

Govt wants to keep opposition out of parliament: AL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) yesterday blamed the government for hatching a conspiracy to keep the opposition away from parliament.

"The government is not serious about the dialogue offered by the deputy speaker and that is why the treasury bench members are delivering speeches full of invective against Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina without any objection from the Chair," Opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid told The Daily Star yesterday.

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"We did not brush aside the

dialogue offer and it is in the process," he said, adding that but the treasury bench members' attitude towards opposition makes it clear that the government wants to make parliament inactive.

Meanwhile, in a statement yesterday, the opposition chief whip strongly protested the remarks made by the law minister, shipping minister and two other MPs in the House on Tuesday.

He called on the Speaker to expunge the unparliamentary languages from the proceedings.

Expressing doubt about the 'neutrality' of the Speaker, Abdus Shahid said, "He (the Speaker) did not stop the treasury bench members when they were delivering speeches violating Articles 270 and 301 of the rules of procedures."

Arsenic-free water by 2010: Bhuiyan

BSS, Dhaka

LGRD and Cooperatives minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday told the House that supply of arsenic-free pure drinking water would be ensured by 2010.

Replies to a question from treasury bench member Manirul Haque Chowdhury, the minister said the BNP government had ensured pure drinking water to 98 per cent of the population during its tenure in government from 1991 to 96. But pure drinking water could not be supplied as tubewell water was contaminated with arsenic.

He said the government had in the meantime implemented various projects to provide arsenic-free water. He said arrangements are being made to provide pure drinking water in the contaminated areas through pipelines under a pilot project.



The Oikya Prachesta stages a demonstration in the city yesterday protesting 'anti-people' budget and the move to send soldiers to Iraq.

He said at present there are two lakh 10 thousand subscribers of Dhaka WASA. He said daily production and supply capacity of WASA is 152 crore litres while actual production and supply is 145 crore litres.

Replies to another question from Haifiz Ibrahim, Bhuiyan said as per a survey a total of 5,20,341 tubewells in 59 upazilas were contaminated with arsenic. He said that survey would be carried out in another 147 upazilas soon.

He told the House that 80 thousand field workers would be imparted training to conduct the survey.

He listed various steps to solve the problem which include testing tubewell water of all upazilas, creating public awareness, identify patients with primary symptom, supply of pure drinking water on emergency basis in arsenic contaminated areas and taking step to survey the arsenic level.

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday assented to six bills passed in the current session of the 8th Parliament.

The bills are: The Members of Parliament (Remuneration and Allowances) (Amendment) Bill, 2003; The Bangladesh Sericulture Board (Amendment) Bill, 2003; The Bangladesh Silk Research and Training Institute Bill, 2003; The Ministers, Ministers of State and Deputy Ministers (Remuneration and Privileges) (Amendment) Bill, 2003; The Speaker and Deputy Speaker (Remuneration and Privileges) (Amendment) Bill, 2003; and The Prime Minister's (Remuneration and Privileges) (Amendment) Bill, 2003, says an official release.

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The 132/33 KV sub-station with two 60 MW transformers has been facing acute problems in meeting the demand of subscribers of Gulshan, Banani, Baridhara, Basundhara, Badda, Joarshahara, Kalachandpur, Nikunja and Uttara.

State Minister for Power Iqbal Hossain Mahmood formally inaugurated the transformer on the sub-station premises at Basundhara yesterday.

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