

Janakantha accuses

FROM PAGE 1
country often carry. Besides, international donor agencies like the World Bank also publish such reports, the release said.

"The report did not mention any names but cited instances of transfer for money at different tiers of the police department.

"Instead of following the norms of contradicting press reports, the home ministry wrote the daily a letter on the day the report was published and claimed that it attempted to break discipline and cause resentments in the police department and demoralise the members of the police," said the press release.

"The report also attempted to tarnish the image of the government and damage public confidence in it."

The ministry asked the daily to send it all data in the next two days for "public interests", which the Janakantha termed as unprecedented.

As the July 10 deadline expired, the home ministry issued another letter asking for the data by July 14.

"The Janakantha authorities could have ignored the ministry's illegitimate demand, but it replied to the letter on July 13 stating that such reports are published to help the authorities to take necessary actions. The authorities concerned should investigate the allegation," the release said and assured all co-operations for the proposed investigation.

But the daily regretted that instead

of following the norms the home ministry issued a third another letter on July 21. It referred to another report of the daily about 36 freedom fighter policemen losing job and asked the paper to submit data about both reports by July 27.

The July 21 letter alleged that the two reports aimed at destabilising the disciplined forces of the government and warned the daily of bringing charges against it under articles 131 and 132 of the Bangladesh Penal Code, which are called for to bring treason charges.

"The latest letter also warned of legal action against the newspaper unless it submits the data the ministry had asked for," said the press release.

Referring to reports carried by different dailies about alleged corruption by the police, it said: "Singling out the Janakantha and accusing it of instigating revolt clearly proves that a certain quarter in the government is out to gag one of the most popular newspapers in the country."

Refuting categorically the government allegation, the daily said it had carried reports on corrupt practices by various government bodies during the rule of past Awami League, too.

The daily said it is ready to publish any rejoinder the home ministry may send if an investigation finds that the report was not based on facts.

Code of conduct

FROM PAGE 12
Professor Nooruddin said student politics has been banned on BUET campus to get back its lost glory. The academic council of BUET unanimously decided on this issue, he said.

Asked who would be running the sports, social entertainment and welfare related activities in absence of the EUCSU and different hall associations, the VC said the university would form various coordination committees comprising talented students to look after those affairs.

Professor Nooruddin said the question of teachers' politics at BUET never arises as chancellor of BUET directly appoints the vice chancellor. The associate professors and other senior teachers get routine appointments to the posts of syndicate members, dean and academic council, he said.

He said classes would resume on August 3 and residential halls would be made open for students on August 1.

Muggers

FROM PAGE 1
He was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) at about 12:45pm. Later, he succumbed to his injuries while being operated upon at about 3:30am.

Sagar Ahmed, production manager of the factory, however escaped unhurt. Badda police picked him up from the DMCH for interrogation.

Police found three spent cartridges inside the taxicab.

Rahman was unmarried and lived with his uncle at Badda. He hailed from Binodpur village under the Palang thana in Shariatpur district.

Earlier, muggers stabbed to death the cashier of a clearing and forwarding firm, Ali Arshad, at Dhanmondi on Thursday and took away Tk 3 lakh.

Arshad was on his way to the New Market from the Standard Chartered Bank at Dhanmondi.

On February 4 this year, a gang of miscreants also shot dead Shamsul Islam, sales manager of Smart Technology Limited, in Dhanmondi.

Trisha's death

FROM PAGE 12
Jatiya Party, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) and Gono Forum expressed their support to the hartal call.

But a faction of the ruling BNP in a press statement published in a local daily termed the hartal call 'illogical', saying it is not necessary as the district administration and police have taken 'prompt action' after the incident.

The protest rally was addressed by, among others, GNC Secretary Forhad Abdullah Harun, Joint Convener Abu Bakar Siddique, Eleven Party district coordinator Mosaddek Hossain Bulbul, Gono Forum president Moinal Islam Raza, CPB secretary Mihir Ghosh, Krishak League president Nirba Nindu Bhanman and Babu Ganesh Prashad. GNC Convener Aminul Islam Golap presided.

