Tokyo.

Besides, they were also asked to follow the safety instructions being issued time to time by the local authorities.

A total of 20 officials and staff, including five officers, are working in the Bangladesh mission.

According to the minister, there has been no casualty report of any Bangladeshi citizen in the earthquake or tsunami that devastated the north-east of Japan on March 11.

"We came to know that some 170 Bangladeshis have been sheltered in different centres and of them 52 have been relocated to Tokyo from worst hit areas," she noted.

Most Bangladeshis residing in Japan are professionals or students. Of them, some are permanent residents.

Dipu Moni said Bangladesh has already offered Japan to send medical and rescue teams and a C-130 cargo aircraft.

Around 100 countries have offered help, but the Japanese government informed they were unable to respond to these offers.

SA storm into qtrs

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dismissed George Dockrell to finish with 3-33.

Wilson and Kevin O'Brien (19) offered brief resistance with a 41-run stand for the fifth wicket before both of them fell to left-arm spinner Robin Peterson in the space of three balls.

Peterson grabbed three wickets and seamer Jacques Kallis two.

Man-of-the-match Duminy earlier kept the Irish attack at bay with a commendable knock, adding 87 for the sixth wicket with Colin Ingram (46) and 65 for the next with Johan Botha (21 not out).

Morne van Wyk was the other notable run-getter with a brisk 42.

Duminy looked set to complete his third one-day hundred before he fell in the last over, brilliantly caught by Kevin O'Brien at mid-on off seamer John Mooney. He hit one six and six fours in his 103-ball knock.

Ingram, playing his first World Cup game in place of injured batsman AB de Villiers, hit seven fours in his 43-ball knock before being bowled by fast bowler Trent Johnston.

The non-Test playing nation did not allow South Africa to settle after they elected to field, with pace-man Boyd Rankin and spinners George Dockrell and Paul Stirling taking one wicket apiece.

The Irish bowlers were backed by their fielders, with skipper Porterfield and Mooney having a hand in the run-outs of Kallis (19) and skipper Graeme Smith (seven).

The South African batting problems began in the fifth over when Hashim Amla (18) fell soon after pulling Rankin for a six, upper-cutting the next ball to Dockrell, who took a superb diving catch at deep third man.

Van Wyk went for his shots from the beginning as he twice lofted Johnston for fours and then hit two suc-

cessive boundaries off Rankin.

He was lucky to survive on 23 when Stirling dropped a regulation slip catch off Rankin, but Ireland did not have to wait long for success as Smith was run out following a Mooney direct hit at the non-striker's end.

Van Wyk continued to play attacking shots as he smashed Johnston for two fours and a six in the same over before his flourish finally ended, bowled by left-arm spinner Dockrell while attempting to cut.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard of the World Cup Group B match between South Africa and Ireland at Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Tuesday:

SOUTH AFRICA
Amla c Dockrell b Rankin 18
Smith run out 7
Van Wyk b Dockrell 42
Kallis run out 19
Duminy c KO'Brien b Mooney 99
Du Plessis c Johnston b Stirling 11
Ingram b Johnston 46
Botha not out 21
Peterson not out 0
Extras: (b-2, lb-3, w-4) 9
Total: (For seven wickets in 50 overs) 272

Did not bat: Morkel, Steyn.

Fall of wickets: 1-24, 2-52, 3-84, 4-95, 5-117, 6-204, 7-269.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Rankin	10	0	59	1
Johnston	10	0	76	1
Mooney	8	0	36	1
Dockrell	10	0	37	1
Stirling	10	0	45	1
Cusack	2	0	14	0

IRELAND
Porterfield c Smith b Morkel 6
Stirling c Kallis b Morkel 10
Joyce lbw b Botha 12
NO'Brien c Van Wyk b Kallis 10
Wilson lbw b Peterson c Amla 31
b Peterson c Smith 19
Cusack c Smith b Peterson 7
Mooney c Van Wyk b Kallis 14
Johnston c Van Wyk b Duminy 12

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Steyn	4	1	13	0
Morkel	5.2	0	33	3
Kallis	6	1	20	2
Botha	8	0	32	1
Peterson	8	0	32	3
Duminy	2	0	11	1

Result: South Africa won by 131 runs.

Man-of-the-match: JP Duminy.

Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-19, 3-35, 4-51, 5-92, 6-92, 7-107, 8-123, 9-137.

Immediately after the attack, a group of agitated youths ransacked at least five houses belonging to the activists of the party's rival faction in Brahmamdi of the town, locals said.

They also tried to set those houses ablaze, they added.

"Police immediately rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control," Narsingdi Police Super Akkasuddin Bhuiyan said.

Abu Bakkar Siddik, principal of the college, told The Daily Star a gang of criminals, equipped with firearms and sharp weapons, stormed into the student union office at about 11:30am and sprayed bullets on Roni.

They also stabbed Roni to confirm his death, the principal added.

Mamun and Raju, who were present in the office during the incident, also received bullet injuries.

They were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

A tense situation is prevailing in the town for the last few days over the recent formation of new JCD committee, police super said.

Before leaving the college premise, the miscreants also locked four rooms from outside where students were taking their lessons.

Narsingdi Sadar Thana BNP President Manjur Elahi suspects that internal feuds between two groups of JCD centring recent formation of the district unit might be the reason behind the attack.

Immediately after the incident, the college authorities suspended all classes for the day. Additional police forces were deployed in and around the campus.

On share market crash, the minister said it is true there was a crisis in the capital market but it is now over.

Narsingdi

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of the college students union and the president of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) college unit.

To protest the incident, JCD has called a day-long hartal in the district today.

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Home beckons

FROM PAGE 1
crowded refugee camp of Choucha near Libya-Tunisia border yesterday.

Many of the remaining 11,000 men, now desperately waiting to get home, had the same story of being cheated on their journey from home to Libya. With more compatriots being repatriated every day, they are waking up to realise that a harsh reality awaits them back home.

I saw several thousand of these men sitting impatiently in the scorching desert of Choucha to hear from the IOM and others, not about food or drink but when they could go home.

Soon I was surrounded by young Bangladeshi workers. They told me how badly the Bangladesh Embassy in Tripoli treated them and how utterly indifferent the officials remained to the plights of thousands of workers trying to obtain travel passes.

Md Atabar of Belabo, Narsingdi, along with 100 others, spent two days in the embassy storehouse before being kicked out of there by a Bangladeshi official named Kibria.

"But I want to tell you about how we were lured to Libya from Bangladesh with false documents and promises," said Atabar, who is in his early thirties.

As he spoke, the surrounding crowd suddenly became quiet. "Like every one else here I paid Tk 2.5 lakh to an agency in Dhaka for a job here. The agency said our salary would be \$360 per month."

"I sold our family land to manage the money. But when I came to Tripoli, to my surprise I realised that I had been cheated. Now I am to go home empty handed," told Atabar.

Others also had the strikingly similar story. The agencies sent thousands of these migrant workers to Libya over the last two years. The whole process was designed by a vicious circle, which the workers firmly believe is backed up by a section of government officials.</