

QAISSAR'S WAR CRIMES TRIAL
Tribunal refuses to take witnesses' statements as evidence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 yesterday rejected a prosecution petition for considering the statements of five prosecution witnesses given to the investigation officer as evidence in the war crimes case against former state minister Syed Mohammad Qaisar.

Moving the petition, Prosecutor Rana Dasgupta said three witnesses died after giving statements to the investigator, while two witnesses, including ex-minister Enamul Haque Mostofa Shaheed, "are too sick" to come to the tribunal to testify. "So, their statements should be taken as evidence," he said.

Defence counsel SM Shahjahan opposed the petition, saying that as the three died before submission of the probe report, they should not have been named as witnesses.

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APPEAL AGAINST DEATH PENALTY

SC resumes Kamaruzzaman hearing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday resumed the hearing on an appeal filed by Jamaat-e-Islami leader Muhammad Kamaruzzaman challenging the death penalty given to him for his offences during the liberation war.

During the proceedings, defence counsel Nazrul Islam read out the charge of killing 164 people in Shohagpur village in Sherpur in 1971.

On May 9 last year, the International Crimes Tribunal-2 sentenced Kamaruzzaman, a key organiser of the Al Badr, to death over five charges of crimes against humanity.

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Haji Osman Gani Road in Alu Bazar of old Dhaka has been in this sorry state for the last two years causing immense sufferings to commuters. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

ALU BAZAR IN OLD DHAKA
Battered road jeopardises business

HELEMUL ALAM

Residents and traders of the Haji Osman Gani Road area, a part of Alu Bazar in Old Dhaka, are undergoing immense sufferings every day, as the crucial road has been in a sorry state over the last two years.

The entire road is riddled with potholes, which turn into large puddles whenever it rains, making matters worse. Moreover, there is often dirty sewerage water flowing over it, said residents.

The street goes under knee-deep water even after light rains due to the poor drainage system, and the water takes no less than 20 hours to recede, they said.

Both Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) and Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa), however, are turning a blind eye to the sufferings.

"The condition of the road is so terrible that it is very difficult to hire a rickshaw, as the rickshaw-pullers show reluctance to ply the bumpy road," said Enamul Haque, a shopkeeper.

He said they often had to pay double the usual rickshaw fare.

Rifat Ahmed Ramjan, a resident, said though they had filed complaints with both Wasa and DSCC to solve the drainage problem, the agencies were putting the responsibility on each other.

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Law enacted for journo welfare

Insolvent, wounded, sick journalists to get financial assistance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parliament yesterday passed the 'Bangladesh Journalists' Welfare Trust Bill 2014' to ensure welfare of the insolvent, wounded and sick journalists and dependants of deceased journalists.

Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu piloted the bill before the Jatiya Sangsad for its passage.

A 13-member board of trustee with the information minister as its chairman and information secretary as its vice-chairman will be formed under the law. The government will appoint its managing director who will also act as the member secretary of the board.

Other members of the board are principal information officer, a director general level officer to be nominated by the prime ministers' office, a finance division officer with the rank and status of not below a joint secretary, director general of Bangladesh Press Institute, joint secretary (press) of the information ministry, two representative from

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TAQI MURDER CASE
SC stays bail of accused Simanta

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday stayed a High Court order that granted bail to Saleh Rahman Simanta, an accused of Tanwir Muhammed Taqi murder case.

Additional Attorney General Murad Reza said Simanta cannot be released from jail following the SC's stay order.

Taqi, an A-level student and son of former president of Narayanganj Sangskritik Jote Rafur Rabbi, was found dead on the bank of the Shitalakkhya on March 8 last year, two days after he went missing.

On March 20 the same year, Rafur lodged a complaint accusing seven people, including Awami League lawmaker Shamim Osman and his son Ayon Osman, of the murder.

The HC on June 24 granted ad-interim bail to Simanta in this case.

Yesterday, the Appellate Division stayed the bail order for two weeks following a government petition seeking stay on the HC order.

NUMBER OF ELECTORATES IN JAN 5 NAT'L POLLS
EC gets conflicting reports

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission has found inconsistencies in the numbers of electorates in some 90 constituencies in the January 5 national polls after scrutinising the figures it received separately from the returning officers and the presiding officers.

After the vote, the presiding officers, individuals in charge of the polling stations, sent one set of the figures to the returning officer, the official responsible for a constituency, and another set to the EC.

Later, the returning officer compiled the figures it received from the presiding officers of her/his constituency and forwarded the total number to the EC.

EC's senior assistant secretary Farhad Hossain told The Daily Star that the range

of the discrepancies in each constituency would be no more than 20 to 30 voters, and that the insignificant numbers would not affect the election results.

"It may have occurred due to migration of voters from one constituency to another," he said.

The EC has recently sent letters to the respective returning officers to remove the inconsistencies and send fresh numbers again, said the commission sources.

The 90 constituencies are spread throughout 25 districts, including Satkhira, Bramhanbaria, Tangail, Mymensingh, Sherpur, Bogra, Rajshahi, Nilphamari, Panchagar and Thakurgoan.

In the 10th parliamentary elections, 153 MPs were elected uncontested, while voting was held in the remaining 147 constituencies.

Padma Bridge construction starts this month
Opens for traffic by 2018, claims Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Construction work of the Padma bridge begins this month and it is expected to open for traffic by 2018, said Communications Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday in parliament.

"Meantime, the construction of approach roads and other construction works for the bridge have already started by spending Tk 2,500 crore, while total estimated cost of the two-level Padma bridge construction will not exceed US dollar three billion," he said.

Replying to lawmakers' queries, the minister said the estimated cost for the construction of main bridge is Tk 12,100 crore while

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