The speakers demanded speedy trial of the case after proper investigation and threatened of tough action programmes for non-compliance.

Police have arrested the accused -- Mehedi Hasan Modern, Md. Shahin and Ariful Islam Asa. Modern's relatives Ashraf, a BNP worker, Afsar, a Jatiya Party worker, Joynal and Bipul have also been arrested under Section 54 of CrPC.

Meanwhile, the autopsy report submitted to police confirmed that Trisha drowned.

Sheikh Nasir Ahmed of the local unit of Ain O Shalish Kendra (human rights and legal aid centre) met the victim's family and assured them of legal assistance if needed.

The shipping ministry forwarded

his request to the labour and employment ministry since it involved thousands of workers and employees.

The ministry eventually issued the notification following necessary vetting from the law ministry.

The officials at the labour ministry yesterday told The Daily Star that the CPA services have been declared essential for the first time in the country.

"During the period, nobody would be able to call any sort of agitation programme including strike, hartal or work stoppage at the port," said Labour Secretary Helal Uddin Khan.

The step was necessary for smooth loading and unloading of goods at the seaport, he added.

According to sources, there are 22,000 workers and employees in the CPA and most are members of 22 CBA and non-CBA organisations.

The shipping minister, however, told the daily Star that the number of the CBA at the port would be reduced to three.

He claimed there was no resentment among workers in the port because an agreement on salary hike was signed recently between the government and the dock workers.

He also said that the number of dockyards would be reduced to

More rain, more flood

FROM PAGE 12
Rangpur zone has experienced heavy rains. Internal rainfall aided by the onrush of floodwaters from upstream caused a sharp increase in water levels of all major rivers.

To add to miseries, erosions by the Teesta River in Rangpur, Nilphamari and Lalmonirhat and by the Brahmaputra, the Dharia and the Ghaghat in Gaibandha and Kurigram have so far devoured many homesteads and seedbeds and rendered thousands of families homeless. At least 50,000 families in the zone were marooned following floods and erosion, an official estimation claimed.

Our Netrokona Correspondent reported that the district's flood situation further deteriorated. Waters from hills in neighbouring India and heavy rainfall during the last 24 hours caused the fresh flood. The water levels of four major rivers Sumeshwary, Kangsha, Mogra and Donu have registered a sharp rise. The rivers were overflowing in many places in its banks.

Seven unions in Durgapur, four in Kalkamanda and two bordering upazilas of the district have been sub-merged. Road communication between Netrokona-Dugapur and

Netrokona-Kalkamanda were cut-off.

According to our Sirajganj correspondent, torrential rainfall with heavy currents of the mighty river Jamuna washed away 120 metres groyen at Zia groyen under Sadar Upzila.

Some 130 millimetres of rainfall was recorded in the last 24 hours till 4:00pm yesterday.

Pabna correspondent adds: The low-lying villages of Pabna have been submerged again due to rising waters in the Padma and the Jamuna over the last 72 hours.

Officials said the water level at Siranganj was flowing over 48 centimetre higher than the danger mark due to a rise in the water level in the Jamuna by 23 centimetres. Water at the Harding Bridge point was recorded just under the danger mark following the 27cm rise of water in the Padma.

Intermittent rainfall has created water-logging in the lowlands of the district over the last 48 hours.

O u r K h a g r a c h h a r i Correspondent reported that normal life of the hilly people was seriously disrupted in the district due to heavy rains and water logging. The low-lying areas have been inundated.

Road communication with the Chittagong, Feni and Rangamati remained suspended for landslide caused by an onrush of torrential rains.

Officials recorded 287mm rainfall over the last 24 hours till 2:00pm yesterday.

Khaleda greets Kalam

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday felicitated President-elect of India APJ Abdul Kalam on his election to the highest office of his country.

Conveying her warmest greetings to Kalam in a message, Khaleda Zia said the government of Bangladesh was happy to see a person of his stature as president of India.

The Bangladesh prime minister expressed the hope that the bonds of friendship existing between the two countries will further expand under the guidance of President Abdul Kalam.

