

ATPs to fly again in this month

Star Report

The government has decided to put the two ATP aircraft, grounded for over seven months, into operation.

The aircraft are expected to be pressed into Biman's domestic routes within a month.

The British made aircraft were inducted in Biman's fleet late last year, but both were grounded on December 28 following frequent engine faults. An engine of one of the ATPs caught fire while landing at Rajshahi Airport.

Bangladesh Biman bought three ATPs last year from British Aerospace at a cost of 50 million US dollars.

Two ATPs were delivered to Biman in October last year while the other was scheduled to reach Bangladesh sometime in December last.

At the same time Biman also disposed of its three F-27s and continued domestic flight operations depending on the newly procured ATPs.

But after the Rajshahi incident and other mechanical faults with the aircraft, both

the ATPs were grounded. The government also decided not to take delivery of the remaining ATP aircraft. Enquiries into the Rajshahi incident were ordered by the government.

Since the ATPs were grounded, negotiations between Biman and British Aerospace continued. The Bangladesh side insisted on returning the two ATPs and cancelling the order for the third one.

Bangladesh also proposed procuring jet-146 aircraft from British Aerospace in place of the ATPs.

But British Aerospace did not accept the Bangladesh proposal and insisted on putting the ATPs back into operation.

British Aerospace took the stand to maintain its reputation in the international aviation market.

While the two sides were engaged in negotiations for a long period, the domestic as well as the regional operations of Biman had to suffer a lot.

The national airlines had to depend on its two F-28 aircraft to operate flights on six domestic routes and also on the regional route to Calcutta. The shortage of aircraft caused a dislocation in these routes.

After a long parley, Biman authorities agreed to operate two ATPs with some extra technical facilities provided by British Aerospace.

According to an understanding reached between the two sides, British pilots will serve Biman for six months to ensure smooth operation of the ATPs.

The British pilots will also provide recurrent training to Biman pilots essential for renewal of their licences. British pilots will also look after the technical maintenance of the ATPs during their stay here.

The British Aerospace authorities also agreed to accept Biman's cancellation order for the third ATP still lying in the UK.

However, Biman will have to pay about US dollars 1,82,000 as compensation for cancellation of the order.

The compensation includes hanger charges for keeping the third ATP in the UK for over seven months.

Now Biman will have to pay for only two of the aircraft. Mode of payment is being rearranged.

As regards the grounding of the ATPs in December last year, the Chairman of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) Air Commodore Azharul Haq recently told reporters that CAAB had not withdrawn the airworthiness certificates issued for the ATP aircraft of Biman.

He said that the decision to ground the ATPs was Biman's own and CAAB had no role in it.

BCCI depositors

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Convener of the association Kaiser Md Quayum told The Daily Star that 311 members of the association would participate in the strike.

The speakers at the rally criticised the Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina for her silence over the issue of the BCCI depositors and urged her to extend her helping hand to the depositors to get back their deposits.

They said, "We are struggling for one month for getting our money but authorities continue to neglect our rightful demand. Most of us are now facing extreme financial hardship but the government is not considering our position even on humanitarian ground". They told in an emotion-choked voice, "Mustafa, a BCCI depositor, is now thinking of selling his kidney as he is not capable to meet his 10-member family's demand". Convener of the association Quayum told the rally.

Quayum urged Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to go to Abu Dhabi for the solution of the depositors' problem. "It is now our main demand", he said adding that the hunger strike unto death has been arranged to press home this demand.

Joint convener of the association Md Ismail Hossain was critical of Bangladesh Bank authorities alleging that the central bank failed to take up any effective step to resolve the BCCI issue. Noted film director Subhas Dutta and other BCCI depositors including Mantruzaman Manir, Feroze, Abdur Rashid and Md Shaifque also spoke at the rally.



Government employees held a rally in front of National Press Club to press for their demands.

— Star photo

Some provisions of 12th bill undemocratic : AL

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League Working Committee termed certain provisions of the Constitution 12th Amendment Bill as anti-people and undemocratic and demanded their withdrawal for giving an institutional shape to democracy.

