



MPs to head govt college bodies

By Staff Correspondent

Education Minister Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar yesterday told Parliament that relevant laws would be amended to enable the MPs to become the chairmen of the governing bodies of government colleges in their respective areas.

Replying to a supplementary question from Mosharraf Hossain (AL-Faridpur), the minister said some provisions in the Universities Ordinance 1973 bar MPs from becoming chairmen of degree colleges.

Thana Nirbahi Officers (TNOs) are the chairmen of degree colleges while the MPs head the managing committees of the non-government colleges.

BSS adds: The Education Minister assured the Jatiya Sangsad that the present government would nationalise one college in each thana by 1995.

Barrister Sircar reiterated that the government had under-

taken steps to eradicate illiteracy from the country by the year 2000.

The Education Minister was responding to a private member's resolution, moved by Jamaat member Mufti Moulana Abdus Sattar.

Awami League members Dr Mozammel Hossain, Abdul Matin Khasru and Sheikh Harunur Rashid and Jamaat members A M Riasat Ali and Moulana Habibur Rahman moved certain amendments in the resolution, which was subsequently withdrawn by the Jamaat member at the assurance of the Education Minister.

The minister said the present government had already decided to nationalise one college in each thana by 1995, much earlier than the proposal of Abdul Matin Khasru who had pleaded to do it by the year 2000.

Tk 400 cr plan to shift Jail

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ernisation of all the jails would take place in phases.

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday — a private members' day — also witnessed discussions on three more resolutions moved by Opposition members.

Of the three, one was rejected by voice vote while two others were withdrawn following assurances of consideration by the ministers concerned.

The resolution, rejected by the House, demanded construction of shelters for homeless people at every district and thana headquarters.

While persuading AL member Tabibur Rahman Sarder to withdraw the resolution earlier, Works Minister Barrister Rafiqul Islam Miah told the House that a national housing policy, in the offing, would aim at providing accommodation to the lower income group.

The minister said that the government had already implemented several housing schemes for the low-income group, including one at Mirpur in the city. The government had also taken up a housing scheme for the poor at Dhaka and Khulna on some eighty acres of lands. Barrister Rafiq added that the scheme was already under the consideration of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Referring to the United Nations' Human Habitat Programme, the minister also said that Bangladesh was engaged in implementation of the programme to ensure shelters for the poor and homeless.

He said although it was a constitutional obligation for the state to provide shelter to each and every citizen, this could not

364 students went abroad under scholarships

By Staff Correspondent

Some 364 students have gone abroad for study under foreign scholarships during the past three years, Education Minister Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar told Parliament yesterday.

Replying to a question from Awami League member Abdul Matin Khasru (Comilla-5), the Education Minister said the exact figure of students studying abroad was not recorded with the ministry since the students need no certificate or permission from the ministry.

The minister said the highest number of 154 scholarship winners have been studying in neighbouring India, followed by 50 in England.

Some 15 countries awarded scholarships to the Bangladeshi students.

The last three years' break-up of scholarships are as follows:

Morocco-5, Australia-24, Turkey-4, Hungary-2, Canada-13, Egypt-6, the United States-18, Poland-1, Czechoslovakia-4, China-40, Japan-34, Pakistan-6 and Russia-3.

'Threat from opposition'

Huda tells JS
by Staff Correspondent

Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda yesterday said in Parliament that he is feeling a 'threat' from the Opposition in the House.

Yesterday one Opposition member threatened to attack my house and today another member is proposing to send me to jail," a smiling Huda said appealing to the Deputy Speaker to record the threats.

The minister's appeal came when the House was discussing jail reform.



A Russian soldier and his cheering girl friend, among others, watching US rock star Michael Jackson performing during his concert in the 'Luznik' Stadium, Moscow Wednesday. — AFP photo

'Too many rules create bottlenecks, encourage corruption'

By Staff Correspondent

Trimming and streamlining of the governmental machinery could help foster good governance.

Prof Mohabbat Khan of the Public Administration Department and AK Monwar Uddin Ahmed of the Economics Department of the Dhaka University made this observation in their paper on 'Governance in Bangladesh: An Overview', presented on the concluding day of the ADB-sponsored conference on the Bangladesh economy at the Hotel Sheraton yesterday.

They said that better economic management could be achieved only by ensuring a healthy competition in the economic system.

'Too many rules and regulations' not only create bottlenecks towards development, but encourage corruption', the co-authors of the paper said.

