

AL joins JS

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marks its change of heart that came after it decided to take part in Jatiya Sangsad activities including nominating its lawmakers to parliamentary standing committees, most of them formed in July last year.

The main opposition insisted the parliamentary standing committees be retooled as it termed their formation unconstitutional -- a demand the ruling party brushed aside.

The AL did not nominate its members last year, saying the committees were constituted without prior discussion with the opposition.

CRIME CONTROL

The opposition lawmakers came down heavily on the government for its failure to arrest killers of AL lawmaker Ahsanullah Master and attackers of British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury and racketeers of the largest arms haul in Chittagang.

The AL demanded that the ruling coalition hold general discussions on the hot-button issues in parliament and a brake on law and order downside -- a demand that prompted LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan to assure the opposition lawmakers of strong anticrime steps.

"There is no instance of the rule of law in the country. The government patronises criminals. People want freedom," said Hasina, who joined the session a couple of minutes after her deputies went in amid recitation from the Quran. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia was not present in the House.

AL lawmaker Suranjit Sengupta launched into an unscheduled debate on law and order that lasted over an hour with the participation

of his party colleagues Abdus Samad Azad and Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim and Mannan Bhuiyan and State Minister for Home Lutfuzzaman Babar from the treasury bench.

Bhuiyan alleged Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar allowed the opposition lawmakers to speak beyond the rules of procedure.

The LGRD minister said the government took measures to arrest Bangla Bhai and the killers of Ahsanullah Master, gunned down at a roadside rally in the industrial town of Tongi on May 7. "Nobody is above the law. If Bangla Bhai is arrested and proved guilty, he will face legal action."

He said investigators would submit the chargesheet on the killing of Ahsanullah Master in 30 days.

Hasina asked the state minister for home why Superintendent of Police (SP) Abdul Baten, who was investigating the murder of Ahsanullah Master, was arrested.

"Was the bribe less than expected? Why did the SP offer to bribe the state minister? Is it true that the state minister into mal-practice and police officials know it?" Hasina asked.

Babar brushed aside the allegation and demanded expunction of Hasina's remarks on him.

Samad Azad said there is no rule of law in Bangladesh, adding: "Who is running the state -- the government or criminals?"

Earlier, a five-member delegation led by Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdul Hamid met the speaker and demanded enough time for budget discussion and retooling of parliamentary standing committees.

(Read the editorial)

Dogs snatch away boy from jackal's maw

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

Two street dogs saved a baby boy from a jackal's clutches at Chayail village under Jhenaidah Sadar upazila at dead of night Sunday.

The jackal sneaked in the house of day labourer Abdul Quddus at midnight, and grabbed and dragged his three-year-old sleeping son Ashik to a fallow land behind the house.

Hearing the baby's wails, two stray dogs rushed forward and launched a fierce attack on the jackal. The dogs could save the wounded baby just in time but failed to catch the jackal even after a long chase.

Hearing the dogs' barking, Quddus woke up and found his son missing. He and his wife came out and saw what seemed to them a miraculous scene of the dogs guarding their child.

Ashik was admitted to Jhenaidah Sadar Hospital next morning in a critical condition being severely bitten by the jackal.



PHOTO: STAR

Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh candidate Abdul Mannan for Dhaka-10 seat, third from right, with his party colleague Mahi B Chowdhury, third from left, take out a procession after the ruling party activists attacked a campaign procession in Fulbaria yesterday.

High revenue

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the government's stress on private sector-led growth was not properly reflected in the proposed budget.

Khosru however noted that the import tariff reduction is aimed at speeding up negotiations with neighbouring states for bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements.

The former commerce minister called for bringing structural changes in the capital market, saying the country's stock exchanges have been striving for modernisation and this drive should get active assistance from the government for further improvements.

Khosru also maintained that the government should give more attention to developing basic industries in the country.

