

Contribute to 14th amendment bill

Moudud asks opposition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed yesterday urged political parties with representation in parliament to contribute to the 14th amendment to the constitution.

"The amendment bill is now in the parliamentary standing committee on law ministry for further scrutiny. We want participation of opposition parties in the committee meeting for their suggestions," he told a press conference.

He said Khandakar Mahbub Uddin Ahmed, chairman of the committee, wrote to Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina, other opposition leaders and talked to the deputy leader of the opposition Abdul Hamid by phone for their participation in the meeting.

The government has two-thirds majority and does not require opposition support to pass the bill, he said, adding, "But as a responsive government we want to take suggestions from the opposition."

He said the government was ready to extend the current session of parliament for discussion on the bill.

The bill proposed six changes in the constitution, including introduction of 45 women's reserved seats, permanent provision for display of portraits of the president and prime minister in government offices, speedy swearing-in of law-makers-elect by the outgoing speaker and automatic dissolution of local government bodies after expiry of five-year tenures.

Moudud said members of the standing committee stressed changing the proposals for hanging the portrait of the prime minister at the president's office and reducing the 90 day deadline for holding polls to local government bodies after their dissolution.

He criticised Hasina's demand for reserving one-third parliamentary seats for women and said when her Awami League was in power it

placed a bill on June 17, 2000 with the provision for 30 reserved seats.

On the demand for direct polls to the reserved seats, he said: "As far as I know, there is no direct election system in reserve seats anywhere in the world."

Attack on Prof Azad BCL reiterates demand for arrest of culprits

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing of the opposition Awami League, yesterday reiterated its demand for immediate arrest and trial of the 'real culprits' responsible for the attack on prominent writer Humayun Azad.

Addressing a rally on the Dhaka University campus, the BCL leaders blamed the 'Jamaat-Shibir quarters' for the attack under the patronisation of the government.

They said those, who are the exponents of freethinking, are the main targets of the BNP-Jamaat led coalition government.

The BCL leaders said 24 days have passed after the brutal attack on Azad, but the government has not taken any steps to arrest and punish the attackers.

The BCL leaders also threatened to launch tougher programmes if the government does not arrest and bring the culprits into justice soon.

Presided over by BCL President Liaquat Sikder, the rally was addressed by General Secretary Nazrul Islam Babu, Manufa Akter Popy, Rafiqul Islam Kotowal, Baloram Podder, Sahajada Mohiddin, Alok Banik, Abdul Alim, Miraz Hossain, Hemayet Uddin Khan Himu and Tasbirul Haque Anu.