

# Ruling MPs refuse

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other AL parliamentarians Abdur Razzak and Suranjit and Krishak Samak Janata League lawmaker Kader Siddiqui.

After much insistence, LGRD Minister and BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain labelled Salauddin's remarks as "personal views and government does not own them".

As the opposition lawmakers rejected a previous statement of the chief whip, Bhuiyan launched in the debate and echoed his party colleague's statement, saying: "It was his (Salauddin) personal statement, not government's. And the foreign minister earlier explained it."

"It will be better if the matter is discussed less," the LGRD minister said, adding he did not want to speak, as he was sick.

"I could have requested the speaker to expunge the statement if it had been in the House," he said.

Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar said he has no way to give a ruling on the issue, as the remarks were made out of parliament -- a judgment that prompted the AL leaders to stage the walkout led by Hamid.

## RAGING DEBATE

"It is unlikely of a gentleman to speak like this," Hamid told the House, blasting Salauddin for his indecent remarks.

He said the government cannot duck the issue by describing Salauddin's remarks as personal, as he is not only a lawmaker but also parliamentary affairs advisor to the prime minister.

Former minister Abdur Razzak

termed Salauddin's remarks "dirty". Terming the defeat of Bangladesh candidate, who bagged 12 out of 57 votes in the OIC elections as a "big defeat of government's foreign relations", the AL lawmaker demanded that the government hold a general discussion on foreign policy in parliament.

Razzak said Bangladesh lost out to Turkey as the ruling coalition nominated whom he called a "war criminal and killer". "The issue must be disposed of. Otherwise, we have to rethink about our presence in parliament."

Suranjit said Salauddin's remark is an offence under the Lunatic Act and he should be sent to an asylum for treatment. He said a member in the British House of Commons would have been detained for such remarks.

AL presidium member Abdus Samad Azad said: "I think the 12 countries that voted for Bangladesh's candidate may feel ashamed of it, thinking whom they voted for."

With the opposition lawmakers demanding government explanations on the issue again, BNP lawmaker Joyнал Abedin Faruk shouted without microphone, "Call Salauddin Quader Chowdhury to respond."

Bhuiyan asked the chief whip to deliver a statement. Amid AL lawmakers' protest, the chief whip said the BNP did not support any derogatory remarks.

Nasim said Salauddin introduced unhealthy and dirty politics through his indecent remarks and added: "We can't accept the way he attacked the opposition leader."

# Robbers gun down

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said Albert Gomes, managing director of JA Money Changers Limited at BCIC Sadan at Motijheel.

"One of them stood guard at the entrance and the leader of the group held a pistol against my head and asked me to hand him cash," Albert told The Daily Star.

"I obeyed them and gave them Tk 57,000 from the vault. They also took Tk3,000 from my purse," he said.

The robbers took three mobile phones from Albert's locker and one from his staff. At that moment, two unsuspecting customers stepped in and the robbers also stripped them of their cash.

"They pointed a firearm at me and grabbed Tk 55,000 I had with me to buy dollars," said one of the customers, Emdadul Haq Babul.

The gang also took Tk 1,900 from Masum Parvez, a staff of the adjacent Shapla Products office.

"While leaving, one of them shouted at me, 'you will be killed if you go out in half an hour'," Albert said, adding that he heard gunshots minutes after the extortionists left his room.

Tipped off about a possible operation by the Idul Group, a six-member police team led by Inspector Salahuddin rushed to the area in a white microbus. The policemen took position near the building.

As the robbers emerged from the building, the law enforcers caught two of them -- Idul and Kiron.

"When the robbers were being dragged towards the microbus, Idul suddenly pulled out a pistol and shot ASI Aminul Islam in the abdomen pointblank," constable Nizam, who was posted near the building gate, told The Daily Star.

As the policemen were caught by surprise, Kiron also struggled himself free and both Idul and Kiron dived to the ground, firing.

"Other members of the gang, who were scattered around, also started firing. I took shelter under a rickshaw-van and kept on pulling the trigger till my gun magazine was empty," said the constable, who received pellet injuries.

The extortionists exploded several bombs this time to make their escape, leaving wounded Idul lying on the street.

As the eight-minute mayhem ended, ASI Aminul and constable Liakot were found lying on the street. Aminul also received bullets in his chest, Liakot in the ribcage and a police informant, Qudus, in his right knee.

Police arrested Idul with bullet wounds in the chest and found Tk 20,000 on him. Police recovered a sophisticated CZ pistol, two maga-

## Forces plan

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dedicated resources over the years to protecting the natural forest, home to various species of birds and animals and vital for the ecosystem of the capital.

