

Ainjibi Forum demands removal of 2 advisers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiyatbadi Ainjibi Forum, a pro-BNP lawyers' association, yesterday demanded removal or resignation of two advisers to the caretaker government Advocate Sultana Kamal and CM Shafi Sami saying that they have lost their neutrality by meeting with Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina. As advisers to the caretaker government they should not meet any political leader which is why they should resign from their posts or the Chief Adviser should remove them, said Moudud Ahmed, a leader of the forum and former law minister. He said Adviser Sultana Kamal should be removed if a newspaper report that she is involved with a political party is found true. The demands came just one day after the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) demanded removal of Adviser Justice Fazlul

Huq for his reaction to the comment by AL-led 14-party combine that they will observe the advisers. Moudud also criticised the SCBA's demand for removal of Justice Fazlul Huq and asked, "Can't an adviser make a comment. What kind of democracy is this?" The 14-party combine is conspiring to foil the next elections as they tried to make the previous government ineffective, said Advocate Khandaker Mahbud Uddin Ahmad, former BNP law-maker. Shah Khasruzzaman, member-secretary of the forum, said there is no provision for removing the chief election commissioner (CEC) and other election commissioners, but some political parties (indicating 14-party combine) are trying to confuse people by demanding their removal. "Even before 2001 general elections, there were demands for the removal of the then CEC and

election commissioners, but it was not possible due to constitutional limitations," he said. The President tried all provisions in appointing the Chief Adviser to the caretaker government, but finally he himself took over the post as political parties failed to reach a consensus, Khasruzzaman noted. "Some lawyers are trying to mislead the nation by misinterpreting the constitution," he said, adding that they even proposed the name of Justice Mahmud Amin Chowdhury who is not eligible for the post of Chief Adviser according to the constitution. Khasruzzaman urged all political parties to refrain from misinterpreting the constitution and cooperate with the caretaker government for holding a free and fair election.



Advocate Khandakar Mahbududdin speaks at a press conference organised by Jatiyatbadi Ainjibi Forum at National Press Club in the city yesterday.

Let the Advisers work

FROM PAGE 1 Huq's position came from another adviser of the same government, Akbar Ali Khan, who welcomed the suggestion of being under constant observation. The resignation demand of the SCBA, which is a body of experienced and renowned lawyers, was, in our view, far too extreme. This body could have asked for the withdrawal of the offensive portions of Mr. Huq's remarks, or even an apology from him. But to demand his resignation for one remark, (which we agree was quite objectionable) was far out of proportion. These renowned lawyers, some of whom we admire for their commitment to the rule of law, constitutional politics, uprightiness, honesty and relentless defence of human rights, should have realised that the whole caretaker government is in a very precarious position and any tinkering with its membership may unleash a whole range of counter events that may dismantle the whole interim structure. This CG has not yet started any serious work. It is bound to face tremendous challenges and difficulties in the coming weeks, especially to bring about the changes in the EC for which, we already know, it has reached a consensus. We urge all concerned to desist from further complicating the work of the CG. They have the most important and, as is evident, a very complex task of delivering a free and fair election. If we are going to constantly create new controversies by twisting their every move and distorting their purpose then the CG will not be able to work. Please remember that this group of people is neither used to the nuances of our politics nor to the constant glare of the media. They are likely to make mistakes (of which Fazlul Huq's comments and the two advisers using private car to visit Hasina are good examples) for which we have to give them the benefit of the doubt. We urge our political leaders from both sides of the political divide not to play petty politics and their professional support groups to be patient at the moment. There is a much greater task ahead to be accomplished for which we should extend all out cooperation to this group of eminent citizens who have a very high degree of success in their own respective fields and who have come forward to serve the nation at this critical juncture. They did not come on their own. They were invited. They must be given that respect.

