

Human trafficking

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speech, said, "There are records which show that a good number of trafficked women and children are being pushed back across the border, instead of sending them through proper channels like the checkposts."

She said most of the children pushed back again fall in the grip of traffickers and often they cannot be traced. Children must not be pushed back, considering the issue of human rights, she stressed.

Uday Sahay from India said, "Those who are being pushed back are persons who have infiltrated into Indian territory. But those who are trafficked are definitely repatriated."

Indrani Sinha, an NGO representative from India, said officials in both the countries must play a more proactive role in the repatriation process. Often it takes a long time to complete the documentation process after a victim's proper identification, delaying repatriation, she said.

They pointed out that some of the common purposes of human trafficking are prostitution, bonded and

illegal labour, forced domestic labour, fake marriage, sex tourism, pornography and sex slavery.

Dr Hirannay Saha, chairman of juvenile welfare board, West Bengal, said there must be 'lucid and transparent policy involving both Bangladesh and Indian governments as well as NGOs in both the countries recognised by the governments' to facilitate repatriation.

The other speakers were Rokey Begum, law officer of Bangladesh Rifles; A B Barua, Additional Inspector General of police; and Manabendra Mandal from India.

Indrani case

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In this regard, said Roshomoy Biswas, Headmaster of Kodalia High School.

Indrani Shikder's suicide sparked protest in Mollahat area. Different political parties and women organisations staged demonstration demanding arrest and exemplary punishment to the accused.

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The injured were identified as Nurul Amin, father of the girl, Nurul Kabir and Mahbubur Rahman. They were admitted to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

Police said, a gang of about 25 armed dacoits stormed into the house of Nurul Amin at Anispara of the village at around 1:30 am and started looting valuables, confining the inmates in a room at gunpoint.

At one stage, the dacoits started beating Nurul Amin. As Ayesha came to save her father, one of the dacoits shot her in the abdomen. She died on the spot.

The dacoits also took away gold ornaments and other valuables from five other houses of the village.

They beat-up Nurul Kabir and Mahbubur Rahman during their operation in those houses.

School girl shot dead by dacoits in Satkania

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, City

A school girl was shot dead and three others were injured when a gang of dacoits opened fire on them at village East Ghatadenga under Satkania upazila in the early hours of yesterday.

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The Bangladesh Mohila Awami League demonstrates in front of the AL central office on Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday against the budget for fiscal 2002-2003. Police barred the procession from proceeding.

AL's joining of JS

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the AL's joining the Parliament depends on people's interests. He personally viewed that the budget that the government proposed for 2002-2003 fiscal should be protested in and outside the Parliament. "We want to protect the interest of the poor who are directly affected by the government measures," he said.

The AL's planned meeting would work out the strategy 'when and how' the party with only 58 MPs would go to the House and what issues would initially be addressed. An AL presidium meeting would also review the decisions of the joint meeting, if needed, hinted one source.

According to AL sources, the CWC meeting that took place on Monday and Tuesday emphasised the overburdened tax measures proposed in the national budget for 2002-2003, the deteriorating law and order situation, and political

persecution on opposition activists. It also called a countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal on June 16 to protest these issues.

The party has been keeping itself away from the House since the eighth parliament came into being last October citing that the October general election was 'crudely rigged' spelling the worst debacle ever faced by the AL. The AL, which had completed its five-year term in office, bagged only 62 parliamentary seats in the October 1 election.

Later, the party observed that there was a lack of proper environment for it to attend the House as its workers throughout the country faced 'government sponsored' repression.

Now, the AL rejects the national budget for 2002-2003 fiscal calling it anti-people and overburdened with taxes, and plans to go to the Parliament to protest it.

Rajuk filling up lake

FROM PAGE 1

He said Rajuk is defying not only a court order but also the wetland protection act, 2000. All those who benefit from Rajuk's 'underhand deals' are influential persons.

Earlier, when the committee members went to the minister concerned to express their concern, the minister said so many powerful people were involved in filling up the lake. So, he would have to call an inter-ministerial meeting and also inform the prime minister before doing anything in this regard. Rahman said, "In such a situation, what can we do?"

The High Court had earlier ordered Rajuk to remove earth from the lake at the far end of roads 118 and 123 in Gulshan. But Rajuk engaged only two persons to do this and abandoned the work after two days. In 2000, Rajuk totally ignored a directive of the minister concerned to inform him why the lake was being filled up, Rahman mentioned.

