

NAM APARTMENTS, SANGSAD BHABAN

JS body smells corruption in lift procurement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary body yesterday asked the housing and public works ministry to examine the lifts recently installed at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban and NAM Apartments which the committee members said are not up to the mark.

The standing committee on housing and public works ministry at

a meeting at the Sangsad Bhaban smelt corruption in the procurement of lifts and asked to check those by experts of the Buet.

One of the committee members told the meeting that even the Speaker was confined for sometime inside a lift recently when it was stopped suddenly.

The meeting also discussed the plight of city dwellers due to fre-

quent road diggings in the capital by different service providing bodies of power, gas, water and telephone.

It laid emphasis on coordinated works by Dhaka Wasa, Desa and other bodies to halt wastage of money.

Chaired by Shahjahan Chowdhury, the meeting however praised the Rajuk decision of lower-

ing the interest rate at 12 percent from previous 17 percent against installments of Rajuk plots.

Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas, and committee members Alamgir Haidar Khan, Noor-e-Alam Chowdhury, Alamgir Mohammad Mahfuzullah Farid, Sultan Mohammad Babu and Abdul Mottalib Akanda were present.

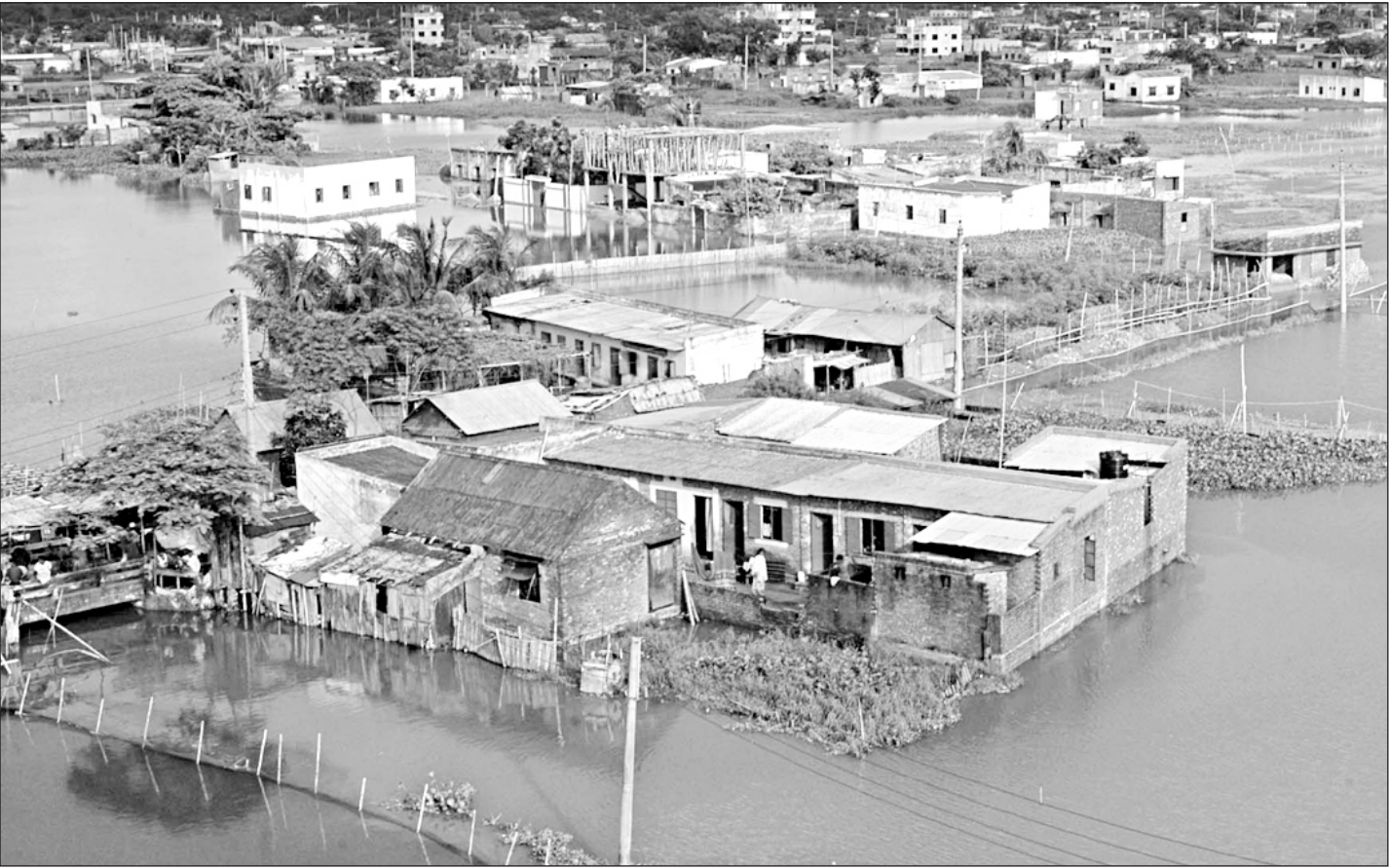


PHOTO: STAR

A vast area inside the Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra (DND) embankment went under knee-to waist-deep water following heavy downpour for the last two days, causing immense suffering to several lakh residents.

CONTEMPT OF COURT CHARGE AGAINST JUDGE, PP, SHOAB HC verdict on July 26

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday fixed July 26 for passing judgement in the contempt of court charge filed against Dhaka Metropolitan Additional Sessions Judge Shamsul Alam Khan, Public Prosecutor (PP) Abdullah Mahmud Hasan and Salahuddin Shoab Chowdhury, an accused in a sedition case.

While hearing the case, the High Court bench comprising Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Emdadul Haque Azad kept Salahuddin Shoab Chowdhury standing before the court.

The court also ordered Salahuddin Shoab Chowdhury to appear before the court on July 26.

The accused through their counsels sought unconditional apology to the court for committing the contempt of court.

The court in its observation said the accused have tarnished the image and dignity of the court by ignoring the High Court order.

Earlier, the accused had sought unconditional apology through affidavit to the High Court.

The High Court, on June 20, exempted Shamsul Alam Khan and Abdullah Mahmud Hasan from appearing in persons before the court.

The court, on May 16, issued a suo moto rule against them for granting bail to Salaudun Shoab in spite of having a High Court rule regarding his bail in the sedition case.