JP MPs

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tacted, told The Daily Star that they had talked about the Constitution Amendment Bills with Ershad, but did not say what decision they had taken on the voting on the bills.

According to reliable sources, Kazi Zafar Ahmed and Sardar Amjad Hossain, who were detained respectively in Mymensingh Jail and Rangpur jail were brought to Dhaka Monday night so that they could attend the parliament session on parole during the passage of the bills. Anwar Hossain Manju is detained in the Dhaka jail.

Sources said, the three detained MPs of Jatiya Party would be allowed to attend the parliament session today on parole.

The question of allowing deposed President Ershad to attend the session on parole has not yet been settled. The government is yet to decide whether a person convicted for illegal possession of arms can continue as a member of parliament. If the offence of Ershad is tantamount to moral turpitude he will be disqualified to continue as a member of parliament. But the defence lawyer of Ershad argued that the offence was a technical one, while the attorney general said, the offence was tantamount to moral turpitude.

In a resolution adopted at the end of four-day meeting of the Working Committee on Monday, AL said that the amendment bill is not congenial for establishing democracy and parliamentary system since some proposed provisions are against fundamental rights and democracy.

The resolution mentioned that the Select Committee by and large reached a consensus on the two constitution amendment bills and placed a report before the House. All the members of parliament have the right to discuss on this report and so discussions for further amendment of the bill was underway.

In another resolution, AL Working Committee extended full support to the Indemnity (Repeal) Bill submitted on behalf of Awami League. The Working Committee demanded repeal of the Indemnity Ordinance of 1975 and said that the ordinance was totally against fundamental and human rights. The committee said that the killers must face trial, otherwise killings, coup and conspiracies would not be stopped.

The AL Working Committee expressed deep concern at the deterioration of law and order situation and held the BNP government responsible for the situation. The committee alleged that the BNP's student front were continuing terrorist activities on the campus with the help of police and BDR. Awami League called upon the people to resist the anarchy and terrorism unitedly.

The AL Working Committee also demanded withdrawal of VAT system and said that the new system has created ad-

verse reaction on the economy. A resolution said that the small industries of the country were endangered due to introduction of VAT. The Working Committee also expressed concern at the price hike of essential commodities and demanded government measures for keeping the price within buying capacity of the people.

AL Committee demanded immediate implementation of Pay Commission report for the government employees.

The AL Committee also demanded the waiving of taxes in the areas devastated by cyclone and flood.

Thai crew killed

A Thai crew was killed and another injured in an exchange of fire with the Bangladesh Navy in deep sea in the Bay of Bengal Sunday. About seven Thai fishing trawlers intruding in the Bangladesh waters started fishing near St Martin island, an official source told UNB Monday.

The 12th amendment bill does not reflect the totality of our views, says Hasina

BNP MPs asked to remain present in JS

The Chief Whip of BNP Parliamentary Party, Khandker Delwar Hossain, Monday requested the ministers and party MPs to remain present in the House regularly in view of the fact that the remaining days of the session were very significant, reports BSS.

Passage of amendment bills

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Moudud Ahmed, Acting Leader of the Jatiya Party Parliamentary Party, traced the background of the Constitution as it now exists and said that the crisis of democracy lay not on systems, but in practice of democracy. Both presidential and parliamentary systems could be democratic or autocratic, he said.

A former Leader of the House and a former Prime Minister Moudud Ahmed said that JP as a party believed in a system of check and balance. However, it would make its stand on the bills clear on the day of voting.

He welcomed the standing committee for producing a unanimous report, and supported the provision for holding of referendum for changing basic structures in the Constitution.

He urged all to view democracy and development as inseparable; and to help the development of democratic culture through tolerance of each other's views.

BKSAL leader Abdur Razzak called for further democratisation of the 12th Amendment Bill and said that the Constitution should have provisions against capture of power through extra-constitutional means.

He made a plea to drop the new provisions in respect to floor-crossing, appointment of non-MP ministers, holding of referendum, and called for holding election of president through a secret ballot.

Abdur Razzak said that only 'Bangladeshi nationalism' could ensure national unity. He demanded trial of those responsible for the killings of August 15, 1975, and the establishment of the rule of law.

and the nation passed through ordeals like one-party or one-man autocracy.