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Prof Yunus accorded reception in Manikganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj Grameen Bank borrowers accorded a reception to Nobel Peace Prize winner Prof Muhammad Yunus in Manikganj yesterday. Hundreds of borrowers gathered at Natun Basta village at Singair to congratulate the Nobel laureate. Talking to reporters, Prof Yunus hoped that poverty in the country will be reduced by 50 percent by 2015. He called on all to come forward to alleviate poverty. Now there is no time to talk about the appointment of the caretaker government, he said, adding that "We want a free and fair election in a festive mood." During his stay there from 9:00am to 2:00pm, Prof Yunus, founder of the Grameen Bank, talked to the borrowers and visited their houses. He also visited some projects of the borrowers, including handicrafts and poultry farms, and expressed satisfaction with their work.

25 injured in AL-BNP clash in Netrokona

UNB, Netrokona At least 25 people were injured in a clash between the activists of BNP and Awami League in Purba Dhala upazila over establishing supremacy on a bus stand yesterday. Local sources said both the groups used lethal weapons during the clash that took place on Purba Dhala bus stand premises at about 3:00pm. Of the injured, AL worker Lat Mia and BNP activist Nazrul were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital. Two children drowned in pond UNB, Sirajganj Two children drowned in ponds in separate incidents in Raiganj upazila of the district yesterday. The two were identified as Bristi, 3, daughter of Barat Ali of Khudramdra village, and Sagar, 2, of Furla village. Local sources said Bristi drowned in the pond near her house at about 12:30pm and Sagar at about 1:30pm.

Father dies of heart attack after BNP torture on his son

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A father died of a cardiac arrest after hearing screams of his son being tortured by the BNP cadres at Subidkhali village in Mirzaganj, Patuakhali, on Wednesday night. The dead was identified as Aziz Mridha, 65. Family sources said a gang of criminals led by Firoz Goldar, an alleged close aide of former minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, abducted Jahangir, 28, an Awami League activist, from his home on Wednesday afternoon. When Jahangir's father Aziz rushed to the house of Firoz to free his son, he heard screams of his son, who was being tortured by the gang there. Immediately Aziz suffered a heart attack and died on the spot. The members of the gang then fled the scene, leaving behind Jahangir in a critical condition. Later, local people rushed the father and the son to local upazila health complex. Meanwhile, the police foiled an attempt of attack on local AL leader of the same upazila in the early morning of Thursday and arrested two criminals. Sources said a gang of armed cadres loyal to Altaf Chowdhury gathered near the house of Mokhles Kazi, Mirzaganj upazila AL president, at Madhabkhali union at about 3:30am. Md Shah Alam, officer-in-charge of Mirzaganj Police Station, confirmed both the incidents and said Bashir and Sahed are listed criminals and wanted in many cases, including murder and extortion. Police sent them to the court and prayed for ten days of remand, but the court granted three days of remand on Thursday afternoon, the OC added.

One to die for killing his wife in Jhenidah

UNB, Jhenidah A special court here on Thursday sentenced a man to death for killing his wife. The court also fined the convict, Sanwar Hossain, Tk 25,000. According to the prosecution, Sanwar of Radhakantapur village in Sadar upazila beat his wife Moina Khatun, 25, to death on March 14, 2005 and hung her body from the ceiling of their room to prove that she had committed suicide. After examining the records and witnesses, Judge of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal SKM Anisur Rahman handed down the verdict in the crowded courtroom.

Obituary

UNB, Chandpur Arun Majumder, a valiant freedom fighter and general secretary of Chandpur district unit of NAP, passed away at a clinic in Dhaka on Thursday at the age of 62. Majumder, also a leader of Bangladesh Teachers' Association, had long been suffering from asthma and old-age complications. He hailed from Roysree village in Shaharasti upazila. He served the Baburhat High School in Chandpur as a teacher for nearly 40 years. He left behind his wife, two daughters, a son and a host of admirers and relatives to mourn his death.

Nujhat Jahan

Nujhat Jahan, wife of Prof Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir, a member of advisory committee of Forum for Secular Bangladesh, passed away yesterday, says a press release. She is survived by her husband, one son and a host of relatives. Forum for Secular Bangladesh has expressed deep shock at her death.

