

Pro-government lawyers out to divide the legal profession

UNB, Dhaka

Leader of the Opposition in parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday alleged that the BNP-Jamaat alliance government has let loose pro-government lawyers in a planned way to create a rift among lawyers.

"They (BNP-Jamaat) came to power through a rigged general election and resorted to naked interference in the judiciary... unfortunately, now they are trying to create a rift among the lawyers," she said.

Sheikh Hasina made the remark when leaders of Dhaka District Bar Association met her at the Dhanmondi office of Awami League yesterday.

Hasina lambasted the alliance government for imposing tax on lawyers and termed it "nothing but repression."

She accused the BNP-Jamaat alliance of unleashing a reign of terror across the country.

Referring to a US report on Bangladesh, the Awami League chief said bribery and corruption have crossed all limits. "BNP is patronising bribery, criminality and corruption," she said.

IFBNP-Jamaat alliance remains in power, she said, socio-economic improvement of the country would remain a far cry.

Hasina accused the ruling alliance of following a "double-standard" by releasing criminals

30 hurt as train derails in Mymensingh

UNB, Mymensingh

A local train derailed near Shyamganj Station here yesterday evening, injuring at least 30 people.

Railway sources and witnesses said a compartment of the 273 down train bound for Mymensingh went off the track at about 7pm near the outer signal of Shyamganj Station.

A preliminary inquiry report said the accident occurred because the center-pin was missing at a point along the railroad near the scene.

Rescue operation did not start till 8:15pm.

Of the injured, ten were admitted to different hospitals while others given first aid.

Ten critically injured people were treated at different hospitals.

CityCell

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at a cheap rate," he added.

Terming the cell phone industry highly capital intensive, he said the government should support the industry for its further growth.

He said although the government claims the telecommunications sector as an important part of infrastructure, it is yet to provide the support that the sector needs.

"Taxes on telecommunications equipment are high in Bangladesh compared to other neighbouring countries," he said.

He called upon other cell phone operators to share infrastructure facilities to ease pressure on the country's limited foreign currency reserves.

"We welcome new operators as they will create more competition in the market," he added.

3 US troops killed

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revenge after the deaths of Qusay and Uday," labourer Mohammed Alisaid.

Soldiers on patrol and manning checkpoints said guerrilla attacks on them -- already bolder and more frequent -- had increased markedly in the few days since the sons' killings.

"Things are worse now," said Staff Sergeant Kenneth Maxwell, from Hartford, Connecticut, as he manned a heavy machinegun atop an armoured vehicle, watching over a checkpoint where soldiers searched Iraqi cars for weapons.

"They used to just attack us, mostly at night. But now they are attacking us during the day with AK-47s and RPGs (rocket-propelled grenades), at any American soldiers they can find," Maxwell said, eyes alert under the baking sun, in temperatures above 40 Celsius (105 Fahrenheit).

Iraq's biggest selling newspaper, Azzaman, splashed colour photographs of Uday and Qusay's corpses on its front page, under a headline proclaiming the brothers were dead.

US forces took the unprecedented step of inviting a small group of journalists, including two from Reuters, to view the bodies on Friday. The faces of the two men

Students block road at Tejgaon protesting injury to mate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students of Tejgaon Polytechnic Institute blocked Tongi Diversion Road for about an hour yesterday protesting a road accident in which one of their fellow students was injured on Thursday.

Over a hundred students of the institute barricaded the road from 10:00am to 11:00am bringing a complete halt to vehicular movement on the busy road.

The agitating students demanded speed-breaker in front of the institute as accidents take place frequently due to reckless driving.

On information, police went to the spot and removed the barricade as the authorities assured the students of constructing a speed-breaker in front of the institute in no time.

One shot dead

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leaving Yunus Ali dead on the spot and injuring six others.

Braving gunfire, the villagers caught six of the gang while others managed to flee.

The villagers later handed over the six to the police. They are Nizamuddin, 25, Babul Hossain, 22, Karim, 20, Selim, 22, Sohel Rana, 20, and Harun, 30.