It said the army took control of over 700 acres in the area, including 16.80 acres of the natural forest, and any further encroachment would cause harm to its bio-diversity and environment.

The handover proposal runs against international conventions on natural forests, the department added.

A committee is currently studying the army proposal.

The airforce wants to take control of 110.34 acres for construction of an exclusive sub-depot for Zahurul Haq Base at Sitakunda in Chittagong.

It has also sought 8.60 acres at Shakhipur in Tangail for the construction of a road to the Airforce Base in Pahar Kanchanpur.

The forest department has planted herbal and fruit trees on an acre while the rest stands without trees.

The inter-ministerial meeting agreed to hand over land to the airforce in Shakhipur, but formed committees to pore over Chatail, Chittagong and Moeshekhali proposals, brining together officials from the forest and environment, land and defence ministries and representatives from the three forces.

## Mastermind

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killed on February 11, Abdur Rashid Sheikh alias Tapu on May 20, Shamimul Bashar alias Amit Hassan on May 7, Bulbul on May 7, and Toudid on February 8. All of them were operatives of an outlawed political party and were killed in armed encounters with law-enforcers during arms recovery operations, Mosharrar said in the charge-sheet.

Of the 12 accused, four at present are in jail custody and the rest, eight, absconding. The four held in custody are Shumon alias Nuruzzaman, Bulbul Hossain, Akram Hossain alias Bomaru Akram and Ali Akbar Shikder.

Names of the absconders are Disco Sattar, Belal, Kachi alias Omar Faruque, Mithul, Saka alias Shawkat Hossain, Altaf Hossain alias BDR Altaf, Mahfuz and Sarwar Hossain alias Saru.

Initially, 22 persons were suspected to be involved in the cold-blooded murder. The IO later dropped five names from the suspect list, as his investigations 'did not find proofs of their involvement' in the crime that outraged the entire media world. The suspects exempted from the charge-sheet are Ananda Bhowmick, Mamun, Manik, Monir and Ujjal.

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## HC terms

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Additional Attorney General AJ Mohammad Ali told the court yesterday there is till time for implementation of the EC decision and the petitioner's seeking a court direction in this regard is premature.

The division bench of Justice MA Matin and Justice Tarik Ul Hakim passed the order on hearing both sides.

Chief Election Commissioner MA Syed in a letter on June 15 to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia asked for deployment of army in each polling centre for Dhaka-10 seat.

The government, however, did not respond to the letter, prompting the Bikalpa Dhara candidate to file a writ petition with the High Court on Saturday.

Barrister Amir-UI Islam and Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud appeared for the petitioner.

## Making quick

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loudly asked a constable to bring his 'casebook'.

However, the constable moved about aimlessly, knowing well his officer was not authorised to carry a 'casebook' as he was not a sergeant and it was not his duty to conduct documentary check-ups. In case the SI recovers a stolen vehicle, he is required to take it to the police station for prosecution.

Apparently shaken, one of the elderly passengers intervened. "Please my son, we're in a hurry, we have to go to a wedding, please let us go," he urged. The SI walked off the scene with the documents to make further stops.

Frustrated, the man whispered to his driver and handed him two 100-taka notes. The driver gave the SI the sum, bought their release, got back the documents and drove away.

Additional Police Commissioner SM Mizanur Rahman told The Daily Star that such behaviour is 'totally unacceptable' from special checkpoints. He said about 350 members of the armed police battalion and 'specially trained' cops are manning 42 similar checkpoints in the city.

"We've clearly instructed them to stop only suspicious vehicles and search those thoroughly," he said. They can only ask for documents if the passengers look suspicious and the officer thinks the vehicle might be a stolen one, he added.

"The whole idea to set up such checkpoints is not to check documents but to check on criminals who now largely use private vehicles to commit various crimes," the police commissioner said.

## Fake fertiliser

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domestic production of TSP and other phosphatic fertilisers and their high market prices.

The state-owned Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) runs six capital-intensive urea fertiliser factories, one phosphate fertiliser factory and one sulphate fertiliser plant. The BCIC by and large meets the domestic requirements of urea but its production of TSP falls far short of the demand.

The estimated domestic demand for phosphatic fertilisers (DAP, TSP and SSP) is 740,000 tonnes a year (DAP 2, 400,000 tonnes, TSP 4,00,000 tonnes and SSP 1,40,000 tonnes). But the BCIC produces only about 1,88,247 tonnes phosphatic fertilisers.

