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Most processed food items have no quality certification from govt
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Tribunals free to try Jamaat

JS amends law to pave way for war crimes trial of organisations, allows govt to appeal; BNP lawmakers mum; Jamaat rejects it

SHAKHAWAT LITON

In a major development, parliament has passed an amendment empowering the war crimes tribunals to hold trial of any organisation for committing crimes against humanity during the Liberation War.

The amendment, a key demand of campaigners for the war crimes trials and the Shahbagh protesters, was made during passage of the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973, amendment bill yesterday.

The bill also empowered the government, informants and complainants to appeal against any verdict of the war crimes tribunals with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

President Zillur Rahman will now sign the amendment bill and the changes would have retrospective effect from July 14, 2009.

Now, the tribunals can hold trials of any organisations -- political or social -- alongside individuals for committing crimes against humanity during Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971 and punish them accordingly.

The bill, which was placed in parliament on Wednesday, did not have the proposal to empower the tribunals to try and punish organisations.

But in the face of mass outrage after the Quader Mollah verdict and the demand for banning Jamaat-e-Islami, considered

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Under threat yet resolute

Imran wants more safety

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Threats by Jamaat-Shibir would not deter youths from continuing Shahbagh movement, Imran H Sarker, one of the key organisers, said yesterday.

After the killing of a protester, Ahmed Rajib Haider, on Friday, Imran said, none of the organisers felt safe but that could not damp down the call for death penalty for war criminals.

He instead vowed to strengthen the unprecedented movement that began on February 5 hours after Jamaat leader

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Cheers from Shahbagh

Youths react to law amendments; urge all to defy Jamaat's hartal today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The unyielding Shahbagh protesters have called upon people to resist today's countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal called by Jamaat-e-Islami by carrying out their routine duties.

They urged students and teachers to attend classes in all educational institutions, businessmen to keep their shops open, transport owners to bring their vehicles out on the streets and workers to go about their daily work in their collective efforts to defy Jamaat.

Already, different bus operators, businesses, educational institutions and political organisations have responded to the call and vowed to brave the shutdown.

"All educational institutions will remain open tomorrow [today]," Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid told Ekattur television yesterday.

Meanwhile, the Shahbagh movement yesterday celebrated the fulfilment of its first and foremost demand -- amendment to the International Crimes Tribunal law.

The victory could not have come at a more appropriate moment for the protesters, who stood resolute at Shahbagh, defying the menacing clouds, biting cold and a light drizzle.

The crowd broke into exuberant cheers as they heard the news of the amendment empowering the war crimes tribunals to try organisations for complicity in crimes against humanity in 1971.

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Suspend licence; not GP operation

Recommends govt commission on Grameen Bank

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

The commission on Grameen Bank has recommended that the licence of Grameenphone be suspended immediately, as the country's largest mobile operator was not a party to the 1996 licence agreement.

"The commission has requested that Grameenphone Ltd mobile telecommunication licence be suspended immediately. But as this is an ongoing enterprise it

should not be allowed to cease operation," said the Grameen Bank Commission in its interim report.

The government-sponsored body that has come under criticism for its ineffectiveness submitted the report to the finance ministry last week.

The report said the licence may be given to a trust or be issued against Grameen Telecom, as it was once responsible for providing bid bonds and

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Expressing solidarity with the Shahbagh movement, students render the national anthem after hoisting the flag at Viqarunnisa Noon School and College in Dhaka yesterday morning.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Brave blogger, goodbye

Rajib laid to rest; JS asks for stern punishment to killers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Braving inclement weather and facebook propaganda not to attend namaj-e-janaza of blogger Ahmed Rajib Haider, thousands of people yesterday paid their last tribute to him at Gazipur where he was laid to eternal rest.

As the body of Rajib, an activist of the Shahbagh movement, reached his home around 9:30am, the air in Kapasia filled with grief.

Relatives and several thousand locals, already gathered at Rajib's house near Kapashia Bus Stand, broke down in tears.

The shock turned into strength and they vowed to thwart the ill-activities of war criminals and fundamental forces.

"My son [Rajib] lost his life due to an international conspiracy as he [Rajib] wrote against the war criminals and fundamentalist," Rajib's father Md Nazim Uddin said.

Criminals hacked Ahmed Rajib Haider, a blogger and activists of Shahbagh movement, dead on the road near

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WAR CRIMES TRIAL
Verdict rejected by people

Claims BNP, asks govt to quit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday said the government should quit power immediately for what it said was "people's rejection" of the verdict of the international crimes tribunal.

"The government-formed International Crimes Tribunal [tribunal-2] has delivered its verdict, which the people have rejected. So, the government does not have any moral right to stick to power anymore," acting secretary general of the main opposition party Mirza Fakhrul Islam Almagir said at a rally in front of the party central office at Naya Paltan in the capital.

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After the killings

SYED BADRUL AHSAN

On February 21, 1952, a number of students died in Dhaka when police fired into the crowd gathered before the university, which today houses Dhaka Medical College

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Milk Vita choking

Trade union blocks salaries of all since January to protect jobs of 76 illegal recruits

TAWFIQUE ALI

The trade union in the state-run dairy Milk Vita halted production for hours at the company's largest milk pasteurisation plant in capital's Mirpur yesterday in a bid to save the jobs of 76 illegally-appointed employees.

However, the production at the plant resumed at night following the

intervention of police, said sources in the organisation.

The union members earlier forced Khondker Anisur Rahman, deputy general manager and in-charge of the plant, to leave office, creating panic among other company officials.

In another development, some of the 76 employees backed by the

Collective Bargaining Agents (CBA) drove out ASM Idris, in-charge of Milk Vita's Baghabari plant, of his office yesterday, said company officials.

The CBA earlier forced the company's accounts section to suspend work on the salary bills of all staff for January to mount pressure on the

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