

Cabinet okays revised, proposed budgets

**BSS, Dhaka**

The cabinet at a special meeting at the Sangsad Bhaban yesterday approved the revised budget of 2004-05 fiscal and the proposed budget of 2005-06 financial year.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia presided over the special cabinet meeting, an official handout said.

The meeting also approved the collection and management of taxes, duties and other sources of revenue for 2005-2006.

Cabinet ministers and concerned state ministers attended the meeting.

Cabinet secretary and concerned secretaries were also present.

President authenticates national budget

**BSS, Dhaka**

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday authenticated the national budget for fiscal 2005-06 before it was presented in the Jatiya Sangsad by Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman.

He gave the authentication from the President's Office at the Sangsad Bhaban.

Earlier, the new budget was approved by the cabinet at a special meeting with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the chair at the Sangsad Bhaban.

Japanese senior vice-minister arrives today

**UNB, Dhaka**

Japanese Senior Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Ichiro Aisawa arrives in Dhaka today on a two-day official visit.

Aisawa will meet Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan and other high officials and exchange views on the further enhancement of Japan-Bangladesh relations, bilateral affairs and UN reform, said a press release of the Japanese embassy yesterday.

Prayer Timing		
June 10		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-45	6-50
Esha	8-15	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Obituary



**Khondokar Mohammad Idris Ali**, senior vice president of Bangladesh Book Publishers' Association, passed away due to cancer on June 8 at the Central Hospital in the city, says a press release.

He will be buried at the Mirpur Intellectuals' Graveyard after namaz-e-janaza at the Baitul Mukarram Mosque after Juma prayers today.

His quikhwani will be held on June 12 after Maghrib prayers at Green Homes Community Centre at 25/C Green Road in the city.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend the quikhwani.

Death anniversary



Today is the first death anniversary of **Helaluddin Helal**, a contractor of Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa), says a press release.

On the occasion, Quankhwani and doa mahfil will be held at his residence at 105/1-A Modhya Pirerbagh in the city.

Quikhwani



Quikhwani of **Alhaj Md Ashrafuddin Mia**, a retired official of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, will be held at his village home Kalma in Louhajang after Juma prayers today, says a press release.

He passed away due to heart stroke at his village home on June 1 at the age of 87.

Ashrafuddin, father of AKM Mohsin, a senior photojournalist of The Daily Star, left behind his four sons and five daughters to mourn his death.



PHOTO: STAR

Family members of slain former finance minister Shah ASM Kibria organised a human chain programme as part of their 'Blue for Peace' programme at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday demanding trial of his killers.

RESERVED SEATS IN JS

'HC verdict a setback for women's rights movement'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Samajik Protirodh Committee, a women rights group, yesterday termed the verdict of the High Court on reserved women seats as a setback for the movement of women rights and development.

The verdict seems to be politically motivated, she said adding that independence of the judiciary is a must to protect the constitution and the basic human rights.

The women rights organisations filed two cases against the bill on 45 reserved seats for the women that was passed in the parliament on May 16. But, High Court bench repealed the cases on May 30.

"The bill is undemocratic and discriminatory, as it goes against some sections of the constitution, CEDAW and the declaration of Beijing+5 and Beijing+10," Mahmuda Islam, president of

Women for Women, said at a press conference at the National Press Club.

"We would request women leaders of all the political parties to abstain from accepting the nomination for the reserved seats," she said, adding, "We don't want that they remain in the parliament as dolls."

Bangladesh Mohila Parishad General Secretary Ayesha Khanam, expressing her grief on the passage of the bill and the court's verdict, said this is a clear negligence and insult to the women's political rights.

The government report presented recently in the 49th session of Commission for Women Status of the United Nations and the Poverty Reduction Strategy

Paper stated the direct election for the reserved seats for the women, but the government is doing just the opposite, Khanam alleged.

"The undemocratic, irregular, non-transparent and imbalance decisions can never be expected," Ain O Salish Kendra Deputy Director Rawshan Jahan Parveen said.

