

Environmental action plan

Move to involve people in decision-making

By Masud Hasan Khan

A country-wide campaign to elicit people's views on the draft National Environmental Management Action Plan (NEMAP) has been launched opening a new horizon of co-operation between the government and the non-government organisations (NGOs).

The joint programme was launched last Wednesday at a workshop at Comilla where a cross section of people expressed their views on different environmental issues and put forward suggestions.

Government officials and NGO community leaders said the workshop, held at the Bangladesh Academy of Rural Development (BARD) at Kotbari, was one of the few instances where the government and the voluntary development organisations of the country worked together to chalk out an environmental programme for the country.

The two-day workshop was attended by 50 rural people, most of them women. They gave their opinions about the most pressing environmental issues of the area like sand deposition in the river Gumti, extinction of fish and bird species and loss of rohi crops due to increased production of high yielding variety (HYV) paddy, the organisers of the workshop said.

National problems like indiscriminate use of pesticide, loss of soil fertility and lack of people's participation in the family planning programme also came up for discussion.

The organisers said, the workshop at Comilla was the first of 24 workshops to be held in different areas of the country. These workshops would be followed by divisional level meetings and a national workshop to involve the common people in the decision-making of the environmental management programme.

Earlier, the draft of the NEMAP could not be finalised because of differences of opinion between the environmental activists and some NGOs who said more discussions were needed on the issue.

Meanwhile, the World Bank is also not discharging any credit in the absence of any action plan on environment.



An Israeli frontier guard arrested a Palestinian woman during a demonstration in Arab East Jerusalem yesterday, held to protest Friday's massacre in Hebron. — AFP photo

Hasina defends relations with Jamaat in JS

By Nurul Kabir

Sheikh Hasina yesterday told her colleagues in the Awami League Parliamentary Party (ALPP) that there should be no question about the party's working relations with the Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh inside the Jatiya Sangsad (JS).

Hasina made this observation at the meeting of the party's parliamentary wing held yesterday afternoon at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhawan.

She, however, told the party MPs that the AL would not maintain any relations with the Jamaat outside Parliament.

Arguing in favour of her position on the issue, Hasina said that she was the leader of all the opposition parties in Parliament including the Jamaat.

"There was nothing wrong in maintaining relations with the Jamaat in the House especially in the case of parliamentary practice," Hasina said.

She made this comment with a view to clearing the party's ethical position in the context of the critical views on the recent AL-Jamaat relations published in a section of newspapers, and MP who attended the meeting told The Daily Star last night.

The AL chief, also directed the party MPs to be vocal on the JS floor against the alleged corruptions of the ruling party.

The meeting sources said, she asked the MPs not to miss any chance on the Parliament floor to criticise the alleged corrupt practices of the government.

Beginning at 2:30 pm the meeting lasted for an hour.

DU student killed in road mishap

By DMCH Correspondent

A final year student of the Marketing Department of the Dhaka University (DU) was killed when a speeding bus knocked his rickshaw on the Mazar Road, Mirpur in the city about 4:30 pm yesterday.

The victim, Mohammed Zamilur Rahman, 25, was seriously injured and rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the doctors on duty declared him dead.

Police seized the bus (Dhaka Ja-244) but its driver managed to escape.

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sad could not take-up any law making business only because of a planned move of the opposition to create smoke screen in the minds of the people through their 'unfounded and unsubstantiated allegations' quoting a report of a Bengali daily.

The speaker on notices of adjournment motion by opposition Awami League members asked them to submit substantial documentary evidence as per rules and parliamentary practices, he said adding, as the concerned members could not provide specific papers to him, he (Speaker) disallowed the motion.

On February 24, violating rules, the opposition members tried to pressurise the chair for a date for discussion on alleged corruption of ministers when 'we categorically said that we were not opposed to any such discussions if that satisfies the rules of the House,' he said.

The BNP Secretary General, at the briefing was flanked by Deputy Leader of the House Prof B Chowdhury, Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman, Information Minister Nazmul Huda, Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mia, Food Minister Lt. Gen (ret'd) Mir Shawkat Ali, State Minister for Establishment Aminul Haq and Whip Mahbubul Alam Tara.

Talukder said considering all aspects of the notices as per rules and on the basis of

4 Sarbaharamen killed by their fellows

From Our Correspondent

CHUADANGA, Feb 28: Four members of the outlawed Purbangar Sharbahara Party were murdered here in early hours today reportedly by their fellow activists as a sequel to intraparty conflicts.

