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Bill passed: BNP walks out

From Page 1
Ershad's rule in 1989.

Khasru took up points raised by JP lawmakers and clarified confusions regarding various legal aspects, franchise, land-related clauses, provision of oath-taking of chairmen and other members of the hill councils and powers and responsibilities of the hill councils.

He welcomed all observations by lawmakers on the hill council bills and said if one feels like, one could go to the court of law. "We're confident enough to prove that the bills do not go beyond the limits of the Constitution."

Earlier, Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury told the House that except the amendments to the bill proposed by six lawmakers, no other amendment was moved in the House. Though some Treasury Bench lawmakers had also submitted a number of amendments, none of those were moved in the House.

Earlier, the House witnessed a heated debate for one and half hours on the disposal of 4365 notices on the three district council bills submitted by lawmakers.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia also participated in the debate, marked by two walkouts by BNP lawmakers.

The Speaker dropped the regular items including the question-answer session from the Order of the Day.

The debate was sparked off soon after the three CHT bills were placed in the Sangsad as its session resumed at 11:12 in the morning.

All the lawmakers of BNP and the Jatiya Party burst into anger as soon as Humayun Rashid Chowdhury announced that he would dispose of the large number of notices as per the Rules of Procedure and following the precedence in the fifth parliament.

Tearing the number of notices "unimaginable", he told the House that submission of such a huge number of notices on any bill was unprecedented in any parliament at home and abroad. He said that finding no such instance in the country's parliamentary history, he had contacted parliaments of some other countries. "But no such instance was reported from

Amendments

From Page 1
clauses of the bills were submitted by the opposition members. More notices are still coming in.

Giving a breakup, the Speaker said 1,630 notices for amendments were submitted on Rangamati, 1,479 notices on Khagrachhari and 1,256 on Bandarban Hill District Council (Amendment) Bills.

Briefing newsmen in the Sangsad Bhavan after the walkout, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Prof A.Q.M. Badruddoza Chowdhury said, "The calculation of the Speaker is wrong."

He said if all the notices were discussed and one minute was given for each notice, it will take 4,500 minutes or 75 hours.

If the Speaker runs Parliament six hours a day, it will take 12 and a half days to dispose of all the notices, he added.

Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia said the current session has been continuing for over four months. It should not be a problem if the Speaker extended the session by 12 more days to allow discussion on such vital national issues.

JCD rehabilitation

From Page 1
lowing a JCD-BCL clash which left a BCL leader killed.

The BCL captured all the three JCD-dominated halls—Jasimuddin, Ziaur Rahman and Bangabandhu halls—following the incident, ousting the JCD supporters.

In a development later last night, BCL accepted the decision of the Dhaka University Syndicate to vacate the four dormitories of the University for rehabilitating the displaced JCD activists, sources said.

The BCL accepted the decision during a meeting with the DU Syndicate last night at the residence of the Vice Chancellor.

The BCL, however, stuck to its earlier position that the JCD activists who are students of other halls of the university will not be allowed to return to those halls.

The BCL also demanded that the killers of Partho Protim Acharya should be arrested immediately.

BCL General Secretary Ishaque Ali Khan Panna while talking to The Daily Star over telephone last night said that residents of one hall could not be guests in other halls.

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Bangladesh a model for developing states: Inderfurth

US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Karl E. Inderfurth has described Bangladesh as a role model for developing countries even beyond the immediate South Asian region, reports UNB.

Inderfurth said on April 27 during a meeting with Bangladesh Ambassador to the US KM Shehabuddin at the State Department in Washington, according to a message received in the city yesterday.

He lauded Bangladesh's accomplishments in areas like elimination of child labour, women development and micro-credit.

He said this was particularly persuasive in the inclusion of Bangladesh on President Bill Clinton's tour plan to the region sometime November.

President Clinton's visit to Bangladesh will be the first by a US President to the country. Inderfurth said President Clinton's programme would include visits to the projects on social development in Bangladesh.

The US Assistant Secretary of State also commended the momentum in the US-Bangladesh economic cooperation in the areas of energy and power.

Inderfurth said the visit of the high-powered US delegation led by US Permanent Representative to UN Bill Richardson to Bangladesh recently was highly successful.