They also slated the changes to the National Women Development Policy, saying this has seriously violated the option for political empowerment.

The changes were not even made based on the consensus of the lawmakers, ministers, or even in consultation with the women leaders, they alleged.

The committee will stage a human chain on June 14 on Manik Mia Avenue protesting the court verdict.

Mamta Begum of Bangladesh Mohila Samity, Shahida Parveen of Bangladesh Trade Union Kendra, Nasima Akhtar of The Hunger Project and other women leaders also spoke at the conference.

Launch social movement to check dowry menace

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday called for launching a social movement to eliminate the dowry system from society in order to protect women from dowry-related violence.

They also suggested carrying out a massive campaign against this social menace through media, in political rallies and at discussions following Juma prayers.

The laws concerned should also be enforced properly to check the dowry practice, they added.

The Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR) in cooperation with the Manusher Jonno organised the seminar on "Dowry -- a social malady: What needs to be done" at the

Cirdap auditorium in the city.

Barrister M Haider Ali, secretary to the women and children affairs ministry, attended the seminar as chief guest while Dr Maleka Begum, a women's rights leader, and Nasrin Haq, country director of Action Aid-Bangladesh, were present as special guests.

Dowry should be treated as a crime, not as a social ailment, Maleka Begum said, adding that it is high time to take effective steps to check it.

She also called for an amendment to the dowry laws and an end to the practice of luxurious marriage ceremonies.

Haider Ali said thousands of women fall victim to domestic violence because of dowry every year and many of them are killed while

some commit suicide to get rid of the suffering.

Presenting a keynote paper, Advocate Alena Khan, executive director of BSEHR, said a total 703 women were killed and 393 others were tortured for dowry in the last five years as of May 2005.

She put forward a set of recommendations to check the dowry-related violence.

The recommendations include making women self-reliant, empowering women, massive social movement against dowry, incorporating a chapter on this issue into the school textbook and effective enforcement of the existing laws.

Representatives from different women organisations and district leaders of BSEHR took part in the seminar.

Govt urged to eliminate child labour

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of six child rights organisations yesterday called upon the government to chalk out action plan to eliminate all kinds of child labour.

They also urged the authorities concerned to identify the sectors which are most hazardous for child.

Out of 3.2 million child labourers, 1.1 million are working in hazardous fields, said the leaders

at a press briefing quoting the latest child labour survey conducted by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

The press briefing was organised by Joint Child Labour Working Group (JCLWG) Bangladesh, a common platform of six organisations at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

These are ILO, Unicef, Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF), Centre for Mass Education in Science (CMES), Dhaka Ansania Mission (Dam) and

Save the Children Alliance.

"Bangladesh ratified the ILO Convention on worst forms of child labour in 1999. After the ratification, the government should have identified which sector is hazardous and which is not for the child according to the rule of the convention 182, but the government did not do it," said Sujewwa Fonseka, chief technology advisor of Time Bound Programme of ILO.

The speakers urged the government and non-government organisations to come forward to working together to stamp out the child labour.

They laid emphasis on social mobilisation to reduce child labour saying that media can play vital role to reach the goal in this regard.

"One out of six children around the world is involved in child labour doing work that hampers their mental, physical and emotional development, and a long-term strategy is needed to overcome it," said Kirsty McIvor, chief of the communication and information section of Unicef.

"Action plan including poverty alleviation programme, access to quality education, flexible delivery of services to working children and research on macro-economic policies affecting children should be taken in hand," said David Humphery, programme director of Save the Children Alliance.

"Promoting linkages with stakeholders including the working children themselves, their parents and communities as well as policy and decision makers at various government levels is also essential to reduce child labour," said Kazi Rafiqul Alam, executive director of Dam.

Asgar of BSAF and Dr Muhammad Ibrahim of CMES were present at the press briefing.

Budget anti-people

Political parties say

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different political parties yesterday rejected the proposed budget for the fiscal year 2005-06 terming it anti-people one.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Haq Inu and General Secretary Syed Jafar Sajad, in a joint statement, said poor people will not be benefited by the budget.

