

## JS body flouts rules, holds off-the-record meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A sub-committee of a parliamentary standing committee yesterday set a bizarre precedence by holding an off-the-record meeting.

The accommodation sub-committee of the Jatiya Sangsad's House Committee yesterday held a 15-minute meeting at Sangsad Bhaban without keeping an official record of the proceedings, violating the Rules of Procedures of Parliament.

"A record of the proceedings of the sittings of the House Committee

## Red tape leads to drug crisis in 450 hospitals

NAIMUL HAQ

Purchase of drugs for more than 450 government hospitals has remained suspended since July 1, as the health and planning ministries got bogged down in red tape.

Fourteen other operation plans have also remained snapped for the last three months, as the Planning Commission of the planning ministry rejected the health ministry's Tk 602 crore project.

The 14 plans deal with salary of about 80,000 family planning

employees, health equipment purchase, measures to prevent HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, safe blood transfusion equipment and construction of new sub-health centres, among others.

The health ministry sought a fund of Tk 602 crore to carry out 15 operation plans including drugs purchase this year, ministry sources said. But the government has this fiscal year allocated only Tk 250 crore in its annual development programme (ADP).

The ministry however did not send the outlines of its plans to the Planning Commission until August, letting the medicine supply run out and leaving family planning employees unpaid.

Bureaucratic tangles appeared as the health ministry's National Steering Committee approved the operation plans and sought funds in August, while the government budget was approved in June.

Rejecting the staggering proposal, the Planning Commission

## Admission test, not GPA to count for govt universities

STAR REPORT

Students seeking enrolment in public universities this year will have to take admission tests regardless of their grade point average (GPA) in HSC (Higher Secondary Certificate) exams, official sources said.

"We think written tests would be appropriate for this year since the pass percentage is still unsatisfactory," State Minister for Education ANM Ehsanul Haq Milon told The Daily Star.

He said GPA as part of admission criteria remains a possibility for the

## Navy suffered Tk 175cr loss in Ctg Port collision

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The loss that the 18 navy ships suffered in a collision between two merchant ships at Chittagong Port on September 21 has been estimated at around Tk 175 crore.

The six-member committee formed to investigate the matter made the assessment in its report. The report has been finalised and is likely to be submitted to the navy chief soon, sources said.

The report has also recommended the loss incurred by the naval ships be realised from the ship

responsible for the accident. However, it did not mention which ship was to be blamed as its task was to ascertain the extent of the damage and assess the loss, sources said.

They said the report also mentioned that the damaged naval ships and two large patrol crafts, BNS Modhumati and BNS Jamuna, and off-shore patrol ship BNS Padma were seriously damaged. Of them, BNS Modhumati, equipped with anti-aircraft guns, was the worst hit and needs repair before it can get back to the sea again.

The probe committee compris-

ing representatives from the Bangladesh Navy, Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) and the Mercantile Marine Department (MMD) finalised the report after a fortnight-long investigation into the matter.

Commodore Bazlur Rahman, commanding officer of the BNS Flotilla, headed the probe committee. The other members of the committee were Captain Awal and Commander Alauddin of Bangladesh Navy, Captain Amirul Islam and Chief Hydrographer Habibur Rahman Khan of the CPA

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## 'Janatar Mancha' case Arrest warrant against ex-dy IGP Chanda

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Metropolitan Second Additional Sessions Judge Hussain Shahid yesterday issued an arrest warrant against Prakriti Ranjan Chanda (PR Chanda), former deputy inspector general of police, in the 'Janatar Mancha' (sedition) case.

Hearing on charge-framing in the case was due yesterday, but the judge adjourned it till October 23 as PR Chanda, one of the seven accused, did not appear in the court.

The judge cancelled the bail of Chanda and issued the warrant.

The six other accused -- former state minister for planning Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, former home secretary Shaifur Rahman, Syed Bazlur Karim, Abu Salam



LOOKS PAR EXCELLENCE: Lux Anandadhara Miss Bangladesh Photogenic 2003 Shayla Shabnam (C) of Habiganj poses with runners-up Rahnum Tasnuva Sonali (L) and Sakiba Binte Ali (R) at Bangladesh China Friendship Conference Centre in Dhaka last night.