Old man chopped to death in Muktagachha

MYMENSINGH, May 3: An old man was chopped to death by a cobbler at Kalibari Bazar in Muktagachha thana here this morning, reports UNB.

Police said the victim, Sher Mahmud, 70, was attacked and injured critically by the cobbler, Nanda Lal, at about 10 am at the bazar.

Nanda was reportedly drunk during the incident. He also attacked those who came in rescue of the old man.

Local people then pelted stones at the cobbler to prevent him.

Sher Mahmud was rushed to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries at about 11 am.

Sundarbans

From Page 1
leged robbers, numbering about 10 to 12, while they were preparing for committing a robbery.

Sensing their presence, the robbers, all the members of Chhotto group, opened fire on the police.

The gunfight reportedly continued for about one and a half hours.

The robbers fled the spot leaving three of their members dead.

Police recovered one rifle, two pipeguns and ammunition from the spot.

The bodies were sent to Bagerhat Sadar Hospital for autopsy and the injured policeman was admitted to Khulna Medical College Hospital.

Three separate cases were filed with Sharakholia police in this connection.

Lakkhatura

From Page 1
production from June this year.

Explaining the causes of delay for production of gas from the Lakkhatura well, the Occidental official said that the gas leakage was one of the factors while the other being delay in acquisition of land for laying of pipelines to connect the well site with the gas processing plant.

A gas processing plant worth about 20 million US dollars will be installed at Alurail, four km off Lakkhatura, he said.

"The processed gas will be connected with the National Grid Line at Kailashtila through a 19 km pipeline."

BNP wants to make parliament ineffective: ALPP

A meeting of the Awami League Parliamentary Party (ALPP) yesterday discussed ways and means to dispose of, as per Rules of Procedure, about 5000 amendments to the local government council bills on three Chittagong hill districts, reports BSS.

As per data and information gathered through internet from all over the world, submission of such a large number of amendments is "unusual" and "unprecedented" in the history of Parliamentary system of any country, the meeting observed.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presided over the meeting held at the Sangsad Bhavan.

The meeting viewed that the BNP through submission of such a huge number of amendments, in fact, is trying to create abnormal situation with an ultimate objective to make the parliament ineffective.

"BNP does not want the country to be run under parliamentary system," the meeting observed.

It discussed different clauses of the bills on three hill districts of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban.

Mastaans force closure of 3 garment units in Tongi

By Special Correspondent

Being denied toll, a gang of local mastaans forced closure of three garment factories of Fortuna Apparels at Kunia, Tongi on Saturday.

According to a press release issued by the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association yesterday, the mastaans also disconnected telephone lines and indiscriminately beating security guards and workers of the factories.

Fortuna employs about 2200 workers and produces 10,000 readymade garments for export.

The BGMEA press release said the mastaans had forced closure of the factories on April 26 and 27. Again, the forced their closure on Saturday causing a loss of Taka one crore during the past few days.

It said the local mastaans had been pressing the management to pay 'toll' for sometime. They are not allowing workers to get inside the factory since April 26.

BGMEA President Mostafa Golam Kuddus has urged the Home Minister and authorities concerned to take appropriate steps so that the factories can operate. The press release said.

Rainfall

From Page 1
partments met yesterday to prepare a forecast for May, with the data from April.

The Meteorological Department said there would be at least one low at the Bay of Bengal and flash floods of light to medium intensities may occur in the north-eastern part of the country this month.

In Dhaka, Rajshahi, Sylhet divisions and in Khulna and Jessore regions at least four to six nor'westers, with medium to high intensity are likely to occur, the forecast said.

The experts noted yesterday that during April the rate of precipitation in the country was higher than average but it was in accordance with the forecast except for the Dhaka and Barisal divisions.

The forecast for May showed that there would be above average rainfall in all the six divisions during the month.

Commenting on the weather condition, Sajedur Rahman, director of Meteorology Department, said he would not describe it as unusual. Neither he would link it to El-Nino effect. He said it was a localised phenomenon that caused the nor'westers.

