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Mismanagement in hospitals Probe ordered, punitive measures to follow'

By Staff Correspondent

Health and Family Welfare Minister Salahuddin Yusuf told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday that he had ordered investigation into all acts of mismanagement and irregularities in the government hospitals and health complexes.

"Punitive measures would be taken soon against all the persons responsible," the minister said adding he himself found such mismanagement during his surprise visits at different health centres.

Replying to a call attention notice by Awami League lawmaker Mirza Azam, the health minister also admitted the fact that in many cases the government physicians remained absent from their workplaces for a whole month and attended their offices only to draw salaries.

Salahuddin Yusuf said the civil surgeons had been asked to prepare reports of attendance of the government doctors at their respective areas on a monthly basis. "We've also ordered the civil surgeons to pay surprise visits to the hospitals and other health centres," he added.

Referring to the shortage of doctors hampering health services at the thana and district level hospitals, the minister told the House, "The government has decided to appoint

1500 doctors at the vacant posts and to create 3,000 new posts to mitigate the sufferings of the people. Steps would be taken soon to implement the decisions."

Earlier, Mirza Azam in his notice mentioned shortage of physicians at the Sadar hospital and the health centres at Madarganj and Melandhanas of Jamalpur district. He also alleged that only one doctor was found regularly available at the Madarganj Hospital while others attended the hospital once in two or three months.

The largest hospital in the district did not have a surgeon and necessary medicines for the serious patients, he alleged and added that lodging complaints about the irregularities with the civil surgeon failed to yield any results.

The AL legislator also charged the storekeeper of Madarganj Hospital for misappropriating valuables of the hospital and the civil surgeon of his area sheltering the persons responsible for all such acts of malpractices.

In replay, the health minister requested the MP to lodge specific complaints with him so that the matter could be investigated.

President's address

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nation in 1971," Akbar said. "If the question of giving credit for leading the War of Independence arises, it is Tajuddin Ahmed or General Osmani who deserves it — nobody else," he added.

Referring to Suranji's 'urge for democracy' the BNP leader posed a question: Does the Awami League really believe in democracy? "If it is so, the party must appreciate the steps taken earlier to free democracy from the clutch of one party rule," he said adding, "No country in the world ever freed democracy from one party dictatorship without blood shed."

Referring to the Ganges water sharing agreement, Akbar said, "Let water come first, then we will discuss about it."

He, however, said that it was surprising why the Indian authorities signed the agreement with the Awami League government. They had refused to do it with the BNP government, even with the government of Ershad, he said.

"We want to know, what the agreement will cost the people," Akbar said.

Referring to the proposed sub-regional grouping, the BNP leader said: "We are very much for a sub-regional grouping, but let the people of Assam, Mizoram, Nagaland and other north eastern states of India who are separately fighting for independence, be successful

200 bags of urea seized in Habiganj

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Jan 21: Habiganj police seized 200 bags of urea fertilizer while being smuggled to India yesterday evening.

According to police, the fertilizer was allotted to a dealer of Moulvibazar district.

Acting on a tip off, a contingent of police from Habiganj sadar thana seized the truck carrying the fertilizer at Shaistaganj Puranbazar.

The truck driver was arrested. A case has been filed.

Robin Raphel

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meet of US ambassadors had been described by the official as "a routine procedure." The meeting venues are rotated among countries where there is "ambassadorial level presence," he said.

The visiting US Assistant Secretary of State will hold bilateral meetings with senior officials of the Foreign Ministry and political leaders on January 27 and 28 "to update herself of the political situation."

Diplomatic sources said Raphel will call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Commerce Minister Tofael Ahmed and Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Lt Gen (retd) Nooruddin Khan during her current tour. She will also meet BNP chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia and some other opposition leaders.

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Serious traffic jam on airport road

By Staff Correspondent

Thick mud fallen from dumper trucks on the Airport Road near Joarshahara created a serious traffic jam throughout the day yesterday causing suffering to the people.

Hundreds of vehicles had to wait for hours to cross the one kilometre section of the road from Joarshahara to Kurlil as thick clay became very slippery due to light rain early in the morning.

An official of Zia International Airport said, Biman's morning flight to Saidpur was delayed by an hour as most of the passengers, officials and employees could not reach the airport in time due to heavy traffic jam on the road since the morning.