## Scared minister skips ATP flight, drives to Syedpur

UNB, Dhaka

State minister for education yesterday got down from a Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight at Zia International Airport knowing that the aircraft was a much-talked-about outmoded Advanced Turbo Prop (ATP).

Ehsanul Haq Milon, also the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party lawmaker in charge of Nilphamari district, boarded the aircraft at about 10:30am. He was scheduled to attend an official programme in Syedpur at noon. When Milon came to learn the plane was an ATP he quickly came out of the aircraft with his family members saying that he was not ready to take any risk and

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## CJ summons judge in bail controversy

Rokanuddin to defend his allegation today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice KM Hasan yesterday summoned a judge of the High Court Division, accused of taking money for fixing bail, sources said.

Hasan asked the judge to explain the allegation slapped against him by Rokanuddin Mahmud, president of Supreme Court Bar Association, on October 1.

Details of the discussion could not be known.

Sources close to the pro-government lawyers said the judge may soon stand down.

The chief justice will also talk to

the client, who allegedly paid the judge Tk 50,000 for arranging the bail in a woman repression case.

Rokanuddin responds today to a letter by the chief justice who asked the Bar president on October 6 to furnish facts on his allegations.

"I will give the reply tomorrow. You will then get to know the content of my reply," Rokanuddin told The Daily Star last night.

Rokanuddin yesterday sat with Attorney General AF Hasan Ariff and leader of the ruling BNP-backed lawyers' forum TH Khan at Khan's chamber. They discussed the allegation.

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## Sierra Leone president to arrive Oct 21

RAFIQ HASAN

Dhaka and Freetown will explore the possibility of strengthening bilateral ties through investment and co-operation in various fields during the upcoming visit of Sierra Leone's President Ahmad Tajen Kabbah.

The president of the war-ravaged West African country is expected to arrive on October 21 on a three-day official visit, according to sources in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

To be the first ever visit by a Sierra Leone president Kabbah will come here on his way home from Kuala Lumpur after attending the OIC summit.

President Kabbah will meet Bangladesh leaders and hold official talks to strengthen bilateral ties, the sources said.

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## Holcim rebuts BoI chief's remarks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Holcim (Bangladesh) Limited yesterday refuted some remarks made by Board of Investment Executive Chairman Mahmudur Rahman at a press conference on October 12 where he claimed that the BoI has noticed some financial irregularities of the cement company and has written to them about it.

Holcim in a press release categorically denied the BoI chief's accusation of so-called "questionable financial transactions" of Saiham Cement Industries, a Holcim project.

After approving registration of Saiham, the BoI on October 6 asked Holcim to clarify a few things which "appear to be the result of misunderstanding and misconception of

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## Muslim nations want pivotal UN role in Iraq

Baghdad's provisional governing council blocks effort for US troops withdrawal deadline

REUTERS, Putrajaya

Foreign ministers meeting in Malaysia sought the rewording of an Islamic summit resolution on Iraq yesterday to strengthen a call for a dominant role for the United Nations.

But the US-backed Iraqi Provisional Governing Council blocked efforts by some countries in the Organisation of the Islamic Conference to set a deadline for US-led occupation forces to leave.

"There was a debate on putting a

specific time for the US to withdraw," Yonatri Rillman, an Indonesian delegate, told Reuters. "But it was not accepted. The Iraq officials themselves preferred an uncertain time."

A draft resolution formulated by the foreign ministers to be given to leaders at the OIC summit on Thursday only called on the UN Security Council to seek a timetable for the "withdrawal of the occupying power from Iraq as soon as possible."

The draft, seen by Reuters, also

said the Security Council should ensure the establishment of a constitution accepted by the Iraqi people in addition to forming a representative government elected by the Iraqi people.

And crucially, it said the United Nations should play a central role in Iraq, covering all aspects of politics, security and economics.

The Malaysian hosts were adamant that the United Nations should take charge, while welcoming signs that Washington would

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