Ashrafal Alam Engineer Ashrafal Alam, managing director of Mitsumaru Group of Companies, passed away due to a cardiac arrest in London on Wednesday at the age of 48, says a press release. Ashraf along with his wife went to London after performing Umrah in Saudi Arabia. His body will be flown in to Dhaka on Sunday and he will be buried at Mirpur graveyard.

Indian media plays judge as justice system fails

REUTERS, New Delhi

A well-connected lawyer convicted for raping and murdering a young woman, senior politicians caught taking money under the table, guards suspended for throwing open the doors to a high-security jail for cash. All were caught thanks to an increasingly aggressive Indian print and broadcast media, which is trying to plug some of the gaps left by an overburdened justice system and a corrupt police force. "I think it's a sort of coming of age of the Indian media," said Poonam Saxena, media critic with the Hindustan Times daily. "Where institutions fail, civil society has to step in. I wholly support campaigns run by the media to get justice for those who have been denied," she added. This week, a sustained media campaign helped get justice for Priyadarshini Mattoo, a Delhi student who was brutally raped and battered to death in 1996 by Santosh Kumar Singh, the lawyer son of a former police officer, who had been stalking her for months. The Delhi High Court convicted Singh, seven years after a trial court had acquitted him. "I can't thank the media enough," Chaman Lal Mattoo, the woman's father, wrote in the Indian Express newspaper. "If it was not for the media, we may have lost the spirit and the battle." Seven years ago, Mattoo and others had accused police and prosecutors of subverting evidence to protect the accused. An appeal had been pending for six years but was fast-tracked only

after the media highlighted the case. Supporters held candle-light processions and street vigils, organised an SMS and email campaign and petitioned the president. "We applied for an appeal as soon as Singh was acquitted," a senior official from the Central Bureau of Investigation, who declined to be identified, told Reuters. "But the courts are also burdened with cases so proceedings were slow. It's true things started to move because the courts also took notice of the repeated media attention." "This is a victory for the media," said Indu Jalali, Mattoo's childhood friend, who had been campaigning for justice for years. "Had it not been for the media, this case, like many others, would have rotted in the files." "MEDIA ACTIVISM... Before Mattoo's case made it to the headlines, the media had championed the case of model Jessica Lall, allegedly shot dead by a politician's son in New Delhi in 1999 because she refused to serve him a drink in a bar. All the accused in the case were acquitted, but a public outcry, with the media leading the campaign, forced the police to go back to court with a fresh appeal, which is now being heard. "I think journalism has to have some sort of activism," said Rajdeep Sardesai, editor-in-chief of CNN-IBN news channel, which is among those campaigning for justice for Mattoo and Lall. "I don't believe in a passive media. It's a healthy trend. We are only asking questions. We are

doing what we should be doing." But critics warn that risks of populist media campaigns can sometimes misfire. "Media intervention without serious research can be dangerous," said PN Lekhi, a veteran lawyer. "There is a paucity of evidence in such interventions." Santosh Singh was sentenced to death for Mattoo's murder, a verdict welcomed by most Indians. That in itself worries newspapers like the Times of India which oppose the death penalty. "Justice is not always served by appeasing the popular will," it wrote in an editorial. "A society consumed by outrage easily confuses punishment and revenge, justice and vendetta. The media plays along or abets these tendencies." ... OR SENSATIONALISM? The Lall and Mattoo cases caught the public imagination. More controversial are the increasingly popular "sting operations" conducted by television channels, which Lekhi calls sensationalist. With more than a dozen national television news channels in India, competition for ratings is fiercer than ever. Stings have been a major part of the quest for "exclusive" news. Politicians have been filmed taking bribes using secret cameras, guards at Delhi's high-security Tihar Jail were shown doing the same to let in visitors, and film stars were recorded seeking sexual favours from wannabe actresses. "Sting operations are nothing but entrapments," said columnist Saxena. "Its sole purpose is to increase the viewership."