They also said that the most blatant failure of the government had been in the area of corruption, which they felt should have been the top priority of the government.

'In many cases the managerial ability of the state agencies is still overestimated by the politicians and public decision-makers. The system needs to be further simplified and the appropriate role of the state is to bring it to the minimum', they pointed out in their dissertation.

They said in Bangladesh po-

ECNEC approves Tk 873 cr for road maintenance

An amount of Taka 873 crore have been allocated for the rehabilitation of 200 kilometres of roads and periodic maintenance of another 2000 km in the north and north-western part of the country, under Phase Two of the 'Road Rehabilitation and Maintenance Project' being undertaken by the Roads and Road Transport Division, reports BSS.

This was decided at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) held here yesterday with the Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman in the chair.

UNB staff go on strike

By Staff Correspondent

The journalists and staff members of the United News of Bangladesh (UNB) have started a 24-hour strike from 7 pm yesterday to protest the non-payment of salary.

The journalists of the private agency enforced the strike at 7 pm yesterday until 7 pm today, according to a decision of the UNB unit of the Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ).

Mostafiz

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cash crisis which has plagued the UN and has also affected its global peace-keeping operations will also figure prominently.

The forthcoming General Assembly session will also consider a proposal for increasing the number of permanent members in the Security Council and also the abolition of the veto powers of the permanent members.

Foreign Minister Mostafizur Rahman is expected to preside over a meeting of the SAARC Foreign Ministers at the UN headquarters on October 4. On their way back, the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister are also scheduled to address all the heads of Bangladesh missions in Europe at a gathering in London on October 6.

Begum Khaleda Zia is expected to fly on the inaugural flight of Bangladesh Biman to New York when she leaves Dhaka on September 29. She is expected to return home on October 7.

litical and bureaucratic accountability is weak due to lack of clear policies and absence of transparency in the process. Parliamentary standing committees on the various ministries had not been effective due to the nature of their composition and methods of functioning, they added.

'Bureaucratic accountability has not been ensured. Rather, an uneasy relationship exists between civil servants and their political masters', they said and added that the executive branch's tendency to interfere in the affairs of the judiciary was very much alive.

Three more papers were also presented at the two-day conference organised by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in collaboration with the Academy for Planning and Development and the Ministry of Planning.

Zaidi Sattar of the National Board of Revenue (NBR), in his paper on 'Non-Traditional Exports and Economic Performance: Review and Empirical Evidence', said the emergence and rapid growth of non-traditional exports was a leap forward for the Bangladesh economy. If it is sustained through appropriate incentives

Jatoi appeals to High Court

ISLAMABAD, Sept 16: Former Pakistani caretaker premier Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi has appealed to the High Court against the rejection of his candidacy in upcoming elections here, he said in a statement published today, reports AFP.

Violence by opponents insignificant: Arafat

TUNIS, Sept 16: PLO leader Yasser Arafat said on Wednesday he expected violence to continue in the occupied territories for some time despite a peace agreement signed in Washington on Monday by Israel and the PLO.

In an interview with Reuters television after returning to his headquarters in Tunis on Wednesday, he said the violence by opponents of peace was insignificant compared with the expressions of Palestinian popular support for the agreement.

He said: 'You are only looking at some small events here and there and you are forgetting the flood of support from the masses everywhere, especially in the Gaza Strip.'

'We have to expect that some of these events will continue for a certain period. I don't know how long. But the important point is that we have to move

PM's Office may intervene

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tions to rehabilitate the sick units.

He said the Finance Ministry issued a guideline for the banks for helping the sick industries and there was also a Review Committee for considering the cases of those denied fresh loans.

The PMO might have to intervene into the matter if this system failed to take decisions on particular cases or make satisfactory progress in reviving the sick plants.

At present neither the Ministry of Finance nor the PMO has any clear-cut evaluation of rehabilitation, since the banks did not send any such report to the ministry or the PMO, sources said.

There are also allegations about violating of a number of decisions of the Review Committee, especially against the Bangladesh Shipra Rin Sangstha (BSRS).

According to the sources, the BSRS is following its own style in rehabilitating the sick industries, which the entrepreneurs

and liberalisation strategies. It has the potential to produce the breakthrough needed to reduce dependence on foreign aid.

The switch from dependence on traditional to non-traditional exports offered tremendous gains to the economy, he said and added that it had also put the Bangladesh economy in the grip of global competition.

Production and managerial efficiency and challenge for innovation was needed to survive in that competition, he felt.

