

National flag replaced in a planned way: Speaker

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali yesterday described the mysterious replacement of the national flag from Parliament premises as 'unfortunate' and it had been done in a planned way, reports BSS.

After the House passed obituary references immediately as it opened in the afternoon, Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain rising on a point of order referred to a report published in yesterday's newspapers narrating the incident which said that an unidentified person had pulled down the national flag from the South Plaza of the Sangsad Bhaban and hoisted a banner resembling the flag.

The Chief Whip said the entire nation was shocked to read the report, he said the members of Parliament were equally shocked and felt insulted at the incident. He said, "We condemn such an act and demand exemplary punishment for the culprit."

The Speaker said, 15 policemen remain posted around the Sangsad Bhaban for security reason when the Sangsad is not in session. He said, no policemen remain on duty on the South Plaza.

He said the Sangsad Secre-

tarlat had already issued a Press Note describing the incident and a case has been registered with the Tejgaon police station.

Shaikh Razzak Ali requested the Home Minister to deploy more police personnel so that such incidents did not recur in future.

Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury condemned the incident. He said, police do not remain near the national flag after it is hoisted at day break.

Oli holds talks with Prokrichi leaders

By Staff Correspondent

Communications Minister Col (Retd.) Oli Ahmed had a meeting with leaders of the Prokrichi-BCS Central Action Council at his Secretariat office yesterday.

Highly placed sources said that the 40-minute informal meeting discussed the government's administrative reform programmes as well as the on-going campaign by the country's 70 thousand professionals, organised by the Prokrichi.

JMB tender for MC

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evaluation of the tender documents.

The identical charges mainly dealt with 'undue influence' exerted in favour of a single bidder and lack of transparency.

The US Commercial Attache, in a letter to the Executive Director of JMBA dated May 17 this year, put it categorically that "We and the companies are not satisfied that the evaluation was done fairly."

"We remain convinced that undue influence was exerted in favour of the top ranked consortium. We believe some of the evaluators' detailed scores, which they were not required to submit, will show a large discrepancy between the ranking given to this consortium and the next bids, skewing the overall result," the letter stated.

When contacted, a US Embassy spokesman said yesterday "We are continuing to study the situation." But he declined to make any further comments.

Following these complaints, the government had proposed a separate review committee for the bids, but till now this committee has not been authorised to operate. "One committee has already evaluated the bids. So, unless that process ends, there is no point in appointing a new one," a high JMBA official said.

Meanwhile, the evaluation committee of the JMBA has reviewed the complaints of the missions and has made a report refuting the charges. This has been sent to the World Bank. The report had insisted that there had been no discrepancy in weightage of the terms of reference and those used by the evaluators, which one mission alleged.

Executive Director of the JMBA Mohammad Ali, when contacted, told The Daily Star "The final criteria for evaluation was adopted before the bids were received and not

with the United States and despite enjoying a per capita income of over 12,000 dollars, Israel receives 176 dollars in US aid per poor person compared to Bangladesh's 1.7 dollars.

The report was also critical about technical cooperation programmes offered by the donors, saying that they are often poorly planned and monitored and rarely have any clear criteria for assessing the existing technical capacity of recipient countries. Nor do they seem able to forecast when each country is expected to graduate from the need for technical assistance, it said.

"Perhaps most disturbing is that, after 40 years, 90 per cent of the 12 billion dollars a year in technical assistance is still spent on foreign expertise — despite the fact that national experts are now available in many fields."

The report opined that if aid is genuinely to benefit the poor, it will have to become much more participatory and people-oriented.

"When there is an open public debate on aid, allowing people to decide whether their country needs aid and who should benefit, aid is likely to be more effective — and to help overcome disparities rather than reinforce them," the report observes.

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BNP Chairperson Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia presiding over the BNP parliamentary party meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday. —PID photo

Quiz-5 prizes

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Mohammadpur, won the first prizes, one 21-inch Philips Powervision colour TV each.

Industries Minister AM Zahiruddin Khan, who attended the lucky draw as chief guest, distributed prizes among the winners of the Quiz-4 lucky draw held on May 17.

In yesterday's draw, Suif A Islam of 8, Gulfishan, Baily Road and Rabiul Islam, a student of Chittagong, won the second prizes.

Jatindra Nath Ghosh, a business man of MR Road, Magura, won the third prize.

