



"Freedom of thought and freedom of expression are being badly restricted in the country. Criticism of any special step arbitrarily taken by the government is labelled as anti-state."
SHAMSUL HUDA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ALRD, AT A DIALOGUE IN THE CAPITAL (PAGE 16)

"I don't think their unity will survive."
OBAIDUL QUADER CRITICISES DR KAMAL HOSSAIN-LED NATIONAL UNITY PROCESS (PAGE 3)

"We are going to win it."
US SECRETARY OF STATE MIKE POMPEO TALKING ABOUT TRADE WAR (PAGE B4)

ENDING ROHINGYA CRISIS PM places 3 proposals at UN meet

UN has 'no right to interfere'

Says Myanmar army chief

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's powerful army chief says the United Nations has no right to interfere in his country's sovereignty, a week after UN investigators called for him and other top generals to be prosecuted for "genocide" against the Rohingya.

Min Aung Hlaing's comments to an army newspaper were his first public reaction since a UN fact-finding mission urged the Security Council to refer the top military brass to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

They came as the UN General Assembly prepares to discuss the crisis in New York.

Min Aung Hlaing also shrugged off demands from UN investigators for the army to withdraw from politics in Myanmar, where it remains

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Why cannot the government touch the big players of the illegal liquor trade? In the last instalment of this two-part series, The Daily Star's Martin Swapan Pandey, Sohail Parvez, Zyma Islam and Shamiul Hossain investigate how all government attempts to audit this unlawful market ended up in court battles.

OUT OF WATCH with legal shield Licence of lies

Dozens of writ petitions filed by bonded warehouses keep govt authorities at bay for years

Almost every time any government agency tried to ensure accountability and transparency of the duty-free liquor trade, it found itself in a legal limbo.

Over the last two decades, diplomatic bonded warehouses, who import duty-free liquor for diplomats and foreigners, filed writ after writ with the High Court challenging the legality of the government action.

As a result, the whole sector is now embroiled in a prolonged legal battle over who can monitor the diplomatic bonded warehouses and to what extent, with the authorities butting their heads trying to figure out their roles.

At least 48 such petitions now remain pending before the HC, making it impossible for the authorities to do what they are supposed to do -- check irregularities within the bonded warehouses.

In a long investigation beginning February this year, The Daily Star has unmasked how the country's illegal liquor business is booming with supplies from two sources -- leakage from some diplomatic bonded warehouses and smuggling (see our yesterday's story headlined "Given by ghosts").

Aware of the leakage and other irregularities, at least half a dozen state agencies took numerous steps to bring some sort of control, but only to be taken to the court.

The commerce ministry, home ministry, National Board of Revenue, customs intelligence, narcotics department, Customs Bond and the

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"The diplomatic bonded warehouses employ various tricks to make sure that the cases [writ petitions] go on and on... The case files simply disappear. It is very much possible to hide a file so that the case does not come before the court for hearing. Vested groups do this."
ATTORNEY GENERAL MAHBUBAY ALAM



INAM AHMED and SHAKHAWAT LITON

It is a piece of paper full of lies and yet it is the legal government document that allows a person to drink alcohol in Bangladesh.

In 1950, a legal provision styled East Bengal Excise (foreign and country liquor prohibitions and restrictions) Rules was made which authorised the Department of Narcotics Control to give people drinking permit.

The paper authorises a person to possess and consume liquor after a government doctor certifies that the person needs to consume liquor on "medical grounds".

The certificate permits a person to consume up to seven units of foreign liquor a month. A unit of foreign liquor means one quart (1.14 litres) bottle of any kind of spirit, including liquor, or three quart bottles of wine.

If someone wants to avoid being harassed by the police, all he has to do is go to a bar or licensed vendor of alcohol and pay the legal fee of Tk 2,000 and some additional money. The certificate will be ready within a few days with the

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An overloaded lorry flipped on the railings of the capital's Kuril flyover early yesterday. The accident happened while the vehicle was ascending a ramp of the flyover. Another overloaded lorry overturned near the spot on September 15.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Liaison body to speed up unity process

BNP may invite Oikya Prokriya leaders to its rally

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Top leaders of Jatiya Oikya Prokriya and Juktofront have decided to form a liaison committee to coordinate programmes and facilitate communication among parties to forge greater unity.

The committee will be comprised of Jatiya Oikya Prokriya Convener Dr Kamal Hossain, Juktofront President Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury and other representatives of parties involved in the unity process.

"Names of the committee members will be finalised at a meeting at 4:00pm tomorrow [today]," Dr Kamal told The Daily Star.

He also said Jatiya Oikya Prokriya will hold a rally in Mymensingh in the first

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PM BLASTS UNITY MOVE -- PAGE 2

MALDIVES ELECTION

Surprise victory for opposition

Solih defeats strongman Yameen by a margin of 16.6pc; India, US welcome results

AFP, Colombo

The strongman leader of the Maldives yesterday conceded defeat in the presidential election, easing fears of a fresh political crisis in the archipelago at the centre of a battle for influence between India and China.

"The Maldivian people have decided what they want. I have accepted the results from yesterday," President Abdulla Yameen said in a televised address to the Indian Ocean nation a day after the joint opposition candidate unexpectedly triumphed.

Earlier today, I met with Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, who the Maldivian electorate has chosen to be their next president. I have congratulated him," Yameen said.

He said he would hand over power when his term ends on November 17 and ensure a smooth transition in the 1,200-island nation, popular with foreign tourists for its white sands and blue lagoons.

Solih's victory was a major surprise, with Yameen's main political rivals either in prison or in exile, media coverage of

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