

Hasina discusses political situation with Hillary, NDI chief

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League President and opposition leader Sheikh Hasina had meetings with Senator Hillary Clinton and NDI President Ken Wollack here Wednesday and discussed ways of making Bangladesh parliament effective.

She said the opposition should be given space and opportunity to put forward alternative viewpoints as well as make constructive criticisms of government's failings and shortcomings for effective running of parliament.

During the meeting with the President of National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) at its Washington headquarters, Hasina also pointed out the deteriorating law and order and discussed human rights and democratic situation in Bangladesh.

The NDI chief referred to the value NDI attaches to its relationship with Sheikh Hasina and her role as a leader of Bangladesh and champion of democracy as well as NDI's relationship with the Awami League as a political party.

Referring to the last election, Hasina said it is now time to look and move forward and evaluate the October 2001 parliament elections as well as subsequent voting held under the present ruling coalition.

"Now it is the time to determine how future elections can be conducted in a manner that will allow the will and choice of the people to be accurately reflected," said the ex-PM, whose party was handed a stunning defeat at the last general election.

Wollack said he very much looked forward to a deepening and strengthening of this association between NDI and Hasina and the Awami League to further the democratic process and cause in Bangladesh.

The Awami League chief drew his attention to the central focus and priority of charting out a path of

Flood

FROM PAGE 12
to swell. As a result, the flood situation in Rajbari, Manikganj, Munshiganj, Faridpur, Madaripur, Shariatpur and Dhaka remained unchanged.

The flood situation in Narayanganj is likely to aggravate further as water level in the Lakhya river recorded further rise during the period, the FFWC bulletin said.

Out of the 46 monitoring stations, 21 recorded rise, 21 fall and 4 no change. Rivers at 14 points were flowing above the red marks in 24 hours ending at 9am.

In the Meghna basin, the Surma at Kanaighat, the Kushiara at Amalshid and Sheola, and Meghna at Bhairab Bazar were flowing above their respective danger levels.

The rivers in the southeastern hill basin were flowing below their respective danger marks as the water continued to recede.

Meanwhile, UNB from Tangail reports that the overall flood situation in the district aggravated further with the collapse of the town protection embankment although the Jamuna and Dhaleswari remained steady.

Over 100-feet portion of the town protection embankment collapsed at Birmahali point through which water was entering, flooding fresh areas of Nagapur, Delduar, Bhuapur, Gopalpur, Kalihati and Sadar upazilas.

Locals feared Tangail town might get under water if the flow of water gushing through the breach could not be checked.

Tale of torment

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The 24 students, including 18 of those arrested, went back to the temporary office of the commission. The commissioner started taking statements at about 2:30pm, which lasted for about three hours.

The arrested 18 students submitted a joint statement to the commission giving a detailed account of the police excesses on the female students in the small hours of July 24, and arrest of and harassment on them in the police custody.

Justice Tafazzal read out the statement before all the 18 students and wanted to know whether any of them differed with it. The students said the statement was all right.

Justice Tafazzal then told them that he would record their statement one by one.

One of the students, who was called in first, said the JCD outsiders kept threatening the students of the hall well before July 24 and situation in the hall was tense since then.

At 12:00 on July 24, policemen, most of them male, broke open the lock of the main entrance to the hall and let loose a volley of expletives. In the second phase at 3:00am, they started beating up the students indiscriminately, and dragged and pulled them out of bed and rooms, she said. The policemen bundled

economic growth and prosperity for Bangladesh and consolidating on the gains and advances of past five years under Awami League.

She emphasised "rebuilding democratic institutions, respect for human rights and ensuring rule of law as well as security of common man in view of the ever deteriorating law-and-order situation" in the country.

Peter Manikas, Director, Asia Programs, NDI, also attended the meeting. She also attended a luncheon hosted by Ken Wollack and attended by NDI Board members Harriett Babbit and Nicholas Rey. Also present were officials and representatives from US Department of State, Human Rights and other institutions.

In the afternoon, Sheikh Hasina met with former US first lady Senator Hillary Clinton at her Senate office and discussed regional issues as well as the current situation in Bangladesh.

Senator Clinton acknowledged the substantial advances Bangladesh made under Sheikh Hasina's government in the field of poverty alleviation, empowerment of women, self-sufficiency in food production and economic growth.