Kafil Uddin said private fertiliser traders import quality TSP from China and Tunisia but they are finding it difficult to supply it at a reasonable and affordable price as the government is yet to give subsidy on TSP as it did in case of urea.

# Czechs squash

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country to book a quarter-final place thanks to substitute Vladimir Smicer's 88th minute winner at the end of an enthralling match.

Germany were held to a goalless draw by Latvia in the other Group D match, giving the Baltic state their first point in an international tournament.

The Czechs, beaten finalists in 1996, qualify from Group D after taking a maximum six points from two matches, Germany are second on two points while the Dutch have a single point and must beat Latvia on Wednesday while hoping Germany lose or draw with the Czechs.

The Netherlands had raced into a two-goal lead within 19 minutes with a header from Wilfred Bouma and a close-range shot from Ruud Van Nistelrooy.

Jan Koller pulled the first goal back for the Czechs after Baros intercepted a terrible pass from Phillip Cocu and fed his giant strike partner for a simple tap-in to make it 2-1 at half-time.

With man-of-the-match Pavel Nedved orchestrating the midfield, the Czechs drew level in the 71st minute of the best match of the tournament so far.

Nedved's left-wing cross was chested down by Koller and Baros smashed a half-volley past Dutch keeper Edwin van der Sar.

The Dutch were reduced to ten men when defender Johnny Heitinga received a second yellow card after fouling Nedved.

A memorabile comeback was completed five minutes from time when Marek Heinz fired in a low shot that van der Sar pushed away only for Karel Poborsky to collect the rebound and square for Smicer to tap in.

"It was a fantastic evening and a fantastic match for us," Nedved

said. "The way we came back after going two goals behind was extraordinary."

Dutch coach Dick Advocaat was wondering how his side lost a pulsating match.

"We had several goal-scoring chances and could have won this match 3-1 or 4-1.

"Three or four times in the second half we were in scoring positions but we couldn't find the net.

"Now we have to beat Latvia and hope that the Czechs play a proper game against Germany."

Germany left their hopes of reaching the last eight hanging in the balance after debutants Latvia held the three-time European champions to a 0-0 draw in Oporto.

Substitute Miroslav Klose wasted a golden chance to win the match when he headed wide in the final minute when completely unmarked.

Latvia could have pulled off a famous victory if English referee Mike Riley had awarded two reasonable appeals for penalties when Maris Verpakovskis was fouled twice inside the area.

German coach Rudi Voller said his team had given their all.

"We knew it would be hard, but I can't criticise the team.

"They tried everything and Klose had a great chance at the end.

"The situation is clear and we will play against the Czechs in a knockout match."

Host nation Portugal must beat arch-enemies Spain in a highly charged Group A decider in Lisbon on Sunday when surprise packages Greece only need a draw against Russia in Faro to reach the last eight of an international tournament for the first time in their history.

lodged with Pallabi Police Station. Bureau of Anti-Corruption (Bac) also has filed 15 cases against him and some of his colleagues recently.

In another development, the Bac yesterday showed Qazi Faruque arrested in two more cases.

## Arroyo voted

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thetally.

Her lawmakers have a majority and can approve the count over any opposition objections. Sunday newspapers quoted Arroyo, a US-trained economist, as saying she was going ahead with plans to hold her inauguration ceremony before a June 30 deadline.

But opposition politicians said she would be a bogus president unless their doubts over the vote were addressed.

"President Arroyo's allies can now run their express train faster to railroad the canvass and proclamation, but it will be a bogus proclamation," opposition senator Edgardo Angara told the Philippine Star newspaper.

Opposition lawmakers had demanded that election returns be re-opened to examine what they say are discrepancies in the results. Administration members refused, saying the counting must be completed by June 30, when Arroyo's current term ends, to avoid a constitutional crisis.

## AL youth front

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Jubo League's stance was made public yesterday afternoon when BDB candidate Major (retired) Abdul Mannan and the newly elected BDB lawmaker Mahi B Chowdhury came to its office. The Jubo League leaders greeted them with flowers.

Mannan seeking Jubo League's support in the election said people would express their no confidence in the BNP-Jamaat government through votes on July 1.

Jubo League leaders of Dhaka North and South including Mohiuddin Ahmed, Nurunnabi Chowdhury Shaon, Bashir Uddin, Nikhil Chandra and Fazlul Huq Atiq were present at the meeting.

Earlier on Saturday, Abdul Mannan and Mahi B Chowdhury visited Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina and sought her support in the July 1 by-election in Dhaka-10 constituency. AL is likely to announce its stance on the by-election formally within a day or two.