Taking part in the discussion, former finance minister M Saidduzzaman labelled the proposed budget as 'bold' and in a sense 'daring', as the targets fixed are not justified by previous performance in the respective areas.

Saidduzzaman stressed proper utilisation of foreign aid and implementation of development projects for improving infrastructure. Noting that the annual development programme (ADP) is heavily dependent on foreign aid, he pointed out that the share of foreign aid in the next ADP too would be around 44.5 percent.

The former finance minister said the government's plan to doubling the credit flow to rural areas has to be sustainable, otherwise people would not be benefited from it.

He also termed the budget's target to generate nine lakh new employment in next year a very interesting one, and said, "We will be monitoring it to see whether it happens or not."

Bangladesh Bank (BB) Governor Fakhruddin Ahmed said, under the budget next year, there would not be any major problem in the macro-economy; but there are some short- and long-term issues. We have to wait for addressing the long-term issues, he said.

Fakhruddin said the bank interest rate in Bangladesh is much higher compared to the neighbouring countries, adding the BB is trying to pursue the commercial banks to charge lower lending interest to facilitate industrial growth.

Man held with pistol at court

UNB, *Dhaka*

Plainclothes police nabbed a young man with a 5-star pistol on the premises of Dhaka District Judge's Court yesterday.

Police said they searched the body of Md Jewel, 27, and found the pistol loaded with six bullets.

Jewel, who is now staying at Uttar Khan Miah Bari in Uttara, came to appear before a court in a murder case.

Jewel, son of Mujibur Rahman of Daulatpur, Kushtia, told police that he had bought the pistol for Tk one lakh to kill the kidnapper of her sister who was scheduled to come to the court yesterday.

He was handed over to Kotwali police.

Recruiters

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people from Iraq with cooperation from International Organisation for Migrants (IOM).

The government had also filed a case against a travel agency -- Grand Overseas Ltd -- that had sent 36 Bangladeshis to Iraq via Jordan. Three officials and employees of the agency were sent to jail for the crime, sources mentioned.

Around 2,000 Bangladeshis workers go to Jordan every year for job mainly in garments sector. As the country enjoys duty-free and quota-free access to US market, garment sector is booming there. Demand for Bangladeshi workers in the sector is very high, the sources said.

Some recruiters and travel agencies send workers to Jordan taking as much as Tk 1.50 lakh to Tk 2.25 lakh.

The government has also turned down proposals from some quarters to send Bangladeshi nationals from Kuwait for temporary work in military camps in Iraq, sources said.

DPRK envoy

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state. He was taken straight to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and connected to life saving devices.

A ten-member medical board headed by Professor Mobin Khan, chief of the Hepatology Department of the university, was formed. Other members included Prof M A Taher, Prof Khurshid Alam, Prof Mahmud Hasan, Prof Sirajul Islam.

The medical board advised immediate stabilisation of his blood pressure, which sharply fell with functions of other vital organs including his heart failing. He breathed his last at 12:40pm.

Ryol's body was handed over to his family at 3:30pm. The body will be flown to North Korea soon.

The North Korean envoy took office in Bangladesh in January 2002. He left behind his wife Kim GyongSil and three daughters.

On hearing the death news, Health and Family Welfare Minister Khondaker Mosharraf Hossain rushed to the BSMMUH.

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia expressed profound shock at his death and conveyed deep sympathy to the bereaved family.

Muggers

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"They were well aware of drawing the money and appeared at the spot just in time," he said, hinting at the involvement of someone of the bank or the factory.

The factory officials filed a case with Pallabi Police Station, but police failed to arrest any of the snatchers or recover the looted money till late in the evening.

While asked about law enforcers' role in preventing such incidents that are now commonplace at the Mirpur area, which houses many garment factories, the Pallabi police officer said, "We usually provide police protection in case of carrying money, but they did not contact us for protection. I don't know why they carried such a big amount of money on their own."

