

Amini to resign from JS body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) leader Fazlul Huq Amini MP is likely to resign as chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on jute ministry today.

"I already signed my resignation letter and asked my Personal Secretary Maulana Zobair to submit the letter to the Speaker on my behalf," Amini told The Daily Star yesterday.

Amini said he had earlier discussed his resignation with the prime minister.

Elected MP from a Brahmanbaria constituency on the four-party alliance ticket, Amini had been cold-shouldered by the BNP following his demand to be inducted into the cabinet. Subsequently, the elderly politician decided to resign from the parliament but withdrew his decision following a discussion with government high officials.

Later, he was named the chairman of the parliamentary standing committee.

Campbell denies cooking up Iraq dossier

AFF, London

British Prime Minister Tony Blair's top aide, Alastair Campbell, yesterday told a parliamentary inquiry into the apparent suicide of weapons expert David Kelly that he had not embellished a government dossier on Iraq to bolster the case for war.

Asked if he had any influence on the insertion in the dossier of the controversial headline claim that Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein could deploy weapons of mass destruction within 45 minutes, Campbell replied:

"None whatever".

"I had no input, output, influence upon it whatever at any stage in the process," Campbell told the inquiry at London's Royal Courts of Justice.

The inquiry is probing into the circumstances that led to the apparent suicide of Kelly, a senior government weapons scientist, after he was named as the source of a BBC allegation that Blair's office "sexed up" intelligence data to help justify

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Alastair Campbell

Spl operation 17 outlaws held in 10 districts of southwestern region

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Seventeen outlaws were arrested during special combing operation in ten districts of southwestern region in the last three days.

Ten firearms were recovered during the same period of special operation by police, Armed Police Battalion, Range Reserve Force, Battalion Ansar and VDP.

The operation launched on the night of August 17 is being led by senior police officers.

It has been alleged that during the operation police stormed into the house of fish trader Siddiqur Rahman of Bhadradia village under Dumuria Police Station, clubbed women and ransacked the house failing to arrest him.

The fish trader is being wanted by

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Schoolgirl, family burnt in acid attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



PHOTO: STAR

Farzana Akter receives treatment at the DMCH after being struck with acid in sleep in an attack aimed at her cousin Lucky in Narayanganj.

A young man splashed acid on a schoolgirl and three of her family members having failed to marry her cousin at Banti village in Arihajar of Narayanganj early yesterday morning.

Farzana Akter, 12, a class seven student of Banti Adarsha High School, was sleeping at her residence when Momen, 20, who passed the Secondary School Certificate examinations this year, allegedly threw acid on her with a spray gun through the window at about 3:00am. She suffered severe burn injuries on her face.

Moi Chan, 55, grandmother of Farzana, Ranu, 15, her aunt, SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

New web worm tackles bugs

BBC ONLINE

Another Windows worm is on the loose, but this one tries to help rather than hinder.

The Welch or Nachi worm is using the same trick as last week's disruptive MSBlast virus to travel around the net but tries to fix vulnerable machines rather than exploit them.

The Nachi worm tries to automatically apply the software patch issued by Microsoft to secure machines against the attentions of MSBlast.

If the Nachi virus finds the MSBlast worm on a PC it removes the malicious program.

"The writer of the Nachi worm may want to be seen as the Dirty Harry of the internet world, cleaning up malicious MSBlast code wherever it is found," said Graham Cluley, senior technology consultant at anti-virus firm Sophos.

Last week many thousands of net connected Windows PCs fell victim to the MSBlast worm which exploited a month old security loophole to infect machines.

Since it made its appearance, the MSBlast worm is thought to have infected more than 500,000 machines. Many machines were due to launch a denial-of-service attack on Microsoft's Windows Update site on Saturday but the software giant said it had managed to dodge the assault.

In the wake of MSBlast, the Nachi worm is prowling the net looking for machines with the vulnerability exploited by the more disruptive program.

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24 activists of PBCP arrested in Tangail

UNB, Tangail

Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and police in a joint drive arrested 24 activists of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) from different areas of Baghil union in Sadar upazila in 24 hours ending at 6:00am yesterday.

