

JS manoeuvring proves

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lawmakers to submit notices in line with the rules of procedure to hold discussion on them.

AL deputies submitted 132 adjournment motions to the speaker accordingly, but Sircar rejected them all giving different reasons.

But political analysts believe the treasury bench's reluctance was the main reason for not taking up the issues, although the ruling coalition and the speaker assured them of discussion after the passage of the budget.

After assurances from them, AL deputies even agreed not to raise any point of order three days in a row before the passage of the budget.

Responding to opposition lawmakers' demand, Speaker Jamil Uddin Sircar and LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said before prorogation that most issues were discussed on points of order.

The speaker in his valedictory speech claimed AL lawmakers were provided more time than they deserved.

He said the AL lawmakers spoke for 271 minutes on points of order, but did not mention the time the treasury bench took to counter the opposition. Parliament watchers say the treasury benchers took almost three times more to counter their opposition colleagues.

The speaker said the AL lawmakers spoke for one hour and 35 minutes on law and order and death threat to Leader of the Opposition

Dam-cut: WDB

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wrecked in a natural process.

But the WDB officials yesterday repeated that a vested quarter cut the dam open in an act of sabotage.

"Chunarpara point (where the dam was breached) was not so risky that the dam would break down naturally," Dhunat Sub-Divisional Engineer Mosharraf Hossain told reporters.

There are 30 risky points on the embankment stretching 262 kilometres from the northern district of Kurigram to Pabna, but none of them broke, they said.

Sources said administrative action might be taken against the WDB officials for their comment.

Strong currents killed five people including four children, washed away 60 others and marooned 5.5 lakh people in Dhunat and Sirajganj's Kazipur upazila after saboteurs cut Brahmaputra flood control embankment in Chunarpara village in Dhunat early Wednesday.

WDB officials filed a general diary with Dhunat Police Station, terming the incident an act of sabotage. UNO (upazila nirbahi officer) Al Arin in his report to the government also described it as an act of sabotage.

Villagers blamed the incident on Bhandarbari Union Parishad Chairman and BNP leader Belal Hossain Babu and another BNP leader Zahirul Islam Nannu who feuded over the repair of the embankment.

But local lawmaker Golam Mohammad Siraj said the feud did not lead to the sabotage but delayed the repair. In a contradictory statement, he told local reporters: "The sabotage would not have taken place if the WDB had allowed Babu to do the work."

Action would be taken against those who showed neglect of duty, he added. WDB officials said they were ready to begin the work but could not do so because of the 'feud' among the pro-BNP contractors.

'TV-addict kids run risk of obesity'

AFP, Paris

Spending hours glued to your television screen during childhood causes an increased risk of obesity and other health problems during later life, according to research to be published in the Lancet medical journal today.

Researchers from New Zealand concluded after a decades-long study that high levels of exposure at a young age to television, with its aggressive barrage of advertising for unhealthy food products, was correlated with increased body mass later in life, the article said.

Robert Hancox from the University of Otago and his colleagues studied around 1,000 children born in New Zealand town of Dunedin in 1972-3, who were tested over numerous intervals up until the age of 26.

"A clear association was found between extensive television viewing (more than two hours a day) among children and adolescents and increased BMI (body mass index), raised cholesterol, greater proportion of smoking, and poor cardiovascular fitness at age 26 years," the Lancet said.

The study comes amid increasing concern about the global obesity epidemic, with the UN's World Health Organisation estimating that one billion adults worldwide are overweight, and at least 300 million of them are clinically obese.

Sheikh Hasina, 44 minutes on foreign ministry and OIC election and one hour and 44 minutes on different issues.

Deputy Speaker Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui dismissing any scope of debate on distortion of the Liberation War history said the issue was discussed in detail in parliament.

But in fact, AL lawmaker Mohammad Nasim spoke only seven minutes on the issue on a point of order, but State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman spoke 22 minutes to counter him.

After the debate, the speaker and treasury bench agreed to hold half an hour's discussion on it.