Business leader Rouf Chowdhury said the proposed budget emits some wrong signals while keeping silent over some important issues. He maintained that the expansion of the value added tax (Vat) net would affect the country's SMEs.

Rouf regretted that the finance minister in his budget speech did not explain the government's position regarding pre-shipment inspection (PSI) system, adding the existing PSI system have been disturbing the businessmen.

As the duty on sugar import has been brought down, the local sugar industry would be seriously affected, Rouf noted, pointing out that around half a million people are directly or indirectly involved in this sector.

Former ERD secretary Moshir Rahman said the government should reach an agreement with the banks to identify the core area of inflation in the country. He also said it was not logical that there would be no debate on defence allocation.

World Bank Country Director Cristina Wallich emphasised decentralisation of administration and strengthening of local government for getting better benefit out of the budget allocations.

President of International Chamber of Commerce, Bangladesh chapter Mahbubur Rahman termed the budget a very positive and a challenging one. He urged the government to take initiatives so that the garment sector can be competitive in the quota-free market.

Businessman Anisul Islam Mahmud observed that the share of private investment in the gross domestic product (GDP) has not been growing due to lack of infrastructure. For instance, he said, "The existing power system in the country is not suitable for running high-tech industries".

He demanded setting up of more specialised economic zones furnished with all utility services including gas-based electricity generating facilities for attracting foreign and local investment.

Asian Development Bank Resident Representative Toru Shibuchi said the approval process of foreign aided projects in Bangladesh is very slow. He urged the government to use foreign aid efficiently and smoothly and underscored the need for simplification of project approval process.

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While addressing the rally, Abdul Mannan protested the attack on his procession and said none would ever be able to make him deviate from fighting for the people's cause.

The rally was also addressed by Mahi B Chowdhury.

Dhaka blacklisted

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foreign secretary are attending the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) of the Organisation of Islamic Conference in Istanbul.

Perennial US sanctions targets Cuba, Myanmar, North Korea and Sudan are the other countries to have been put on the list. However, the State Department removed from the list Nato allies Greece and Turkey and nine other countries.

The State Department in its report observed that Bangladesh is a country of origin and transit for women and children trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation, involuntary domestic servitude, and debt bondage.

An estimated 10-20,000 women and girls are trafficked annually to India, Pakistan, Bahrain, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). A small number of women and girls are trafficked through Bangladesh from Burma to India.

Bangladeshi boys are also trafficked into the UAE and Qatar and forced to work as camel jockeys and beggars. Women and children from rural areas in Bangladesh are trafficked to urban centers for commercial sexual exploitation and domestic work.

The government has failed to make a priority of protecting trafficking victims or prosecuting their exploiters.

PM

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force responsible for providing protection to the VIPs, including the president and the prime minister as well as some visiting foreign dignitaries.

Referring to terrorist activities in different countries of the world, the prime minister admitted that it might logically need a change in the structure and management regarding security of the VIPs.

She also noted that with the development of science and technology the pattern of crime is also changing.

"Members of the force have to think of keeping themselves one step ahead in knowledge, perception and use of modern technology in security matter," she said, adding that exchange of professional knowledge and experience with similar security agencies of other countries should be intensified.

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar, ministers, chiefs of the three services and other senior civil and military officials attended the function followed by dinner and a cultural function.

Director General of the SSF Brigadier General Sayed Fatemy Ahmed Roomy also addressed the function, attended by the members of the SSF and their spouses.

Attacks on Bikalpa

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The dispersed BDB workers, however, soon assembled again on the road near the Railway Colony after the attackers had gone away. Shortly afterwards, Mahi B Chowdhury joined them.

As they were shifting the women activists from the scene in a microbus, all of a sudden the attackers again swooped on them. They assaulted some women and damaged the microbus. They again chased Mahi B Chowdhury and forced him to run for shelter in the police headquarters. The policemen closed the headquarters gate after he entered there. Later, Abdul Mannan also went to the Police Headquarters.