Local Superintendent of Police Mohammad Jahangir briefed journalists at his office this afternoon about the killings and showed three of the four slain bodies recovered by the Alamdanga thana police of the district.

According to police, Nazrul Islam, Sattar and 'bullet' Sattar were killed in Kabinagar of Alamdanga thana at about 1:30 am today. Police recovered the bodies from there and brought those to the thana. The three Sharbahara Party members were wanted in connection with several murders and arms cases, police said.

Another activist of the Sharbahara Party, Shamsul Islam alias Pocha was found

slaughtered near his village home in Bishnapur under Damurhuda thana of the district. Police said, Pocha was also murdered by his rivals in the party in the small hours of today.

The attack, according to sources, was a sequel to a dispute over the formation of the madrasa committee. Some local people, however, alleged that the commissioner was bitter about the role of Rahim during the last city elections.

Till the time of filing of this report at 1 am, a tense situation was prevailing around the premises of the madrasa where hundreds of enraged people gathered.

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Madrasha teacher beaten up in city

By Staff Correspondent

A commissioner-elect of Mohamudpur, Ehsanul Haque Shetu reportedly stormed into a madrasa and seriously beat up its teacher late last night, according to witnesses and police.

The injured, Kari Mohammad Rahim, was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he received treatment.

According to police sources, the commissioner-elect, along with four others, stormed into the madrasa and dragged him out of the premises and seriously assaulted him at around 11:30 pm. Five madrasa students were also injured.

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DUCSU election schedule announced

By DU Correspondent

The University authorities announced the schedule of the Dhaka University Central Students' Union (DUCSU) elections yesterday.

Returning officers for DUCSU in each hall will receive nomination papers from 8 am to 12 noon on March 26 in the hall offices.

The nomination papers will be distributed from March 21 to 26 from 10 am to 4 pm from all the Provosts' offices in the halls.

Scrutiny of nomination papers of DUCSU and hall union polls will be held on March 26 at 1 pm. Besides, the withdrawal of nominations will be allowed until noon on March 31.

The voting of DUCSU and hall unions will be held in all the 14 halls on April 12 from 8 in the morning to 2 in the afternoon without any break.

All the voters will have to show their identity cards to the polls authority before casting their votes.

The final voters' list will be published on March 23 at 4 pm and a supplementary list of voters will be announced at 4 pm on April 11. Meanwhile, a draft voters' list will be published on March 2 at 2 in the afternoon.

The authorities have suggested the hall administration to nominate a Returning Officer in every hall for the DUCSU polls, sources said, adding that these Returning Officers will maintain liaison with the Chief Election Commissioner.

Besides, the DU authorities will form an advisory committee for the polls shortly.

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parties, dealing with student affairs, may be given the charges of guiding their respective student bodies for the DUCSU polls.

Chiefs of the two parties Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina—are also expected to address campaign rallies on the DU campus. Senior leaders of the two parties may also join the campaigning.

After its debacles in the mayoral elections in two major cities—Dhaka and Chittagong—the ruling party is now attaching special emphasis on the DUCSU polls. The Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of the BNP, swept the last DUCSU polls in 1990.

To retain its hold on the prestigious DUCSU, the BNP leadership is actively considering strengthening the JCD which was charged by the party leaders with having failed to play its due role in the city corporation polls.

On the contrary, the AL, after landslide victories in the city polls in Dhaka and Chittagong, is going ahead in a planned manner to guide its student wing, the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), for fighting the DUCSU elections, party sources said. The AL is determined to pursue the same policy, as followed in the city polls, in the DUCSU elections in its attempt to help the party's student leaders win the DU polls.

Since the country's independence, no elections to the DUCSU, held from 1972 to 1990, were won by any government-backed student organisation.

The second prize went to the Shandhani Prokashani while the third to Prakritojan.

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caused by anesthesia. Dr Golam Ambia was in charge of anesthesia, he added.

"When the condition of Sujat deteriorated I shifted him to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) at 4:30 pm and there he died after about two hours," Dr Mukhtadir said.

Hasina

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weakness and that was why they did not like to discuss the matter.

If BNP ministers were so honest, why they were afraid of any discussion on the allegation of corruption against them? she questioned.