## AL fronts

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"Country's image has been tarnished for nominating a killer, characterless and controversial person like Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury for the post of OIC secretary general and his humiliating defeat," said a release of the Swechhasebak League.

"His audacious remarks not only tarnished country's image but also put unity of the Muslim Ummah at stake. Bangladesh is now about to be friendless for his perverse comments," said the release of Swechhasebak League quoting its President AFM Bahauddin Nasim and General Secretary Pankaj Devnath as saying.

In a separate statement, Bangladesh Jubo Mohila League also urged people to observe the shutdown.

## Clinton blasts

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Saddam, but "terrorists" have flocked to Iraq since the US-led invasion in March 2003, Clinton said in press excerpts from the interview.

"Let me say this: I think the Iraqis are better off with Saddam gone, if they can have a stable government," Clinton said.

"There have been more terrorists move into Iraq in the aftermath of the conflict. I still believe, as I always have, that the biggest terrorist threat by far is al-Qaeda and the al-Qaeda network," he said.

Meanwhile, Clinton says in his memoir to be released Tuesday that his failure to capture al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden was his "biggest disappointment," Newsweek magazine said Saturday.

In an online exclusive, Newsweek reported that Clinton said he met with his successor George W. Bush before leaving office, and told him what his "five biggest security problems would be -- naming Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda first, and Iraq last. He told Bush his own failure to get bin Laden was 'my biggest disappointment'."

"Clinton also urged Bush to visit North Korea in an effort to seal an agreement that would get that nation to end its nuclear program. Clinton says Bush listened, then quickly changed the subject," Newsweek reported, citing the memoir.

## Desa

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posed the question.

"We, the environmentalists, do not oppose the power station, but we will not allow the government to construct the station hindering smooth water flow of the river," the speakers asserted.

They also demanded of the government to take further steps to stop encroachment on other rivers around the capital.

BAPA General Secretary Abu Naser Khan and Member Secretary Mihir Biswas addressed the rally.

## Another acid

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positioned himself near a window. As Salma entered there, he threw acid on her face and escaped.

Jaintapur Police on Saturday night arrested Nasir's mother, elder brother and sister. Nasir, however, was still at large.

## Rocket attack

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more than a dozen rockets on Friday but the main gas installations facilities escaped damage.

Officials said a paramilitary soldier on duty was slightly injured when hit by shrapnel.

Rocket attacks blasts around gas facilities have periodically occurred with officials attributing such activity to tribal demands for increased royalties for the use of gas from their lands and more jobs for tribesmen.

## Woman

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Landslides in Chittagong during the monsoons have claimed lives of over 60 people, mostly shanty- and slum-dwellers, in the last two decades, police and other sources said.

## Morshed

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proposed at the second ACD in Thailand in May 2003.

The fund, he said, would work to coordinate and finance different poverty alleviation programmes in Asian countries.

Bangladesh will also work as a prime mover on poverty alleviation in Asia along with Vietnam and Cambodia during the dialogue session while the concept paper will be based on a seminar on rehabilitation of working children in Dhaka last year, he added.

One of the main agenda of the ACD will be to pursue a process to launch an Asian Bond, which was declared in its second session. The forum has been the only Asian platform to announce political support for development of an Asian bond market.

The foreign minister returns home on June 23.

## Workers Party

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political, organisational, or ethical right to take such a decision," Haq, who challenged the party's top leadership over ideological and strategic issues, told The Daily Star yesterday evening.

"It is unfortunate and unwanted that the people responsible have pushed the party towards a split," he said adding, "since we are the holders of the party's ideals, we will continue to be activists of this party."

The politburo member led an open criticism of party leadership and stopped attending the party office since releasing a statement accusing top leaders of veering from their ideology.

On the future of the rebel group, Haq said they will hold meetings with Workers Party leaders and activists and announce their future programmes today.

# Hasina blames

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general post but could not win the race due to selection of a 'contro-versial candidate'.

"The image of Bangladesh before the world has been tainted through nomination of such a controversial person for the OIC top post," Hasina said.

Hasina also alleged that the government has unleashed a reign of terror across the country through releasing 70,000 criminals from jail.

"The BNP came to power with the help of anti-independence forces, that's why they (BNP) are eager to look after the interest of the anti-liberation forces," Hasina observed.

The opposition leader also alleged that the government is planning to rig the upcoming by-polls in the Dhaka-10 constituency.