Hundreds of dumper trucks are leaving huge mud on this very important road everyday hampering smooth traffic, said an official of the Roads and Highways Department who was supervising the works for clearing mud from the road.

Departure of three international flights were delayed at Zia International Airport yesterday.

The flight of Saudia to Jeddah was delayed by nearly two hours, the Indian Airlines flight by about five and a half hours and the Biman flight by nearly three hours.

Order to arrest Phoolan Devi

By DMC Correspondent

NEW DELHI, Jan 21: A court today ordered the arrest of India's Bandit Queen, who is now a lawmaker, reports AP.

Phoolan Devi, 36, is accused of massacring 20 upper-caste men in 1981 in the village of Behmai in northern Uttar Pradesh state, where she had earlier been held prisoner and repeatedly raped.

On Tuesday, her arrest warrants were issued by Judge SK Srivastava in Kanpur city in Uttar Pradesh state.

Woman murdered at city slum

By DMC Correspondent

A woman was killed allegedly by her daughter-in-law at a slum at Tejgaon in the city yesterday afternoon.

Fulechha Begum, 55, sustained fatal injuries in her head when Tahera Banu, 38, reportedly hit her with a brick during a quarrel at 3 pm. Fulechha was immediately taken to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared her dead, police and hospital sources said.

Tejgaon police arrested Tahera and her husband, Fazal Miah.

JS tidbits

From Page 1

Like any other day, ruling party MP Haji Mohammad Selim yesterday uttered "Bismillah Rahmatul Raheem" before his deliberations in the House making the Opposition BNP legislators giggle.

Two Belgians currently ranked amongst the Top 100 in the world, Nationally, Appelmans and Dominique van Roost, have reached the quarterfinal round of a Grand Slam for the first time in the Open. It is the first time two Belgians have advanced to the quarterfinal round of a Grand Slam. It is the second time for a Belgian to advance to the quarterfinal round of a Grand Slam. Michelle Gurdal advanced to the quarters in 1979. She lost to Sharon Walsh 6-0, 6-3.

There are five Belgians currently ranked amongst the Top 100 in the world. Nationally, Appelmans and Van Roost are number one and two respectively, followed by Laurence Courtous (No 43), Els Callens (No 47) and Stephanie De Ville (No 75). Overall there are 12 Belgians with rankings on the WTA TOUR.

BELGIAN BLISS

By DMC Correspondent

A woman was killed allegedly by her daughter-in-law at a slum at Tejgaon in the city yesterday afternoon.

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JS tidbits

From Page 1

In his speech, Col. (Retd) Akbar Hossaini Sengupta who preceded him calling him (Suranjit) "the great leader of the Bangalee nation".

In his speech, Col. (Retd) Akbar also ridiculed AL lawmaker Suranjit Sengupta who preceded him calling him (Suranjit) "the great leader of the Bangalee nation".

Earlier Suranjit, who was the opening speaker on the President's address, advised BNP lawmakers to follow former finance minister Saifur Rahman and "abandon those pursuing the politics of Pakistan."

Suranjit highly praised BNP leader Saifur for his "outspokenness and admitting the facts."

WHERE ARE THEY FROM?

By DMC Correspondent

Of the previous 70 winners at this tournament, the host country has earned the highest number of titles with 43 total. The United States is next with 14 followed by Germany with four and Great Britain and Yugoslavia with three each.

The totals for all nationalities include:

Australia 43
United States 14
Germany 4
Great Britain 3
Yugoslavia 3
Czechoslovakia 2
France 1

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The Daily Star

Indemnity Ordinance

Two-third majority needed to repeal it, court told

By SC Correspondent

The Indemnity (Repeal) Act, 1996 has to be struck down as it is unconstitutional and ultra vires of the Constitution, observed Khandker Mahabubuddin Ahmed, *amicus curiae* appointed by the High Court Division in hearing on the writ petitions filed challenging the Act.

Among six *amicus curiae*, Khandker Mahabubuddin Ahmed alone observed that the Indemnity Ordinance being a part of the Constitution can only be amended by a two-third majority in the Parliament.

The other *amicus curiae* are Barrister Syed Ishaq Ahmed, Barrister Md. Hossain, Barrister Rafiqul Huq, Senior Advocate M. Nurul Islam and Barrister Amirul Islam.