The other two papers were presented by Sadrel Reza and M Ali Rashid of the BIDS and Dhaka University and Mustafa K Mujeri and Salehuddin Ahmed of the CIRDP and BARD, Comilla. Those papers were on 'Foreign Direct Investments in Bangladesh: Problems and Prospects' and 'Poverty and Human Resource Development,' respectively.

Hijackers of Russian plane surrender

ULLENSAKER, Sept 16: Grenade-wielding hijackers, believed to be Iranians, forced a Russian passenger jet to fly to Norway, then surrendered Thursday after authorities promised to consider their demand for political asylum, reports AP.

All passengers and crew were released unharmed, said government spokeswoman Kirsti Skjerven. Justice Minister Grete Faremo told a news conference in Oslo that 58 people in all were aboard the jetliner.

Violence by opponents insignificant: Arafat

fast to put these pieces of paper into effect on the ground.

'This will help both of us to overcome these events.'

The Palestine Liberation Organisation is pressing Israel to free detainees, let back deportees and take other measures to make life easy for Palestinians under occupation.

Israel and the PLO are convening joint committees to flesh out the agreement, the Washington Post reported in early editions today.

The newspaper said the groups would meet in Washington, Israel and the occupied territories to deal with issues of public safety, economics and administration.

Meanwhile, the United States plans to release 30 million US dollars in security aid to Jordan, the State Department said today.

Diplomatic ties with Moldova

Bangladesh and Moldova have established diplomatic relations, reports BSS.

A protocol was signed to this effect on September 14 in Kishinev, capital of the Republic of Moldova.

The Ambassador of Bangladesh in Russia Mustafizur Rahman and the Foreign Minister of Moldova Nicolau Tau signed the protocol on behalf of their respective countries.

The protocol provides for mutual cooperation in political, trade, economic and other fields and diplomatic relations at the level of embassies.

Bangladesh has already established diplomatic relations with the other 14 republics of the former Soviet Union.

15 hurt in gang attack in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Sept 16: At least fifteen villagers, including ten women, were injured when a gang of armed men attacked the house of a peasants' leader at Bhabnaha under Fakirhat Police Station of Bagerhat district today morning.

According to eyewitnesses, the gang of 10 to 15 people armed with lethal weapons attacked the house of one Jafar Farazi who led the peasants of that village against a fish gher (farm) owned by one Amjad Nikary at about 9:30 this morning.

The hoodlums allegedly tried to kidnap Jafar after ransacking the house by exploding hand bombs and firing shots. They also beat the female inmates of the house.

As the news of the attack spread villagers encircled the house and caught two of the miscreants alongwith their firearms.

The besieged gang at one stage fired at the villagers indiscriminately, injuring some fifteen villagers including ten women.

Saifur: NCB

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cisions promptly if a genuine entrepreneur submits a proposal for funds," he said.

Rahman observed that some of the bank officials were showing very good performance while some others were not performing their duties properly.

In this context, he said the banks have to take steps to give incentives to those who were showing good performance. 'Free market economy is an incentive oriented economy.'

Speaking on unrecovered bank loans, the Finance Minister said previously one Manager or General Manager disbursed loan and another had to recover that loan from the loanee.

This situation must be changed... those who disburse loan, both working capital and term loan, will be responsible and they must recover the amount," Rahman said.

Criticising the commission-based activities, the Finance Minister said this type of activities are harmful for the economy and industries are lying sick due to this agent-based tendency. The tendency of not returning bank money is also destroying the environment of investment in the country, he said.

He also urged the bankers to reduce the transaction cost in the banking sector and help promote industries in the country.

In this context, he advised the bankers to set up professional monitoring units for better transaction of money. 'You are on a mission to develop the country,' he said.

MFA phase out

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the Harkin Bill and MFA phase-out, when it occurs, will set the clothing sector on a tailspin and with it the whole economy will undergo a shock. Clothing is now the single largest item of export. Bangladesh's medium term export potential is thus critically linked to what happens to the MFA.

According to a source, the future of the MFA is already being taken into consideration in formulation of the medium term scenario for exchange rate policy. Given the importance of the clothing exports, if the MFA phase-out hits Bangladesh all at once, the exchange rate or the country's foreign exchange reserve will have to take a heavy beating. To avoid this, small downward adjustments in the Taka-US dollar exchange rate may be tried well before the MFA phase-out occurs.