But the situation took a dramatic turn when the speaker switched off the microphone of Textiles Minister Shahjahan Siraj as demanded by prime minister's parliamentary advisers adviser Salauddin Quader Chowdhury.

The speaker abruptly cancelled the discussion apparently at the signal of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia after a debate on which bench would speak first broke out.

The current Jatiya Sangsad has witnessed only a general discussion on law and order.

Bomb hurled at Khulna food official's house

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A powerful bomb exploded in front of a three-storey building at Babu Khan Road under Khulna Police Station last night.

Police said unknown miscreants threw the bomb at the building belonging to Amzad Hossain, Morrelganj upazila controller of food, at about 7:45pm. No-one was injured nor any damage done due to the explosion.

Amzad Hossain said the extremists threatened him several times in the last few months to pay off or face dire consequence. Police collected splinters from the spot as evidence.

Meanwhile, eight people, arrested as suspects of bomb attack on a local BNP leader on Wednesday night, were released from Khulna Police Station on Thursday as police did not get any evidence of their involvement in the incident.

Sekander Zafnullah Khan Shaechu, vice-president of Khulna city BNP, was critically injured as unknown assailants hurled a powerful bomb at him near his residence at Gagan Babu Road in the city at about 8:30pm.

After the incident, Sub Inspector Sham of Khulna Police Station, filed two separate cases as complainant.

Police said investigation is going on to detect the extremist who had earlier demanded Tk 50 lakh in toll from the BNP leader and gave him death threat for failing to pay it.

Dhunat waters

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victims and move household goods.

Saboteurs cut the dam open at Chunarpara in Dhunat's Goshabari union

and surging waters from the rain-fed farmlands instantly cut a 500-metre swathe through it submerging villages and washing away houses. All villages in the upazila went under water by yesterday.

Government statistics said flood waters submerged 12,000 houses and damaged 100-kilometre road in Dhunat.

Only houses were visible in many areas of Dhunat municipality and three of the 10 unions.

Locals failed to bury a man in Maddhyaduar village Thursday night as there was no dry land.

Waterborne diseases, mostly diarrhoea and dysentery, have broken out in different parts of the upazila but local administration is yet to distribute sanitary pans and install tubewells the government allocated two days ago.

Hundreds of flood-affected women thronged Dhunat upazila headquarters yesterday on false information about relief but returned disappointed.

Nazma Khatun, a mother of four from Daspura Mahalla, pleaded to reporters, "Please save our children, kindly report on us so that the government ensures supply of at least baby food and pure drinking water."

Local administration distributed 12 tonnes of rice in Goshabari union and 10 tonnes in Hambandarbari union until yesterday. Many victims alleged the administration favoured ruling party supporters in relief distribution.

The upazila parishad could not make any list of the affected people until yesterday.

Outlaws

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took bullet in one hand while brother-in-law Liton Sheel was shot in the leg when they came to his rescue.

As locals confronted the killers they fired at least 25 bullets that left Kawsar Hossain, Kabir Ahmed, Nitai Das and Alam Hawlader injured.

The band of outlaws walked away through the crowded Bazar chanting party slogans. Police and locals suspected they belong to the Zia faction of PBSP.

Assistant Superintendent of Police (Sadar circle) Farhad Ahmed confirmed the news.

Locals said Mongal and his men committed a number of robberies in the area, the latest one on Thursday.

Demra police yesterday filed three cases against the gang for illegal possession of arms, attack on police and attempt to commit robbery.

Locals said the same faction shot and wounded Menon in 1992.

HUDA'S THREAT SC Bar calls general meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) yesterday called a general meeting for tomorrow against the backdrop of Communications Minister Nazmul Huda's threat of legal action against SCBA President Rokanuddin Mahmud.

But in fact, AL lawmaker Mohammad Nasim spoke only seven minutes on the issue on a point of order, but State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman spoke 22 minutes to counter him.

The general meeting was convened by the SCBA to protest the comments made by both the Law and Justice Minister Moudud Ahmed and Nazmul Huda on Thursday.

The SCBA on Wednesday called upon the chief justice (CJ) to appoint efficient judges to the High Court to stop appointing judges if competent ones are not found.

