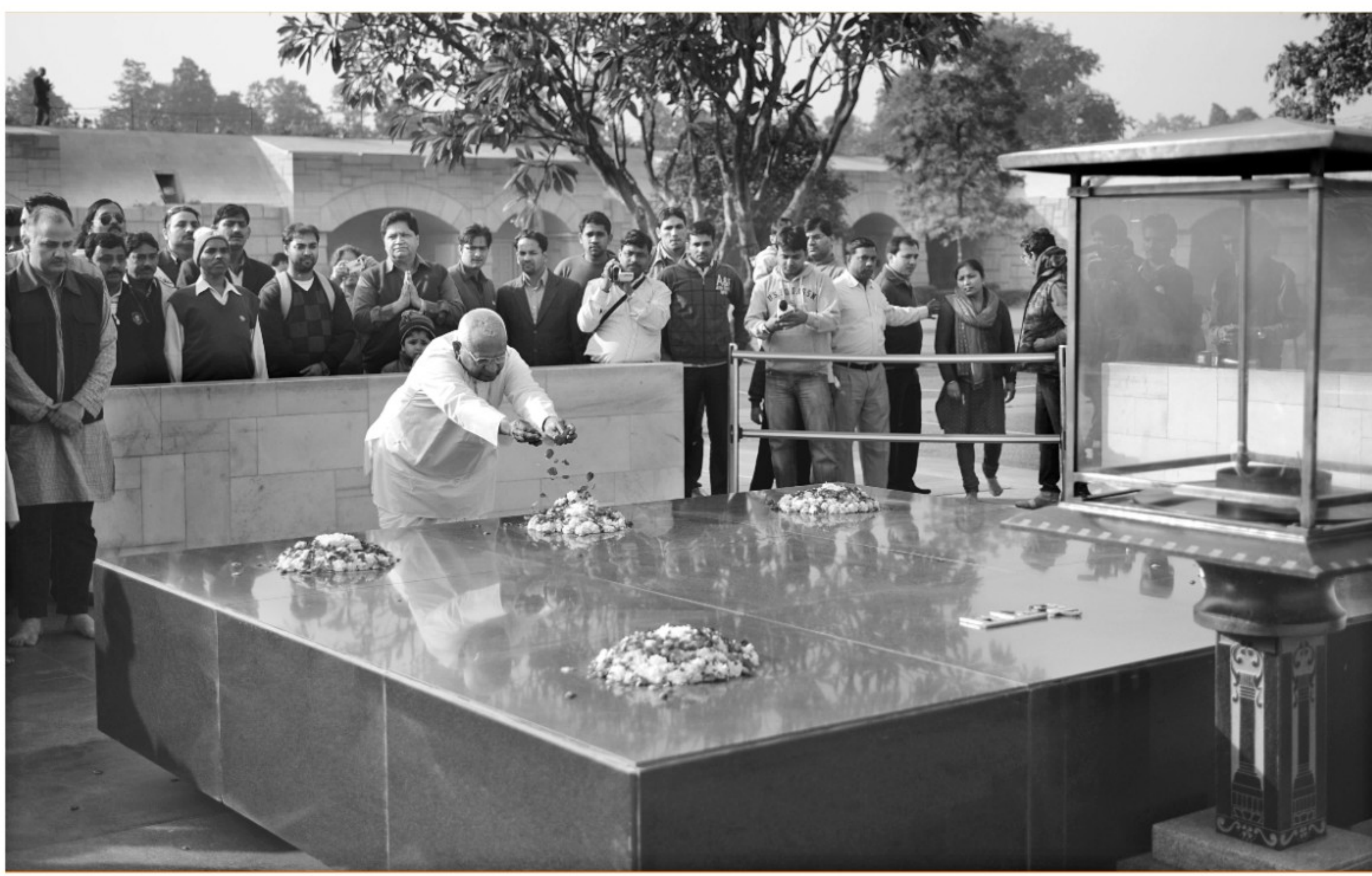


Pak Taliban denies peace talks

AP, Peshawar
A Pakistani Taliban spokesman and another commander yesterday denied the group is in peace talks with the government.
The militants contacted The Associated Press by telephone yesterday, a day after Maulvi Faqir Mohammed, recognised by many as the Pakistani Taliban's deputy chief, announced the group was negotiating with the government. He was the first named commander to confirm talks.
Spokesman Ehsanullah Ehsan denied the claims, saying there would be no negotiations until the government imposed Islamic law, or Shariah, in the country. He has previously denied reports of peace talks by unnamed commanders and intelligence officials.
"Talks by a handful of people with the government cannot be deemed as the Taliban talking," Ehsan told AP.



