

Gram Sarkar

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lawmaker and brother of the prime minister, at a BNP upazila council in Feni, reflects the thought working at the centre of the process. "We will have to make sure all Gram Sarkar units are filled with our party men," he said on August 13.

The government passed the Gram Sarkar Act on February 27 to form the Gram Sarkar units to ensure grassroots-level participation in development and that they assist the Union Parishad but not act as administrative bodies.

The Gram Sarkar concept received opposition within the government and outside, as it wants to select its members instead of electing representatives. Moreover, a writ is pending with the High Court on the legality of the Gram Sarkar formation.

The law dictates that 13 members of a unit will be selected from voters of an area, with two elected members of the union parishad in the lead.

A unit should be formed in the presence of at least 10 per cent of voters in a ward, but it is still confined to paper as the government bent it at will.

Only 40 voters turned up in a ward of Kurigram, home to 1,500 voters, but the official registered 71 signatures and formed the 15-member unit.

Although barely 16 out of 1,600 voters were present in Shinganj, Bogra, the official pushed ahead with formation of the unit.

Only 55 voters were present in Chuadanga, although there are 1,800 and the official handicapped

JCD men

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injured in the attack.

Seriously injured Ripon, Masum and Delwar were sent to university medical centre.

The JCD activists also ousted Shuvro and Ripon from the hall and ordered them to leave campus.

Meanwhile, the Progressive Students Alliance (PSA), the Sammilita Sanskritik Jote (SSJ) submitted a memorandum to the JU vice-chancellor, proctor and provost of the MB hall yesterday demanding punishment to the JCD cadres involved in the attack.

Earlier, the PSA-SSJ brought out a procession on the campus at around 11:30am demanding exemplary punishment to the JCD cadres and naming of the central auditorium as Shaheed Zahir Raihan Auditorium.

The JCD activists on the other hand gheraoed the scheduled syndicate meeting for three hours Sunday afternoon and demanded withdrawal of expulsion order against its three activists, removal of Shaheed Salam-Barkat hall Provost AKM Shahinawaz and naming of the auditorium after late president Ziaur Rahman.

The VC had an hour long meeting with the JCD leaders and reportedly agreed to discuss their demands in the coming syndicate meet.

The VC however could not be contacted for comment.

Jamal abduction

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Meanwhile, no further development was reported in another millionaire businessman Rezaur Rahman Zakir murder case till yesterday.

Zakir went missing since he left his city residence at Shah Garibullah Housing Society under Khulshi thana on August 11 and his dead body was recovered from Boalkhali the following day.

No-confidence

FROM PAGE 12

Pakistani troops into India's Kargil sector in Jammu and Kashmir in 1999 had taken all by surprise.

The opposition leader said people wanted to know from the government what was achieved by spending Rs 8,000 crore and deploying five lakh soldiers along the border with Pakistan soon after the terrorist attack on Indian parliament in December 2001.

Deputy Prime Minister LK Advani, who spoke just after Sonia, termed "incorrect" the charges against the government and said he was disappointed by the note of aggression in his speech.

Refuting the charge against the government of jeopardising the country's security, Advani said it was the BJP-led coalition government that had brought under control the proxy war unleashed by a country in India's western neighbourhood and destroyed all modules of Inter-services Intelligence in the country.

He said democracy has strengthened over the last five years and recalled the Congress' chief's justification of imposition of emergency by the government headed by Indira Gandhi in 1975.

Before the debate began, Vajpayee, addressing members of Lok Sabha belonging to the ruling coalition, said his government was ready to fight out the challenge posed by the no-confidence motion but wondered why the opposition had brought the motion so late.

"We have long been waiting for the motion," he said and hoped the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) would emerge victorious in the trial of strength.

Meanwhile, Sonia Gandhi-led main opposition party Congress decided yesterday morning that it would not boycott Defence Minister George Fernandes' speech in the

two members for the unit in their absence. In Ukha, 60 of 3,200 voters turned up, leading the official to suspend formation of the unit.

In Gouradi, the voter turnout was lower than the number of the Gram Sarkar members: as few as 11 of 987 voters arrived.

In Bogra's Rajapur, the official appointed a farmer as a member in the teacher category and a landowner as a landless farmer.

The official in Puthia, Rajshahi, saw that none of the voters showed up in the designated place for Gram Sarkar formation. The official sought the help of the local BNP leader who said all voters went to attend a rally of the prime minister. Another BNP leader came forward, collected 73 signatures and submitted a list of the Gram Sarkar members to the official.

Numerous clashes and scuffles have taken place since the government made efforts to form the Gram Sarkar. The feuds surfaced mainly between two rival groups of the BNP, followed by supporters of the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, and a small number of incidents took place between the BNP and the Awami League.

In Nilphamari's Jaldhaka and Domar, BNP and Jamaat activists clashed when the two parties could not reach a consensus over the Gram Sarkar representation.

Clashes also took place in different unions of Pabna, Gaibandha, Khulna, Gazipur, Chandpur, Bagerhat and Bogra, among other places.

By exception, there are instances of rush of voters and competition among members that made the local body formation difficult.

In Bhairob, four candidates arrived to fill the slot of distinguished personality required for the 15-member body. The candidates are a khalim of a mosque, a fruit vendor, a milkman and a small trader.

To decide on the candidature, the government official asked the candidates to assemble their supporters in cues. The milkman outperformed others by drawing more supporters to his cue. The rest were made members in the farmer category.

OIC secy gen

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Maldivian President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom's special envoy and Health Minister Ahmed Abdulla conveyed his government's decision in this regard when he made a courtesy call on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office here on Sunday.