The injured villagers, identified as Shamsu, 25, Din Islam, 26, Enamuddin, 35, Altaf, 52, Sohrab 30, and Jahangir, 35, were admitted to Enam clinic at Savar.

Vegetable exports

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Biman charges for each kilogram of vegetables to the Middle East, the private operator offered to carry the same at Tk 55.

Syed Salahuddin Mahmud, general secretary of the Bangladesh Fruit, Vegetable and Allied Products Exporters Association, told The Daily Star that Biman's London flight, which used to carry 20 tonnes of vegetables, has reduced the volume to 11 tonnes.

"Vegetable cargo space is shrinking while we are receiving more orders," Mahmud mentioned.

He demanded the government request the foreign airlines to carry more vegetables.

When the UVEV was set up in mid-1980s, the world vegetable market was \$6 billion and has now swollen to \$23 billion. But Bangladesh is failing to tap it and limiting itself only to the 'ethnic market' or people of Bangladesh origin due to transportation problem.

Twenty-seven per cent of its vegetable exports go to Europe, 22 per cent to Saudi Arabia, 12 per cent to other Middle Eastern countries, 11 per cent to Kuwait, 10 per cent to Bahrain and eight per cent to Qatar.

Bangladesh's vegetable export basket includes bitter gourd, snake gourd, bush bean, okra, ridged gourd, wax gourd, eggplant and green chili.

The Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation's vegetables and fish cold storage near Zia International Airport, however, provides low-cost warehousing facilities for vegetables which cannot get cargo space.

Private universities

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educationists in this field. The

He said private universities were making a positive contribution to the country's education sector, but would be helped if the government lowered the guarantee payment and allowed private universities with small campuses to function.

Petrobangla

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by using a 'price deficit fund'.

As it pays all its earnings to the government, the Petrobangla faces the problem of having not enough cash to pay for gas from Sangu and Jalalabad. Petrobangla owes the Shell Oil and Unocal over US\$120 million in arrears for gas purchases from the Sangu and Jalalabad fields.

The Petrobangla is contractually obligated to pay the companies in foreign currency.

Sangu's monthly bill comes at around \$15 million for purchase of around 160 mmcf of gas. Jalalabad's monthly bill stands at around \$5.7 million for purchase of around 120 mmcf.

The Petrobangla sold gas worth over Tk 3,000 in the last fiscal. If gas was not there, Bangladesh would have imported oil worth about Tk 7,000 crore to meet its energy demands.

"The sector is the prime earner of the government and key mover of the economy. Its performance will continue to excel," said a Petrobangla official, preferring anonymity.

"Unfortunately, we get between Tk 600 crore and Tk 700 crore a year in the Annual Development Programme, although our true requirements are double the allocation."

Among other government agencies that contribute large chunks to the national exchequer are the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) and Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTB).

The BPC contributed over Tk 3,000 crore in import duty alone and the BTB Tk 1,600 crore in the last fiscal.



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia talks to Bangladesh Nationalist Party leaders from Khulna at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday. Whip M Ashraf Hossain, left, Mayor of Khulna Sheikh Tayebur Rahman, fourth from left, are present.

7 die in Liberia

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"Seven people died and this is very sorrowful. The fire is coming from across the bridge," said one loyalist commander on the scene as bullets whistled past from rebel lines a few hundred meters away.

The battle raged despite a unilateral cease-fire that was declared by the rebels on Friday shortly after Bush announced US troops were on their way to take up positions off the coast of Liberia. Liberians, who have been begging foreign troops to intervene, welcomed news of the deployment, but it was not immediately clear whether any US soldiers would go ashore. US television network CNN quoted Pentagon officials as saying US troops would only give logistical and communication support to West African peacekeepers who are expected to start deploying by the end of next week.

With US forces already stretched in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Pentagon is thought to be reluctant to put combat troops on the ground, but a White House spokesman left the option open.

US officials said on Friday the warships were seven to 10 days sailing time away.