Police said 11 of the arrested - Mozammel Haque, Amir Hossain, Zakir Hossain, Firoz Ahmed, Saiful Islam, Raju Ahmed, Abdul Latif, Anwar Hossain, Ainal, Sarbesh Ali and Jhantu Mia - are listed members of the outlawed party.

They said 20 RAB members along with 130 policemen took part in the drive.

Table with Sun Rises, Sun Sets, and Prayer Timings for August 20.



PHOTO: STAR

Hindus celebrating Janmastami, the birthday of Lord Krishna, rally from the National Dhakeswari Temple to different parts of the capital yesterday.

Janmastami celebrated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hindus yesterday celebrated Janmastami, the birth anniversary of Lord Sri Krishna, with religious fervour and festivity.

It was a public holiday and created huge enthusiasm among Hindus.

Dhaka Mahanagar Sarbajaneen Puja Committee (DMSPC) brought out a colourful procession in Old Dhaka yesterday as part of its three-day programme on the occasion.

A large number of Hindus participated in the Janmastami parade starting from Dhakeshwari temple and ending at Victoria Park.

Mayor of the Dhaka City Corporation Sadeq Hossain Khoka inaugurated the procession and Nasir Uddin Ahmed Pintu, MP was present as special guest.

President of the DMSPC Anil Chandra Nath, General Secretary of the DMSPC Mangal Chandra Ghosh, Prof Neem Chandra Bhumik, Subrata Chowdhury and Bashudev Dhar spoke on the occasion.

A Geeta jagna was also held on the Dhakeswari temple premises praying for peace and prosperity of the country.

As part of the programme, the Puja committee will hold padabali kirtan, devotional songs in praise of Lord Krishna, at Dhakeshwari temple every afternoon to be followed by discussion meetings and cultural functions. The three-day programme will end tomorrow evening.

Like father like son

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abu Sayeed Bepari, alleged mastermind behind businessman Barkat Ullah murder, faces four criminals cases while his son Shamim is an accused in four cases including one of killing Barkat.

Apart from Barkat killing, Bepari is an accused in Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Ward Commissioner KM Ahmed Raju murder case and contractor Mukti killing case.

Bepari, a ward commissioner and Bangladesh Nationalist Party leader, is an accused in another case of violence.

He amassed huge money and property by extortion and grabbing of lands in Beribandh, Mohammadi Housing, Kaderia Housing and Kalyanpur areas, locals alleged.

"I had tried to fill with earth my nearly one bigha land at Boardghat and Kalyanpur beside Bepari's land several times but Bepari and his henchmen thwarted the attempts," said a local businessman seeking anonymity. "They did not even allow me to sell my lands," he added.

"After the joint forces demolished illegal structures on government property during the 'Operation Clean Heart', each shop owner had to pay Tk 10,000 to Bepari to run their businesses," said a makeshift shop owner at Mohammadpur Beribandh.

Bepari has already grabbed five bigha of our land at glass factory area in Mohammadpur, alleged Barkat's family.

Bepari and his sons regarded Barkat as a major obstacle to their land grabbing plan, Barkat's mother

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Vajpayee govt most likely to survive no-confidence

BBC ONLINE

The lower house of the Indian parliament was due to vote last night on an opposition motion of no-confidence in the government of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee.

Congress Party leader Sonia Gandhi, who called for the vote, said the motion was born out of real concern for the direction the country was taking.

Her party says it intends to force the government to address what the opposition says are corrupt arms deals.

The motion is expected to fail because the ruling National Democratic Alliance has a comfortable majority.

Indian newspapers are describing the debate as a "curtain raiser"

to key state elections due later this year.

"The BJP-led government has shown itself to be incompetent, insensitive, irresponsible and brazenly corrupt," Ms Gandhi said on Monday.

Deputy Prime Minister Lal Krishna Advani welcomed the motion, saying it gave Vajpayee a chance to air his administration's achievements.

Correspondents say there is a risk for the opposition that the government could win convincingly and make the motion look foolish.