Armed goons unleash terror

From Page 1

At Shapla Shalu, several hundred men, women and children gathered to tell their stories of sufferings, intimidation, assault and murder. Most women and children were visibly malnourished with their hollow eyes, frail structures and bulging stomachs. Men, women and children showed the marks of torture on their bodies and narrated how they had been kept besieged since April 14.

Asgar Ali, 65, said that on April 14 the government surveyor came and demarcated the land for them. But the joidars' men uprooted the pillars in presence of the surveyors. "As soon as some of us tried to raise a small divider on a part of the land, people with bamboo sticks and machetes started to beat us up," Asgar said.

Kachmoti's son, Shamsul, 22, said that the hoodlums kicked and hit his mother and others with sticks indiscriminately as they entered the village. He said that following the attack, the whole village was

surrounded by armed men for three days, preventing the injured people even from going to hospital.

"We had to smuggle the injured people to Shagatha at night where my mother succumbed to her injuries," said Shamsul. Villagers said that the leader of the attackers was one Azizul Haque, a former student of Jagganath College in Dhaka.

Workers of a local NGO, Nizera Kori, who had extended their development activities to cover the people of Shapla Shalu said that they had brought the matter to the notice of the local administration, but without any result whatsoever.

A grocery shopowner near Shapla Shalu, Mohammad Altaf Hossain, said that since April 14 he had single-handedly supplied rice and other daily necessities to the besieged people on credit. Villagers acknowledged Hossain's help and said without his support many children would have starved to death.

A farmer who was seen

Shazneen: Cry for social security

From Page 1

of Class VII of Eton International School in Dhanmondi, said that since the news about Shazneen's murder, a sense of panic and insecurity have gripped him and his class mates. "We want that the culprits should be punished quickly."

Another student of the school, Nafis said, following the incident, he was so panicked that he and his sisters convinced their mother to dismiss their male domestic help.

Anan Rahman, a student of Sunbeams, said that the cruel death of Shazneen came as a great shock. "But we now feel her demise has given us a cause to pursue social security and a safe environment for living."

Papri Rasul, a teacher of a secondary school, said, "Many of my students have conveyed a sense of shakiness and uneasiness since the murder of Shazneen. I blame the society for the deteriorating law and order. Criminals get away after committing crimes. The worse is that some of the same criminals repeat crimes and yet there seems to be no action."

A senior government official while giving his reaction said: "It seems you can hire people to commit crimes of the worst nature. We are all sleeping and not reacting publicly at the level we are supposed to do."

A housewife at Uttara, while condemning the murder of Shazneen said, "Since the day I read about the incident, I have decided to replace the 20-year-old male domestic help at my house. I don't feel safe as I have a 19-year-old daughter."

Tasleem Hussain, a businesswoman living in Siddhewari, having three grown-up children attending school said, "The incident of Shazneen murder has sent a shock wave among all members of the family. I now keep in constant touch with my home by calling my home several times on the telephone to know about my children's whereabouts."

Abul Ashraf Noor, former principal of Sylhet and Pabna Cadet Colleges and now an Advisor of Hosaf Group, said Shazneen's death has once again brought to the surface the social malaise that inhibits the society.

He said dish antennas and satellite television has a bad influence on the environment and it had a cascading effect which often encouraged criminal activities.

Nahar Kabir, a Dhanmondi resident, said she and her neighbours were perturbed that innocent girls are being victimised. "There should be more serious efforts to identify and round-up criminals by the law enforcing authorities."

She also suggested that there should be a system through which all domestic helps could be cleared and registered with the police before being employed.

Meanwhile, Hasna Moudoud of the Platform for Violence Against Women informed that it plans to organise regular rallies to raise social awareness to prevent recurrence of such heinous acts as the killing of Shazneen and repression on women and children.

The rally that was brought out on Saturday by students and teachers of several city schools had a tremendous impact in generating a sense of solidarity to build up social resistance against such heinous acts, some of the participants informed.

The rally was also participated by Selina Kaleque, President, and Munira Khan Secretary General of Bangladesh Federation of University Women, Rehana Ashraf, President, Women's Voluntary Association, Sakshi Doha, Vice President of SAARC Women's Association, besides several Roractar volunteers.

On April 21, the Speaker by a ruling in Parliament declared that the seat of Md Hasibur Rahman Swapan and Dr Alauddin had not fallen vacant since they had neither resigned from BNP nor they had voted in the parliament against their party.