Senator Hillary Clinton, wife of former President Bill Clinton, emphasised the need to build on these tremendous achievements. But she expressed concern over reported "human rights violations" and "violence on women and religious minorities" in Bangladesh.

Sheikh Hasina's Political Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury and her son Sajeeb Wazed accompanied and assisted her in the discussions.

Hasina

FROM PAGE 12
Hasina said the alliance government has created a reign of terror in the country by unleashing torture, killing, repression, rape and extortion, and these will only accelerate its fall.

She appreciated the students, teachers, officials and staff of Dhaka University for compelling the subversive VC and the proctor to step down through a tough student movement backed by the teachers, employees as well as the people in general.

"By overthrowing the VC and the proctor, the DU students have achieved a partial victory and their total victory will come through the acceptance of their 7-point demand," Hasina said demanding immediate withdrawal of the cases filed against the students and teachers.

The Awami League chief demanded immediate reopening of the university ensuring congenial academic atmosphere on the campus.

She also called for withdrawing the conspiratorial cases filed against 16 student leaders of Awami League-backed Chhatra League, including its acting president Saifuzzaman Shikhor, Baloram Poddar, Delwar Hossain and Hemayet Hossain Himu.

Referring to the police atrocities in Shamsunnahar Hall, the opposition leader said such heinous incidents didn't take place in the 80 years' history of the university.

"By building up a strong resistance against injustice, repression and harassment, the students have once again proved that the student community is the conscience of a nation. They have glorified the image of students through this movement," the former prime minister said.

Housewife gangraped at Natore

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Natore

A young housewife who was staying at a residential hotel here was raped allegedly by the hotel owner's son and two employees on Wednesday night.

The alleged rapists were arrested yesterday.

The victim was identified as Kulsum Begum (not her actual name) of Indirkali areas in Pirozpur.

The young housewife came to Natore with her two children Wednesday afternoon for some private purpose and rented a room at Natore Boarding, a residential hotel at Nichabazar in the town.

According to the case filed by the victim with the Sadar Police Station yesterday, Tuhin, 27, son of the hotel owner Monwar

Hossain Munnur; manager of the hotel Shamim Reza Khokon and Dulal, an employee, forcibly entered her room at the dead of night and raped her.

Her children—a seven-year-old son and a five-year-old daughter—were

Asleep at the time.

Acting VC

FROM PAGE 1
of the university's treasurer, deans of different faculties and provosts of different halls.

After taking the office, the new VC urged the students, teachers, officers and staff to help restore congenial atmosphere for education and research on the campus.

Later, he went to the Aparajeo Bangla where members of the Dhaka University Teachers' Association were observing token hunger strikes. He offered them fruit juice to end the hunger strike.

Meanwhile, Prof. Atiqur Rahman of the Institute of Social Welfare has been appointed as the acting proctor of the university.

Textile perks

FROM PAGE 1
signboards.

The team also collected some 'false' documents of foreign importers located in Hong Kong and Dubai from the possession of the factory owners.

The team also found that the bank accounts of the factories did not have any money deposited against the claimed exports.

President of the Bangladesh Specialised Textile and Power Loom Mills Association (BSTPLMA) Mohammad Shahjada Mian categorically denied involvement of any of his members in misappropriation of government fund.

He said the alleged factories are not registered with the association.

He alleged that a section of corrupt government officials are involved in the practice.

Mian regretted that many textile factories were on the brink of closure due to nonpayment of cash incentives in the last few months.

President of the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporter Association (BGMEA) Kutubuddin Ahmed also demanded extensive investigation into the scam and exemplary punishment to the guilty.

He also denied involvement of any garment factories in such fraudulent practices.

The investigation report further observed that a big gang is involved in siphoning off money in the name of cash incentives by showing fake mills and false exports.

The eight mills are Anwara Weaving Factory, Ayesha Fabrics, LK Fabrics, Nipa Garments and Textile Industries, Morium Textile, Silvi Textile and Rajdhani Fabrics.

BTTB

FROM PAGE 12
each new connection in the Rajshahi region. But Sharfuddin declined to go along with unionists, which reportedly caused his removal from the office.

Meantime, such actions have led to widespread discontent among the honest BTTB officials.