He said that there would be stability and peace if the Constitution Amendment Bills were passed.

After the passage of the bills all political parties should concentrate on pressing problems like floods, population explosion and poverty.

Politics of killings should also come to an end, and there should be a trial of the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, 10,000 workers of the JSD, Straj Sikdar, Ziaur Rahman, and Col Taher, he added.

Maulana Abdus Subhan of the Jamaat urged all not to create a situation that the nation loses an opportunity to move ahead on the road to stability. "We should not miss this chance on the plea to achieve everything", he said.

He defended the Article Eight of the Constitution as amended in 1979, saying nowhere in the world there was socialism in the sense the word was used in the past. Similarly faith in Allah was not against any religion, he said.

NDP leader Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury in his speech said that the bill as submitted by the Select Committee was a very ambitious one and termed the decision of the Awami League and the BNP to switch over to a parliamentary system very important for the nation.

He however raised questions on the bitterness now prevailing among the political parties over the passage of the bill even after the unanimity of the Select Committee represented by all the political parties.

He bitterly criticised the decision on dropping the schedule for election to the post of President.

He referred to the constitutional provisions of different democratic countries of the world including India and

Germany and said that there was no constitution in the world where there was no provision on procedures for a president election.

He said that the provision for election to the post of President was probably dropped out of fear and lack of confidence in the members of the party.

He said that the election to the post should be held through secret ballot and added that without taking the members of the party into confidence a government could never be a stable one.

Awami League leader Matya Chowdhury said that the gist of the declaration of three alliances was to establish the fundamental rights of the people, freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

She said that without repealing the Special Powers Act fundamental rights could not be established.

She said that there should be a trial of the killers of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in which Col Jamil Chowdhury who was on duty was also killed.

She said that the armed forces should also be held accountable for the killings. Matya Chowdhury also said that there was scope to debate 12th Amendment Bill even after the report of the Select Committee.

She said that the Awami League would continue its struggle for an unalloyed democracy, which she said was not reflected in the report of the Select Committee.

Advocate Fazle Rabbi of the Jatiya Party said that both the presidential and the parliamentary forms of government could be autocratic.

He said that the Article 56 (2) of the Constitution providing for inclusion of non-MPs in the cabinet was also undemocratic.

Another group of Govt employees threatens day-long strike August 12

By Staff Correspondent

The Pay Commission Report Implementation and Office Time Changing Action Council of the government employees Monday announced a work abstention programme to realise its two-point demand.

The council leaders at a rally in front of the National Press Club said the class III and IV government employees would observe two-hour work-abstention daily from August 7 to 11 and a day-long strike on August 12. If the demands were not fulfilled by that time, a fresh programme would follow, Tofazzal Hossain who presided over the rally said.

Their demands include immediate announcement and implementation of the Pay Commission report and 7-30 am - 2 pm office hours.

Several thousand employees from across the country attended the rally, addressed by, among others, Mr Humayun Kabir, Asaduzzaman Murad, Mosharraf Uddin Ahmed, Atiqur Rahman, Abdur Rab, Sheikh Sohrab, Rafiquddin Ahmed, Qiasuddin Ahmed and M A Mannan.

Speakers told the rally that their movement was not against the government but for survival in the face of price spiral.

The Prime Minister while in opposition had supported the cause of low paid employees, but was now delaying the Pay Commission Report under different pleas, they added.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Government Employees Solidarity Council also held a meeting inside the Secretariat on Sunday after one hour countrywide work abstention by class III and IV employees.

The Midnight File

PNC to meet in September

ALGIERS, Aug 5: The Palestine National Council (PNC), the Palestinian Parliament-in-exile, is expected to meet in Algiers in September. PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat was quoted as saying today, Algiers's state radio quoted Arafat as saying President Chadli Benjedid had agreed to host the PNC meeting. Arafat conferred with Chadli in Algiers at the weekend, reports Reuter.