Anti-corruption activist Anna Hazare pays tribute at the Rajghat memorial for Mahatma Gandhi in New Delhi yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

FRESH ROW OVER LOKPAL
Hazare fasts, rejects bill

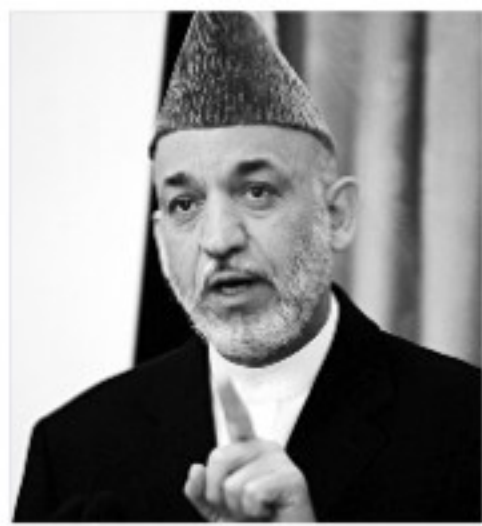
OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India's anti-graft crusader Anna Hazare yesterday went a day-long fast here protesting against 'watered-down' proposals of a Parliamentary Standing Committee on a law against corruption.
Hazare, 74, began his hunger strike at Jantar Mantar, an 18th century observatory in the heart of Delhi, at around 10:15AM accompanied by a number of supporters who waved the Indian tri-colour and shouted slogans like 'Vande Mataram' and 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai'.
Hazare was received at the protest venue with a thunderous applause and sloganeering by his supporters who had gathered at the venue braving the morning chill.
Before going on fast, Hazare went to Rajghat, the memorial of India's Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi, and spent around 30 minutes meditating there. "I am fine and healthy," he told reporters.
This is Hazare's third hunger strike against corruption. The first one, which was a five-day affair from April 5 at Jantar Mantar, had drawn huge crowds. The government had then set up a joint committee comprising official representatives and activists to draft the Lokpal Bill.
The social activist had undertaken his second fast at Ramlila Maidan here in August this year that lasted 13 days and received a groundswell of popular support, mainly from the middle class, across the country.

Foreigners fuelling corruption in Afghanistan: Karzai

AFP, Kabul

Foreigners are fuelling the problem of corruption in Afghanistan, a country already ranked as one of the most corrupt in the world, Afghan President Hamid Karzai said yesterday.
At a major international conference in Germany on the future of Afghanistan last week, Karzai pledged to step up the fight against corruption in return for sustained international support.
But speaking in the capital yesterday, Karzai said foreigners were adding to the problem by, for example, awarding contracts to high ranking government officials.
"We have problems with both Afghans and foreigners... Our foreigner colleagues have not only been uncooperative but sometimes they have created obstacles," he told an anti-corruption



Hamid Karzai

conference.
"One of the ways to curb corruption is that foreigners should stop giving out contracts to the relatives of the high-ranking government officials. We have to revise and reform the contract system.
"We have lost our mutual trust: foreigners think we go corrupt for political reasons, and we think they are corrupt for the same reason."
In a global survey published this month by Berlin-based anti-graft watchdog Transparency International, Afghanistan was again named one of the world's most corrupt nations,

coming 180th out of 183 countries.
Karzai said that the corruption problem was exacerbated by uncertainty over the future of the country.
"We have to work together with our foreigner friends to give people assurance," he said.
Afghanistan pledged at a conference in Bonn last Monday to maintain the fight against corruption as one of its "key priorities".
This is not the first time Afghanistan has blamed foreign influences for adding to the problem of graft.
In February the country partly blamed foreign donors for serious problems at the scandal-hit Kabul Bank.
At that time the suggestion of foreign responsibility was quickly rejected by a US official who said Kabul was attempting to shift the blame for its own failure in the affair.

SHIA SHRINE ATTACK
Death toll rises to 80

AFP, Kabul

Afghanistan said yesterday the death toll from bombings targeting the Shia Muslim holy day of Ashura, which raised fears the nation could face an eruption of sectarian violence, has climbed to 80.
The coordinated attacks struck in Kabul and the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif on Tuesday as Shias gathered to mark the holiest day in their calendar.
"The Ashura incident happened at a time that the people of Afghanistan were happy after a successful Bonn conference," Karzai said during a speech in the capital, referring to the international meeting in Germany on his country's future.
The twin blasts have prompted fears that Afghanistan could see the sort of sectarian violence that has pitched Shia against Sunni Muslims in Iraq and Pakistan.