"We are deeply concerned the condition of the Liberian people is getting worse and worse and worse," Bush told reporters in Washington as Friday's deaths added to a government-issued toll of several hundreds in the past few days.

Leg-spinner Stuart MacGill took 5-77 for Australia after the pace attack had struggled to break through the top order.

Top-ranked Australia lead the two-match series 1-0 after Bangladesh, who have not won a Test in 20 attempts, lost the first match inside three days by an innings and 132 runs in Darwin last week.

Waugh's 74 not out kept him on course for his 32nd Test century.

Sent in to bat by Australia, Bangladesh's 295 was their highest first innings total since their 400 Test debut against India in Dhaka three years ago.

Colonel San Pwint said the plot was timed to coincide with Martyrs Day on July 19, which marks the anniversary of the assassination of Aung San Suu Kyi's father, independence hero General Aung San.

drove out Joseph Estrada.

Arroyo has faced coup rumours in the past over questions about her legitimacy as leader and graft in her government.

Cardinal Jaime Sin, the Roman Catholic archbishop of Manila and the most influential church leader in the country of 82 million, warned earlier on Saturday of "ongoing plots, organised and already in operation, set on destabilising our society."

"We cannot deny that much reform is needed," he said in a statement. "What must be done for national renewal can and must be done through peaceful means."

A military spokesman declined to comment on the cardinal's statement as television commentators talked of retired generals occupying prime army housing and low-ranking soldiers risking their lives for as little as 4,000 pesos (\$74) a month.

Retirement

FROM PAGE 1

all secretaries and additional secretaries open to such appointments.

According to the service rule, the government can appoint, on contract, civil servants from people with outstanding career records who are deemed essential at a given time.

But partisan consideration and cronyism now dictate such appointments, sources said.

Police could neither seize the bus nor arrest the driver.

A case was filed with the Kotwali Police Station.

In another accident, Idris Ali, 50, died after he was knocked down by passenger bus at Navabpur at about 8:00am.

A passer-by took Idris, a resident of Arabhazar upazila of Narayanganj, to the DMCH where the doctors on duty declared him dead.

Police could neither seize the bus nor arrest the driver.

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Authority. But the committee opted to work on the power sector first considering the power crisis.

"The committee also asked the comptroller and auditor general to report to it irregularities found in different organisations in the power sector." The committee will then recommend to the ministry concerned actions against those responsible," said Rustam Ali Farazi, another BNP member of the committee.

Committee Chairman and BNP lawmaker Abdul Alim chaired yesterday's meeting. It was attended by Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan, Majibur Rahman Sarwar, Shamsul Islam Khan, Rustam Ali Farazi, Alamgir Mohammad Mahfuzullah Farid, Abul Kalam Azad and Salahuddin Ahmed -- all from the BNP.

Police and army personnel rushed to the area. None however could be held in this connection.

A special drive will be launched to nab armed activists of the two organisations, an official said.

The delegation suggested intensifying the ongoing BDR-led joint operation in the southwestern region.

Industrialisation, possibility of setting up some essential drugs factories, re-opening of closed mills and factories and problems of the running mills were also discussed at the meeting.

The MPs requested the prime minister to take necessary steps for starting work on the proposed Khan Jahan Ali Airport in Khulna, construction of Padma bridge and establishment of a planned 210MW power plant in Khulna.

PM's Principal Secretary Dr Kamal Uddin Siddiqui was present.

Shyamprince recovered Mishel's decomposed body 17 days after the abduction.

Despite hunts in different city and other areas police could not arrest Shoyeb and Hanif till 9:00 last night.

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Wounds heal better on quitting smoking

REUTERS, New York

Quitting smoking for as little as 4 weeks can dramatically reduce the odds of wound infection after surgery, according to a new report.

Surgery patients are routinely advised to quit smoking before their operation, and previous research has shown that abstinence from smoking can reduce post-op complications, including wound infection. However, exactly how long abstinence must be maintained to produce a benefit has been unclear.