"There is no specific direction about poverty reduction in the budget, rather it will help rich section to be more rich," the statement added.

The JSD leaders also criticised the budget for retaining the provision of whitening the black money.

They said no measure to curb the ongoing unbearable price hike of essentials is found in the budget.

President of the Communist Party of Bangladesh Manzurul Ahsan Khan and General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim, in a joint statement, said the proposed budget will pave the way for plundering national wealth.

"It will also create an opportunity for the BNP-Jamaat candidates to maintain their economic influence on the next general election," they viewed.

In his reaction, Jatiya Party (Ershad) leader Golam Mohammad Quader told the UNB that the proposed budget is ambitious and election oriented.

The budget has proposed an Annual Development Programme of Tk 24,500 crore by showing an availability of only Tk 9,000 crore, he said, adding, "It also fails to provide any guidelines how the remaining money would be collected."

In his reaction, Bangladesh Gono Azadi League President Abdus Samad termed the budget anti-people one.

He said the government has formulated the budget to satisfy its political needs.

Bangladesh Workers' Party said the budget is the politicisation of the finance minister ahead of next parliament election.

Finance bill placed in JS

BSS, Dhaka

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday introduced the Finance Bill, 2005 in the House after the presentation of the budget proposal for fiscal 2005-2006.

The finance bill proposed for appropriation of fiscal proposals and necessary amendments in different fiscal laws, ordinances, rules etc in line with the budget for the next fiscal year.

The bill also proposed incorporation of re-fixed tax net in VAT, Direct Tax and Indirect Tax to update the laws and rules in line with the new tax proposal made in the budget for next fiscal.

JS seat of Kazi Siraj declared vacant

BSS, Dhaka

Speaker Barrister Mohammad Jamiuruddin Sircar yesterday declared parliamentary seat Faridpur-1 vacant following resignation of Kazi Sirajul Islam from Awami League.

The speaker informed the House that the sitting MP from Awami League Kazi Siraj tendered his resignation from all posts including his primary membership from AL.

Consequently, as per Article 70(A), the parliamentary constituency that Kazi Siraj represented (JS-209, Faridpur-1) had fallen vacant.

This was published through Bangladesh Gazette notification on June 8.

Attack on indigenous people condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Adibashi Parishad (National Indigenous Council) yesterday condemned the attack on the indigenous people of Ratal Bazar under Singra upazila in Natore district.

In a statement, parishad General Secretary Rabinindranath Soren demanded of the government to arrest the persons responsible for the attack within 24 hours.

"With an ulterior motive to encroach the land of Jitendranath Toppo, some identified land grabbers along with hired miscreants attacked the indigenous villagers in broad daylight on Wednesday leaving 30 people seriously injured and looted four shops," he alleged.

Although the lands of indigenous people are illegally occupied across the country unabatedly, the local administrations remain indifferent to the incidents, Rabinindranath Soren said.

The parishad also threatened to go for a tougher movement if the attackers are not brought to justice immediately.

PM to join South Summit in Doha June 15-16

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia flies to Qatar on Tuesday on a three-day visit to attend the second "South Summit" where leaders from some 50 developing countries will discuss their development challenges, with special focus on aid and trade.

Khaleda will address the two-day meet on June 15, the inaugural day. On the sidelines of the summit, she will also hold bilateral talks with her counterparts of different countries to strengthen trade and investment ties with those countries.

"Development Challenges Facing the South" is the theme of the high-profile summit, which will follow up the Havana Summit Declaration and Havana Plan of Action adopted at the first summit of G-77 held on April 11-14, 2000.

Briefing reporters on the summit and the PM's visit, Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin yesterday said Khaleda will lead a 30-member Bangladesh delegation.

He said the PM is expected to have bilateral meetings with the emir of Qatar, the king of Nepal and the prime minister of Malaysia. There is a possibility of more such bilateral talks with the heads of the state and government attending the summit.