On the price hike of essentials, the AL chief said, "When the benefits of the prime minister and other ministers are increasing, people of the country at the same time are

struggling to live hand to mouth."

"During the AL's rule, the growth rate was 6.6 percent and inflation rate was 1.59 but all the successes of the AL government have been marred due to the ruling coalition's plundering of national wealth..."

Turning to law and order, the former prime minister said people are passing their days in great insecurity due to the abysmal law and order situation.

Hasina also blamed the government for not arresting the assassins of Ahsanullah Master MP.

Speaking at the event as special guest, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil blamed the government for defeat in the election for OIC chief.

"The nomination of an anti-liberation individual for such an important post proves that this government has weakness for the anti-liberation forces," Jalil said.

AL Joint Secretary Obaidul Kader and President of BASI AFM Bahauddin Nasim also addressed the inauguration ceremony.

# Clock ticks

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as the leader among worldwide contenders for the Ansari X-Prize, which aims to boost space tourism. The prize will award \$10 million to the first privately funded, three-seat spaceship to reach 62 miles and repeat the flight within two weeks.

If the mission is successful, Rutan will then enter his rocket plane in the X-Prize competition, which includes more than 20 other teams from around the world.

It also thrills those who have been there before pilots who earned their astronaut's wings on similar suborbital flights during the X-15 rocket plane program decades ago.

"I'm tickled to death that Burt's doing this," said Joe Engle, 71, who made 16 flights in the X-15 and commanded two space shuttle flights. "I think any way to demonstrate someone's desire to learn more about high-speed, high-altitude flight and make it safer for people downstream is a wonderful thing."

Thousands of people are expected to watch the attempt on the ground around Mojave Airport, about 65 miles north of Los Angeles. An unusual entrepreneurial aviation brain trust developed the craft in secret at the airfield and without the vast overhead of the national programs responsible for all previous manned spaceflights.

SpaceShipOne was built by Rutan and researchers at his Mojave aerospace company. Scaled Composites, a backyard operation by comparison to NASA's standards but still an impressive backyard.

Rutan became a household name in 1986 when his Voyager aircraft made the first nonstop flight around the world without refueling. His projects include the popular homebuilt VariEze light aircraft, new business planes, remotely piloted craft for defence and science, the 1988 America's Cup wing sail, a crew-return vehicle for the international space station and an upcoming jet for another world flight attempt.

SpaceShipOne's financial backing an amount still unspecified came from Microsoft co-founder Paul G. Allen, whose rumoured role was not confirmed until last December.

The entire program had been under wraps for years, originating as a concept in 1996, followed by some testing and then the start of full development about three years ago.

The low-profile approach lasted through a May test flight to an altitude of 40 miles. The builders then invited the public to watch the attempt to reach space. Motel rooms in the high desert town of

Mojave, a 90-minute drive north of Los Angeles, sold out immediately.

Some secrecy remains. The decision about which of the project's pilots will make the historic flight was being withheld until a Sunday afternoon press conference by Rutan and Allen.

Looking like something out of an old "Tom Swift" story, SpaceShipOne has a stubby fuselage and a pointy nose covered with small portholes. There's room for a pilot and two passengers.

The rocket's nozzle extends out the rear, and wide stubby wings protrude from each side of the fuselage. Booms on each wingtip extend to the rear, flaring into tail assemblies.

Mission control is a truck equipped with antennas, telemetry radios, communications gear and avionics displays that duplicate what the pilot is seeing at the spaceship's controls.

Behind the scenes, there is a flight simulator, pilot training program, a rocket motor development company, a rocket test stand and other support equipment.

Weather permitting, SpaceShipOne will be carried aloft at 6:30 a.m., slung beneath the belly of the White Knight, an exotic jet that resembles two slender sailplanes joined at the wingtips.

The mothership will take an hour to carry the rocket to launch altitude. Chase planes will tail them.

At 50,000 feet, the White Knight will release SpaceShipOne. Its pilot will light the engine and pull into a 2,500 mph climb, experiencing G-forces three-to-four times the gravity of Earth.

The rocket engine will burn for 80 seconds and then shut down. SpaceShipOne, its pilot now weightless, will coast to the peak of its trajectory and begin its descent.

The craft's twin tailbooms and the back half of each wing will rotate upwards at a right angle to the ship to create drag in the same way that feathering slows the flight of a badminton shuttlecock.

Re-entering the atmosphere, the tailbooms will rotate back to their normal position and the pilot will fly the unpowered ship on a 15-to-20-minute glide back to Mojave Airport.