

"All people who come to file cases should not be considered rich. Most of them are poor. I will request you to consider this before charging extra money."



"If he [Shakib Al Hasan] wants to have surgery for his satisfaction, he can do that."



"Illiberal democracy is a contradiction in terms."



WRIT ON 'FALSE' CASES HC issues split order

One judge for enquiry, the other rejects the petition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A two-judge High Court bench yesterday delivered a split order in a writ petition submitted over "fictitious" cases filed against activists of the BNP and other political parties.

Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury, senior judge of the bench, in his order directed the inspector general of police to involve the investigation officers concerned in monitoring and enquiring into the alleged fictitious cases filed in Dhaka.

He asked for a report in 60 days and set December 17 for issuing further orders.

The judge also issued a rule asking the authorities concerned to explain in four weeks as to why filing of such cases should not be declared illegal and actions be not taken against the police officials concerned.

Justice Md Ashraf Kamal, the other member of the bench, summarily rejected the petition, saying it was not acceptable as the petitioners had no right or ability to move such a petition before the court.

Three pro-BNP lawyers, who are also accused in such cases, had filed the petition, seeking the court's directives on the government to form a probe body to investigate the legitimacy of the around 4,000 cases.

Now, the HC judges will send the petition along with their orders to the chief

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Implicated mostly in "fictitious" cases, people, majority of whom are BNP men from across the country, gather in front of the High Court yesterday to secure bail.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

In droves, they come for bail

Hundreds of accused in 'ghostly cases' crowding HC for redress

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abdul Mannan says he is 85. But leaned against a High Court corridor wall, he looked much older as he waited for bail yesterday.

He has been suffering from diabetes

and heart problems for about six years now, and keeps himself confined to his home in Sylhet, he claimed.

But, according to a case filed by the Jalalabad police, Mannan vandalised vehicles and threw bricks at police in Temukhi Bypass Bridge area at 5:15pm on

September 22. In the case records, he is said to be 55, which he said was laughable.

The old man came all the way from Jalalabad on Monday to seek bail from the High Court. At least 84 others, mostly BNP leaders and activists, are named as accused.

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All set for verdicts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All eyes are on a special tribunal that is all set to deliver today the verdicts in two cases filed over the grisly grenade attack on an Awami League rally on August 21, 2004.

The attack, carried out to assassinate then opposition leader Sheikh Hasina, left 24 AL leaders and activists killed and over 300 others injured. Hasina survived with injuries to her ears.

The verdicts, to be delivered 14 years after the blasts on Bangabandhu Avenue, are likely to further heat up the political landscape ahead of the national election as several BNP leaders, including BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman, are accused in the cases.

Fates of the then top police and intelligence officers accused in the cases will also be known this morning.

Prosecutors say the charges against the 49 accused are proven beyond reasonable doubt and they have sought the

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CHARGE	ACCUSED
Conspiracy and approving the plan of attack	10
Assisting the killers financially and administratively	2
Misleading investigation and creating Joj Mia drama	4
Destroying evidences & providing attackers administrative support	2
Protecting the suppliers of Arges grenade	3
Conspiracy and killing	12
Planning and killing	16

All in vain
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Digital Security Act faces an unprecedented protest and criticism.

Since 1973, successive parliaments passed 1,395 bills till date. But none of them triggered criticism of the scale that the digital security act elicited at home and abroad for some of its controversial provisions, which go against freedom of speech and expression and press freedom guaranteed by the constitution.

The criticism

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Revise Digital Security Act

UNHR office wants govt to act now so arbitrary arrests, curbs avoided

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations Human Rights office has called for urgent revision of the Digital Security Act in a bid to ensure checks and balances against arbitrary arrests and other undue restrictions.

The call came in response to the newly enacted Act that has drawn serious concerns over press freedom and the right to freedom of expression.

"We call on Bangladesh to urgently revise the Digital Security Act, to ensure that it is in line with international human rights law and that it provides for checks and balances against arbitrary arrest, detention, and other undue restrictions of the rights of individuals to the legitimate exercise of their freedom of expression and opinion," said a UN spokesperson.