On the first day of her visit, Khaleda will attend a reception in Doha to be hosted by the Bangladesh community in Qatar.

Hemayetuddin said the second South Summit will have a 5-year review of the Millennium

Declaration in New York and the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong in December.

"The developing world is expected to forge a strong coalition on the inter-related issues of aid and trade, which are of crucial importance for them," he added.

The foreign secretary said the inaugural session of the summit will be addressed, among others, by the prime minister of Jamaica as the chair of the G-77, the emir of Qatar as the host and the UN secretary-general.

The summit will be preceded by a preparatory meeting of senior officials on June 12 and a ministerial level meeting on June 13. The preparatory meeting of the senior officials will have two substantive items on its agenda. These are consideration of the draft documents of the second south summit and consideration of projects on South-South Cooperation.

Hemayetuddin will lead the Bangladesh side at the senior official level meeting.

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan will lead the Bangladesh delegation at the ministerial meeting which will have an interactive session on South-South cooperation and the implementation of the outcome of the first South Summit.

The foreign secretary said the interactive dialogue would provide an opportunity to highlight Bangladesh's progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals

(MDG) and the need for international assistance to meet the targets.

He said Bangladesh will also seize the opportunity to highlight its position on international trade issues in the perspective of the Hong Kong ministerial meeting of the WTO.

Morshed Khan will also lead the Bangladesh delegation at the NAM (Non-aligned Movement) ministerial meeting on the UN reforms to be held on June 13 on the sidelines of the summit, the foreign secretary told reporters.

He said during the meeting Bangladesh will put particular emphasis on market access, global zero-tariff access for all products originating in the least developed countries (LDCs), flexibility of the rules of origin and preferential treatment.

Bangladesh will suggest that the global trade agenda should be linked to global poverty reduction agenda and new and additional resources should be allocated to build trade capacity of the LDC economies, the foreign secretary said.

Bangladesh will also put forward special emphasis on the development dimension of the Doha Round and will call for greater South-South cooperation in terms of increased implementation of the General System of Trade Preference (GSTP), investment, exchange of best practices, and technological know-how.

Disqualify Ershad from next election

Women leaders urge EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of six women's organisations yesterday called on the Election Commission (EC) to disqualify former president and Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad from contesting the next election, terming him an oppressor of women.

They also protested the arrest and harassment of Bidisha, the beleaguered wife of the former president, saying that such an inhuman act will have a negative impact on the nation.

The leaders demanded an impartial probe into the incidents centring on Bidisha and punishment to the persons involved in harassing her.

They also urged all political parties to unite to protect women's

rights.

The incident of harassment of Bidisha not only hurt the integrity of a citizen but also violated the constitution, said Sultana Kamal at a press conference in the city.

Expressing surprise over the prompt police action, Barrister Sigma Huda said, "Ershad used his money and power to influence the law enforcement agencies to resort to harassment."

Advocate Salma Ali said the way Bidisha was treated would encourage many males to oppress their wives.

Farida Akhtar of Ubining and Advocate Alena Khan of Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights also spoke.

Sunamganj by-polls July 20

UNB, Dhaka

By-election to Sunamganj-3 parliamentary seat will be held on July 20.

The Election Commission (EC) in a gazette notification yesterday announced the schedule for the by-election. The seat fell vacant following the death of senior Awami League leader Abdus Samad Azad on April 27.

According to the schedule, the last date for submission of nomination papers to the returning officer or assistant returning officer is June 25, while the date for withdrawal of nominations is July 3. The voting will be held on July 20.

Deputy Commissioner of Sunamganj has been appointed the returning officer. upazila nirbahi officers of Sunamganj Sadar and Jagannthpur will act as assistant returning officers.

'NIROBATAR MUKTI' LAUNCHED

Children demand more access to media

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Children yesterday demanded more access to the media to discuss their problems and share their opinion about their rights.

Children from about 35 organisations gathered at the launching ceremony of a video film on violence against children at the Biam auditorium in the city.