"The Maldives always supports Bangladesh," a spokesman of the Prime Minister's Office quoted Abdulla as saying.

He further said the Maldives and Bangladesh extend cooperation and support to each other in various regional and international forums and hoped that such interaction would strengthen in future.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia also hoped that cooperation between the two fraternal countries in various international forums would continue to expand.

The Maldives special envoy praised the role of Bangladesh leadership in strengthening regional cooperation, particularly development process under the purview of Saarc.

The Maldives special envoy extended an invitation from President Gayoom to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia for her visit to his country. Khaleda reciprocated by inviting the Maldives president.

debate on the motion.

The Congress and other opposition parties have been boycotting Fernandez for nearly one and a half years protesting his re-induction into the ministry after his resignation in the wake of a news portal's expose of corruption in defence deals in 2001.

Vajpayee will intervene in the debate, expected to last 12 hours before the motion is put to vote this evening.

Notice on 2 OCs

FROM PAGE 1

Joypurhat Abdul Jalil Mondol, they were also charged with ignoring orders of superior officers.

Departmental investigation into the incident found that six policemen were injured because of the negligence of the two officers, said Mondol.

According to the SP, Shafi went to the 'high risk' spot with a negligible number of forces and Haque did not conduct any advance study that he was ordered to do.

"Most bullets of the policemen were damp and their rundown rifles did not function properly during the fight with the militants," said Rezaul, a sub-inspector of Khetlal thana.

"They suddenly besieged us while we were waiting in front of Montejar's house for reinforcements," said a policeman present at the raid.

Police believe that Montejar, a former leader of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, was one of the master-minds of the attack.

Police, however, recovered photos of Montejar Rahman and his eldest son Mominul Islam yesterday evening and decided to publish those in newspapers.



PHOTO: STAR

The new extension of arrival and departure halls at Zia International Airport is ready for inauguration by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia tomorrow.

LDC leaders' team

FROM PAGE 12

Commerce and Industry (DCCI) and a member of the WTO Advisory Committee, decided not to attend the Cancun meeting.

Hyder is learnt to have written to the commerce ministry that he was unable to attend the meet on 'personal grounds'.

Manzur, on the other hand, told The Daily Star that he has other engagements during the Cancun talks.

"I cannot attend the meet on personal grounds," Manzur said.

Bangladesh's negotiation stands every chance of being affected at the Cancun meeting in absence of expert opinions, sources in the business circle said.

The fifth ministerial meeting of the WTO is slated for September 10 to 14 in Mexico. Though the outcome of the meet is still in doubt, experts observe that the future of the global trading arrangement would be shaped up in the meet.

Bangladesh as the coordinator of 49 LDCs is expected to play a vital role at the meet. A conference of LDC trade ministers in Dhaka in June adopted a 16-point demand.

Sources said both Debapriya and Hyder played vital role on behalf of the government in convincing the

LDCs to include temporary movement of natural persons in the 16-point Dhaka Declaration.

Besides, they prepared the country position paper and negotiation points for Bangladesh for the just concluded Montreal meet, a mini-ministerial gathering attended by trade ministers from both developed and developing countries, to finalise the agenda for Cancun talks.

"The Bangladesh delegation will not be weak in the absence of three persons, as the delegation members basically have no role over there. All preparations have already been taken here," Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury told The Daily Star.

Asked why then he is taking a 14-member delegation to Mexico, he said the team members will be attending the talks for their own capacity building.

"But the fact remains that broad-based alliance building has a crucial role in multilateral negotiations and the non-government sources, business and other trade networks provide inputs during the negotiations. Bangladesh will be deprived from such access," said an NGO source.

The other members of the delegation include Commerce Secretary Suhel Ahmad, Permanent Representative to the WTO Dr Toufiq Ali, First Secretary Toufiq Rahman, Chairman of the Tariff Commission Mohammad Ali Taslim, Deputy Chief of the Tariff Commission Dr Mostafa Abid Khan, Deputy Secretary of the commerce ministry Nasir Ahmad and Senior Assistant Chief of the commerce ministry Abu Youssuf.

Representatives included in the delegation from the private sector include President of the International Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (ICC-Bangladesh) Mahbubur Rahman, Vice-president of the ICC-Bangladesh ASM Kashem, former president of the MCCI Latifur Rahman, former president of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association Matin Chowdhury and President of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association Kazi Moniruzzaman.

Meantime, CPD is going to hold a symposium on post-Doha marginalisation of LDC concern in collaboration with a number of international NGOs on September 12 in Cancun.

The dates for the written test will be announced later.

Yahia Mollah, member of the PSC and also in-charge of the 24th BCS examination, told The Daily Star, "We published the results in very short time considering the five-month delay of the test due to cancellation of the same test held earlier".

In reply to a question, he said, "Usually the commission selects candidates for the written test in proportion to the vacant posts and the ratio of examinees and vacant posts is usually 10:1."

On March 3, the PSC had cancelled the preliminary test held on February 28 following reports of question leakage. It had formed an inquiry committee to investigate the matter but the committee is yet to complete its preliminary test.

A seven-member team comprising officials of the Detective Branch, CID and district police are quizzing the suspects at the Khetlal Police Station.

"They (arrestees) are highly trained and are reciting scriptures and uttering Allah's name during interrogation," one of the interrogators said.

Some of them were involved in the Dainapur blast, he added.

The arrestees, however, confessed that they gathered at Montejar's house for training on theoretical issues and combat operations.

The Court observed that since no documents of leaked out questions nor the genuine questions were submitted before it, the court could not interfere in the matter on the basis of newspaper clippings only.

The writ on behalf of 10 participants of the test was filed by Barrister Amir-Ul Islam on Sunday.

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