

Treasury bench members tell JS

Opposition betraying cause of people

Treasury bench members yesterday accused the opposition political parties of betraying the cause of the people by tendering en masse resignation from the Jatiya Sangsad, reports BSS.

"They have voted them to Parliament to speak for them and point out their grievances but the opposition members have denied their rights by resigning," they said.

Initiated by the State Minister for Finance, Mujibur Rahman and four other members took part in the general discussion on the presidential address to parliament on January 23. With them the total number of participants in the discussion rose to 19.

Yesterday's other participants were Forest and Environment Minister, Col. (ret'd) Akbar Hossain, Ansar Ali Siddiqui, Principal Abdur Rashid Khan and Khondkar Badrudin.

Akbar Hossain said the Opposition, particularly the Awami League, would be held responsible if democracy was affected in the country.

The minister said despite the acceptance of the opposition demand for election under a neutral government they (opposition members) tendered their resignation.

He said Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia had accepted

the demand that she would step down from power 30 days ahead of general elections but even then the Opposition resigned.

Hossain said democracy would never be safe in the hands of the Awami League which had killed it in four minutes in 1975 and introduced the one-party (BAKSAL) rule.

"Mujibur Rahman said that the current foreign exchange reserve of the country stood at US dollar 3.11 billion equivalent to Taka 13,000 crore and the government was in a position to pay the entire import bill for one year from the present reserve."

He said the fiscal programme of the government had created enthusiasm in the economic field of the country which resulted in the increase of stock exchange transactions in 1994 to the tune of Taka 3002 crore.

He said the people had rejected the Opposition in the 1991 parliamentary elections for their past politics of destruction, lawlessness and anarchy. Now seeing no hope they are again resorting to disrupt the development process by calling frequent hartals, gheraos and strikes, he added.

Deputy Speaker, Humayun Khan Pannil, adjourned House at 1.30 pm till 11 am today.

BGMEA mid-term polls tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

Elections to pick one-third of the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters' Association's (BGMEA) 27-member executive committee will be held tomorrow at its headquarters at Kawranbazar.

Under the newly promulgated Trade Organisation Ordinance, 94, all trade bodies, having a full-fledged executive committee (EC) for two or three-year terms, have to organise mid-term elections for one-third of the posts, to be vacated through resignation of the members. Resignation of the one-third EC members, under the law, has to be decided through lottery.

In tomorrow's elections, about 900 voters of the BGMEA would elect nine members for a 27-member executive committee, formed in 1993. Of the nine seats to be filled, seven are from the Dhaka quota and two from the Chittagong quota.

Two panels are contesting the poll — one led by incumbent president Redwan Ahmed, MP, and the other, by Noor-e-Alam Siddiqi, Managing Director of Doreen Apparels Limited.

Contestants for the elections from the Sammitto Nirbachani Parishad of Redwan Ahmed are Abul Quasem Haider, Abdus Salam Morshedi, Md A Moin, Col (Ret'd) M Anwarul Azim, Md Atiqul Islam, Alhaj Md Bazur Rahman, Md Shahidur Huq, Md Hanif Chowdhury and Shahabuddin Ahmed Chowdhury. Noor-e-Alam Siddiqi, Anisul Huq, ASM Qusheem, Anisur Rahman Sinha, Lutfi M Ayub, Yahya Khan, Md Wazir Afzal, Hafiz Ahmed Majumder and Shahi Alam are contesting from the other panel.

Voting will be held from 9 am to 5 pm.

PM honoured

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President of IAAE Nikolai N Khaladjansent and his secretary Elioidea P. Mishetseva, in their letter highly appreciated Begum Zia's determination to improve the educational, social, cultural fabrics of Bangladesh and achieve the goal of universal access to education.

"We admire your active support for all educational organisations to implement innovative programmes to eliminate adult illiteracy in your country," they said.

US President Bill Clinton has also been conferred with this honorary degree and academic gown by the IAAE, where hundreds of authoritative Russian scientists, scholars and academicians are engaged in various professional activities.

IOM chief in city

James N Purcell Jr, Director General of the International Organisation of Migration (IOM), arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a three-day official visit, reports BSS.

"We have excellent cooperation in some projects in Bangladesh and we will explore further cooperation," he told newsmen at the Zia International Airport on arrival.

Dr. Shah Mohammad Farid, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Manpower, received him at the airport.

The IOM extended valuable assistance to Bangladesh in the aftermath of the Gulf crisis when a large number of Bangladeshis were stranded in Kuwait and Iraq.