Defence deals

The vote comes after a debate on Monday in the Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Indian parliament.

The ruling coalition led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has a

majority of in excess of 100 seats, and Congress leaders have admitted that they do not expect the government to fall.

But they are using the debate to put the spotlight on defence procurement, which they say has been riddled with corruption under the current government.

The main target of Congress is Defence Minister George Fernandes, whom they accuse of trying to cover up a corrupt arms deal.

The scandal broke out in 2001, when the Indian internet news site Tehelka.com taped secret video footage of politicians, bureaucrats and army officers apparently taking money in connection with a fake defence deal.

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Govt talks with transport workers today to avert strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will again sit today with leaders of transport owners and workers to avert their 48-hour countrywide strike starting Saturday, with the leaders hinting that they may skip the latest meeting as well.

An earlier meeting on Monday failed to resolve the issue as most of the transport sector leaders skipped it.

The Uttarbanga Paribahan Malik Samity, Dakkhinbanga Paribahan Malik Samity and Transport Workers' Federation jointly called

the strike to press home their eight-point and nine-point demands respectively.

Their demands include an end to toll collection on highways, reduction of ferry fare, withdrawal of 'harassment cases' against transport workers and arrest of criminals in transport sectors.

Today's meeting will be held at the office of the communications minister, said Shamsur Rahman Simul Biswas, chairman of the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation and also a member of the special committee on transport

sector.

Sources said on instruction from the prime minister, the communications ministry has invited the transport sector leaders to attend the meeting and resolve their problems through discussion.

But some leaders said they might not attend even today's meeting if their demands were not included on its agenda.

"We have received a letter from the communications ministry, which contained no assurance to meet our demands. We want a spe

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PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka City Corporation's mosquito eradication department has kept its fogger wheelbarrow machines in the open, unmindful of the expensive equipment falling into disrepair.

Netrakona polls AL apprehensive of vote-rigging

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition party Awami League (AL) yesterday expressed its apprehension that the government, fearful of its candidates' defeat in a free and fair vote, will rig tomorrow's by-polls to the Netrakona-3 constituency.

An AL Parliamentary Party (ALPP) meeting at its Dhanmondi office in the city yesterday observed that the government has been misusing its executive power to skew the polls in favour of the ruling four-party alliance candidate Khadija Amin, widow of BNP's Nurul Amin Talukdar, the late MP from the constituency. Six other candidates including M Jubed Ali of the AL are contesting the polls.

Chaired by AL presidium member Kazi Zafarullah, also the party's campaign co-ordinator for the Netrakona-3 by-elections, the meeting threatened tough agitation against the government in case of any vote-rigging. Former finance minister SAMS Kibria aided Zafarullah during a press briefing after the meeting.

"Forty AL lawmakers divided into 20 groups will monitor the situation in and around the vulnerable polling centres during the polling hours," Zafarullah said.

He alleged that some cabinet ministers were using government facilities while campaigning for the four-party alliance candidate, which violates the election code of conduct. He also urged the Election Commission to ensure maximum security for the minority voters, who, he said, are under threat from cadres of the ruling alliance.

The meeting observed that the government ignored AL's request for army deployment at vulnerable polling centres and instead deployed police and BDR personnel who, the AL leaders alleged, have been directed by State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar to work for the four-party alliance candidate.

The ALPP meeting elaborately discussed the latest situation in Netrakona-3 in the run-up to the by-polls to the parliamentary seat that fell vacant following the death of BNP stalwart Nurul Amin Talukdar three months ago.

Ex-member of outlawed party shot dead

UNB, Jhenidah

A former member of outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) was gunned down at Andolpota village in Kotchandpur Upazila yesterday morning.

Police said the assailants stormed into the house of Kartik, 30, at about 10:30am and shot him point blank. He died on the spot.

Police quoted family sources as saying Kartik came to the village home from his workplace in Sylhet on Sunday.

Police recovered the body and sent it to the Sadar hospital morgue for autopsy.

A case was filed with Kotchandpur Police Station.