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NHRC, DISAPPEARANCES

Draft laws clip powers granted in ordinances

Say stakeholders at government-organised discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Weeks after promising stronger legal frameworks to combat state-sponsored human rights violations, the government yesterday presented new draft laws on enforced disappearances and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) that critics say strip away independent oversight and institutional strength.

The drafts were unveiled at a stakeholder discussion organised by the law ministry at the CIRDAP auditorium in Dhaka, chaired by Law Minister Md Asaduzzaman.

Stakeholders described the drafts as "watered-down versions" of relevant ordinances, which were passed by the interim administration but allowed to lapse by the elected government.

In parliament last month, the treasury bench had opposed the two relevant ordinances, declining to even table the one on enforced disappearances.

The NHRC ordinance's repeal reinstated the 2009 law that gave more state control over the agency.

During the parliament session last month, Asaduzzaman and Home



Eight years on, the construction work on the Mollarhat Bridge over a branch of the Dhaleshwari River in South Keraniganj remains unfinished, forcing thousands on both banks to rely on risky boats and makeshift crossings. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

PM assures action on the cases against journalists

Editors' Council urges repeal of undemocratic media laws

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday assured the Editors' Council that he would discuss with the home ministry the issue of harassment cases filed against journalists.

He made the assurance after several council members raised the matter during a meeting with him at the Secretariat.

The editors maintained that while proper investigations into allegations against journalists and due legal process are necessary for justice, cases filed deliberately to harass them are "not acceptable in any way."

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DRAFT LAWS

NHRC cannot itself probe rights violations when disciplined forces are involved

NHRC members' selection committee will be government dominated

Cases of enforced disappearances will not go to any special tribunal

Only police will be allowed to probe enforced disappearance cases

CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT

BNP to again ask opposition to join panel

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The ruling BNP will once again ask the opposition to join a special parliamentary committee on constitutional amendments in line with the July National Charter when parliament's second session begins on June 7.

BNP leaders said the party was waiting for a formal response from the opposition to its earlier proposal. If the opposition rejects it or continues to withhold a decision, the matter will be raised again in the upcoming session of the 13th Jatiya Sangsad.

The BNP high command has informally learned that the opposition parties have decided to reject the ruling party's proposal, party sources said.

Talking to The Daily Star, BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed, also the home minister, said, "We will once again raise the issue in the next parliamentary session. If they don't respond, then we'll discuss it in our parliamentary party meeting to reach a decision."

Chief Whip Nurul Islam Moni said there was no constitutional alternative to the proposed parliamentary committee. "We will still ask the opposition what other constitutional methods there can be as an alternative. If they can provide any new insight, then we will consider it and arrive at a decision."

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Clashes over VC appointment leave 23 hurt in DUET

JCD, Shibir trade blame



STAR REPORT

At least 23 students of Dhaka University of Engineering and Technology in Gazipur were injured yesterday in a clash between two groups over the appointment of a new vice-chancellor.

Supporters and opponents of the newly appointed VC engaged in chases, counter-chases, and hurling brick chunks on the campus around 11:00am. This continued for around four hours in phases, according to witnesses.

"As far as we know, 23 of our students have been injured," said Utpal Kumar Das, director of the university's Students' Welfare Office.

A total of 15 people, including nine students and six policemen, came to the hospital with injuries, said Aminul Islam, director of Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmad Medical College Hospital in Gazipur.

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DHAKA AIRPORT Cargo exports hit as 3 of 4 scanners out of order

RASHIDUL HASAN and REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Exports through Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) have been severely disrupted as three of the four Explosive Detection System (EDS) scanners remain non-functional.

With only one scanner operational, cargo clearance has slowed substantially, delaying shipments.

The problem began in April when all four scanners stopped functioning, said Kabir Ahmed, former president of the Bangladesh Freight Forwarders Association (BAFFA). One was repaired later.

"It is very difficult to complete the vital scanning of export cargo with only one EDS as three are damaged," he said.

The pressure is mounting as the ongoing Iran war has increased reliance on air shipments, particularly garment exports, to meet strict deadlines set by international retailers and brands.

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'Clock is ticking' for Iran: Trump Drone strike ignites fire near UAE nuke plant

AGENCIES

President Donald Trump yesterday warned Iran "there won't be anything left of them" if Tehran does not quickly agree to a peace deal with the United States.

"For Iran, the Clock is Ticking, and they better get moving, FAST, or there won't be anything left of them. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE!" he wrote in a Truth Social post.

Trump is expected to hold a Situation Room meeting tomorrow with his top national security advisers to discuss the options for military action regarding Iran, Axios reported, citing two US officials.

Washington, locked in conflict with Tehran since US and Israeli forces launched major strikes on the Islamic republic beginning February 28, has struggled to break an impasse and make any progress toward ending a war that has shaken the Middle East and sent energy prices climbing.

Iranian media said yesterday the United States had failed to make any concrete concessions in its latest response to Iran's proposed agenda for negotiations to end the war.

The Fars news agency said Washington had presented a five-point list which included a demand

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