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Sorry, no free SMS!

BTRC upset as operators decline to send out messages carrying the govt's success stories

MUHAMMAD ZAHIDUL ISLAM

The government is considering taking action against all three private mobile operators in the country for not complying with the telecom regulator's order to send short messages to their subscribers.

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission on September 29 asked all four mobile operators to send their subscribers 10 short messages with slogans on development and success stories of the government.

But of them, only state-owned Teletalk, which has 39 lakh active connections, carried out the order, said a BTRC high-up seeking anonymity.

The official mentioned that all the operators were asked to send each of the 10 SMS every day to all their users.

But the three private operators -- Grameenphone, Robi and Banglalink -- with 15.15 crore active connections refused to disseminate those as free text messages, terming those "political".

The operators argued that they are supposed to disseminate government texts on "national emergency or security matters" for free, not on any other issues.

However, the three operators had sent the first of the 10 messages to some of their subscribers without going through the content of the message, said several officials of the private mobile companies.

Several BTRC officials said the posts and telecommunication ministry prepared the 10 SMS highlighting the success of the Awami League-led government as the national election is approaching. The ministry also prepared 50 more similar SMS.

In a joint letter to the BTRC on October 1, the three operators said they can circulate those SMS only under commercial agreements.

"Under these circumstances, should the content

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ROHINGYA CRISIS Int'l response underfunded

Says senior UN official

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A senior UN official has warned that the international response to the Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh is severely underfunded and sought more funds to cope with the challenges.

"We are entering into the cyclone season which could be potentially devastating in the camps. This only adds to the enormous sense of uncertainty the refugees face about their future," said Annika Sandlund, acting senior coordinator for the Rohingya refugee response and head of the Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG).

She made the comments as a high-level delegation of ambassadors and senior

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No tough street protest for now

Say BNP insiders about the party's possible reaction to Aug 21 verdicts

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The BNP will not go for any tough street agitation over the verdicts in the August 21 grenade attack cases as the party thinks the ruling Awami League might use the "judgments as a weapon" to carry out a campaign against it during electioneering for national polls.

"We will not give the Awami League any chance to make the verdicts an issue before the parliamentary polls," a senior BNP leader, wishing anonymity, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The party is likely to organise protest rallies and form human chains across the country if its leaders are convicted in the cases. But it will not call for strikes and blockades.

According to party insiders, some top BNP leaders in a recent meeting discussed the trial process with the party's senior lawyers.

BNP leaders said their main focus was on the release of party Chairperson Khaleda Zia from jail, forging a "greater national unity" with other political parties and forcing the current government to hold the next national election under a nonpartisan interim government.

"If we launch a tough movement now, the focus on the other issues will be missing and the ruling party will try to describe it as a movement for saving the party men. So we will not go for any tough agitation programme now," a BNP standing committee member told this correspondent.

Meanwhile, the AL yesterday said its leaders would be on the city streets today, but they would not organise any programme.

Senior AL leaders would be at the AL central office on

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A transport worker spatters used engine oil on a trucker for driving the truck defying a strike enforced by Bangladesh Goods Transport Owners Workers United Council. The photo was taken on Dhaka-Narayanganj road in Shyampur area around 1:00pm yesterday, hours before the platform postponed its indefinite strike in Dhaka division till October 31.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Truck strike put off till October 31

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Truck owners and drivers yesterday postponed their indefinite work abstention in Dhaka division until October 31.

They made the decision following a meeting between leaders of truck owners and workers and Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan at his secretariat office yesterday, Mokbul Ahmed, convener of Bangladesh Goods Transport Owners Workers United Council, told The Daily Star.

In the meeting, the minister assured the transport leaders of considering their seven-point demand, he said.

The minister asked the Inspector General of Police to take necessary steps to stop "police harassment," and he would talk to law, and road transport and bridges ministers about their demand for bringing changes to the Road Transport Act-2018, Mokbul added.

"Following his assurance, we decided to postpone our work abstention until October 31," he added.

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