The IOM organised the repatriation of the stranded Bangladeshis from the Gulf. It is devoted to creation of congenial condition for the migrant workers on global basis.

Bangladesh is an active member of the organisation, Purcell said. The IOM has 55 members and many others as observers.

AL condemns killing of workers

The Bangladesh Awami League has condemned the "ruthless" killing of workers during their peaceful observance of the barricade programme, reports UNB.

"When, in the holy month of Ramadan, the workers are engaged peacefully in their constitutional struggle, the present government, claiming to be democratic, is perpetrating ruthless killings, arrest and repression on workers," said a statement issued yesterday by acting president of the party Abdul Mannan and general secretary Zillur Rahman.

The AL leaders urged the government to shun the path of repression and to settle the dispute by meeting their 'just demands'.

The leaders also asked the government to pay proper compensation to the families of the victims, provide treatment for the injured and release the arrested workers.



Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury (R) visited the Pangu Hospital yesterday to see The Daily Star photographer, Imran Hossain who was injured grievously in police action earlier on the day in the city. Editor of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam (L) is also seen. —Star photo

Photographers injured

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Prime Minister at her Hare Road official residence, complained to Begum Zia about this latest incident of police excess against journalists. Visibly perturbed by the incident, the PM asked the Home Minister, who was present, to take immediate action against those involved in this totally unwarranted, senseless act.

Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury then went to the hospital later in the evening to visit Emran. Health Minister Kamal ibne Yusuf, when informed about the matter, advised senior doctors at the hospital to ensure proper treatment of the injured pressman.

At the time of filing this report late last night Emran's condition was still serious.

One wild swing at Emran's head missed its target but fractured two of his bones, the sixth and seventh cervical vertebrae. Emran immediately fell unconscious.

Regaining consciousness at the DMCH later in the afternoon, Emran told this correspondent that while he was being beaten up, he had recognised one of the police inspectors standing nearby whom he desperately implored for help. But unfortunately, the said officer, who knew Emran well, simply did not respond and instead faded from the scene, leaving the youngman totally at the mercy of his high-handed subordinates.

Rescued by other photographers, Emran was first taken to the nearby Royal Clinic and later shifted to the DMCH.

Doctors at the DMCH suggested he be immediately shifted to the orthopaedic hospital where the doctors feared for his life.

Due to the impact of blows below his left ear, the fractured bones have put pressure on his spinal cord. As a result, the right side of his body has already begun to show signs of immobility.

In the evening, journalists, at an after party hosted by the

pedestrians alike.

Later, they lobbied more than 15 teargas shells to bring the situation under control.

Witnesses said, the processionists tried to provoke the police by taunting them and throwing stones at them and passing vehicles. But the police failed to take prompt enough action to disperse the mob although they were well equipped with anti-riot equipment.

said AK Fazul Haque, an engineer, who was passing through the area in his car at the time.

A few moments later a group of ICS activists came out with sticks and started damaging the windshields of cars which got stuck there and in the adjoining areas.

A number of passengers, including some women, were also injured, witnesses added.

Radar purchase case Hearing against Ershad deferred

The hearing of charge in a corruption case against deposed President Hussain Muhammad Ershad and four others, including two former air chiefs, was adjourned yesterday, reports BSS.

District and Sessions Judge and senior Special Judge M Abdus Salam fixed March 15 for the next hearing.

The hearing was adjourned due to indisposition of the prosecutor.

Air Vice-Marshal (ret'd) Sultan Mahmud and Air Vice-Marshal (ret'd) Montazuddin Ahmed, Shahzad Ali and AKM Musa, both directors of United Traders, Dhaka are the other co-accused.

UN advances date for transfer of power in Kabul

ISLAMABAD, Feb 14: The UN special mission to Afghanistan today decided to advance the date for transfer of power in Kabul amidst a seemingly inexorable advance by the new Taliban militant army, reports AFP.

A statement issued here said the mission led by Mahmud Mesturi will go to Kabul by February 18 for a 'peaceful transfer of power.'

Osmany's death anniversary tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

The 11th anniversary of death of the Commander-in-Chief of the Liberation War Bangabir General MAG Osmany will be observed tomorrow.

Different socio-cultural and political organisations have taken up elaborate programmes to mark the occasion.

The Sylhet Division Movement and Development Council will hold a discussion on "Liberation War and Role of Osmany in Democracy" today at 3 pm at the auditorium of the Jatiya Press Club. The discussion will be followed by a *do-mahfil* and *liter* party.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman will attend the programme as the chief guest.

UNu dead

YANGON, Feb 14: The first prime minister of independent Myanmar U Nu, died here today at the age of 88, a family source said, reports AFP.