Syeda Rezwana of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association said whenever a new government comes to power, the lake is filled up to allot plots to influential persons. Rajuk never tried to demarcate the Gulshan-Baridhara-Banani Lake or the Uttara Lake just to keep 'an option

open for secret allotment of plots,' she said.

Every time Rajuk allots a residential plot, it ignores the original map of the area which is kept in Rajuk's record room. Rajuk 'creates' a new map in which new plots are shown, but there is no copy of the new map in Rajuk's relevant section.

"When we challenge the matter in a court, Rajuk cannot show us any genuine map. But the owner of a new plot produces copy of a map given by Rajuk," Rezwana said.

Rajuk has even failed to come up with a statement expressing its willingness to protect the Gulshan-Baridhara-Banani Lake, she regretted.

Naser Khan of environmental organisation POROSH urged the government to immediately demarcate the lake and form a body to protect it.

They also called for steps to make the lake pollution-free.

The mid-ranking treasury benchner wondered why the removal of the army chief angered the opposition. "It is being asked why a freedom fighter has been removed from the office of army chief. Should he be allowed to continue for ever just because he is a freedom fighter?"

Referring to the appointment of General Mostafizur Rahman as the army chief when he was on LPR during the AL rule, the BNP lawmaker wanted to know why the opposition party is now clamouring about the removal of the army chief by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

Others who took part in the budget discussion were Anwarul Islam and Moshirur Rahman of BNP and Gazi Nazrul Islam of Jamaat.

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'Desolate' JS

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Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar was generous to allow extra time to each of the four MPs, who spoke on the new budget. The discussion continued 19 minutes beyond the stipulated time of 45 minutes.

Opening the budget discussion, Moshirur Rahman was all praises for the proposed budget. However, he raised several other issues including the removal of the army chief 18 months ahead of his scheduled retirement.

He blasted the opposition Awami League and a section of the press for being critical of the government decision about the army chief. "He (Lt. General Harun-Ar-Rashid) was made the army chief superseding six (senior army officials) only for his loyalty to the party (Awami League)," he told the House.

The mid-ranking treasury benchner wondered why the removal of the army chief angered the opposition. "It is being asked why a freedom fighter has been removed from the office of army chief. Should he be allowed to continue for ever just because he is a freedom fighter?"

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Tragic!

FROM PAGE 12
irritated Mujibor might have put the pillow on the baby's face to stop her from crying, which caused her death. Police recovered the body of the victim and sent it to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for autopsy.

The victim's mother filed a case with Mohammadpur Police Station in this regard. Police arrested Mujibor.

CHT

FROM PAGE 1
agenda for the 1.3 million people of CHT. It includes creation of employment for the young, development of agro-based industries, health and social services and improvement of rural infrastructures.

"We spent a lot of time visiting the institutions which will look after development activities," Heyn said. They also had talks with officials of the CHT Affairs Ministry, CHT Regional Council, hill district councils and leaders of other local government bodies.

Heyn said the team has also recommended a risk management system and steps for strengthening law enforcing authorities in the CHT. He said involvement of local communities is key to long term security and a bottom up approach to reduce poverty. Besides, the land ownership issue must be solved. All development activities should focus on the poor and on building institutions. Small-scale programmes will benefit them most, he observed.

Mahmud Hasan, DG of South Asia Desk in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also spoke at the press conference. The team included Maj Gen (Rtd) Moinul Hossain Choudhury, former advisor in caretaker government, Salimullah, joint-secretary of CHT Affairs Ministry, the divisional commissioner of Chittagong, the deputy commissioner of the three hill districts and Brig Rafiq from the army.

The visit was coordinated by the UNDP and the ADB.

Budget can't satisfy all

FROM PAGE 1
Dr Debapriya said, "In spite of positive measures taken in the budget, investment will still remain constrained by lack of reforms, particularly in trade-supportive infrastructure, public domination and last but not the least, the law and order situation."

The finance minister said, "I have given increased allocation for home ministry and also for new recruitment. But I do not know whether these measures will do the trick."

He said law and order can not be managed through budgetary measures.

The participants also criticised the "abrupt decision" to slap a ban on import of reconditioned vehicles and raised question on increased tax on public transport.

The minister said, "Many things cannot be done gradually. I did this as junks are also coming in the name of reconditioned vehicles."

Brushing aside the criticism that the budget has an "ambitious revenue target", Saifur said, "In the present economic situation I am convinced in my mind that we will be able to achieve the target because I know good management."

Former finance minister and Awami League leader AMA Muhiit said when there is recessionary trend in the economy, the finance minister has opted for an "ambitious budget".

