

AL returns to resumed budget session today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Sangsad resumes its session today after a week-long recess with the main opposition Awami League (AL) deciding to return to the House.

The AL lawmakers left the House on June 24, barely three days after they made their maiden appearance in the eighth parliament, staging the walkout for being denied their "due share" to speak on the budget.

See editorial on page 4

The AL at a meeting of its presidium last night decided to rejoin the current session from today and raise issues of public concerns.

An hour before the scheduled start of today's sitting at 7:00pm, the Awami League Parliamentary Party (ALPP) will sit to work out its strategy in the House.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Elevation of 170 dy secys: Govt asked to explain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued a rule nisi on the government asking it to show cause within six weeks why the promotion of 170 deputy secretaries as joint secretaries would not be declared illegal and null and void.

The HC also asked the government to explain why the policy under which the promotions were given would not be declared illegal.

A Division Bench of the HC comprising Justice Shah Abu Nayeem Mominur Rahman and Justice Md Arayeesuddin Ahmed further ordered that the 'secret policy' along with related documents should be produced in the court.

The HC rule and order followed a writ petition filed on behalf of the 1973 batch of officials.

The writ was jointly filed by Director of Planning and Development Academy Mollah Anwarul haq, Deputy Secretary of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

34.29pc pass Degree (Pass) exams

UNB, Dhaka

About 34.29 per cent examinees have passed this year's Degree (pass), B-Music and certificate course examinations under the National University.

Of the successful candidates, 1,046 got first class, 50,981 second class and 28,559 third class. The number of successful candidates in certificate course is 743.

The pass percentage is BA -- 33.64, BSS -- 32.01, BSc -- 41.34, B Com -- 36.56, B Music -- 45.83 and Certificate Course -- 41.81.

Using the principles of disease surveillance, experts measure sexual and drug taking behaviour in 'sub-populations most likely to be exposed to HIV' and on the basis of

According to a study -- A Summary of Trends in Sexual and Drug-Taking Behaviours -- jointly conducted by the Family Health

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

INSIDE TODAY

Article 4

Where is justice?

Column: Between the Lines Kuldip Nayyar

Law and Our Rights 6

Securing pension benefits -- a daunting task; and The legal battle for a city without vehicular pollution

Supplement 10

One page supplement on 'the birthday of the King of Nepal'

Sun Rises Sun Sets

July 7 6-50 pm

July 8 5-17 am

Prayer Timings

July 7

Azan Jamaat

Fajr 4-15 4-45

Zohr 12-45 1-15

Asr 5-00 5-15

Maghrib 6-55 6-59

Esha 8-15 8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Afghan vice president gunned down



Haji Abdul Qadir

AFP, Kabul

Afghanistan's fragile security was shattered yesterday when powerful Vice President Haji Abdul Qadir was assassinated by two gunmen close to his offices in the capital Kabul, officials said.

"The motive behind the assassination is not yet clear and we are investigating the case," Interior Minister Taj Mohammad Waardak told reporters.

Kabul police chief Bashir Salangi said that 10 guards at the Public Works Ministry had been arrested after the assassins escaped after spraying Qadir's car with bullets.

Salangi, who said that two gunmen had carried out the killing, said that "one of the guards came out and told one of the assassins that the minister was coming."

Another senior government

official said that it appeared that two of Qadir's bodyguards had also been killed.

The killing once again throws a major question mark over new President Hamid Karzai's attempts to bring stability to Afghanistan at a time when security in Kabul had appeared to have improved.

Qadir, who was until recently governor of the main eastern province of Jalalabad, was one of the most powerful regional leaders in Afghanistan.

His appointment as one of five vice-presidents by Karzai last month was seen as a move to bring an end to the dominance of warlords by drawing them away from their traditional powerbases.

Despite the ouster of the Taliban regime last November, peace in Afghanistan remains elusive.

Former aviation minister Abdul

Rachman was also assassinated in February while bombers tried to kill Defence Minister Mohammad Qasim Fahim earlier this year in Jalalabad.

Qadir was shot dead near his Ministry of Public Works, a portfolio he was given last month by Karzai, at around 1.00 pm local time.

Witnesses said that Qadir's car had been shot at from close range by two men. The gunmen had been waiting near the gates to the ministry. They fired 36 rounds smashing the car windshield and riddling the side with holes police said.

A total of five people were in Qadir's dark green Landcruiser. Two others were also killed while two escaped with injuries, according to an official who declined to be named.

"I arrived shortly afterwards. Qadir had bullet holes in his head and chest," an official at the scene said.