She referred to the dilly-dallying tactics of the BNP government to impede the working of the parliamentary special probe committee to investigate the allegations of corruption against Agriculture, Water Resources and Irrigation Minister Major General (Ret'd) M Majidul Huq and the ministry concerned.

Sheikh Hasina said that the essence of democracy was that the government would be transparent and accountable to Parliament. But here, the BNP government considers it to be above criticism and is trying to guide the proceedings of the House as per "their sweet will," she observed.

We have accountability to the people to take stock of the activities of the government and an honest government never dares face any discussion on allegations of their misdeeds, she added.

The Midnight File

Karadjic arrives in Moscow

MOSCOW, Feb 28: Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadjic arrives in Moscow today for talks with Russian officials on ways of resolving the conflict in Bosnia. Karadjic, with long-standing ethnic links to the Serbs, has dispatched troops under UN command to Bosnia to help peace efforts. Karadjic is expected to discuss their role with Russian officials as well as NATO involvement in actions there, reports Rostov.

20 killed in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, Feb 28: Twenty people including 10 militants, two of them self-styled commanders, and three women were killed while 14 others including an area commander were arrested in the Kashmir valley overnight. An official spokesman said 10 militants, including a self-styled platoon commander and a company commander of a militant outfit, were killed in encounters with security forces in six of the 14 districts hit by militancy related violence in the state, reports PTI.

Jatiya Party office case

Proceedings to remain postponed till Mar 9

All proceedings of a corruption case against former President Hussain Muhammad Ershad and two others will remain postponed till March 9 to honour the order of the High Court, reports BSS.

Besides Ershad, former minister Mostafa Jamal Haider and former acting Works Secretary M A Rouf have been implicated in the corruption case—the special case No. 50 of 1993. The case relates to misuse of government money for renovation of an abandoned house in Dhaka which was used as the Jatiya Party office.

Sessions Judge and Senior Special Judge Muhammad Abdus Salam is the judge in the Special Judge's court which last month framed charges against the three.

After hearing the prayer of T M Akbar, the defence counsel of

Rouf in which he mentioned the order of the superior court, the judge asked the counsel to produce the stay order of the High Court by March 9.

Lawyers of both Ershad and Haider also submitted separate petitions seeking adjournment of the proceedings and extension of the bail order respectively.

Akbar in his petition to the special judge's court said on an application filed on behalf of Rouf in the High Court demanding transfer of this case to any other special judge's court and to expunge certain observation made by senior special judge M A Salam. The bench comprising Justice M Badruzzaman and Justice Syed J R Mudassir passed an order Sunday staying further proceedings of the said special case till disposal of the matter.

Presentation on GATT held

The Ministry of Commerce yesterday held a presentation on GATT (General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs) at Uruguay Round, outlining its 28 agreements and the economic benefits to be given to the least developed countries including Bangladesh, reports BSS.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, ministers, state ministers, deputy ministers, Cabinet Secretary, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister and the secretaries of the ministries attended the presentation held at the Bangabhaban.

Commerce Minister M Shamsul Islam, Commerce Secretary Mofazzal Karim and Economic Minister of Bangladesh Embassy to Geneva Syed Jamal Uddin spoke.

The Commerce Minister gave a brief resume on GATT and said discussion on GATT started in 1947 with the participation of 23 countries. Now the number rose to 127, he added.

NATO fighters down jets

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men was hurt. The F-16s were based at Aviano Air Base in northern Italy.

"It was not known if the Bosnian Serb pilots bailed out. We did not see any pilots eject," Boorda said. "It does not mean that they did not do it."

Serb officials denied their planes were in the air, but a Serb source confirmed four Serb aircraft were shot down.

UN sources said the Serb planes had attacked a munitions factory in Novi Travnik, a town in central Bosnia held by Bosnia's Muslim-led government. Boorda said NATO had received unconfirmed reports that bombs hit a storage facility and a hospital.

Boorda said the Serb jets were Yugoslav-built Soko G-4 Super Galeb attack aircraft. The single-engine Soko Galeb planes can carry twin-barrel rapid fire cannon and can be equipped to carry bombs.

Boorda said the US jets broadcast a warning for the six Serb planes to land or exit Bosnian air space immediately or be engaged. He said no response was heard and the American pilots then witnessed the Serb planes make what appeared to be bombing runs. The Serb planes did not return fire when the US aircraft attacked, Boorda said.