Such adjustment of the exchange rate will be compatible with the system of convertibility to be introduced from October 1 next. The convertibility of the Taka on trade account will be within a band calculated by the Bangladesh Bank on a daily basis. Calculation of the band can be adjusted to the loss in competitiveness of Bangladesh's exports that the MFA phase-out will cause.

The Midnight File

Pak commission to probe govt officials' corruption

ISLAMABAD, Sept 16: Pakistan set up a special commission today to investigate corruption among government officials in a drive by interim Prime Minister Moeen Qureshi to stamp out bribery and influence-peddling. The commission will review and propose action in corruption cases involving public servants, the official AFP news agency said. It will also investigate the system of federal government and suggest reforms, reports Reuters.

Khamenei blasts Israeli-PLO pact

NICOSIA, Sept 16: Iran's spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei today urged the Islamic world to mount a 'counter-attack' against the Israel-PLO peace pact. 'The enemies of Islam think they have taken a step forward, but the Islamic world should launch a counter-attack and push them back,' he told a group of revolutionary guard commanders in a speech reported by Iranian television, reports Reuters.

Biman restores all international flights

By Staff Correspondent

After nearly four months of disruption Biman Bangladesh Airlines has restored all its international and regional flights suspended following the accident of one of its DC-10s in May, officials said yesterday.

'The flight schedule is back to normal after two leased DC-10 aircraft joined the fleet,' Raisuddin Ahmed, General Manager, Public Relation of Biman told The Daily Star. He added that for the past one week there were no major delays in flights.

He said the national carrier had to suspend its Singapore, Malaysia, Narita (Japan), Delhi, Athens, Bombay and Hong Kong flights following the May 18 accident at the Zia International Airport and also discontinued one of the four weekly flights to London. Biman flies to 29 overseas destinations.

'We have recovered from the crisis and restored all the suspended flights,' Raisuddin said, adding 'We even increased the frequency flight to London by raising the number to five every week.'

Biman took two 274-seater DC-10-30 aircraft from its manufacturers McDonnell Douglas — one for three years and another for six months — to cover the international and regional flights. The airlines now has five DC-10, two ATPs and two F-28s in operation.

He said the final repair works of the damaged DC-10 was going on in full swing at Biman's hangar at Zia. The aircraft is expected to join Biman's fleet by mid-December when one of the two leased planes will leave the fleet. But the operational strength of Biman will remain the same, he said.

The official said the Biman authorities are still hoping to start the New York flight from September 29, the state-owned airline has already received clearance from the US Federal

Aviation Administration (FAA) and from the Department of Transport (DOT) to enter US airspace.

Biman is waiting for the immigration and customs clearances and also for safety equipment procedure (SEP) card for its crew members.

If the test of the required formalities are completed on time the inaugural flight will ferry the entourage of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia who will attend the UN General Assembly.

Sources at the Prime Minister's office said the PM's official programme still shows that she will go to the United States via France on Sept 29.

When his attention was drawn to the statement of the State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism M A Mannan in Parliament Tuesday that Biman had managed only a 46.4 per cent flight regularly on its international route, Raisuddin Ahmed said that was the average schedule regularity of the financial year 1992-93.

'For the last one month we have been maintaining more than 90 per cent flight schedule regularity,' Raisuddin said, adding that 'Biman will be able to maintain this performance because an additional wide-bodied aircraft has joined the fleet.'

Cabinet

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and to lift certain restrictions and conditions from the said Import Policy Order.

The meeting also approved the proposals of the Ministry of Religious Affairs for establishment of a permanent Hajj camp at Ashkona near the Zia International Airport.

The Cabinet directed the ministry to take up the construction work immediately so that this can be used in the next Hajj season.

Special Drive for Gas Line Disconnection

With a view to realising the arrears, the special drive for gas line disconnection of all defaulting consumers, including govt & autonomous establishments, has been started from 31-7-93. In this first special drive of 1993-94 financial year, total 1982 gas connections have been disconnected up to 15-9-93.

All esteemed consumers are requested to pay the arrear gas bills immediately and show the payment receipt to the disconnection squad on the place of gas use. On production of the bill payment receipt by the disconnected consumer at the concerned zone/office of the company by 5-00 pm on the day, steps will be taken for immediate restoration of his line.

If the reconnection is not taken within 3 (three) months of disconnection, the gas line will be permanently disconnected with cancellation of gas supply contract.

Pay the gas bill in time and abstain from any sort of illegal gas use.

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