Well done in Durban

FROM PAGE 1

While this represents a significant achievement to keep the Kyoto Protocol alive, although in considerably less ambitious level, Durban may be considered to have been a good COP.
However the lack of ambitious mitigation targets by all the major emitting countries including the United States of America, China and India means that temperature increase is still headed for well over 3 degrees Centigrade since the pre-industrialised period, which is well over the 2 degrees agreed in Cancun, and much more above the 1.5 degrees demanded by the least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS). This lack of ambition makes the Durban outcome a bad COP for the more vulnerable developing countries.
On the positive side the LDC Group, with Bangladesh's active involvement, played a significant role in the negotiations and achieved a positive result on the adaptation track with an agreement on National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF).
The Bangladesh delegation played a significant role in the negotiations not only as part of the LDC Group but also at the political level with a ministerial level meeting of the Climate Vulnerable

Forum (CVF) which Bangladesh now chairs. This forum of political leaders, which was formed by the Maldives in 2009, has grown in significance since then, and with Bangladesh hosting the meeting in November this year it takes over the leadership until next year when Costa Rica will take over.
Bangladesh foreign and environment ministers, together with their counterparts from the Maldives and Costa Rica, must now redouble their high level diplomatic efforts to visit countries like the US, China, India and Brazil to get those countries to do more before the 18th COP to be held a year from now in Doha, Qatar.
The main lesson from Durban is that leaving efforts to the negotiations in the COPs is not enough, and that higher level political and diplomatic efforts will be necessary before COP18 next year if it is to be a good COP rather than a bad one. Bangladesh and the other vulnerable countries will have to be proactive at the highest political levels if they wish to achieve such an outcome.
(Saleemul Huq is senior fellow at the International Institute for Environment and Development in London, and director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development at Independent University, Bangladesh.)

Russia orders poll inquiry after protests

REUTERS, Moscow

President Dmitry Medvedev ordered an investigation yesterday into allegations of fraud in Russia's parliamentary election, one day after tens of thousands of protesters demanded it be annulled and rerun.
Medvedev responded on his Facebook site to the protesters' complaints that the December 4 election was slanted to favour of his and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's United Russia party, but did not mention their calls for an end to Putin's rule.
"I do not agree with any slogans or statements made at the rallies. Nevertheless, instructions have been given by me to check all information from polling stations regarding compliance with the legislation on elections," Medvedev said in a post on the social media site.
"Citizens of Russia have freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. People have a right to express the position that they did yesterday. It all took place within the framework of the law," he added.
His statement was a sign that the Russian leadership feels under pressure after the biggest opposition protests.

7 Jamaat leaders

FROM PAGE 1

Paltan Police Station while Metropolitan Magistrate Shahriar Mahmud Adnan passed a similar order after refusing their bail petition in the other case filed with Ramna Police Station.
The accused are Dhaka city unit Jamaat Nayebe-Ameer Prof AKM Nazir Ahmad, lawmaker Hamidur Rahman Azad, executive members - Maulana Rafiuddin Ahmed and Maulana ATM Masum and the party activists Rafiqunnabi, Abdur Rahman and Maulana Abdul Mannan.
Meanwhile, police picked up 12 more leaders of Jamaat and Shibir from the court premises yesterday.
Mahmudul Haque, operation officer of Kotwali Police Station, told The Daily Star that police picked them up as they gathered at court premises with 'ill motives'.
On September 19, several hundred Jamaat activists clashed with police in the

capital, torched and vandalised vehicles and shops, leaving at least 100 people injured.
Following the clash, two cases were filed with Paltan and Ramna police stations against the Jamaat men.
On October 19, the accused had surrendered before the High Court seeking anticipatory bail in the cases. The court granted them bail for a period of six weeks.
However, their bail period had already expired.
Two other cases were also filed with the police stations under the Speedy Trial Act in connection with creating anarchy among the people and halting traffic movement for hours on the same day.
Jamaat acting Ameer Maqbul Ahmad, its acting Secretary General ATM Azharul Islam and over 140 leaders and activists had been made accused in the cases. Both cases are still under trial.