To investigate, Dr. Lars Tue Sorensen and colleagues, from Bispebjerg University Hospital in Copenhagen, studied the healing of small incisions in 78 volunteers. Some were habitual smokers and some had never smoked.

Half the smokers were allowed to continue smoking while the others abstained from smoking using a nicotine or placebo patch. After 1 week and again at 4, 8, and 12 weeks later, small suture-closed incisions were made on the smokers.

For comparison, among most of the never-smokers an incision was made at only one of those time points.

"I know that all our people would never accept such a situation recurring," he said. "We will take severe action against those who were colluding with these elements to try to disrupt peace and stability in this country."

Kyaw Win stopped short of saying that Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been held in detention since political violence on May 30, was involved in the dissident campaign which he said had begun in late 2002.

"We are continuing our investigations to try to find out if the NLD is implicated in this campaign of civil unrest," he said. "Only Aung San Suu Kyi and the leaders themselves will know whether they are implicated or not."

Other military intelligence officials said the 12 "saboteurs" were arrested on July 17 in possession of a quantity of explosives which were to be used to bomb the homes of junta leaders including Kyaw Win.

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Wounds became infected in 12 per cent of smokers, significantly more than the 2 per cent of never-smokers, the investigators report in the Annals of Surgery. In addition, wounds broke open in 12 per cent of smokers, while no ruptures were seen among never-smokers.

After 4 weeks and again at 8 and 12 weeks, abstinent smokers were significantly less likely to develop a wound infection than continuous smokers. Moreover, this benefit did not depend on whether they quit using a nicotine or placebo patch.

No difference in wound rupture rates was seen between abstainers and continuous smokers.

Just 4 weeks of abstinence from smoking "reduces wound infections to a level similar to never-smokers," Sorensen's team concludes.

Two Stanford University physicians point out in a commentary that these results "suggest that surgeons need to be even more active in recommending smoking cessation programs to their patients because the impact of smoking on even minor incisions can be significant."

Netrokona by-polls

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candidate against the ruling four-party alliance candidate has so far been positive," he added.

This is the first time since its defeat in October 2001 general elections that the AL is participating in any parliamentary by-election.

Terming the participation in the by-election as part of the ongoing movement against the government, a meeting of the AL central working committee early this month urged all the pro-liberation and non-communal forces to start uniting against the government from the Netrokona-3 by-election.

The ruling coalition has nominated Khadiza Amin, the death of whose husband Nurul Amin Talukder left the constituency vacant.

The AL candidate, M Jubed Ali, won from this constituency in 1991 but was defeated in 1996 and 2001 polls.

Sources in the AL said the successes in some recent municipal and city corporation polls have encouraged the party to contest the Netrokona-3 by-election.

"Moreover, the party wants to revive relations with its old friends and the Netrokona-3 by-election is an occasion to bring together the anti-government forces," said an AL leader.

"If it succeeds, the party will strive for a greater coalition with the like-minded parties against the government," he added.

Sources said senior AL leaders held talks with Gano Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) Mujahidul Islam Selim, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Haq Inu and Krishak Sramik Janata League (KSJL) President Kader Siddiqui MP on the issue.

Party sources said it will also

advocate Mahbube Alam submitted that the government action was malafide. He said about 30 applications for permission to launch private TV channels were lying pending but the government ignored them by allowing ntv under undue influence.

The counsel questioned the post facto approval of the information ministry, which he said had no power to grant such approval. He submitted that the approval was biased, politically influenced and described it as a 'colourable exercise of power'.

The shareholders of ITCL are close relatives of Prime Minister's Political Secretary Mosaddek Ali Faltu and State Minister for Home Lutuzzaman Babar, the counsel pointed out.

Referring to the guidelines on private channel television installation and operation framed in 1998, the counsel submitted that the ownership of TV channels could not be transferred to any person or institution without prior permission from the government.

As per regulations of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Act 2001, a licence or any right acquired wholly or partially shall not be transferable and such transfer, if any, shall be void.

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