After the second attack additional police force reached the spot and ordered the attackers to leave the place and at one stage picked up three -- Noor Mohammad, Moazzem and Bellal -- from there.

As normalcy returned, Abdul Mannan and Mahi reorganised the procession and marched towards Bangabazar where they held a wayside rally.

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Raul dilemma

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named Europe's player of the year, an honour eventually awarded to Czech midfielder Pavel Nedved.

The damage may also have been done in Real's disappointing domestic season in which Raul scored just 11 goals in the league as the expensively assembled 'galacticos' failed to win a single trophy.

Saez stressed before the Euro 2004 kickoff that Raul "must be our leader" and said he had not changed his mind after the Russia game.

"Perhaps I am a little stubborn, but that's the way I'll be until the day I die," said the coach.

Raul insists he is prepared to drop out of the first eleven providing it helps his teammates, who are seeking to lay to rest Spain's puzzling lack of honours in international tournaments; their last trophy was the 1964 European title.

"I have no problem with being on the substitutes' bench," Raul said.

When he last faced calls for his axing, he responded in the best possible way - by scoring both goals in the 2-1 victory against Ukraine which proved crucial in securing Spain's place in the finals in Portugal.

It seems almost certain he will be on the pitch against Greece to attempt to provide a similar response.

Plot to kill Modi foiled, 4 killed

PTI, *AHMEDABAD*

Three days ahead of the Lord Jagannath Rathayatra, four Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists, including a woman, were killed in an encounter with police in Ahmedabad early yesterday.

Acting on intelligence reports that terrorists were in the city to assassinate Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi, Crime Branch sleuths intercepted a vehicle at Kotarpur near the city airport and in the ensuing encounter, the terrorists were killed, Joint Commissioner of Police PP Pandey said.

The terrorists belonged to LeT's suicide squad and two of them hailed from Pakistan, he said.

Last year, a few days before the Rathayatra, crime branch had shot dead two members of Chhota Shakeel gang, who had allegedly

come to assassinate BJP leaders Ashok Bhatt and Bharat Barot.

Meanwhile, two days after militants exploded a grenade in a Pehulgam hotel killing five tourists, the headline Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) outfit told (June 14, 2004) said it was against harming tourists visiting Jammu and Kashmir.

"We have no plan to harm the tourism industry. In fact, we support the revival of tourism sector so that economic status of those connected with the industry can improve," a LeT spokesman told a local news agency.

However, he criticised Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed for "portraying the revival of tourism industry as return of normalcy in the State".

Those in the tourism trade can continue their business without any fear, the spokesman said.

84 promoted

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Superior Selection Board (SSB), the seven-member authority which handles promotion of civil servants, in its final report submitted Monday.

Several names were dropped and some were included after the SSB report was sent to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) for various reasons like political considerations, sources alleged.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia approved the final promotion list and an official notification was issued late yesterday with approval of the president.

Many eligible officials having more than 85 marks, including over a dozen from 1981 batch were not promoted reportedly from 'political consideration'.

All the new joint secretaries have been made OSD (Official on Special Duty) and posted at establishment ministry until fresh assignment. Majority of the officials promoted yesterday rushed to

the ministry and submitted joining reports.

Several promoted deputy commissioners (DCs) posted in the districts also rushed to the capital to join in their new post. Some 22 DCs of different districts are in the promotion list, sources said.

Officials at important offices, including the PMO, Cabinet Division, Ministry of Establishment and Anti-Corruption Bureau, private secretaries to different ministers and DCs dominated the list of promotees.

The several private secretaries to important ministers who are elevated as joint secretaries include: PS to LGRD and Co-operatives minister, PS to Social Welfare minister, PS to Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad, PS to Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs minister, and PS to state minister for Energy and Mineral Resources.

Though the promotion was long overdue, majority of junior officials has expressed satisfaction, as they think it would create vacancies in the lower tier and in turn pave way for their own promotion.

