

Increase lower court judges' retirement age by Feb 25: SC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday asked the government to increase lower court judges' retirement age as per its earlier directive by February 25.

The Appellate Division passed the order during a hearing of the separation of the judiciary case known as Masdar Hossain case.

During the proceedings, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam prayed to the court for more time till March for the government to finish the job.

An eight-member bench headed by Chief Justice Md Muzammel Hossain fixed February 25 for further hearing of the case.

On December 14 last year, the SC asked for increasing the age by three years as per Judicial Service Pay Commission's recommendations.

Earlier on June 2, 2009, JSPC had recommended that the age be raised from 57 to 62. On December 26, 2011, the government made it 59 from 57 for all government officials.

On October 1, 2012, the SC had ordered increasing it to 62 by updating Judicial Service Rules.



A boy dances on the shoulders of his peer during Holi, the Hindu festival of colours that welcomes spring and celebrates the season's new life and energy, at Old Dhaka's Shakhari Bazar area on March 28, 2013. The photographer was a finalist in the theme "Festivals" of photo contest inPixel of The Daily Star.

PHOTO: INKIAJ HASIN



Dr Kamal decides to advise CJ on improving judiciary

Will send lawyers' recommendations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some eminent jurists led by Dr Kamal Hossain will make a set of recommendations to the new chief justice for the improvement of the judiciary.

"We are soliciting opinions from senior lawyers for upholding the constitution and independence of judiciary, establishing rule of law and human and fundamental rights of people. After getting their views, we will send the recommendations to the chief justice so that he can take necessary steps," said Dr Kamal.

He disclosed it to the media after holding a closed-door meeting with senior lawyers including former presidents of the Supreme Court Bar Association at its conference room yesterday.

Dr Kamal, the chief author of the constitution, convened the meeting of his own accord, marking the change of the chief justice, meeting sources said.

The jurist said they discussed ways on the development of the judiciary including the Supreme Court. "I hope that we will get more suggestions from them. After reviewing those, we will place relevant recommendations to the chief justice."

Kamal Hossain said a similar meeting might be held for finalising the suggestions.

The next chief justice, SK Sinha, will take charge on January 17, a day after his predecessor Justice Md Muzammel Hossain retires.

Former attorney general Mahmudul Islam, SCBA President Khandker Mahbub Hossain, its former presidents M Amir-Ul Islam, Rakanuddin Mahmud, Zainul Abedin, AJ Mohammad Ali and former additional attorney general MK Rahman, among others, attended the meeting.

Urbanisation wild in Bangladesh

US-based architecture educator Kazi Khaleed Ashraf says on eve of 'Engage Dhaka 2015'

TAWFIQUE ALI

The ongoing urbanisation in Bangladesh is a wild development activity, said a US-based architecture educator during an interview with this paper yesterday.

"No one is choreographing it, as policymakers lack a clear vision," said Kazi Khaleed Ashraf on the eve of a three-day international conference on architecture fashioned "Engage Dhaka 2015" beginning today at the army museum in the capital's Bijoy Sarani.

The consequence of destruction of conservable wetlands and croplands by private real estate developers in the name of urban development all around Dhaka city's fringes will be devastating for the ecological, environmental and hydrological systems, he said.

Planned urbanisation is living collectively and equitably in a civil manner, not earth filling an area and building mere structures, Ashraf said.

"City is a dynamic space for a collective living in a decent way," he said, "It is a highly dynamic cultural artifact, not a mere mechanical entity."

In fact, it is all about urbanism -- a social and cultural bonding in city life with economic vibrancy. Urbanism is an ensemble of buildings, spaces and other physical facilities in a city, he said.

Walking is given the highest priority in urban mobility across the world but pedestrians in Bangladesh are not only denied footpaths but also discounted, added Ashraf.

Small car owners are given priority reducing pedestrian passages to make

way for wider roads in Bangladesh while Bangkok, Tokyo, Mumbai, Kuala Lumpur, New York, Paris and London are all pedestrian cities, he said.

A city is not civilised without pedestrian passages, said Ashraf, who has been writing for around two decades on how Dhaka could be better designed in the way of urbanisation.

Mass transportation like Mass Rapid Transit is a must for Dhaka but it will not work without a functional pedestrian system, he said.

It is a civic right of a city dweller to have pedestrian passage, parks, playgrounds, plazas and festivals apart from basic services including safe water, electricity, education and healthcare, Ashraf said.

Destroying such social spaces is severely hampering social, emotional and cultural growth particularly of children, he said.

Dhaka is no more what it architecturally used to be three decades back, he said, it has experienced constant rebuilding and transformation implying a tremendous change in the city's physical and social baric, said Ashraf.

But in the context of Bangladesh, urbanisation has acquired a negative connotation of traffic congestion, lack of basic services, overpopulation, pollution and health crisis, he added.

Dhaka like any other is tremendously an emerging Asian city because of economy, incentives, entrepreneurship and migration. Dhaka's problems cannot be solved just by looking at Dhaka alone and streamlining Dhaka will not be possible without organising other cities, he said.

Architects have a responsibility to show better and viable alternatives in urban development and help prevent social inequality and deprivation, he said, and international discourse would further make the public aware of architecture.

Architects are not mere professional tools; they envision and inculcate the social and political vision. Architecture is integral to and fundamental for a planned city, said Ashraf, currently teaching architecture at the University of Hawaii in the USA and taking part in the conference along with Shamsul Wares, Bashirul Haq and Saif Ul Haque from Bangladesh.