Bhuiyan reprimands Gaziul Hasan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan reprimanded Gaziul Hasan Khan for making 'freestyle' speech during a press briefing organised by the party at its central office yesterday. The caretaker government on Thursday cancelled the appointment of Gaziul Hasan Khan as the managing director and editor of state-owned news agency Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS). At the beginning of yesterday's press briefing, Gaziul Hasan, known as a pro-BNP man in journalist community, started speaking on his own and his speech seemed 'political' as he said, "Honourable secretary general... Awami League has begun the fight for going to power." At this stage Mannan Bhuiyan stopped him, saying that Gaziul Hasan is not working for any newspaper or news agency now. As Gaziul gave his identity as a columnist, the BNP leader said, "It's a press briefing... not a place for columnists."

Two advisers violate oath, says Jamaat

UNB, Dhaka

Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Muhammad Mujahid has said two advisers -- CM Shafi Sami and Sultana Kamal -- have violated the oath and lost neutrality by meeting with 14-party alliance leader Sheikh Hasina at her residence on Thursday night. "This proves that the two advisers are representing a party... they have lost the eligibility to remain in the advisory council," he said at a press briefing at Jamaat central office yesterday. Mujahid, also former social welfare minister, hoped that the president and chief advisor to the caretaker government would take proper steps against the two advisers. About the formation of caretaker government, he said the president took oath as the chief adviser on October 29 as per constitution, bringing "a sense of relief to the people". He urged all to cooperate with the caretaker government in holding a free and fair election in the country.

Death anniversary

Today is the 6th death anniversary of Orny M o h o n a Momen, daughter of prominent journalist Dr Mahmud Nurul Momen and granddaughter of Nalyaguru Nurul Momen, says a press release. On the occasion, Orny Mohona Foundation has declared to award an annual prize styled as "Orny Mohona Prize." It'll be announced on her next birth anniversary and awarded on her next death anniversary.

Nurul Islam Chowdhury

Today is the third death anniversary of Alhaj Nurul Islam Chowdhury, a former civil servant and president of M o h a m m a d p u r t h a n a Bangabandhu Parishad and the father of Barrister Moinul Islam Chowdhury, says a press release. On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his Plot No Q/6 Noorjahan Road residence after Asr prayers today. All relatives and friends are requested to attend the doa mahfil to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Quikhwani

Quikhwani of Jahanara Islam Chowdhury, wife of former Civil Servant late Nurul Islam Chowdhury and mother of Barrister Moinul Islam Chowdhury, will be held today, says a press release. She passed away on October 30 at Renaissance Hospital in the city at the age of 79. She left behind four sons, one daughter, grandchildren and a host of admirers. A doa and milad mahfil will be held at 4:15pm at her Plot No Q/6 Noorjahan Road residence in the city today. All relatives and friends are requested to attend the doa mahfil to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

UK takes in 500 immigrants a day

REUTERS, London

The net inflow of people coming into Britain last year was 500 a day, the second-highest level since 1991, official figures showed on Thursday. The biggest single group was Polish with others coming from "new Commonwealth" countries including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Of those leaving the UK for a new life abroad, Australia was the favourite destination, followed by Spain and France. "I think we are seeing something very unusual in world experience," said Danny Srisakandrajah, a migration expert at the Institute for Public Policy Research. "Britain is becoming a sort of interchange, a hub of the move-

ment of people," he told BBC television. "There's lots of people moving in and there's also lots of people moving out. That's unlike any other state in the world." The opening of British borders to new members of the European Union saw a net rise of 64,000 people coming for stays of over a year from countries including Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. The government last month announced it will restrict the influx of migrant workers from Bulgaria and Romania after they join the European Union in January, in a shift from the open-door policy adopted towards other eastern Europeans. The figures, released by the Office for National Statistics, show

185,000 more people entered the country than left it during 2005. The net inflow was lower than rise of 223,000 estimated in 2004, but remains the second highest level since current methods of calculation started in 1991. In 2005, some 565,000 people are estimated to have arrived to live in the UK for at least one year, with 49,000 coming from Poland. That was offset by 380,000 people leaving the country during the same period. There was a continued decrease to 11,000 in the net amount of asylum seekers coming to the country, down from a peak net inflow of 81,000 in 2000. An estimated 60 million people live in the United Kingdom.