BNP to recast

FROM PAGE 12
purge the party of opportunists, the sources said.

The leaders suggest that Tarique Rahman, BNP joint secretary-general (1), look into organisational matters.

Tarique, the prime minister's eldest son, who has already proved his capability to run the party in different times, especially in the last general election, is working on organising the party and its front organisations.

He is gathering information about city, district, municipal and thana committees as well as the expired and inactive committees in the 75 organisational districts.

The preliminary reports dispatched to the Hawa Bhaban say most district and grassroots-level committees have long remained inactive.

In consultation with the BNP secretary-general and other policymakers, Tarique has decided to appoint new persons to the leadership.

Some front organisations that will undergo changes are the Jubo Dal, the Krishak Dal, the Matshyajibi Dal, the Mohila Dal, the Sramik Dal and the Ulema Dal.

The changes will take place before the BNP celebrates its founding anniversary on September 1.

Moreover, the vacant posts on the BNP central committee will be filled by competent people soon, the sources said.

The insiders said the BNP is likely to hold its national council early next year after new committees in all thanas, districts and cities are formed.

The BNP's last council was held in 1993 and all changes took place on the instruction of the party chairperson in line with the provision of the party constitution.

Cricketers

FROM PAGE 1
Enamul also dismissed Jayasuriya but not before the explosive left-hander blitzed 145 off 164 balls. He set the field afire with six sixes and 13 savage hits across the rope.

Although the bowlers were battered as the day wore on, however, debutant Talha Jubair offered an inspiring morning by snapping up twoquick wickets.

The 19-year-old sent opener Marvan Atapattu back in the first over of the day and removed dangerous Mahela Jayawardene for a duck.

"You see, I just got one month with the team before coming here. I am yet to get a right combination and my mission is to make Bangladesh a good team before I leave," said Bangladesh coach Mohsin Kamal after the day's play.

On the other hand, captain Khaled Mashud claimed that his team improved a lot despite Sri Lankan run feast.

"What we need is to play more positively in the second innings as they did last September against the same opponent. If we can bat the whole day tomorrow, I think we have a chance to avoid an innings defeat," said Mashud.

Bangladesh have so far lost seven matches by innings in their eleven Tests so far.

(Scorecard and other stories on page 13)

AL won't

FROM PAGE 1
its next session. The constitution requires that the election be held within 90 days since resignation of the previous president.

Azad, standing in for Sheikh Hasina, now on a visit to the United Kingdom and the United States, said the acting Speaker did not entertain any of the notices his party had submitted for discussion in the just prorogued budget session.

One of the major issues that his party wanted talk about was the unceremonious exit of AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury on June 21 under "BNP pressure", he said.

The Chair's repeated refusal to allow some AL lawmakers to speak in the House led to another walkout. The main opposition, which stayed away until the Sangsad was prorogued on July 15, is yet to decide whether it would go back to parliament or not.

While there is an indication that the fourth session of the current parliament may be summoned earlier than usual, the AL's return to the House remains uncertain.

Meanwhile, its stance has been hardened following rejection of a bail petition by its Shariatpur lawmaker Shawqat Ali and his subsequent arrest.

Hasina is expected to return home on August 10.

Badruddoza Chowdhury was elected president unopposed on November 12 after independent candidate Barrister Rowshan Ali had withdrawn his candidature at the last moment.

Since his resignation on June 21, Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar has stood in as the acting president.

The ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) is yet to decide on its presidential candidate.

Hamid's JS membership

FROM PAGE 12
Sultana, after hearing the writ petition filed by advocate Fazlur Rahman as petitioner, yesterday decided to pronounce the judgement on July 24.

Fazlur Rahman filed the writ petition challenging the validity of parliament membership of the deputy leader of the opposition, also the former speaker, on the ground that he did not take oath as MP in accordance with the provision of the Constitution.

Senior lawyer Khan Saifur Rahman, appearing for the petitioner, argued during the hearing that the present deputy leader of the opposition in parliament ceased his membership of parliament by not taking oath as per article 148 of the Constitution.

