



Bhutanese King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck meets Opposition Leader and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at Hotel Sonargaon in the capital yesterday.
PHOTO: BNP

SUOMOTO ON NEWS REPORTS, LETTERS

Content verification must

Say amended High Court rules to be effective from Feb 20

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The Supreme Court amended the High Court rules, effective from February 20, including the requirement of verifying the authenticity of media reports or letter contents while issuing suomoto rules on those.

At present the HC benches, dealing with writ motions (writ petitions on which no rule was issued), issue the suomoto rule mostly following newspaper reports without sending any notice to the reporter or the editor, said sources.

The rule can also be based on any letter sent to the chief justice, any judge, the HC and the SC registrar, and based on any report broadcast by any electronic media.

The HC sources said in a few cases, the media or letter contents did not check out.

As per the amendment, the office concerned of the HC must send a notice along with the rule to the writer of the letter or the reporter concerned, or to the editor or the media's controlling authority.

Accompanying it will be a verification form in which the authorities concerned will authenticate the letter or report. If true, the letter or report may be treated as a writ petition under Article 102 of the Constitution.

The other amendments include provisions for the HC judges and

lawyers dealing with cases for smooth and effective functioning of judicial and other related court units, says a gazette notification issued by the apex court.

It includes barring a petitioner from taking back a petition, through the lawyer concerned, from one HC bench and moving it to another, if the first HC bench wants to reject it.

The petitioner can file a new petition containing different grounds, but has to attach the rejection order along with the fresh petition.

Moreover, the petitions and applications can be written in both English and Bangla instead of being only in English.

The remaining amendments were made to give a legal shape to most of the provisions which are now followed as tradition.

It states that the chief justice will direct judges and lawyers as required and that judges are responsible to ensure that the rules are complied with.

Adequate security devices will be installed at appropriate places, including the HC building's entry points, while mobile phones must be switched off in the court premises.

It also says, "No person whether he is a member of Bar or a law clerk or a member of the court staff or other person, shall hold or arrange any procession or chant slogan or engage in a meeting or engage in

demonstration in the court premises or any part of the court building".

The amendment also includes provisions concerning court proceedings.

Photographs or audio recordings of court proceedings will not be allowed. However, a judge or staff could use a voice recording gadget with prior permission.

Laptops or similar devices will be allowed for rendering assistance to the proceedings. Carrying any bag, umbrella, stick or weapon to the courtroom is banned.

Smoking, drinking, eating, gossiping and using sound generating device except microphone is prohibited. Water or medicine might be taken considering the urgency.

All lawyers, staff and any other person present in court must behave in such a manner that the proceedings continue unaffected, states the amended rules.

The office hours will start 45 minutes earlier at 9:00am and end at 5:00pm as usual.

The rules accommodate publishing in the SC website the daily list of cases to be heard. The bench officers of HC will deliver the following day's list to the bench section before 5:00pm every day.

A five-member body of the then HC judges, headed by Justice MA Wahhab Miah of the SC's Appellate Division, prepared the amendments in 2011.

Bhutanese king meets Khaleda

Expresses interest in exporting hydroelectricity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck yesterday said his country was ready to export hydroelectricity to Bangladesh if the lacks in the latter's infrastructure were removed.

He said this during a call on BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia in the capital's Sonargaon Hotel.

"Bhutan is not only self-sufficient in hydroelectricity. It also has a surplus that we can export to our friendly neighbouring country Bangladesh," BNP Vice-Chairman Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury, who accompanied Khaleda, quoted the king.

On August 10, 2010, a delegation of Bhutan Exporters Association, citing an example that 1,200 megawatts of electricity was exported to India, recommended that Bangladesh had an opportunity to import hydroelectricity from Bhutan.

Information available online shows that Bhutan produces 1,500 MW of electricity against an internal demand for only 300 MW and aims to produce 10,000 MW of hydroelectricity.

The king and Khaleda also discussed the scope of increasing cooperation between the two countries, Shamsheer, a former foreign secretary, told journalists after the meet-

ing.

The king enquired Khaleda of her visits to India and China last year. The BNP vice-chairman, however, did not elaborate what the opposition leader said in reply.

The king and Queen Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck invited the BNP chief to Bhutan.

The king and queen of Bhutan arrived in Dhaka on Thursday on a five-day private visit.

This is the king's second visit to Bangladesh in less than two years. His first visit was in March 2011. However, this is the first visit of the queen. They are scheduled to leave Dhaka on Tuesday.

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Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and Indian External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid sign two memorandums of understanding and a protocol at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the capital yesterday.
PHOTO: PID

Poverty, legal loopholes hamper children's rights

Convention told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The vicious circle of poverty is the biggest impediment to achieving the rights of children in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) beyond 2015, said speakers at a convention yesterday.

Various tribulations like child prostitution, child trafficking and hazardous working environment exist in the country as a result of poverty and loopholes in the legal structure, speakers added.

Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies of DU organised the convention titled "Convention on the Rights of Children in Post MDG 2015 Context" at Centre for Advanced Research in Science on DU campus.

Prof Rawshan Ara of philosophy department of Dhaka University said the

country does not have adequate playgrounds, which is essential for children's holistic development.

"Juvenile delinquency is increasing at an alarming rate, intake of drugs being a primary reason," said Prof Sharmin Huq of education and research institute of DU, stressing the need for more youth development centres in the country with adequate well trained counselors.

Dr Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury, secretary to the education ministry, said, "Children are the future beholders of the nation. In order to ensure their rights we have to ensure social equity."

Jan De Waal, national director of World Vision Bangladesh, and Elena Ahmed, deputy country director of Plan Bangladesh, also attended the conference.

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