"It will be impossible to run the telecom network if the government openly pampers the identified criminals," said a BTTB official. "If the government fails to control these elements, the BTTB would soon become another Adamjee."

Officials blame the telecom secretary for the growing arrogance of the BTTB's labour union. On May 29, the secretary convened a meeting of the BTTB officials. Violating the official decorum, the secretary also invited some union leaders to the meeting. In their presence, the secretary allegedly accused all BTTB officials of corruption and highly praised the union's activities.

The telecom secretary also allegedly verbally abused the BTTB officials. Later, the BTTB officials complained to the telecom minister about the incident. The minister ended his duty just by giving assurance of 'restraining' the secretary.

These allegations were faxed to the secretary for his comments, but he did not reply. The telecom minister could not be contacted despite repeated attempts.

Govt to offer legal aid to poor convicts for quick disposal of cases

BSS, Dhaka

The government has taken some important decisions for quick disposal of cases of the convicted accused in jail custody.

The decisions include offering legal assistance through lawyers to the prisoners who cannot afford the expenditure of appointing lawyers in the High Court and fixing two benches on the same day of a week for hearing on the appeal cases.

The managing council of the national committee of government's legal aid organisation took the decisions at a meeting at Bangladesh Secretariat yesterday.

Hearing on the jail appeal cases would be held in two separate benches every Wednesday. Lawyers of the government's legal aid organisation would be imparted training and a 28-member lawyers panel has already been formed in this regard.

Presided over by Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed, the meeting was attended, among others, by Awami League lawmaker Mostafizur Rahman, eminent lawyer Dr Kamal Hossain, Law Secretary Afzal Hossain Ahmed, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Modabbir Hossain, Inspector General of Prisons Brigadier General Zillur Rahman, Jatiya Ain Sahayata Sangstha Director Nasrin

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Khulna BL college students go on rampage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Students of Government BL College put up a barricade on Khulna-Jessore road at Daulatpur yesterday morning to press for upgrading the college to a full-fledged university.

They also damaged six trucks and two passenger buses during the road barricade programme that continued for more than two hours from 10 am.

At one stage, some unruly students pelted brick chips at police. Police clubbed the unruly students and brought the situation under control.

Four students, identified as Liton, Shamima Akhter, Tapash and Rafiaz, were injured in police action.

Shazneen case

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accusing Shahidul Islam alias Shahid, a domestic help at his residence, on April 24, 1998.

Mojibur Rahman, assistant superintendent of police of the CID, Dhaka, filed a rape case with the same police station, accusing seven people including Shahid after six months of investigation into the Shazneen murder case.

Accused Shahid, Hasan, Badal, Shani Ram, Minu and Parvin were present in the court yesterday.

Special public prosecutors Arfan Uddin Khan, ABM Sharfuddin Khan Mukul and Mahbub Ahmed and advocates Saima Khanam, Mohammad Ali Hossain and Anisur Rahman appeared in the court on behalf of the complainant.

The Shazneen murder case, pending with the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka, was earlier stayed by the High Court (HC). The HC order will remain valid till disposal of the rape case.

Trial of the rape case began at the special court on July 9, 2000.

Stipend for HSC

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female students of colleges and madrasahs of Manikganj, Narsingdi, Savar, Keraniganj, Dohar and Gazipur.

For the 1st-year students, cheque for Tk 740 was given to each as stipend for six months from January to June 2002 at the rate of Tk 65 per month and book allowance Tk 350. The amount was Tk 790 for a 2nd-year student.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia distributed the cheques among 17 students. Education Minister Dr Osman Faruque, State Minister for Osmania Ehsanul Huq Milon and Deputy Minister Abdus Salam Pintu gave out the stipend among the rest.

The total project cost is Tk 20.79 crore for the January-June period. The second phase of the project started from July.

Criteria for receiving the stipend are: The student will have to be a regular student of Higher Secondary or Alim class, secure at least second division (45% of the total marks) or GPA 2.5 in the SSC examination, have at least 75 per cent college/school attendance, remain unmarried till HSC or Alim examination and a girl of class 12 will have to secure 45% of the total marks in the class 11 annual examination.

Addressing the function, the prime minister said the country would not advance without providing opportunity to the womenfolk, who constitute half of the country's total population, to

Begum and leaders of National Women Lawyers' Association.