He also raised question whether the five per cent growth in revenue expenditure, projected in the bud-

get, can be maintained. Former finance minister M Syeduzzaman said a serious mid-term review can tighten the grip on budget management.

Former deputy speaker Prof Ali Ashraf said, "I want to pay taxes, but want my security and safety." Wali Bhuiyan, President of Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) said, "I do not mind to pay tax. But do not like to see tax burden on my car driver."

He commented, "Laws and rules are for those who can not break them."

However, former lawmaker and BNP leader Maj (Rtd) Akhtaruzzaman supported the move to lower the income tax limit and other tax measures that would affect the low income groups.

He said, "The low income groups do not pay taxes but enjoy all the benefit like free education, health service etc. The high income groups pay most the taxes."

Former MCCI President Latifur Rahman said VAT evasion has to be checked. Otherwise, it will create an uneven competition among different businesses.

Professor Abu Ahmed of Dhaka University, journalist Enayetullah Khan, Dr Atiur Rahman of BIDS, former foreign secretary Faruq Sobhan, former bureaucrat Dr Mashur Rahman, Md Masum of Jahangirnagar University, GM Kader MP of Jatiyo Party and NGO

activist Khushi Kabir also spoke, among others.

Dr Bhattacharya identified five characteristics of the proposed budget for FY03. These are fiscal consolidation, policy continuity, benchmark contestation, programmatic contention and social compromise.

He said there is absence of a mid-term framework in the proposed budget as there is no five-year plan anchor, linkage with interim poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) is not articulated and the three-year rolling plan is not elaborated.

Also, there is no time-bound reform package and development targets.

Analysing the outcome of the current budget (for FY02), Dr Bhattacharya said deterioration of fiscal balance has been harnessed and pressure on balance of payment partly contained, but recession continues in the economy.

In this context he mentioned, "Inability to address the investment situation will jeopardise the recent gains." He also raised a question, "Will the budget do the trick?"

Regarding the Tk 19,200 crore annual development outlay in the proposed budget, Dr Bhattacharya said, "The main challenge is not financing but implementation because of limited absorption capacity of line ministries."

Food production

FROM PAGE 1
barely seven days after the finance minister's statement that sparked much criticism.

Replying to lawmakers' questions, Noman said the country would hopefully produce 19.50 lakh MT more foodgrains than required in the current financial year. "It appears from the production probability that the country is now self-sufficient in food."

In his budget speech on June 6, Finance Minister Saifur Rahman said, "The Awami League government carried out widespread propaganda that the country had attained food autarky. Some relevant statistics however indicate exaggerations in this claim. During Ershad's 9-year rule, average annual import of food was about two million tons. During 1991-96 BNP rule, import of food decreased and annual average import was slightly above 1.7 million tons. During Awami League rule, import of food again increased and average annual import stood at 2.4 million tons. Had the country really achieved self-sufficiency in food, why the volume of food import increased?"

Mentionably, before the food minister came up with the production statistics yesterday, former

Police-BDR

FROM PAGE 12
nals and conduct joint drives'. The same day, the committee decided on launching a special drive in the city.

But with the drive on, reports on 'atrocities' by police and the BDR started circulating. Under intense pressure, they picked up innocents, mostly under the CrPC, the sources said. The only upside is that mugging has been at a low.

Several reports dispatched to the Daily Star showed that the police and the BDR picked up many on the slightest suspicion. Most victims of the ongoing drive have come from the families of the low-income bracket.

Many of the 10,258 people arrested since May 12 had to pay 'off-the-record fees' at every step of the administration and eventually obtained bail from the court.

Last month, four people were tortured to death in police raids. Two of them were in the capital - Sohel, a fish trader, and Mohammad Alam, a rickshaw-puller. And two others were in Narayanganj - Mohammad Badal, a butcher, and Fazlul Haq Bhuiyan, an Awami League leader of Ruppangj.

Of relevance, the BDR personnel also set on the Awami League leaders and activists.

The cell of the police control room has said that every day 35 to 40 callers phone the police for help, but they do not want to mention the names of the accused for security reasons.

agricultura minister and AL leader Motia Chowdhury protested the finance minister's statement.

Addressing a press conference in the city on Wednesday, Motia said Saifur's statement on food situation was baseless. She resented the finance minister's allegation that food autarky was a propaganda by AL. The whole world recognised Bangladesh's attainment of food self-sufficiency, she said.

Asked whether food was imported in the current financial year (2001-2002), Noman told the House that the government did not import any food. He however said the country imported 24 lakh MT foodgrains during the five-year rule of AL.