Barrister Qurban Ali, counsel for the petitioners, Col (rttd) Shahriar Rashid Khan and Mahmuda Rahaman, mother of Col (rttd) Faruk Rahaman, today will make reply to the arguments of Attorney General Barrister K S Nabi and those of the *amicus curiae* and by the leave of the court, the Attorney General may also submit his reply.

In the normal course of law-making under Article 93(1) of the Constitution, a president could not enact an ordinance like the Indemnity Ordinance, 1975 because it would be violative of the basic constitutional provisions guaranteeing the rights and rule of law," said Khandker Mahabubuddin Ahmed.

"But the situation at the relevant time was in no way 'normal,' lawful president of the country had been brutally killed by a mutinous section of the army of the country, martial law was promulgated, tanks and guns were surrounding the president's house and Khandker Mahabubuddin Ahmed, 'the self-proclaimed president of the country,' he opined.

He finally observed, "Until paragraph 3A and 18 of the Fourth Schedule remain in the Constitution, the Indemnity Ordinance, 1975 (being a law ratified and confirmed by the parliament) cannot be repealed in the ordinary process of law-making."

He added, "In a situation like this the *de facto* president purported to act in pursuance of the

law-making power of the president."

He further observed, "The order on the bail petition of Zobaida Rashid, wife of Col (rttd) Abdur Rashid Khan, in the arms case may be passed today by the High Court Division.

The Division Bench of the HC comprising Justice Mahmudul Amin Choudhury and Justice Mohammad Joinal Abedin after hearing of the petition yesterday fixed today for the order.

Zobaida Rashid was arrested from her house in Gulshan in allegation of keeping unauthorised arms.

Subsequently she was also implicated in the 15th August 75 killings.

Advocate Mahbubur Rahman assisted by Farah Mahbub moved for the petitioner, while Deputy Attorney General Mansurul Haq Chowdhury on behalf of the state opposed the bail petition.

ALPP meets today

The Awami League Parliamentary Party (ALPP) will hold a meeting at Sangsab Bhaban at 3 pm today, reports UNB.

5 sub-committees

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gathering, evaluation and monitoring of the existing health care services (convened by state minister for health Prof M Amanullah); Sub-committee for formulating necessary policies for ensuring main (essential) health services (convened by National Prof Nurul Islam); Sub-committee for formulating policies for improving hospital based health services (convened by State Minister for Health Prof M Amanullah); Sub-committee for innovating techniques for human resource development, management and implementation (convened by UNICEF Consultant Manjur-ul-Karim); and Sub-committee for involving NGOs and private sector and expenditure and financing (Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury).

The meeting laid emphasis on coordinating the private and public health services both in rural and urban areas and ensuring the treatment of complicated diseases inside the country.

The meeting also discussed the policies regarding private clinics and medical education in the private sector.

Use Parliament for Consensus

From Page 1

the open, then we might be able to achieve what on the surface appears to be, at least for now, impossible. **And that platform is the parliament.**

We suggest that if she really means business then Sheikh Hasina should immediately propose an open debate in the parliament on achieving national political consensus on economic issues. Let the Prime Minister enunciate a four or five point economic programme and announce it to the nation.

Then let her invite the opposition to say what they would like to see included in that policy which will make them join a consensus on those specific areas.

For the sake of argument let us say Sheikh Hasina's policy consists of the following five main thrusts: a) rapid industrialisation; b) quick privatisation of the state owned enterprises; c) attracting foreign investment; and e) financial sector reforms.

Having made these five points in the parliament, the PM can invite the opposition to debate it, amend it, re-formulate it to their hearts content, and then come to some sort of consensus on the basis of a broad understanding.

After the recent 4-point accord between the treasury and the opposition benches, we think the time is appropriate for an initiative on formulating a consensus on economic policies. Frankly our economy cannot take another spate of strikes and hartals. However we may glorify people's movement, the truth is that it came at a great economic cost. Yes, if there is need, people must and will go for civic action and protest. But that must be left for the very last. Before we allow such a situation to arise we must open all door for negotiations and compromise, and accommodate different view points so that the need for civic action is made redundant.

We believe that the prime Minister is sincere in his desire to formulate a consensus economic policy framework. We may consider to be of more

importance than the five suggested by the Prime Minister.

There are two important reasons why we make this suggestion. For far too long we have talked about consensus on economic issues without really doing anything about it.