It was argued in the writ petition that by joining the government and taking seats in the Treasury Bench the two MPs crossed the floor and according to Article 70 of the Constitution their seats became vacant.

Attorney General KS Nabi, opposing the writ petition, submitted that the writ petition is not maintainable as the petitioners as representatives of BNP cannot be aggrieved persons.

He further argued that no writ petition is maintainable against the Speaker as he is not functioning in connection with the service of the Republic or my local authority.

"Court cannot interfere with the internal proceedings of the Parliament," the Attorney General opined.

He further submitted, "The court is not the appellate authority of the Speaker of the Parliament."

From Page 1
dependent observers.

He was further told that if Pakistani authorities questioned these figures, they can disclose the figures which they consider "historically accurate," the sources said.

The Pakistani official had drawn the attention of Rahim to some of the materials published in many countries on the occasion of the Independence and National Day of Bangladesh on March 26, 1998. The articles in the supplement spoke of untold sufferings of the people in winning the liberation.

The sources said that it was mentioned to the Pakistani diplomat here that the Liberation War touched the lives of almost all the Bangladeshis and it was a part of our glorious history. The atrocities inflicted on the Bangladeshis in 1971 were unprecedented in modern times, it was also mentioned.

The Pakistani authorities were called upon to show respect and honour the sensitivities of their Bangladeshi brethren, the sources said.

Referring to Pakistan's observation that continued "anti-Pakistan propaganda" would adversely affect the relations between the two countries, the Acting High Commissioner was told that if recalling the glorious Liberation War and paying homage to the millions who gave their lives affected our bilateral relations, then Bangladesh was "helpless".

The Foreign Ministry official also noted that it was surprising that paying homage and recalling history should be considered as a propaganda against Pakistan, the sources added.

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An announcement by the Seven-Party Alliance last night said the hartal was called for "protection of the Constitution and the integrity and sovereignty of the State, cancellation of the CHT agreement and to protest denial of the Opposition's right to speak in the Parliament."

The Seven-Party meeting also decided to organise demonstrations today and bring out torch processions tomorrow throughout the country in support of the hartal.

A resolution adopted at the meeting blamed the government for trying to give legal cover to the "black" CHT accord and said it has no right to stay in power after "nakedly refusing" the opposition lawmakers to speak in the House.

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The participants stressed upon the need to ban cable and satellite television and urged parents to restrict their children to viewing only educational channels on TV.

They also strongly felt that Bangladesh Television should censor its drama programmes and expunge scenes of violence, crime and indecent social behaviour.

Uncontrolled viewing of local and foreign television was leading to increasing incidents of violence, the participants felt.

Our Chandpur Correspondent reports that the officials, workers and union leaders of W Rahman Jute Mills condoled the sad demise of Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, daughter of industrialist Latifur Rahman and Managing Director of W Rahman Jute Mills.

A condolence meeting and milad mahfil was held at the jute mills on April 25. The meeting condoled the tragic death of Shazneen and demanded exemplary punishment of the killers.

Nari Samaj

From Page 1
inscription saying "We will not tolerate a single more incident of repression on women and children."

The participants in protest meeting expressed their deep concern over the increasing incidents of rape, murder and torture on women and children and called upon all to help protect fundamental rights of every human being.

Shireen Akhtar of Nari Samaj said that insecurity was now prevailing both inside and outside the homes. "Children as well as 60-year-olds are not safe from the perpetrators," she said.

The protesters said whenever there is such an incident, the Home Minister rushes to see the victim. But he is not playing any significant role in ensuring exemplary punishment to the culprits. Therefore, crimes against children and women were on the increase, they said.

The demonstrators called upon every citizen of the country to come forward and organise resistance against repression on women and children in every locality.

"It is not the sole responsibility of women to protest such incidents. Men and women should unite to fight it," said Natasha Ahmed.

The rally was attended by, among others, Sheema Das Shimu, Rokeya Begum, Nandita, Shahana, Lutfa, Shabnam, Rahima Akhtar, Parvin Akhtar, Baby, Tahmina Begum and Kushum Ahmed.

CU halls