Contractor, old man

FROM PAGE 12
body of an unidentified man in his early thirties from Cantonment rail station yesterday afternoon.

Hands of the victim were tied together and there were marks of bruises on his throat.

Police sent the body to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for autopsy.

Hospital sources quoting employees at the morgue said the victim might have been strangled and later dumped at the rail lines.

Meanwhile, an old man died mysteriously in his house at Shankharibazar in the old part of the city.

Krishna Chandra Pal, 70, was taken to the DMCH with serious wounds on the back of his head where attending doctors declared him dead.

Family members said Pal died as he slipped and banged his head on the floor.

Sources however alleged that relatives of the old man might have killed him to grab his land at Khankharibazar.

The body was kept at the DMCH morgue for autopsy.

5 Navy officers

FROM PAGE 1
Commodore Harunur Rashid, Area Commander, Khulna, Commodore Khurshid Alam, Chairman Mangla Port Authority and Commander P J Ullah, posted in Chittagong, the sources said.

Commodore AKM Azad's name was learnt to have been considered seriously during the process of appointment of a new navy chief.

The government later appointed Commodore Shah Iqbal Mujtaba, as the Navy Chief. He was superseded earlier and was serving as Director General of the Coast Guard.

Promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral, Mujtaba took office on June 4.

JCD cadres

FROM PAGE 12
Madhu's canteen on the DU campus, the heart of student politics in the country.

But before the BUET incident, the JCD cadres and outsiders were staying in the halls and roaming on the campus in presence of the police, said the sources.

General activists and supporters of the JCD told The Daily Star that the criminalisation of the JCD DU unit started due to the failure of the campus authorities to check the criminal activities of the JCD in the name of student politics.

They however said although the listed troublemakers are now staying out of the campus, they are in control of the halls and are kept abreast of the situation over mobile phone and by fellow activists staying in the halls.

Asked about the alleged killers who are also JCD activists, some leaders of the organisation told The Daily Star yesterday that they were directed by the BNP high-ups not to put up with the killers on the campus.

Monir Hossain, president of JCD DU unit, said none should tolerate the killers even if they are involved with the JCD. "We demand the immediate arrest of and exemplary punishment to the killers of Sony," he added.

The students who are not involved in student politics said they are always victims of amoral student politics, while the criminals always get away thanks to blessings of the politically influential persons.

They however criticised the university authorities for their repeated failure to restore peace on the campus.

NGO activities

FROM PAGE 12
Executive Director of RDRS Kamal Uddin Akbar, Executive Director of IRD Saiful Islam, Chairperson of NGO Coalition on Beijing Platform Salma Khan, Director of Mass Literacy Movement Rasheda K Chowdhury and Executive Director of NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation M A Rashid attended the meeting.

Sources said the committee and NGO leaders exchanged views on the entire gamut of NGO activities in the country as well as the proposed amendments to NGO Act. They shared opinions on NGO asset management, political activities by some NGOs and ways and means to liberalise NGO activities and their Foreign Donation Act (FDA).

Haji Selim

FROM PAGE 1
Selim was produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka at 4:00pm yesterday under section 54 of the CrPC with a prayer for a seven-day remand.

In its forwarding report, police charged Selim with patronising all sorts of criminal activities in the country by supplying arms and money to criminals.

Defence lawyers submitted a petition seeking bail and cancellation of the remand prayer. They maintained that the former MP was arrested as part of a conspiracy to harass him politically, stating that no specific charges were brought against him at the time of his arrest.

Selim's lawyers also claimed before the magistrate that he was placed before the Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC) after his arrest by DB men and was not given any food. Moreover, the ex-MP, who has a heart condition, was physically and mentally abused all the night by the JIC, the lawyers added.

Selim told the court that some of the investigating officials asked him about his frequent visits to the Awami League office and his "connection" with the deteriorating law and order across the country. Selim also said he was physically abused by the police.

The prosecution side opposed the petition for bail. After hearing both sides, Magistrate Khondoker Atiar Rahman rejected both the petition for remand as well as bail and ordered him to be sent to the

Dhaka Central Jail. Meanwhile, the detectives submitted another petition to have him shown arrested in a regular case filed with Lalbagh Police Station in connection with a fire incident at the telephone exchange in the city's Chawkbazar area on April 30.

Police submitted another prayer for a seven-day remand for interrogation in this connection.

Magistrate Jagannath Das Khokon ordered Selim to be shown arrested in the case and placed him on a two-day remand.

In its forwarding report, police claimed they had some important information about the MP's involvement