The Bar members across the political divide at a general requisition meeting adopted a resolution to that end and asked the chief justice (CJ) to take necessary steps in two weeks' time.

Huda in a statement threatened the incumbent Bar President Rokanuddin Mahmud with contempt of court charges in case of repetition of such a resolution in future.

Moudud described the resolution as unfortunate and inconsistent with the lawyers' responsibilities to uphold the image and independence of the judiciary.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi awaits yet another hartal barely in a fortnight, as Rajshahi Rakkha Sangram Parishad (RRSP) yesterday called for a dawn-to-dusk shutdown on July 31 demanding gas supply through pipeline.

The hartal call came at a press conference held at the organisation's office in the morning yesterday.

While announcing a fortnight long programme, RRSP convenor Zamal Khan called upon the city dwellers also to observe a 'cooking (abstaining) strike' for an hour at 10:30am.

But Sub-Inspector (SI) Karim Hossain of Tongi Police Station said a Rab team led by SI Shahjahan arrested the three in a hotel in Tongi for demanding Tk 50,000 from businessman Tajul Islam Akand, who informed Rab about the alleged extortion.

The Rab officials also picked up Sumon's cousin Lokman, 22, and Akbar Hossain Pinku, 20, both AL's youth front activists, on their way out and took the three blindfolded to a camp by pickup van.

"The Rab officials brought him to the police station after giving him first aid and left the three there," he said.

"Sumon's condition deteriorated after the Rab officials left the police station and we sent him to Tongi Health Complex where he died at 1:30am," said the Tongi Police Station duty officer.

Tajul said he asked Dukhu to hand the money to Sumon in the hotel on Thursday afternoon in a plan of Rab officials to arrest him along with the others.

4m in flood-hit

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of biscuits, and 906 pieces of lungis and saris among the flood-hit people in 21 districts. They also said to have distributed house-building materials worth Tk four million.

The minister for disaster management and relief could not be reached yesterday for his comments as he was staying abroad.

The Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre said flood situation in the country's central region is worsening, but improving slowly in some northern and northeastern districts. It warned the worst flood this season would hit the country towards the end of this month.

Yesterday, water level in the Brahmaputra-Jamuna continued to fall at upstream points while rising at the downstream side. The Ganges-Padma river-system posted further swelling all along. Most of the rivers in the Meghna and the Southeastern Hill basins and the Meghna towards the end of this month.

Earlier on Thursday Rajshahi Gas Andolan Parishad, an organisation supported by local BNP leaders, professionals and social activists, enforced a dawn to dusk hartal

and supply gas to the northwestern and southern region through pipeline. But instead they are now implementing the Tk 128 crore-project to ensure direct gas supply to Bogra ignoring the divisional town, the statement added.

The flood situation in Gaibandha, Jamalpur, Mymensingh, Sirajganj, Pabna, Kishoreganj, Manikganj, Nawabganj, Narshingdi, Madaripur, Sharaipur and Narayanganj is likely to deteriorate further. More low-lying areas around the capital may go under water today.

Sources at the centre said 30 out of its 85 water-level monitoring stations across the country recorded a rise, 39 fall and the rest same as the previous day. Rivers were flowing above the danger level at 27 points yesterday.

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The dead was identified as Mamun, 35, and the injured robber as Yasin Arafat, both members of a gang led by notorious robber Mongal Dakat, police said.

Yasin was arrested but Mongal, Kana Ripon and other gang members managed to flee.

Police seized two pistols and seven bullets from the possession of Mamun and Yasin.

Sub-inspector Ali Ahmed Masud of Demra Police Station suffered minor bullet wounds in his chest in the nearly 30-minute encounter and was given first aid at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

According to our Sherpur correspondent, floods in the district yesterday took a serious turn after a cross dam had cracked at Asansara under Sadar Upazila and the Southeastern Hill basins and the Meghna towards the end of this month.

The situation in Sylhet, Sunamganj, Moulvibazar, Sherpur, Netrokona, Rangpur, Dinajpur and Kurigram is likely to continue improving.

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