The incident occurred over Banja Luka, a northwestern city that is a Bosnian Serb stronghold.

In Washington, US President Clinton said "every attempt was made" to avoid shooting down the Bosnian Serb planes.

Clinton said helicopters have violated the NATO "no-fly" zone in the past, but there have been no fixed-wing violations by fighter planes since September.

saying the no-fly zone 'was plainly infringed.'

A Sarajevo report adds: Serbs shelled an airfield at Tuzla in northwestern Bosnia today, and a ceasefire around Sarajevo began to fray amid mounting tension.

UN officials said 16 artillery rounds hit Tuzla airfield, including one that struck the airstrip itself. There were no injuries.

Capt Jan Pederson of the UN Bosnia Command speculated that the attack might have been in retaliation for NATO's downing of four Bosnian Serb warplanes early Monday over central Bosnia.

But the Serb, who oppose UN plans to open the airfield March 7, have shelled the area frequently in recent weeks.

Tuzla is the Muslim-led Bosnian government's largest enclave outside of besieged Sarajevo.

The shelling underscored growing tension in Serb-Muslim confrontation zones, despite a ceasefire around besieged Sarajevo since Feb. 10.

Rohingyas

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meeting at a press briefing at Hilldown Circuit House here on return from Myanmar this afternoon.

An 11-member delegation represented Bangladesh in the talks while an 8-member team, headed by Director General of Immigration Maung Aung, led the Myanmar side. It was the 16th meeting on the Rohingya repatriation, which began on Saturday.

Myanmar also assured that clearance to the remaining 1,15,563 Rohingyas would be provided in phases. Till Sunday, Myanmar has given clearance to 1,35,316 Rohingyas, of whom 53,009 have been repatriated with the latest batch repatriated on Saturday.

Commissioner for Refugees, Relief and Repatriation Golam Murtaza, DIG of Chittagong and officials concerned with the repatriation process were present in the meeting.

Speaker's 'no' to debate

From Page 1 Col 7

parliaments India and Britain to point out that there was no scope for a general debate on the non-specific allegations of corruptions against a member of any bench—be it the treasury or the opposition.

However, referring to the JS Rules of Procedure, Razzak Ali said any member was free to move any motion seeking a discussion on the alleged corruptions of any member of the House. "If the motion is moved as per rules, I am ready to accept the motion," the speaker assured the legislators.

Despite the ruling of the chair, the leader of the Opposition took the floor to demand 'a specific date' for a general debate on corruptions.

Arguing in favour of the demand, Sheikh Hasina said that as both the opposition and the treasury benches had agreed to have a debate, the chair should not hesitate to give the schedule for a discussion.

When Tofael Ahmed (AL) sought the floor to say something on the issue, the speaker told him that there was no parliamentary convention of challenging the speaker's ruling.

Tofael said he had no intention to challenge the ruling, specially relating to the rejection of the adjournment motions on the reported corruptions of the ministers.

About the Speaker's observations on the general debate on 'corruptions', Tofael said, it was the chair's obligation to accept the demand, especially when the 'entire House was in favour of a debate'.

In reply to Tofael, the Speaker maintained that the chair was not bound to give in to the demand, wherever it came from, in violation of the rules and conventions of parliamentary practices across the world.

"If you can show me a single instance of a general debate, on the basis of unsubstantiated allegation of corruptions, taking place anywhere in the world, I am ready to bow to the demand here in this House," the Speaker said.

At this point, Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) Minister

Secretariat bill

From Page 1 Col 8

the Leader of the Opposition, the Minister in charge of parliamentary affairs and the Finance Minister or their nominees as members.

The Commission will decide upon the structure, rules, terms of service of officials and the budget for the secretariat.

The bill was, however, opposed by Abu Lais Mohammad Mobin Chowdhury of Jatiya Party who argued that it was inadequate to fulfil the provisions of the Constitution. His objection was rejected by voice vote.

Rafiqul Islam Mia, also in charge of the Law Ministry in parliament, contended that rules for the secretariat would be framed by the Commission after adoption of the bill. The doubts expressed by the member are baseless, he said.

A similar bill, introduced last year by Awami League's Prof Rafiqul Islam and scrutinised by the House Standing Committee, is already before the House for consideration.

The private member's bill was considered inadequate and hence the government came up with a comprehensive one.

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