As such, the Awami League lawmaker, advocate Hamid, should be deemed to have lost his membership of parliament "for violating the provision of the Constitution", he pleaded.

This court had issued the rule upon advocate Abdul Hamid and others last February asking them to show cause as to why his parliament seat should not be declared to have been "deemed vacated" for not taking oath in accordance with provision of the Constitution.

Senior lawyer Khan Saifur Rahman, appearing for the petitioner, argued during the hearing that the present deputy leader of the opposition in parliament ceased his membership of parliament by not taking oath as per article 148 of the Constitution.

Barrister Amirul Islam and Shafiq Ahmed with advocate Ozayer Faruk, president of the Supreme Court Bar, appeared for the respondent to the writ petition.

The defence counsel submitted to the court that article 5(3) of the parliamentary rules empowers a sitting speaker to take oath himself before administering oath to other MPs of the present parliament.

"As such, advocate Hamid having taken oath earlier as per provision of the parliamentary rules, is not required to take oath again and therefore he is the valid Member of Parliament," said the counsel.

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Housewife

FROM PAGE 12
poured kerosene on his wife, Nasrin Sultana Nasima, 18, and set her on fire, following an argument on Sunday night.

Nasima was immediately rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where she succumbed to her burn injuries at 8:00am yesterday. The body was sent to the hospital morgue for an autopsy.

Sources added that Tajul was also injured in the fire as he tried to douse it. He too was admitted to the DMCH under police guard.

Rafiqul Islam, father of Nasima, alleged that her husband premeditated the killing.

In another incident, Kamrun Nahar Nipa, 27, was stabbed to death by her husband, Kamrunzaman Faruq, at their Nikunja residence.

Faruq stabbed Nipa in the throat following an altercation at 10:30pm, Sunday night. Nipa died on the spot.

Neighbours called the police who went immediately and arrested the alleged killer-husband.

Separate cases were filed with the police stations concerned.

turned profitable overnight.

These include 20 branches of Sonali Bank, six of Janata, 10 of Agrani and one of Bangladesh Krishi Bank.

The bankers also question the 'miraculous' recovery and doubt that this was a case of 'creative auditing'.

In case the recovery was genuine, it again demonstrated huge thefts in these branches during the loss-making years.

Meantime, Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed last week asked the banks concerned to appoint audit firms to check on the branch records. He also asked the banks to send teams from headquarters to verify the claims.

It is now doubted that many of the branches actually disbursed loans and adjusted defaulted amounts against the new disbursement.

According to the banks, Sonali has 210 branches bleeding continuously for the last five years of which 55 were supposed to be closed down by June this year.

Janata has 254 such loss-making branches and 29 of them were supposed to be shut down by June. Agrani has 42 such branches of which 31 were to be closed down by June.

Saifur sees evil axis

FROM PAGE 1
According to the banks, they could not implement the closure for 33 branches because of cases against the move. Sonali Bank has 27 such branches, Janata two, Agrani one, Rupali one and Krishi two.

They could not close down 12 branches because of 'protest' by local people. Sonali and Janata have five such branches each, Agrani two and Rupali one.

Agrani Bank could not close down nine branches because of interference by ministers, state ministers and deputy ministers.

The NCBs officials cited, among other things, political interference from ministers, state ministers and deputy ministers is responsible for the stalled branch shedding process.

However, the finance minister yesterday told the bankers to ignore any political pressure to make the plan a success for the sake of a healthy banking sector, according to meeting sources.

"I am asking you not to entertain any such request or pressure. Go ahead with the plan. If there is any such pressure you report to me straight," Saifur reportedly told the bankers.

He was also surprised to know that as soon as the closure plan was rolled out, 37 of the NCB branches

Cable TV

FROM PAGE 1
imposed on the business in the current fiscal and declaration of a tax holiday on the business for the next five years, and restriction on unlimited imports of pay channels by the distributors.

They also demanded formulation of a national policy for cable business and a 'Satellite Channel Censor Board' and reduction of the license fee of Bangladesh Television (BTV) fixed for the cable operators.