The law minister said 136 cases pending in the High Court for long have been prepared for hearing. The hearing would begin soon, he added.

The district and sessions judges have also been asked to make a list of the accused who are not getting legal facilities due to want of money, the minister said.

As it is not possible for the government to give legal assistance to all at first stage, the government has initially selected women, adolescents and elderly people to offer legal aid, Barrister Moudud said.

He said the government has taken different steps to develop the national legal aid organisation as an institution. Financial assistance for the legal aid has been assured by the World Bank and the UNDP, the ministers said.

Emerging from the meeting, Dr Kamal Hossain said that the number of false cases is increasing gradually. Legal action is needed against those who harass others by filing false cases.

He said to establish the rule of law, in addition to stopping false cases, the government should take care that nobody faces any hindrance to file a case.

VC hunt on

FROM PAGE 1
Science faculty were the most prospective candidates for the post of VC.

The names of Prof. Asaduzzaman and Prof. SMA Fayed are widely being tipped to become the next VC.

Prof. Fayed had earlier served as provost of Mohsin Hall and chairman of the Public Service Commission (PSC).

The sources also said the government also would have a look at the performance of acting VC Prof. AFM Yusuf Haider. "He could be appointed the VC if his performance is up to the mark," one source said.

Meanwhile, the Awami League-backed Blue Panel teachers are yet to decide 'whether or not to fight for the VC panel' in a meeting soon, said an influential teacher of the Blue Panel yesterday, requesting anonymity.

The university regulations stipulate that the Senate of the university elect a three-member panel for the appointment of VC within the short possible time and send it to the president, also the chancellor of the university, for choosing one as the VC.

The acting VC will run the office in the meantime. On June 16, the Senate elected a three-member panel for appointment of vice-chancellor. All were teachers of the White Panel. Among them, the immediate past vice-chancellor, Prof. Anwarullah Chowdhury, bagged the highest number of votes, while Prof. Asaduzzaman stood second. Acting DU VC Prof. AFM Yusuf Haider was the other member.

The president appointed Prof. Anwarullah Chowdhury vice-chancellor for a four-year term.

The Awami League-backed teachers under the Blue Panel stayed off the election. Earlier, the BNP-led coalition government on its takeover after the last general election removed Prof. AK Azad Chowdhury from the post of VC and appointed Prof. Anwarullah Chowdhury of the Department of Anthropology on November 12 under the University Act of 1897.

The act formulated during the British rule was applied for the first time at the university in removing and appointing a VC.

BCL leader shot dead at Boalkhali in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Armed cadres of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal allegedly gunned down a BCL leader in front of his father at Boalkhali upazila yesterday (Thursday) noon.

The victim was identified as Mohammad Azim, 28, vice president of the Popadia union unit of BCL and son of Md. Abu Mian.

Sources said Azim and his father were returning home from Chittagong when a gang of 10 to 12 JCD men laylaid them. They roughed up Azim at Baigyertek area of Popadia union at around 1.00pm. They also beat up Abu Mia as he tried to rescue his son and repeatedly pleaded the JCD activists to spare his son's life.

The father's plea fell into deaf ears and the cadres suddenly fired twice that killed Azim on the spot. The killers, then, left the scene, sources said.

No case was filed in this connection till filing of this report late last night.

Graft case

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As per Rajuk rules, one cannot apply for another plot if he or she already owns one.

While applying for a second plot, Sajeda submitted an affidavit claiming that she had no plot.

The SAC has filed around 30 cases against AL ministers and leaders after the BNP came to power through the October 1 general elections last year.

AL programme

FROM PAGE 12
ised on the occasion.

Addressing the programme, Samad Azad said, "Those who want to protect the killers of Bangabandhu who were condemned to death are the state terrorists and collaborators of the killers."

Awami League presidium members Amir Hossain Amu, Abdur Razzak MP, Matia Chowdhury, M Rahmat Ali MP, Abdul Mannan, BKL general secretary Harun-ar-Rashid Hawlader and vice-president Motahar Hossain Mollah also spoke on the occasion.

Hunger strike

FROM PAGE 1
Prof. Yusuf Haider sympathised with his colleagues and assured them of immediate reopening of the university. "I know my students have suffered a great loss with the closure of the university," he commented.