Besides, eight fourth prizes went to Md. Zahidur Rahman of Dhanmondi, Dhaka, Ashek bin Rahman of Azimpur, Khaled Al-Fesani of Fakirpool, Mojahid of Agargaon, Commander M.S. Helal of Banani, Dhaka, Md Selim of Syed Aulad Hossain Lane, Farzin Islam of Mohammadpur and Nasiruddin of Dhanmondi.

Speaking on the occasion, the Industries Minister congratulated The Daily Star for its continued efforts to promote sports in the country.

Sports, being an integral part of the human development programme, is high on the agenda of the present government, he said.

Zahiruddin Khan said The Daily Star has set yet another trend by introducing the quiz competition to popularise sports in the country.

He also lauded the role of the Transcom Electronics and the Media World, the owning company of The Daily Star, for helping the development of sports.

Chairman of the Transcom Electronics AS Mahmud spoke of his company's social responsibilities and said it would continue the efforts for greater national interest.

Budget session begins

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communicated it to the Leader of the House," he said.

Today's meeting was a follow-up during which I informed the Leader of the Opposition what the Prime Minister told me yesterday, he added.

"I am basically carrying messages from both the sides," Razzak Ali told a group of reporters.

The Speaker said, "There are some new points raised by the Leader of the Opposition, which I will communicate to the Prime Minister. He declined to elaborate."

"I think all of us have to reach a consensus," the Speaker said adding "I am happy at the outcome of the meeting."

Meanwhile, the Opposition parties and the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) held separate meetings to review the situation and to work out their respective strategies.

After the meeting of the BNP parliamentary party, Party Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder told reporters, "The Opposition rejected their proposal for dialogue."

Party chief and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia chaired the hour-long meeting.

Salam Talukder said they discussed the initiatives they took so far. "I personally talked to the leaders of all the parties including Awami League, Jamaat, Jatiya Party, Gana Forum, NDP and IOJ. But the Opposition repeatedly complained that there was no effort from the ruling party side," he said.

"Finally, I invited the Opposition leaders to a meeting this morning but none of them turned up," he said.

Talukder further said that since April, the ruling party leaders tried to prepare a

ground for a formal dialogue but all those efforts failed. He said the 1991 election, election to 4,000 pourasavas and 16 by-elections were conducted by their Election Commission, but the Opposition parties raised the demand for caretaker government only after the Magura by-elections.

"We can amend the election rules enacted in 1972 during the Awami League rule to strengthen the Election Commission, so that the present short comings, if any, may be removed," Talukder said.

Under democratic practice, no government conducts any elections. It is an independent election commissions which conducts the election, he said.

"The BNP is ready to do anything to ensure a free and fair election under this Election Commission," Salam Talukder said adding "The BNP will gain more than any other party if the election is free and fair."

Talukder said that the Opposition rejected the Speaker's proposal for a dialogue.

He said the ruling party will have to place the national budget for 1994-95 fiscal in Parliament without Opposition parties if they continue to stick to their demand.

Meanwhile, at a separate press conference, Moudud Ahmed of Jatiya Party termed yesterday's combined Opposition meeting a historic one.

"I think the Opposition parties will accomplish a historic task by getting the caretaker provision in the Constitution," he said.

Moudud said the Election Commission may have powers, but if it does not have the freedom to exercise it, then no election can be fair.

Parliament session resumes at 4-30 pm today.

Taslima Nasreen still at large

By Staff Correspondent

The controversial writer, Taslima Nasreen, is still at large. Police made several fresh raids yesterday in different places, but all attempts ended in failure.

A police source said that both uniform and plain-cloth policemen continued their manhunt for the 32-year-old authoress.

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM), Dhaka, Saturday, issued a non-bailable warrant of arrest against Nasreen following a police case accusing her of 'blasphemous statements' against Islam she had made in an interview with the Calcutta-based daily The Statesman of May 9.

Officer-in-Charge of Motijheel Police Station Mohammad Nurul Alam, filed a case on behalf of the State under Section 295A of the Bangladesh Penal Code accusing her of hurting the religious sentiments of the Muslims.

If found guilty, she faces a maximum two-year imprisonment or fine or both.

Speaker rejects notices on Taslima issue

Four notices of adjournment motion against controversial author Taslima Nasrin, were rejected by Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali yesterday, reports BSS.

Three members belonging to Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh and lone member of Islami Oikya Jote Moulana Obaidul Huq had submitted notices of adjournment motion against Taslima Nasreen for her comments on the holy Quran in an interview with a Calcutta daily 'The Statesman' hurting the sentiments of Muslims.