One source told AFP that Qadir's driver appeared to have been killed and the car itself smashed into a wall inside the ministry.

The vehicle was cordoned off by police but blood and bullet holes could be clearly seen.

Qadir was the brother of former Mujahideen commander Abdul Haq who was assassinated by the Taliban last October as he tried to stir up a rebellion against the fundamentalist Islamic militia.

Qadir, an ethnic Pashtun, was a firm supporter of Karzai and was one of five vice-presidents appointed at last month's Loya Jirga grand assembly.

He was also one of the wealthiest men in Afghanistan, with suspicions that his fortune was largely funded through the drugs trade.

A diplomatic source told the wire service recently that moves to give Qadir the interior ministry portfolio at the Loya Jirga grand assembly were blocked by the United States over his drugs links.

Qadir criticised Karzai's campaign to eradicate all opium-producing poppy production which is one of the mainstays of the economy in eastern Afghanistan.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



PHOTO: AFP

German member of the International Security Force (ISAF) inspects the bullet-ravaged car of assassinated Afghan vice-president Haji Abdul Qadir close to his office in Kabul yesterday.

Sitting on a short fuse

Low use of condom among the most risky people raises concern of an impending AIDS epidemic

NAIMUL HAQ

Although Bangladesh is still a low prevalence country as regards HIV/AIDS, there are a lot of potentials that could lead to an epidemic.

Sounding this caution, experts have said while preparatory works relating to the disease and the process of action are being accelerated, 'concentrated and long-term efforts' are needed to prevent an epidemic.

Various studies show that use of condom among the 'most risk behaviour groups' in Bangladesh is very low, increasing the risk of 'easy transmission' of the deadly disease.

Using the principles of disease surveillance, experts measure sexual and drug taking behaviour in 'sub-populations most likely to be exposed to HIV' and on the basis of

this, they warned that Bangladesh is not 'very far from an epidemic to happen.'

Quoting from a recent comprehensive study, they said use of condom among the risk groups in Bangladesh is the lowest among the South and South-East Asian countries, except Cambodia. An epidemic is linked to Intravenous Drug Users (IDU) in all countries of the region.

Nancy Fee, HIV/AIDS programme and development officer of the World Bank, said, "Of those who have risk behaviour, the risk is very high in Bangladesh. And there is high potential for transmission of the disease among the group due to low use of condom."

According to a study -- A Summary of Trends in Sexual and Drug-Taking Behaviours -- jointly conducted by the Family Health

International (FHI), the DFID and the USAID, commercial sex workers (CSWs) "using condom with last client in Bangladesh is 21 per cent (pc)" compared to 77.4 pc in Maharashtra, 80 pc in Andhra Pradesh, 93 pc in Gujarat, 89 pc in Kerala and 92 pc in West Bengal (India), 91 pc in Laos, 41 pc in Indonesia, 67 pc in Nepal and 94 pc in Vietnam.

Percentage of "direct condom use by CSWs with all recent clients in Bangladesh is only 0.5 pc" compared to 78 pc in Cambodia, 74 pc in Maharashtra, 62 pc in Andhra Pradesh, 73 pc in Gujarat, 52 pc in Kerala, 51 pc in Orissa and 76 pc in West Bengal (India), 12 pc in Indonesia, 72 pc in Laos, 40 pc in Nepal and 64 pc in Vietnam.

The last sero-surveillance report of the International Centre for

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Newsman abducted in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Mohammad Shukur Ali, 40, Staff Correspondent of Dainik Anirvan, Khulna, was kidnapped by some cadres of outlawed Biplobi Communist Party (BCP) from his house at village Ula under Dumuria thana at midnight on Friday.

According to his wife, a gang of seven armed cadres of BCP (Mrinal group) called Shukur Ali out of his house and abducted him at gunpoint.

Shukur Ali was given death threats several times in the last three months by armed cadres of BCP Mrinal group.

In the first week of last month he was kidnapped by outlaws and released after two days on condition

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Trading thru' Sona Mosque land port suspended

ANWAR ALI, from Rajshahi

Trading through the Sona Mosque land port in Chapainawabganj was completely suspended yesterday as some exporters and importers started abandoning the route for an indefinite period, protesting the one-day holiday enforced by the local clearing and forwarding (C&F) agents three months ago.

The government is likely to be deprived of nearly Tk 50 lakhs each day the land port remains abandoned, feared the customs officials.