Libya welcome as observer: Baker

ALGIERS, Aug 5: US Secretary of State James Baker III suggested Monday that Libya would be welcome as an observer at the upcoming Middle East peace conference. Baker wrapped up his 23-day trip abroad with a stopover in Algiers, where he tried to enlist the aid of Arab nations in North Africa for the peace effort, reports AP.

Youths ransack Pak offices

ISLAMABAD, Aug 5: Some 200 youths demanding the arrest of the murderers of a Shi'ite leader ransacked key Pakistani government offices today and damaged a number of vehicles. The slogan-chanting youths, some clad in shrouds, entered the walled central Secretariat, which houses several ministries, and attacked the offices, a police officer said, reports AFP.

Hiroshima bombing anniversary

HIROSHIMA, Aug 5: On the eve of the 46th anniversary of the world's first atomic attack, as on every other day, Hiroshima remembers. The city that rose from the ashes of that attack, on August 6, 1945, is peppered with reminders: buildings that were gutted but remained standing, memorial tablets and statues heaped with rainbow-hued paper cranes, the ghostly atomic dome — purposely left in ruins.

Shops shut to protest extortion of money

By Staff Correspondent

Some 400 businessmen owning shops in the Science Laboratory area have become hostages to 12 hooligans who frequently extort money at gunpoint from them.

In a press conference at the National Press Club on Monday four of the owners said the businessmen of Ahmed Mansion, Ruma Mansion, Kuddus Bhaban, Dhanmondi Bhaban, Alpna Plaza, Zahan Mansion and Elephant Road decided to keep their shops shut for three days from Sunday to protest the state of anarchy.

The owners present at the press conference were so scared of the hooligans that they repeatedly requested the reporters not to identify them in any news item.

They said that the thugs belong to a student organisation threatened the businessmen not to open their establishments in the next one month as a "punishment" for their strike.

If they can identify us they will kill us," one of the owners said.

They said the businessmen refused to pay the 'subscription' by saying that there is specific government order against extortion of money.

They also said that their harassment increased before the election of a nearby college union.

They alleged that five cases have so far been lodged with Dhanmondi police but the police remained inactive in taking any action. Rather the police were favouring the armed terrorists, they also alleged.

Jamuna bridge

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for the tender, sources at the JMBA said.

Nezam Ahmed Choudhury, Vice Chairman of JMBA, told Karoosmanoglu that the government wanted to see that the bank take necessary initiative so that implementation of the project could be started in right earnest. He also told the bank's Vice-President that the people of Bangladesh were eagerly waiting to see that the work of the project is on.

Karoosmanoglu, who strongly emphasised the economic viability of the project, informed Choudhury that the bank was sending a mission to Bangladesh next month to update the cost of the project. He noted that project's economic viability would be determined on the basis of that costing.

The sources said such updating the data and cost were unnecessary since those were done in preappraisal meeting in August last year after discussions among the IDA, cofinanciers and the government.

Pass bills

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Fifty-six members of the Dhaka Bar Association have also called for passage of the Constitution Amendment Bills and the Indemnity Act (repeal) Bill.

Passage of the 11th and 12th Amendment Bills without the Indemnity Bill would not consolidate democracy. The Indemnity Bill should be passed to ensure freedom of the judiciary and establish rule of law which were committed in the joint declaration of the three political alliances.

Signatories to the statement include: Mohammad Rahmat Ali, Mohammad Ali, Khandakar Mehbub Alam, A B M Karim Uddin, Jahid Sardar, Mohammad Baki Miah, Md Humayun Patol Md Zahir Rathan and Jamal Hossain Bhuiyan.

Teachers federation condemn AL member's behaviour in JS

By DU Correspondent

The National Federation of Teachers Association (NFTA) in a statement Monday expressed its strong indignation over showing of shoes in the Jatiya Sangad by a member.

The statement, jointly issued by Dr Yasuddin Ahmed and Prof M Shareful Islam, President and Secretary General respectively of NFTA said that decency and decorum of parliament should be maintained by all.

The teacher leaders said the people did not elect anybody to show such behaviours and no sensible man could tolerate this ruffian attitude and temperament tarnishing the sanctity of parliament.

They said the 15 minutes drama of misbehaviour, witnessed by large number of spectators could not be accepted by any sensible people.