He criticised the police attack on Prof. Anwar Hossain, chairman of the department of Biochemistry and on other teachers. He was also keen to meet other demands of the teachers.

Earlier, addressing a rally of the striking teachers, speakers demanded resumption of academic activities and opening of residential halls to students.

They also demanded withdrawal of cases filed against the teachers and students, and removal of BDR and police forces from the campus.

Deploing the police atrocities at Shamsunnahar Hall and the consequent events that unleashed a reign of terror on campus, the teachers demanded punitive actions against those involved.

They also maintained that the law enforcing agencies must take prior permission from concerned university authorities before entering any students' dormitory.

Presided over by Prof. Abul Khaer, the rally was addressed by former vice-chancellor Prof. AK Azad Chowdhury, Prof. AAMS Arefin Siddique, Prof. Mezbah Kamal and Sharif Ullah Bhuiyan.

Security siege

FROM PAGE 1
Students will bring out a victory procession on the day of the university's reopening, marking the resignation by the former VC and the proctor.

Meanwhile, hundreds of DU students flocked to the Central Shaheed Minar in the afternoon to join a rally organised by general students, dodging the police look-out. They burst into a triumphal jubilation over the resignation by the former VC and the proctor.

Speakers at the rally demanded immediate reopening of the university and pullout of law enforcers from the campus.

Abdul Matin, a language movement hero, Prof. Serajul Islam Chowdhury, Prof. Anu Muhammad and Noor Mohammad, guardian of a student, addressed the rally.

It was also addressed by Lucky, a student of the Shamsunnahar Hall, who was harassed and arrested by police in the early hours of July 24.

The police and the BDR were on guard at five points of entry to the campus, student halls, residence of the vice-chancellor, the Central Shaheed Minar and the Teachers and Students Centre (TSC).

The campus was off-limits to people yesterday. No vehicles except ambulance were allowed to enter the campus.

Armed security personnel had restricted the entry of students to the campus and put up barbed-wire barricades at the DU-Shahabagh, Nilkhet, Palashi, Chankharpool and the High Court Gate intersections.

Malaysia arrests 135 illegal immigrants

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysian police yesterday arrested 135 illegal immigrants seeking asylum outside the UN refugee agency here in a bid to escape jailing and whipping under tough new laws, and warned of major sweeps ahead.

The immigrants, including women and children, were picked up outside the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) centre in Kuala Lumpur after the expiry of a Wednesday midnight amnesty deadline, a police spokesman told AFP.

"They are mostly Rohingyaas from Myanmar, Acehness and other Indonesians. All of them have no legal documents and will be handed over to the immigration department," he said.

It was up to the department to decide if the detainees would face the harsh new immigration laws, he said, adding that more arrests were expected.

Under the new laws, both illegal immigrants and their employers face a mandatory six months in jail and possibly up to six strokes of the cane.

Thousands of desperate illegal immigrants flooded Malaysia's ports this week in a panicked rush to return home ahead of the expiry of the amnesty, and a police spokesman said they would now begin nabbing illegal immigrants who have made no effort to flee.

"We are going to launch major sweeps on certain areas with large communities of illegal workers," he told AFP.

Immigration Director General Mohammad Jamal Kamdi was quoted by The Star newspaper as saying that some 300,000 illegal immigrants had left under the four-month amnesty which began March 22.

He has said that illegal immigrants who could prove they were willing to leave the country would be granted a one-month grace period before being arrested.

But the Bangkok-based International Organisation for Migration said Malaysia's policies

were not aligned to its manpower needs and called for a review of its migration management.

"Meting out punishment like caning on illegals is not going to resolve the problem because there is a need for them, there are employers willing to hire them," chief of mission Farooq Azam told the news agency.

Employers also warned the hasty move could paralyse the country's export-driven economy amid severe shortages in the construction and plantation sectors.

The Malaysian Employers Federation executive director, Shamsuddin Bardan, said some 80 per cent of construction workers were foreigners, of whom 70 per cent were illegals mainly from Indonesia.

JBWG submits final repor to foreign ministry

UNB, Dhaka

The Joint Boundary Working Group (JBWG), formed to address the unresolved issues between India and Bangladesh, submitted its