Defence begins

FROM PAGE 20

Prosecution witness Mahbul Alam Hawladar, 60, who testified on Wednesday, was asked about details on the list of evidence submitted to the tribunal and among others, the Pirojpur madrasa where Sayedee had studied.
The cross-examination will resume today after the relevant documents are submitted to the tribunal.
The adjournment came in the face of opposition from the prosecution when defence counsellor Mizanul Islam introduced a document and proceeded to question the witness about the contents.
The document is about a request that witness Howladar, a freedom fighter, had submitted to the prime minister in 2004 through Pirojpur deputy commissioner seeking assistance in constructing a house.
The prosecution objected

immediately when the defence asked the witness whether he had made such a request, showing Howladar the document.
The prosecution argued that the defence did not submit documents that it wished to rely upon.
The tribunal then said the defence could ask the witness about the document only, not about the contents since the prosecution had not seen it before.
Upon defence lawyer Mizanul's repeated pleas seeking a one-day adjournment, judge ATM Fazle Kabir asked whether the defence would submit all documents regarding the first witness within the day.
The defence said it would do so.
Tribunal Chairman Justice Nizamul Huq then adjourned the proceedings for the day but cautioned that there would be no further adjournments in similar circumstances for the defence.

Refrain from

FROM PAGE 1

Referring to a speech by Law Minister Shafique Ahmed, made a day before, he alleged that the minister had branded beforehand the accused as perpetrators of the crimes against humanity.
"An accused be presumed innocent till proved guilty," Razzaq told the tribunal quoting the legal maxim.
Interrupting the defence counsel, the three-member tribunal Chairman Justice Nizamul Huq said, "You've brought a very important matter before us... We also go through daily newspapers and watch TV talk shows over the trial of the war crimes.
"Sometimes it becomes harsh and unheard of. But we avoid all those things for the smooth running of the judicial process," observed the tribunal chairman.
As the order of the day came up for hearing, Chief Prosecutor Ghulam Arief Tipoo moved a petition seeking more time as it could not complete the formal charges against one of the four accused Jamaat-e-Islami leaders Abdur Quader Molla.
The chief prosecutor said they have already submitted formal charges against detained Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami, Secretary General Ali Ahsan M Mojaheed and Assistant Secretary General M Kamaruzzaman.
After the hearing, the tribunal asked the prosecution to submit the formal charge against Quader Molla before it within a week. The tribunal also set December 18 for considering formal charges in presence of all the four accused.

SC directives ignored

FROM PAGE 20

approval, said a ministry official wishing anonymity.
The draft says importers should submit lists of "on board" hazardous waste, if any, but it did not mention anything about "in built" hazardous materials that are used to build ships. These "in built" substances with high toxicity may cause deadly diseases such as cancer.
The Chittagong coast is already exposed to deadly hazardous materials such as asbestos, polyurethane foam and other heavy metals, and liquid organic waste from ship-breaking yards in Sitakunda.
If these substances get scattered in the sea by cyclones or tidal surge, they will cause severe sea pollution, says a recent World Bank report. It said if the current trend continues, Bangladesh's coastline will face more environmental pollution than Pakistan in

the next two decades.
The industries ministry kept the draft's English version posted on its website for a month till December 4, asking for suggestions from the stakeholders concerned.
But the ministry did not take views of marginal workers although the guideline is meant to ensure their safety.
At least 36 workers were killed and many others injured in accidents at ship-breaking yards in the last 40 months. These deaths could have been averted if adequate safety precautions had been taken at those yards.
The Supreme Court directed the government to formulate a set of rules by December 14 to free the ship-breaking industry from pollution and ensure workers' safety. It also asked the industries ministry secretary to appear before the court with a copy of government gazette on the rules.

However, the court asked the ministry to prepare the draft on the basis of the "Basel Convention on the Control of Trans-boundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal" and five other laws.
On December 15 last year, an HC bench asked the government to frame rules in the light of the six existing laws.
The six laws are the Basel Convention Act, 1989; Bangladesh Environment Protection Act, 1995; Bangladesh Marine and Fisheries Ordinance, 1989; Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006; Bangladesh Territorial Water and Maritime Zone Act, 1974; and Environment Protection Rules, 1997.
Industries Ministry Secretary KH Masud Siddiqui said, "We tried our best to comply with the Supreme Court directives."
He admitted that the new guideline is based on the Hong Kong Convention, and

said they had taken into consideration stakeholders' observations while drafting the guideline.
The government in February decided to give the ship-breaking industry a formal shape by bringing the sector under the rules of business of the industries ministry.
Earlier, the environment and forest ministry prepared a guideline on ship breaking and recycling. The government published a gazette on it on February 28.
The guideline contained some provisions for reducing environmental pollution and ensuring workers' safety. But the industries ministry ignored the guideline while drafting the latest one.
In March 2009, the High Court directed the government to draw up rules and guidelines for ensuring workers' safety, and not to allow import of any hazardous vessels.

Advertisement for Bangladesh College of Applied Sciences (বিসিপিএস) featuring a table of courses and fees, and a list of 10 exam questions.