However, the Speaker said that another notice on the same issue submitted under Rule 68 for short discussion by Moulana Obaidul Huq might be considered.

The Speaker rejected the notices saying that the matter was subjudice as the officer-in-charge of Motijheel Police Station had filed a case against Taslima and the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate had issued warrant of arrest against her.

Bangladeshi shot dead in US

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, June 6: A Bangladeshi cab driver, Patan Mia, 25, was killed by a blackman in New York last Friday, according to a telephone message received here today.

He hails from village Elashpur of Fenchugonj thana in Sylhet.

He had been in USA since 1990.

A blackman boarded his taxi on Friday night. When the victim asked the passenger for fare, the latter suddenly fired at him causing his instantaneous death.

His body will reach Sylhet on Wednesday.

5-member JS Chairmen panel

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali nominated a five-member panel of chairmen to preside over the House in his and Deputy Speaker's absence, reports UNB.

The panel consists of Osman Ghani Khan, Ziaur Rahman Krim, Abdul Awal Miah, Sheikh Ansar Ali and Begum Shamsunnahar Khwaza Ah-sanullah.



Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina addressing an all-opposition press conference at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday. —Star photo

Speaker's efforts to end the impasse

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politicians of all camps.

The Speaker, while talking to this correspondent yesterday evening on the present crisis, however, expressed his optimism saying "I am sure, good sense will prevail on both the sides and the nation would come out of the present undesirable situation."

The political crisis has been created due to the Opposition demand that the ruling party move a bill seeking constitutional provision for holding general elections under a caretaker administration and the ruling party's refusal to accept the demand. The Opposition is boycotting Parliament session to realise its demand.

Razzak Ali said that both the sides had to give concessions to each other. Declining to disclose anything about the proposals he made during the meetings with the chiefs of the ruling party and the AL, the Speaker only said a dialogue is a must to resolve the present problem as well as to continue parliamentary democracy.

Sources close to the Speaker and the leaders concerned told this correspondent that the Speaker during his discussion with the Prime Minister Sunday night, said that side by side with a dialogue with the Leader of the Opposition, Begum Zia should implement the rest of the

four-point accord signed with the AL-led Opposition last year.

The accord included the points — the microphone of the Opposition chief will remain operative whenever she stands to address the House, withdrawal of the charges against 24 professionals involved in the Nirumol Committee public trial and ensuring that the Opposition parties can hold public meetings in a peaceful atmosphere.

The Speaker also suggested that the government should not take any move to renew the controversial Anti-terrorism act after its expiry this year.

Sources close to the Prime Minister informed The Daily Star that she had approved of the Speaker's suggestions almost entirely. Another source in the ruling party, however, told this correspondent that two of the four points had been implemented long ago. On the question of the trial of Golam Azam, the source said that the matter was still subjudice because a case regarding his citizenship was awaiting the verdict of the Supreme Court.

The Prime Minister also authorised the Speaker to communicate to the Leader of the Opposition that she (Begum Zia) was willing to sit with Hasina to discuss ways of ensuring free and fair elec-

tions.

The Prime Minister also agreed to discuss the issue of caretaker government as one of the important options for holding a free and fair general elections, sources added.

Meanwhile, the Speaker, during a 55-minute meeting with the Leader of the Opposition yesterday, communicated the Prime Minister's views to Sheikh Hasina. Shaikh Razzak Ali is learnt to have told her that the Opposition demand for a caretaker government had stemmed especially from the controversial by-election in Magura.

What the nation now needs is to find out a polling system which would in no way allow irregularities and in that case all the parties together could scrutinise the options, including the caretaker government issue, to achieve the objective, the Speaker told the Leader of the Opposition.

Sheikh Hasina, in response to the Speaker's proposal for a dialogue, said that she would communicate her views after consulting the leaders of the opposition groups, who were waiting outside her office.

At a meeting of the opposition leaders later, Jatiya Party (JP) representatives strongly opposed the idea of a dialogue and the Jamaat leaders also echoed the JP view, meeting sources said.

The Midnight File

Benazir's govt won't last beyond December: Murtaza

KARACHI, June 6: Murtaza Bhutto, the younger brother of Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, predicted today that his sister's eight-month old government would not last beyond December. He bitterly attacked Benazir's policies and what he called the 'corruption' of her husband Asif Ali Zardari during a new conference a day after his release on bail by a court after seven months in jail, reports AFP.