At present, the government has fixed Tk 25, 000 as license renewal fee for the cable operators.

They also demanded a change in the monopolistic attitude towards the cable operators by the country's two distributors -- Translink International and Nationwide Communication Limited.

According to the meeting sources, the minister promised to consider the operators' demand for withdrawal of the supplementary tax imposed on the cable business. He also assured to make an effort for concrete solution to other demands of the operators.

Meanwhile, the government has formulated a draft policy styled, Cable Television Networks (Regulation and Management) 2002, to regulate the country's cable business. The draft is likely to be finalised soon after discussion with the authorities concerned.

EC kept in dark

FROM PAGE 1
None of the 26,753 voters of the offshore island municipality exercised their franchise on the polling day, re-fixed by the EC 38 days ago, as the ruling party's musclemen allegedly threatened them to stay off polling centres.

Officials of the EC said the local authorities must have known during the quite a long period for election campaign whether there was any plot to foil the polls. Although newspapers had predicted violence on the polling day, the authorities concerned did not raise the issue at the EC's pre-election law and order review meeting on July 11.

Asked about the Sandwip municipality election, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Syed, apparently hesitant to reply, said it was too early to comment. "Whoever had obstructed the election process will be taken to task," he added.

He replied in the negative when asked whether the authorities had alerted the commission about possible obstruction in the election. That is why the commission has called the officials concerned to explain it, he said.

The officials have to explain at today's meeting at the commission

office how such a unique situation arose. They include the deputy commissioner of Chittagong, the additional deputy commissioner (general), the superintendent of police, the returning officer and some others. Some of them might face disciplinary action, one source said.

Meanwhile, the EC has also sought reports in this regard from non-government election observer groups.

Many of the election officials believe that the local authorities were aware of preparations by certain quarter to create a situation so that voters do not turn up at the polling stations.

Referring to the background of Sandwip municipality election, one official said the situation was very complicated since the municipality came into being on February 28, 1999. The same year, the EC announced the election schedule, fixing October 28 as the polling day.

Following a court order for suspension of the election for eight weeks, the EC on October 27 suspended polling. And the situation remained the same till April this year.

On April 11, the Local Government Division in a letter to the EC requested it to hold election

in Sandwip municipality along with 14 other municipalities since the court order was no more in force.

The EC then asked the local authorities to report to it whether there was any legal complexities in holding election in Sandwip. On May 4, it was informed that there was no such complexity.

On June 12, the EC fixed July 20 as the voting day with 10 chairman candidates and 44 ward commissioner candidates including five women's reserve seats.

The CEC considers Saturday's polls a stray but unfortunate happening and told newsmen that election must take place there. A final decision would come from today's meeting.

After the voting hours on Saturday, Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) of Sandwip Biswanath Banik, who was the returning officer, faxed a message to the EC that only two ballots were cast. But both were found invalid.

The UNO also reported that there was no law and order problem during the voting hours - 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

King of kitchen

FROM PAGE 12
lished by former British Airways hostess Pat Kerr and a school-cum-flood shelter in Sylhet region.

Some 10 more school-cum-flood shelters across Bangladesh will be constructed using this fund, he added.

Tommy Miah said Buckingham Palace officials were surprised when Queen Elizabeth responded positively to such a tiny curry cookery book. "I was overwhelmed when the Queen agreed to write the foreword," Tommy recalled.

The queen is patron of both the Cancer Research Campaign and the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, he said.

He said many celebrities of media and political arena in the UK, Europe and North America, who love South Asian food, frequently visits the original Raj Hotel in 6 West Coates, Edinburgh.

Tommy Miah said celebrities who love Bangladeshi food includes Tom Jones, Sir Richard Branson, Victoria Wood and the Prime Minister's wife, Cherie Blair. Cherie Blair loves Kutchhi Bhindi, a vegetarian sweet and sour curry made with okra, Tommy says.

Pointing to his little formal education Tommy said I had no capital or family connections in the catering

business but I'd always been interested in food and I often made curries at