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Contempt of court law scrapped

HC bench says new law curtails its constitutional power; govt to appeal

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The High Court yesterday declared "void and unconstitutional" the contempt of court law that gives some protection to journalists and government officials, saying the law curtails court's constitutional powers to deal with contempt cases.

Provisions of the Contempt of Court Act-2013 are discriminatory since those give protection to a section of people, the HC said in a judgment.

Every citizen is equal in the eye of law as per the constitution, it observed.

The HC gave the verdict upon a writ petition filed by two Supreme Court lawyers

challenging the legality of eight provisions of the contempt of court law, which exempted journalists and government officials from contempt charges.

The Jatiya Sangsad enacted the law on February 19 this year.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam told The Daily Star that the government would soon file an appeal with the Supreme Court, seeking a stay on the HC judgment.

He, however, declined to elaborate on the matter.

The judgment said provisions of the contempt of court law, which are

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FULL TEXT OF THE LAW ON www.thedailystar.net

Dr Kamal pins hope on appeal

SHAKHAWAT LITON and WASIM BIN HABIB

The Daily Star has talked to eminent jurists and lawmakers about yesterday's High Court verdict that declared the Contempt of Court Act, 2013, illegal and unconstitutional. Following are their reactions to the verdict.

DR KAMAL HOSSAIN

After a long time since 1926, the country had the Contempt of Court Act, which was passed in parliament, said the eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain.

An act of parliament cannot be annulled so easily, he added.

He said he had appealed to the court to make Bangla daily Prothom Alo and

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Blow to media

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The contempt of court law that the High Court declared illegal and unconstitutional yesterday had actually strengthened people's right to freedom of speech and the freedom of press.

The law did not consider as contemptuous the publishing of impartial and objective reports on judicial proceedings and making objective and unbiased comments on the merits of a case after its final disposal.

Such provisions were incorporated into the law at a time when the media and people in general had been finding it difficult to write even objective reports or make comments on judicial proceedings, fearing action under the previous contempt law.

Now, with the annulment of the law, that protection is gone.

The landmark law lived a very short life, though; it was passed on February 19. In contrast, the contempt of court law enacted by the British rulers to gag criticism had been in force for around a century since 1926, even after the departure of the colonial power from India in 1947.

In Bangladesh, that law was repealed only this year and a new law was enacted with some press-friendly provisions in it.

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BNP to fight militancy

Tarique assures US embassy official

RASHIDUL HASAN

Now in London, BNP

Senior Vice-chairman

Tarique Rahman has

told an official of the

US mission in Dhaka

that his party, if voted

back to power, will

introduce a new type

of government and

show zero tolerance for

corruption, party

sources told The Daily

Star.

Tarique also explained

his party's plan

to fight militancy. The

next general election

is scheduled to be held

between

October 25 this year

and January 24 next

year.

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Police retreat during a clash with garment workers demanding an increase in minimum monthly salaries. The photo was taken yesterday in Shibu Market area of Fatullah, Narayanganj.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Garment workers stay rowdy

No production in 30 factories

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Production remained suspended for the sixth straight day yesterday in at least 30 garment factories due to vandalism by workers in spite of patrolling by paramilitary personnel.

The government deployed Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) personnel in Gazipur to bring the situation under control, but the agitated workers continued to wreck workstations and front faces of factories at Ashulia, Savar, Zirani, Narayanganj and Gazipur with vengeance,

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Fix it quick or lose business

Say top apparel exporters

SAJJADUR RAHMAN

When it comes to paying employees, the best policy is to settle the matter as quickly as possible, because it reduces a businessman's liability down the line, say country's top exporters.

The Daily Star has talked to four top apparel exporters on the recent tension between labour leaders and factory owners over the minimum wage.

The exporters want an amicable solution to the crisis, or else they fear western buyers might turn away from Bangladesh as they did in the case

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