U Nu, a former school master and writer, died quietly at his home in West Yangon this afternoon, the source said.

No details were given. A founder and leader of the Non-Aligned Movement from 1955, U Nu served three terms as premier from independence in January 1948 until he was overthrown in a military coup in 1962.

Undaunted by periods of jail and exile, he returned to politics during the 1988 pro-democracy demonstrations, declaring himself still the legitimate prime minister and forming a parallel government.

The ruling junta, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), placed him under house arrest on December 29, 1989, where he remained until April 1992.

Land acquisition for anti-flood projects okayed

The central land allotment committee at its 40th meeting held with Land Minister Kabir Hossain in the chair yesterday approved proposals for acquisition of land for various development projects and programme for keeping the Dhaka city free from floods, reports BSS.

The projects for which proposals for acquisition of land have been approved are: Digging of four branch canals in Kalyanpur, Badda-Shahjapur canal digging and development project, Katashur canal digging and development project, Ramehandrapur canal digging and development project under Dhaka Wasa, construction of embankment from Lalbagh Kella to Islambagh under the Water Development Board, Tongi-Ashulia-Jirabop-EPZ road under the Roads and Highways Department, construction of flood control embankment under Bhairab-Kashmpur sub-project, land development of low-lying areas adjacent to the Sonargaon Hotel, Malibagh-Rampura connecting road project under Rajuk and construction of a cricket stadium under the Jatiya Krira Parishad.

The meeting also approved proposal for acquisition of some land for expansion of the Wills Little Flower School.

Corruption case against former Rajuk member

The Bureau of Anti-Corruption yesterday filed a case with Motijheel thana against Major (ret'd) AFM Kamrul Hasan, a former Member (Land and Estate), Rajuk and two government employees, reports BSS.

According to a press release, Major Hasan by abusing his official position and in connivance with Abul Hashem and MA Kais Sarwar, accountant and accounts officer of the Ministry of Lands and Works respectively, cheated one Golam Mowla Chowdhury of Tk 6 lakh by preparing false papers.

The matter came to light after Major Hasan was suspended and the accused failed to realise the rest of the money.

12 hurt in N'ganj

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Feb 14: At least 12 people were injured in a clash between two rival groups of youths at Talla in the town today.

Of the injured, Wasim, 20, and Apu, 8, were admitted to the Narayanganj Hospital, while Roni, 20, and Tipu, 12 were rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Witnesses said, a group of youths of Nagarkhanpur attacked their rivals in Khanpur in front of the Bibi Mariam Girls' School for feasting the girl students.

The warring groups opened fire, exploded cocktails and used lethal weapons during the clash which lasted about half an hour.

The Midnight File

Grand Canyon tour plane crash kills 8

TUSAYAN, Arizona, Feb 14: A plane flying tourists over the Grand Canyon lost an engine, crashed and burned while trying to return to an airport, killing eight of the 10 people aboard. Killed in the crash Monday were seven passengers, all Taiwanese nationals, and the pilot, a Nevada man. Two other passengers, both women from Taiwan, were critically injured, said Maureen Oltrogge, a spokeswoman for Grand Canyon National Park, reports AP.

Benazir renews offer to India for talks on Kashmir

ISLAMABAD, Feb 14: Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto renewed an offer to India for meaningful talks on resolving the bilateral Kashmir dispute, in a statement published here today. The eight non-papers, informal proposals exchanged between the two countries in the past, could form the basis for a resumption of dialogue, Bhutto told local journalists Monday, reports AFP.

Chechnya: Estonia for early recognition

TALLINN, Feb 14: The Estonian parliament, in an open challenge to Moscow, voted overwhelmingly on Monday in favour of recognising the breakthrough Russian province of Chechnya as soon as possible, reports Reuter.

A resolution, apparently backed by the government, called for recognition of Chechnya at the first available opportunity as soon as the international situation makes it possible.

The Kremlin, which ruled Estonia for more than two centuries, had already protested about the debate in the Baltic nation's parliament, local news media in Tallinn reported.

The Russian Foreign Ministry, complaining to Estonia's ambassador in Moscow on Friday, described it as "an apparent interference in the internal affairs of the Russian federation."

US to finance

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for phased elimination of child labour from the country's garment sector.

Meeting sources said the US delegation observed that the current education programmes are scattered and need to be made comprehensive and better coordinated.

The mission assured adequate financial support from the US government for a comprehensive and coordinated programme for the education of child labour.

Some 10,000 garment workers aged between 12 and 14 have been identified for in-service education programmes.