According to sources among the importers and exporters, the local C&F agents on April unofficially declared Friday as their holiday. Leaders of the exporters and importers claimed the one-day holiday was the first of its kind in the history of the land port. They said it

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Fiesty funds fraud

At DESA, millions siphoned off against tenders that never were there

ZAYADUL AHSAN

What an innovation! No demand for goods, no tender for procurement, and yet corrupt DESA officials embezzled funds by just printing some fake newspapers carrying purchase tenders and then simply gulped down the money.

The Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAC) has detected embezzlement of Tk 40 lakhs in the form of arranging a false tender bidding by some high officials of the Dhaka Electric Supply Authorities (DESA) along with some contractors.

These officials have printed fake newspapers showing a tender notice. Again in the notice, they used a Department of Film and Publication number belonging to a different project of a different organisation.

The BAC is now seeking the prime minister's nod for filing a case against 13 people on charge of corruption. A

file of the First Information Report (FIR) has been sent to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

A competent source said the accused are now lobbying hard to make the PMO reject the FIR approval. Earlier, these people tried to persuade the BAC officials.

Sources said on September 28, 1997 Director, purchase and inventory directorate, Abdul Hye floated a tender inviting bidding from genuine manufacturers or suppliers to supply 475 molten case circuit breaker (MCCB) of 200 ampere.

As per the terms of the tender, it was open till October 21, 1997 and proposals could be submitted till October 23. The bid documents would be opened before the bidders at 12 noon on October 23.

The DESA documents showed that this tender notice was printed in The Bangladesh Times on October 12, 1997, Dainik Rupali on October 11 and in Dainik

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Political dynasty PM's prime goal: Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition leader and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is trying to create a 'political dynasty'.

"It's heard that the prime minister wants to become president and put her son in the chair of the premier. She is going to create a political dynasty and so, she has been conspiring against the nation," Hasina told a Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) conference at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh in the capital.

Referring to the prime minister's (PM) recent allegation that the opposition was conspiring to oust the government, she said: "The conspirators are within her government. You (PM) will find them all around you and not in the opposition."

"The prime minister sees deep-rooted conspiracy and has warned of stern actions. But she fails to see what's happening around her. You will find the conspirators among the



Sheikh Hasina

turncoat politicians within your party."

Hasina also made several observations about the exit of president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury.

"Why should we conspire with a person (Chowdhury) who spread invectives against us during the last general elections? How will the Awami League gain by conspiring with such a person?" Hasina said the allegations of

conspiracy are aimed at gearing up repression against the AL.

She said her party would return to the parliament today although the opposition lawmakers were not allowed to 'speak freely' on the 'anti-people' budget.

"We'll continue our battle to raise issues of public concern like rape, torture, killing, violence and inflation as long as possible. We will join the House because we believe in democracy."

About the PM's suggestion to ban student politics, the opposition leader said there is nothing bad in politics. "Before blaming it, she should have stopped hooliganism over tenders and violence by her student activists."

In her hour-long speech, the former prime minister also spoke about reported attacks on journalists, closure of the Adamjee Jute Mills (AJM), controversy over proposed gas export, alleged persecution of opposition activists, violence against women and alleged corruption by the government, among other issues.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Revoke order, Natore newsmen's 7-day ultimatum to DC

ANWAR ALI, Natore

Journalists of Natore Press Club in a press conference yesterday gave a seven-day ultimatum to the deputy commissioner (DC) of Natore to withdraw his order of cancellation of the declaration of 'Dainik Uttarbanga Barta'.

They also threatened tough action programmes including boycott of coverage of news on the DC's office if the cancellation order is not withdrawn by July 14.

Advocate Khondokar Zubair Hossain and advocate Motahar Hossain Shahjada, vice president and general secretary respectively of Natore Press Club, addressed the conference among others.

The speakers strongly protested the order and said the decision was taken only to please the influential circle of the ruling party.

The cancellation order on Thursday has been the talk of the town here evoking strong resentments from different quarters

including allegations of political foul play.

Sources alleged that the order of the DC was influenced by Deputy Minister advocate Ruhul Kudus Talukdar Dulu from Natore.

During a monthly meeting on law and order on June 22 at the deputy commissioner's conference room, members of the law and order committee told the deputy minister

that the Uttarbanga Barta had run a report that said BNP cadres had set fire the house of Chatni Union Awami League president Tofazzal Hossain Sarkar and threatened to kidnap his school-going daughter.

"As soon as the issue of the report was raised in the meeting, the minister turned to DC Sadar Uddin Ahmed and asked him why he had

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



PHOTO: STAR

People using the Narayanganj College Road have been suffering due to the stagnant water that has flooded a large part of the road for a long time.