Depression can be beaten but it takes time: study

REUTERS, Washington

Depression can be beaten in more than two-thirds of patients, but it takes time and trying several combinations of treatments, US researchers reported on Tuesday. The "real-world" study of 3,671 patients with major depression showed that no one drug or class of drugs works any better, the researchers said. The right combination must be found for each individual patient. "The good news is that two-thirds of people can be relieved of their depression if they can hang in there for up to four treatment steps. That's pretty significant for a tough illness," said Dr A John Rush, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Centre, who led the study. But the bad news, he said, is that until patients are completely symptom-free, they risk relapse. Writing in the American Journal of Psychiatry, Rush and colleagues said their findings come from the

\$35 million, six-year Sequenced Treatment Alternatives to Relieve Depression, or STAR*D, study paid for by the National Institute of Mental Health. All the patients started on the same drug -- Forest Laboratories Inc.'s Celexa, a drug in a class called SSRIs, for selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors. This drug sent 37 percent of patients into remission. Patients who did not get completely well were randomly assigned to take other SSRIs or Wyeth's Effexor, a drug in a similar class called selective serotonin/norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors or SNRIs. COGNITIVE THERAPY Patients could also add cognitive therapy -- a type of psychological counselling -- and this second step helped an additional 31 percent of patients. Those who were still not cured went to one of four treatments: nortriptyline, an antidepressant in an older class called tricyclics;

Remeron, also known as mirtazapine, which is a noradrenergic and specific serotonergic antidepressant; lithium; or T-3, a thyroid hormone. This step helped 13 percent of patients. Then a fourth step involved yet another class of antidepressants called MAO inhibitors or a combination of the other drugs. "It didn't turn out that there was a definitive large winner," Rush said in a telephone interview. "It is almost as if there are different kinds of depression." Rush said only a few patients opted for cognitive therapy but his group will publish findings on that later. "Our treatments don't produce a 100 percent remission rate," he said. "That means we have got to find newer treatments or use the treatments that we have more effectively." His team will look at genetic samples from the patients to see if there is a way of predicting who will respond to which treatment.

Education trip turns 'excursion'

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one is from Kandail High School, Karimganj, Kishoreganj, one from Gabrilo Pilot School, one from Ranihat MC High School, one from Tatiuya Adarsha School, Kachua, Chandpur. Karimganj is Farruq's constituency and Kachua is Milon's constituency. Gabrilo is late president Ziaur Rahman's village home, while Ranihat is the village home of the education secretary. It turned out that most of the invited teachers came from remote areas and they were not at all computer literate. A ministry source said, "You may term it a pleasure trip. What is the use of a 10-day training for these people we don't know, but the delegates surely would enjoy." A well-paced source at the ministry said Joint Secretary (Establishment) Mahfuzul Haque along with Deputy Secretary Nasreen Akhtar secretly designed

the list. Mahfuz is now in Thailand and had been awarded frequent foreign trips for his 'Hawa Bhaban' connection. Nasreen was rewarded with 20 foreign trips in the last five years. The sources said since Nasreen was promoted at the end of the four-party rule, she could not sign the papers and eventually directed the 'leave substitute' to do so. Asked, Nasreen said she does not know anything. But, to justify this nepotism, Mahfuzul, Director (training) Sirajuddin Ahmed and she took a selection examination on the fourth floor of Banbas office at Nilkhet on October 5 to give it an authentic look. Forty teachers were invited to attend this exam, but it is unknown how the 40 were selected in the first place. Meanwhile, BNP-backed teachers' association president Selim

Bhuiyan ruled out his involvement with the trip but expressed his regrets. "Those who served the minister in the field failed to get any benefit. But friends and families of the education ministry high-ups are getting all the trips," he said. He demanded immediate investigation into these irregularities. Officials close to the former education minister and state minister were frequently sent abroad as rewards for their loyalty. Sources said prior to the ongoing trip, Dilara Hafiz, director general of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education and wife of former minister for commerce and water resources, went on a visit to Canada from October 13 to 25. The National Curriculum and Text Book Board trip was fixed for the DG of the Primary Education, the sources added.