Shahabuddin observes debate

By Staff Correspondent

Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed visited the Sangad Bhaban (parliament house) Monday and observed the debate on the 12th Constitution Amendment Bill in the House for more than an hour.

Hasina

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She, however, criticised the Treasury Bench for not allowing the Indemnity (repeal) Bill to come before the House so far. "How can we reject the politics of killing and violence, as desired by the Joint Declaration of the alliances if we do not pass this bill?" she questioned.

In a highly caustic vein the Leader of the Opposition criticised the Prime Minister for rushing to the Acting President and claiming that obstacles were being placed in the path of the smooth passage of the 12th Amendment Bill.

"What, may I ask, had happened that necessitated the Prime Minister to go up to the Acting President, and for the Acting President to say that he would resign if the bill was not passed? This is only to embarrass me, to make it look as if I am creating obstacles."

Referring to her talks with Justice Shahabuddin, Sheikh Hasina said, "I explained to the Acting President that the constitutional amendment bill in its present form contains gaps which need to be filled if we are to ensure a true parliamentary democracy. That is what I had said during my party's extended meeting. There was no need to create the atmosphere of a crisis that the ruling party did."

To the question on what caused the crisis, the PM's visit to the Acting President or her speech, the Leader of the Opposition said: "I was only pointing out the shortcomings of the bill. The bill, as proposed by the Select Committee, is a compromise bill, and like all compromise documents, it does not reflect the totality of our views."

But does it not create the impression that after agreeing during the negotiations of the Select Committee the AL is trying to raise new issues? "No, if you examine the bill that we had put forward in the first place it will be clear that what we are saying is not new at all."

Sheikh Hasina, however, said that the bill did not reflect the Awami League's views fully and as such she would work to improve it further.

Khabar Group withdraws writ petition

The Khabar Group of Publications and its Managing Director Monday withdrew themselves from the writ petition filed jointly by five newspapers challenging the Fourth Wage Board Award in the Division Bench of the High Court Division, reports BSS.

The court comprising Justice M Abdul Jalil and Justice M Badruzzaman took up the application filed by the Khabar Group of Publications and its Managing Director Mizanur Rahman Mizan, praying for withdrawal of their names from the writ petition. After hearing the court dropped their names from the writ petition.

Earlier Inqilab Enterprise and Publications Limited and its Managing Director Maulana M A Mannan and the Azad Publications Limited and its Managing Director Z A Khan withdrew their names from the writ petition on July 28 and 29 respectively.

On the prayer of Barrister Zainul Abedin, the petitioner's counsel, the court Sunday vacated the order of stay which was earlier granted on July 15 on the implementation of the Wage Board Award.

Nazmul Hasan, Advocate, moved the application on behalf of the Khabar Group of Publications. Barrister Zainul Abedin appeared on behalf of Sangbad Limited and the Ittefaq Group of Publications Limited.

Barrister A R Yusuf and Sk Habib-ul-Alam, Advocate, appeared for the journalists, press workers and newspaper employees federations.

Syed J R Modasser Hossain, Deputy Attorney General, appeared for the government.

Flood

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river Gumti is likely to remain unchanged. The river was flowing 38 cm above danger level Monday morning, despite considerable fall overnight.

The Deputy Commissioner of Comilla told UNB over telephone standing crops on nearly 7,000 acres had been damaged in Burichang and Muradnagar upazilas in flash flood caused by water gushing through severe breaches in the WDB embankment at Jatrapur.

In the Ganges basin, river Ganges itself will swell at all points during the next 24 hours ending 6 pm Tuesday, but will be flowing below danger level.

The flood situation in Feni, Chittagong, Banderban and Cox's Bazar districts is expected to continue improving, the Centre forecast added.

Road communication between Cox's Bazar and rest of the country remained disrupted, but officials said it might be restored shortly on completion of reconstruction of the collapsed bridge.

Roads and Highways Department men are working on the bridge round-the-clock to restore the road link.

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Russian workers

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party cells, the local authorities will use the necessary leverage toward them," Sherbakov said in remarks reported today by the unofficial news agency Interfax.

Editor : S. M. Ali