

C'WEALTH MEMBERSHIP Maldives' fate to be decided

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) will hold discussions next week on whether the Maldives can retain its membership following allegations that the "ousting" of former president Mohamed Nasheed was a breach of the Commonwealth values and principles.

A three-member Commonwealth Ministerial Mission completed investigation in the Maldives on Sunday and will report to CMAG.

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Communications of Trinidad and Tobago, Surujrattan Rambachan, led the mission comprising Foreign Minister of Bangladesh Dipu Moni and Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia, Dennis Richardson.

Speaking at a press conference, Rambachan said they held detailed discussions with a wide range of stakeholders including the new President Mohammed Waheed Hassan and Nasheed.

"Our observations and recommendations will be presented to the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group, which will meet in London in the coming week.

Nasheed, the Maldives first democratically-chosen leader, resigned on February 7 and was replaced by his vice president, Waheed, after the police and army clashed in the streets of the island nation amid protests over the arrest of a top judge.

HIGH COURT 5 cops kept standing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday once again kept five officers of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) standing before it for about four and a half hours for their "involvement" in torturing Rakib Hossain, a grandson of the country's first prime minister Tajuddin Ahmed.

On February 16, they were kept standing in the courtroom for the same reason.

The police officials are Deputy Commissioner of Gulshan zone Chowdhury Lutful Kabir, Assistant Commissioner Ashraf Azim Miah, Officer-in-Charge of Gulshan Police Station Shah Alam, and sub-inspectors Soumen Barua and Mostafiz.

Yesterday, they appeared before the bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik and Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim as per its February 16 order.

Deputy Attorney General ABM Altaf Hossain told The Daily Star that the court had exonerated Chowdhury Lutful Kabir from personal appearance as it did not find his involvement in the torture, but directed the four others to appear before it tomorrow.

On February 10, SI Soumen and Mostafiz tortured Rakib when he along with a friend parked his car before a roadside restaurant in Gulshan, say news reports.

Meanwhile, during a hearing on a suo moto rule yesterday, Dr Kamal Hossain as amicus curiae (friend of the court) told the court that Rakib Hossain was deprived of the protection of law, as he was tortured in police custody without any case.



HONOURING LANGUAGE HEROES

President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina observe one minute's silence in honour of the language martyrs after laying wreaths at Central Shaheed Minar early hours of today. Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia placing a wreath. People from all walks of life crowd the memorial to pay their tribute.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HUQ



Cyclists rally against Tipaimukh dam

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

A cycle rally was taken out by activists in the Indian state of Manipur against the proposed Tipaimukh dam, which they alleged would damage the environment.

The protesters on Saturday also submitted a memorandum addressed to Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, requesting him to revoke the Memorandum of Understanding reached last year between the Manipur government and two state-owned enterprises for the dam's construction, said an Indian daily report yesterday.

The proposed dam will be built at the tri-junction of Manipur, Assam and

Mizoram at a cost of Rs 3,000 crore.

During the rally at Kakching Khunnou in Thoubal district, the agitators carried placards alleging that the dam, if implemented, would cause human, animal and environmental destruction, the report added.

Social Action Development Organisation organised the rally, supported by anti-dam organisations.

Its Secretary Mandir Laishram told journalists that the Tipaimukh project envisaged 1,500MW power generation.

He, however, had doubts whether the project would actually generate that much electricity.

Laishram alleged that 311 sq km area

in Manipur would be submerged due to the dam and nearly 30km of National Highway no:37 would be damaged and the habitat of many birds and animals in 25,822 sq km of forest area would be destroyed due to it.

Bangladesh also has voiced grave concerns over the impact of the Tipaimukh hydropower project on the quantum of water flow in Barak. It has demanded a joint survey before the construction work is launched.

Meanwhile, it is understood that India has accepted a proposal by Bangladesh to include the discussion on the Tipaimukh project under the aegis of the Joint Rivers Commission.