Arab League chief hails Sanaa's ceasefire

CAIRO, June 6: Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdel Meguid today welcomed Sanaa's acceptance of a ceasefire in its war with southern forces, saying it was a 'first step' toward halting the bloodshed in Yemen. "This decision is an important measure and a positive response from the Yemeni leadership to efforts underway to maintain security and stability in Yemen," he told AFP.

FM seeks Indian gesture to solve water crisis

Foreign Minister ASM

Mostafizur Rahman yesterday said he had talks with Indian State Minister for External Affairs RL Bhatia on the Farakka problem, reports UNB.

Mostafiz, who led a five-member Bangladesh delegation to the NAM conference in Cairo, took the opportunity of a fringe meeting with Bhatia in the Egyptian capital.

He said he tried to impress upon Bhatia about the adverse effects of Farakka on the social and economic life of Bangladesh.

The Foreign Minister who returned home yesterday morning, told newsmen at Zia International Airport that he had sought Indian gesture in solving the outstanding bilateral problems as quickly as possible.

Mostafiz said he had made it clear to Bhatia that Bangladesh wants to solve the Farakka issue through dialogue.

Other members of the delegation to NAM were Bangladesh permanent representative to the UN Reaz Rahman, Bangladesh Ambassador to Egypt Tofail Karim Halder, Director General Syed Muazzem Ali and Director A M Yakub Ali at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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said: "Bangladesh stands for social and economic development, particularly poverty alleviation, for which we need peace and stability in the region."

He said countries in the region should use their resources for the economic development, not for production arms. "Bangladesh which has signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty is against any military build up and arms race," he added.

Youngman stabbed to death in city

By DMCH Correspondent

A youngman, Khokan, was stabbed to death in the city's Kalyanpur area last night reportedly for having rejected a local bully's proposal to marry his niece.

Share market

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day's poor show. Observers have identified a number of reasons for the market slump. They said the banks are maintaining a tight position causing a shortage of funds in the market.

The budget apprehension and the current political crisis have also affected the market they pointed out.

The share market situation in the South Asia region has also had its fall out effects in Bangladesh. "Intiyaz Husain, vice-chairman of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) told The Daily Star last night, "Political turmoil has affected the Karachi market while the Indian and Sri Lankan markets were dented because of the brokers reacting to the restrictions on forward trading."

The foreign investors usually have their exposure in the SAARC region and want to invest in Bangladesh, Husain pointed out, adding the regional situation has thus shied away the foreign investors from Bangladesh.

"However, I hope our market will soon start gaining weight, probably from this month," Husain said, "Our market is still under -weight."

Meanwhile, brokers feel that a quick resolution of the political crisis and a private sector budget would help perk the market up once again.

LUCKY WINNERS of The Daily Star WORLD CUP QUIZ

Following are the lucky winners of The Daily Star World Cup Quiz No. 5, the draw for which was held at the Jatiya Press Club auditorium yesterday:

| First Prize (Two) | Fourth Prize (Eight) |
|--|--|
| 1. Fatihul Quadir Samrat (25) 114/2, Naya Tola, Magh Bazar Dhaka | 1. Md. Zahidur Rahman (28) House 59, Road 3/A Dhanmondi, Dhaka |
| 2. Firuz-Al-Mamun (Titu) (24) U/46 (Gr. Floor) Noorjahan Road Mohammadpur, Dhaka | 2. Ashek Bin Rahman (22) 55/C Azimpur Colony Dhaka-3 |
| | 3. Khaled Al Fesani (Sunny) (14) 79/1 Fakirpool Dhaka |
| | 4. Mojahid G-98, Shere Bangla Nagar, Agargaon Dhaka |
| | 5. Commander M S Helal BN (42) NHQ Complex Banani Dhaka |
| | 6. Md. Salim (40) 34, Sayed Awlad Hossain Lane Dhaka |
| | 7. Farzin Islam (10) 6/18 Babur Road, Mohammadpur Dhaka |
| | 8. Nasiruddin (20) House no 50 R/o no 11 Dhanmondi Dhaka |

The prizes will be handed over to the winners during the lucky draw for Quiz No. 6, to be held at the Jatiya Press Club later this month.

The winners of Quiz No. 5, named above, are requested to contact The Daily Star office to claim their prizes.

(See the correct answers to Quiz No. 5 on Page 11)