Two among the notable books Ashraf authored include "Designing Dhaka: A Manifesto for a Better City" and "An Architect in Bangladesh: Conversations with Muzharul Islam".

Other world famous historians, theorists, teachers and practitioners of architecture expected to take part in the conference include Fumihiko Maki from Japan, Kenneth Frampton, Farooq Ameen and Rahul Mehrotra from the USA, William JR Curtis from France, Ken Yeang from Malaysia, Han Tumertekin from Turkey, Kongjian Yu from China, Anupama Kundoo from India, Palinda Kannangara from Sri Lanka and Hector Fernandez Elorza from Spain.

Bengal Foundation is organising the conference in association with the Institute of Architects Bangladesh and is dedicating it to architect Muzharul Islam, considered the maestro pioneer of modernism in architecture in Bangladesh.

Implement peace accord, end attacks on Adivasis

Says Int'l Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing concern over the attack on Rangamati's indigenous communities by Bangalees on January 11, International Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission (CHTC) urged the government to immediately effectuate the unimplemented clauses of the CHT peace accord of 1997 and prevent further communal attacks in the region.

In a press statement issued yesterday, CHTC also expressed deep concern that "on January 10 in Rangamati at least 30 people were injured when a rally of the Hill Students Council protesting the inauguration of a new medical college education program was attacked by ruling party's student wing Bangladesh Chhatra League and other organisations".

Hours after the clash on January 10, the district administration imposed Section

144 in the municipality for an indefinite period from 11:30am but the next morning there were reports of attacks on indigenous youths in at least two places and unconfirmed reports of attack on indigenous homes in Bangalee-dominated areas.

CHTC said there had been "no practical and reliable analysis" of benefits to the Adivasi community as a result of establishment of a medical college.

"On the other hand, it is not unfounded to think that more non-Pahari teacher-student-staff from outside the area will come in to the CHT and the discrimination against the Paharis will increase further," read the press release.

It also noted that lack of unbiased and reliable investigations into violence in the CHT contribute to the recurring communal attacks on the indigenous people.

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Staff of The Daily Star cut a cake in The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday marking the newspaper's 24th founding anniversary.

PHOTO: STAR



Mohibul Hasan Jabir, a Bangladeshi expatriate, has recently been awarded President's Gold Medal by the Federal President of the Republic of Austria as recognition of the services to the Foreign Ministry of Austria. Jabir has been working with the Austrian Chancery in Geneva for the last 25 years.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Explain concerns over Bergman

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media about the order at his office. On December 2 last year, the tribunal found Bergman, the editor (special reports) of the daily New Age, guilty of contempt for his comments posted to his personal blog and sentenced him to imprisonment "till rising of the court" on that day and fined him Tk5,000.

Bergman published three blog posts in November 2011 and January 2013, one of them dwelling on the indictment order of Jamaat-e-Islami leader Delwar Hossain Sayedee where he questioned the Liberation War death tolls and two others on the verdict of Abul Kalam Azad, known as Bachchu Razakar. He was convicted over the last two write-ups.

Two weeks later, on December 20 last year, the daily Prothom Alo ran a report titled "50 people express concern over Bergman's punishment" on the basis of the statement, which

observed that the tribunal's order would restrict the freedom of expression.

Some of the signatories were M Hafizuddin Khan, Shahdeen Malik, Rasheda K Chowdhury, Prof Imtiaz Ahmed, Badrul Alam Majumder, and Zafrullah Chowdhury. Later, one signatory, Khushi Kabir, withdrew her name.

Following the tribunal's orders, the Prothom Alo submitted the full statement, while Shahdeen Malik, whose name appears on the top of the statement, and Hana Shams Ahmed, the sender of the statement, provided the addresses of the signatories.

After receiving the addresses yesterday, the tribunal said the matter needed to be disposed of only after affording opportunity to the 49 citizens to "explain their statement and conduct".

TRIBUNAL-1

A prosecution witness yesterday cor-

roborated the murder of five villagers by Razakars on the instructions of war crimes accused Sheikh Sirajul Haque alias Siraj Master in Bagerhat on November 22, 1971.

Subodh Chandra Karati, 61, the 13th witness, said the victims were Satish Chandra Mondal and Hashem Ali of Tengrakhal village, Babu Khan of Kachua, Nazrul Islam of Hajra Khali, and Monindra Nath Saha of Barui Khali, of Kachua upazila.

On Tuesday, freedom fighter Sheikh Fozor Ahmed, also the 12th witness, testified on the murders.

The five were shot dead on the bank of the Bhairab and thrown into the river, according to their testimonies.

Karati said he took training for the Liberation War from Fozor Ahmed and Sheikh Nurul Haque.

The witness was cross-examined before the proceeding was adjourned till today.

Impunity contributor to road accidents

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The association's secretary general, Mozammel Haque Chowdhury, urged the government to institute an effective mechanism for collection accurate data

of road accidents across the country.

"If the government does not have accurate data, how will it address the problem?" he asked.

Passengers' Welfare Association

President Sharif Rafiquzzaman chaired the function, while Prothom Alo Associate Editor Abdul Quayum, Nagorik Sanghati General Secretary Sharifuzzaman Sharif, among others, attended the function.