Attacks 'halt

Iraq oil exports'

REUTERS, *Baghdad*

A sabotage attack on a southern Iraqi oil pipeline yesterday brought oil exports close to a standstill, reports say.

Oil Minister Thamer Ghadhban told Reuters that blasts had damaged a pipeline from the southern oilfields feeding the Basra oil terminal.

The explosions, which occurred late on Monday, appear to have severed the flow from the oil pipeline.

It was the second attack on the Basra terminal - one of the few operational outlets - in just over a month.

It is estimated that repairs to the pipeline will take 10 days and cost \$600 a day unless deliveries are resumed.

Oil output has plunged from more than 1.6 million barrels a day to less than half a million.

In the last attack saboteurs hit the same pipeline, cutting Basra exports to around one million barrels per day for almost two weeks.

The al-Basra terminal, together with the smaller Khor al-Amaya terminal, in southern Iraq jointly export 1.6 million barrels daily.

According to Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi, pipeline sabotage has cost the country more than \$200m in lost revenues over the past seven months.

Allawi recently blamed foreign militants opposed to the survival of Iraq for the attacks.

Iraqi oil production in May stood at 2.1 million barrels a day, according to the International Energy Agency.

al-Qaeda

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The three were among eight foreigners arrested in Japan in connection with an investigation into Lionel Dumont, 33, a Frenchman linked to al-Qaeda who stayed in Japan after the September 11 attacks in the United States, news reports said.

Dumont belonged to al-Qaeda's logistics arm and police suspect he was engaged in raising funds, money laundering and forming a terrorist network while hiding in Japan between July 2002 and September 2003, according to earlier reports.

Police and security agencies have refused to comment on Dumont's reported stay in Japan, although it has been tacitly acknowledged in comments by politicians including Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi.

Cops club

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and sent them to Bakolia and Panchlalis police stations.

Panchlalis Police Station confirmed that 30 people held from Rajakhal were under their custody. But Bakolia police station could not be contacted despite repeated attempts.

Chairman of the factory Ali Zafor Md Belal, however, claimed that some workers attacked the factory at the instigation of some local 'miscreants'.

He further claimed that no payment of any worker of his factory was pending.

Identify real source

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On the grave situation in Palestine where Palestinians are subject to indiscriminate killing, the foreign minister said: "Real peace in the Middle East can only begin with the end of crimes against the Palestinians and with the establishment of an independent state of Palestine having Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital."

He called for urgent action to salvage the key elements of the 'Road Map' and renewed efforts by the OIC to bring the peace process back to track.

Calling the situation in Iraq as challenging, he said the United Nations (UN) Security Council resolution adopted on June 8 is a step in the right direction.

The foreign minister said: "We hope this will lead to the restoration of effective sovereignty of Iraq and that the UN should play a leading role in establishing political institutions and facilitating reconstruction in Iraq."

OIC should play its role in support of the Iraqi people, he added.

In his speech, Khan touched on the issues of Cyprus, Sudan, Somalia, Guinea-Bissau and Moro National Liberation Front in Philippines.

He said the OIC should make

itself more relevant to the common people in the member states. Its programmes should aim at enhancing human security.

On socio-economic agenda, he said: "We should focus on the key economic and social areas like poverty alleviation, eradication of illiteracy and basic health care."

Seeking support for Bangladesh's candidate Salauddin Quader Chowdhury for the post of OIC secretary general, Khan said the OIC can realise its purposes through greater unity, understanding and solidarity.

The future of the organisation and the agenda will also depend on the leadership of the secretariat, he said.

Kidnapping

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abductions, police said. The outlaws claimed responsibility for killing at least 15 of the abducted people.

Abductions for ransom have created panic among people in Kushtia and Chuadanga.

There are widespread allegations of police inaction in checking abductions or rescuing the victims even after filing of cases with them.