Ichchey Shishu Media House

produced the film titled 'Nirobatar Mukti' with footage from 150 episodes of 'Mukta Khabar', a popular news programme for children shown on Ekushey Television (ETV), the first private terrestrial television channel of the country.

The film features various forms of child repression such as trafficking, acid attack, torture by their employers and drug addiction, along with opinion from the experts and statement of the abused children.

Editor of the Prothom Alo Motiur Rahman inaugurated the film while Acting Editor of The Daily Star Syed Fahim Munaim and Country Director of Save the Children, Sweden-Denmark Olof Rigbarg opened the ceremony by lighting candles.

Children from Child Brigade, CSID, CPD, Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association, Nari Maitree and Children Club attended the programme organised by Save the Children, Sweden-Denmark.

The children said the incidents of child abuse have a devastating impact on them and they feel as if there is no place to go where they can find themselves secured and free.

"The film reflects the real situation of children in society. The media usually treat the child abuse incidents as day-to-day events and cover it accordingly. But they don't dig deeper into it and don't conduct further research on it," said Fahim Munaim.

He also assured that The Daily Star would extend cooperation to the children.

Responding to the demand of the children, Editor of the Prothom Alo Motiur Rahman expressed solidarity with the children and promised to convey their message across the world through the Prothom Alo and The Daily Star.

"It is not a mere film, it is the reality and so it is extremely important," said Olof Rigbarg in his concluding speech.

Fuad Chowdhury, executive producer of Mukta Khabar, Shamsul Alam, programme officer, and Kristine Zeuthen Jeppesen, advisor to Save the Children, Sweden-Denmark, were also present.

The film will be shown in different parts of the city and other districts to raise awareness about child abuse and help check violence against children.

DHAKA

TODAY

Art exhibition

An art exhibition titled 'We can also do in our way' will be inaugurated. A total of 165 works drawn by the children in 'Boshe Anko 21005' art competition will be on display. Venue: Zainul Gallery-2A, Institute of Fine Arts. Time: 4.00pm.

DHAKA

TODAY

Drawing competition

Sylhet Division Development Students Action Council organises a drawing competition for children as part of its campaign to save Osmani Udyan. For participants aged 9 and under, the theme of the competition is 'Present condition of the Udyan', while for the children under the 9-12 age group, the theme is 'Portrait of Bangabir MAG Osmani'. Venue: Osmani Udyan. Time: 4.00pm.

DHAKA

TODAY

Film show

World Literature Centre will screen a film titled 'Lolita' by Stanly Kubric. Venue: Film Circle Auditorium, Bangla Motor. Time: 6.00pm.

DHAKA

TODAY

Academy Film show

Academy Film Society will screen three films titled 'Twice Upon A Yesterday', 'You Have Got Mail' and '101 Reykjavik'. Venue: Academy Auditorium, 21/C Jigatola. Time: 3.30pm, 6.30pm and 8.30pm.

DHAKA

TODAY

Seminar

Bangladesh Quran, Sunnah Parishad organises a seminar titled 'Present Muslim Society: Role of Hakkani Olama-Mashaekh'. Venue: VIP Lounge of the National Press Club, Tophkana Road. Time: 3.00pm.

DHAKA

TODAY

Biennial meeting

The biennial meeting of Bangladesh

DHAKA

TODAY

Recital workshop

The certificate awarding ceremony of a recital workshop, organised by the Central Kachi-Kancha Mela, will be held. Venue: Kachi-Kancha Bhaban, Segun Bagicha. Time: 8.00pm.

DHAKA

TODAY

Conference

A conference of Gonorantani Party Dhaka City unit will be held. Venue: Muktagong, Ramna. Time: 10.00am.

DHAKA

TODAY

Friends foundation

The scholarship awarding ceremony of Friends Foundation will be held with Education Minister Dr M Osman Faruk as chief guest. Venue: Biam Auditorium, New Eskaton. Time: 10.00am.