Two teachers lose MPO

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The education ministry yesterday suspended monthly payment order (MPO) facilities to two teachers and a staff of Benapole Secondary School at Sharsha upazila in Jessore for assaulting a student.

The ministry also asked the school managing committee to temporarily suspend the trio - school headmaster Shawkat Ali, assistant teacher Habibur Rahman and office assistant Abdur Raihan - within the next three working days.

The trio assaulted class-X student Mohammad Pappu on February 15 centring losing a seat cover of a bus while they were going to Shat Gambuz Mosque in Bagerhat, says an official handout.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 2nd death anniversary of Nur Alam Ziku, freedom fighter and former president of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), says a press release.

On the occasion, his family members have arranged a doa mahfil after Zohr prayers today at Buriganga bhaban in the city's Wise Ghat.

Also, JSD will place wreaths on his grave at Mirpur Freedom Fighters' Graveyard at 9:00am.



Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad places a wreath at the coffin of veteran journalist Faiz Ahmed at Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Tributes paid to Faiz Ahmed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different socio-cultural and political organisations yesterday expressed grief and shock at the death of eminent journalist and writer Faiz Ahmed.

President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed deep shock at the death of this noted litterateur of the country and offered condolence to the bereaved family.

In a condolence message, the PM recalled his contribution to journalism and democratic movements, particularly during the times of national crisis.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia also condoled the death and expressed sympathy to the bereaved family.

In a message, she said Faiz was a brave journalist and he fought all his life for the nation's independence and democracy through his journalism.

Speaker Advocate Abdul Hamid, Deputy Speaker Col (retd) Showkat Ali, Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed, State Minister for Law Kamrul Islam and Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University (DU) Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique also condoled the death of Faiz Ahmed.

Communist Party of Bangladesh, Jatiya Party, Dhaka Union of Journalists, Diplomatic Correspondents Association, Bangladesh, Workers' Party of Bangladesh, Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Jatiya Mukti Council, Jatiya Ganotantrik League, Bangladesh Nari Mukti Andolon, Peshajibi Shamannay Parishad, Ganotantrik Biplobi Party and DU mass communication and journalism department, in separate messages, expressed sympathy over the death.

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After a long struggle and a lot of sacrifice, we earned
অ, আ, ক, খ...

মোদের গরব
মোদের আশা
আ-মরি
বাংলা ভাষা

As a mark of respect to the martyrs, today, on 21 February, the world observes "International Mother Language Day"

যারা মাতৃভাষার জন্য বিসর্জনের এমন দৃষ্টান্ত স্থাপন করলো আনান ও জেরিনের মতো আমরাও তাদের শ্রদ্ধাবনত চিত্তে স্মরণ করছি।

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স্বাফল্য আনবেই

RU teacher faces sexual harassment allegation

RU CORRESPONDENT

Teachers, students, and different cultural and political organisations yesterday demanded removal of a Rajshahi University teacher for "sexually harassing" a female student.

They said a newly appointed teacher at the sociology department has been harassing a second year student of the department for many days.

One month ago, the victim submitted a written complaint to the department's chairperson Nilufar Sultana, but to no effect, they added.

Approached by journalists, Nilufar denied talking.

The victim said the teacher has been making "awful proposals" for many days.

"As I refused his proposals, he threatened to hamper my academic career. I was also forced not to appear at the second year final examinations for frequent threats from him".

The teacher was not available for contact.

The agitators put their demand at a human chain at Alupotti intersection in Rajshahi city.



Music programme

Department of Music, Dhaka University (DU) will hold a music programme; Venue: Teacher-Student Centre (TSC), DU; Time: 6:30pm.

Discussion

Kendria Kachi-Kanchar Mela will organise a discussion; Venue: the Mela auditorium, Segunbagicha; Time: 10:30am.

Cultural programme

Nazrul Academy will arrange a cultural programme; Venue: the