Five schools, where under age garment workers will receive two-hour education after six hours of work for five consecutive years, will soon start, under an ILO programme — the International Programme for Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).

At least 25 to 30 schools will be required for bringing all the 10,000 workers in the education programme, according to an NGO which will run the schools under the IPEC programme.

The use of under-age workers in the garment factories became a matter of concern in 1992 when a US lawmaker mooted a Bill in the Congress seeking import ban on sectors using child labour.

The Bill likely to be revived soon, after remaining in the shelf for two years, particularly targeted Bangladesh's garment sector. The two billion dollar local garment sector heavily relies on the US market.

Digital Phone

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"Presently, we need a 'C' to increase our service trunk and some 30 to 35 circuits to avoid jams in telephone lines," said Javed Rabbani.

"However, we are trying to create a balance among the two CPs through correction of software, as recommended by NEC of Japan which provided our digital system," he added.

Other sources in the T and T Board informed The Daily Star that the Maghbazar exchange has some 9500 digital lines, which is much more than the system can accommodate and is therefore overloaded.

No new digital lines are being installed in the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar and Uttara exchanges for the last six months. Persons applying for a digital line are being given analogue connections as a compensatory measure, the sources added.

There are only 10,000 digital connections under the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar exchange, 10,000 under Gulshan, 4,000 under Mirpur, 4,000 under Uttara and the remaining 19,000 for Maghbazar and Nikhet. Yet more than a lakh applications for new phone lines are pending with the T and T Board.

The government plans to install 1.30 lakh new digital lines in the next few years of which, 40,000 lines would replace the whole analogue under the Ramna exchange, the sources added.

Rubber assoc

From Page 1 Col 4 and a rubber board set up. However, no further meeting of the cell was held till date and no progress has been achieved in this regard.

He held a particular deputy secretary in the Ministry of Environment and Forest responsible for the non-implementation of the decision regarding a rubber board, and added that due to the absence of such a board private rubber planters have to rush from one office to another and from one official to the other for a decision.

The association also urged the government to provide the private rubber plantation owners with low-interest loans, incentive bonuses and to extend the loan repayment time because their gardens were badly damaged during the catastrophic storms of 1991 and 1994.

Malik also said that despite a decision for sending 50 rubber garden owners of the country to Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and India for training so far nothing has been done.

The association's advisor Abul Fazl Chowdhury vice president Khandaker Azizul Haq Kazi Shahadat Hussain, Kazi Ruhul Amin, secretary Mahbubur Rahman Chowdhury and joint secretary Anwar Hussain were also present at the press conference.

Third day of barricade

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Dhaka for Chittagong via Mymensingh, by passing the Ghorashal station which became a trouble spot, particularly for train communication during the agitation.

Road communication between Dhaka and other parts of the country was also disrupted due to the barricade programme. A few inter-city buses, however, departed from the city's Gabtall terminal.

The workers' leaders alleged that police along with BNP activists, set fire to the workers' colony of Golunda Textile Mills Monday midnight.

The workers have called an 8-hour hartal in the industrial belt of Khulna today to protest "the killing of labourers and police atrocities on them" during their strike and barricade programme.

The hartal was announced at a rally of workers held at Khalishpur yesterday with Sarder Motahar Uddin in the chair.

Meanwhile, in a joint statement, the labour leaders rejected the government press note issued on Monday's clashes, saying "it was aimed at confusing the people."

They said, they had tried to resolve the crisis through dialogue, but "the government avoided this path and resorted to repression to suppress the movement."

Moreover, the government was reluctant to implement the accords, signed four times with the workers, they claimed.

Exemptions from VAT

From Page 1 Col 3

Bangladesh Bank Training Academy, the seminar was attended by executive directors and general managers of the Bangladesh Bank and senior officials of different nationalised and private commercial banks.

Bangladesh Bank Deputy Governor Mahbubur Rahman Khan presided over the seminar, held in the central bank's conference room.

Gunmen kills 17 in Karachi

KARACHI, Pakistan, Feb 14: Gunmen have killed 17 people, including a policeman and four activists of the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP), in the southern port city of Karachi in the past 24 hours, police said today, reports Reuter.

They said the bullet-riddled bodies of the policeman and the four PPP activists had been found dumped in an abandoned car in the city's district west early today.

No group claimed responsibility, but police and residents linked the killings with a local feud between PPP workers and the ethnic Mohajir National Movement (MQM) in which 12 people have been killed in the past few months.

The Sindh provincial government, controlled by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's PPP, has been holding inconclusive talks with the militant MQM which has wide support among Karachi's Urdu-speaking majority.

Organised by the

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