Shoab Chowdhury was arrested at the Zia International Airport on November 29, 2003. On January 24, 2004, a sedition case was filed against him.

A petition was filed on behalf of Shoab Chowdhury to the Additional Metropolitan Session Judge's court seeking bail in the case on March 14 this year. The judge's court rejected his petition.

On March 28, he filed a petition for bail in the High Court. The High Court bench comprising Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Emdadul Huq had issued a rule upon the government regarding his bail. In this situation, the Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge Shamsul Alam Khan granted his bail. The Public Prosecutor had not opposed the bail during the hearing.

DU exams postponed

The Dhaka University has postponed all examinations under the course system scheduled for the period up to July 11, except those under medical faculty and colleges, says a press release.

Fresh dates for these exams will be announced soon.

However, other parts of the exam schedule will remain unchanged.

Cabinet okays pvt varsity (amend) act, draft of seeds (amend) act

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet approved the draft of 'The Seeds (Amendment) Act, 2005' at a meeting yesterday to check proliferation of low-quality seeds in the country.

It also approved 'The Private University (Amendment) Act, 2004' in principle.

The meeting was held at the cabinet room of the Prime Minister's Office, with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the chair.

The draft of the seeds act proposes increasing the amount of fines from Tk 500 to Tk 2,000 for marketing low-quality cereal seeds, meeting sources said.

In the draft, the government

also proposed to make it mandatory for all kinds of cereal and non-cereal seeds to go through a three-year 'agro-ecological suitability' test before the supply of the seeds to the markets.

About 'The Private University (Amendment) Act, 2004', the sources said some changes were brought to the act for its proper enforcement in order to streamline the private universities.

The act will help check malpractice and irregularities now plaguing the private university sector, they added.

The amendment bill will be placed before the parliament for approval, said Education Secretary Faruque Ahmed Siddique.

The proposed act clearly defines the nature and scope of the board of trustees, he said.

The proposed amendments also suggest regulating the introduction of distance education.

Besides, the cabinet also decided to extend by two more years the time limit of 'general waiver' facility, now being enjoyed by foreign ships under 'The Bangladesh Flag Vessels (Amendment) Act, 2003'.

Mustafa Kamal new envoy to Korea, Golam Akbar to Oman

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The government has decided to appoint Mustafa Kamal as the next ambassador of Bangladesh to the Republic of Korea.

Mustafa Kamal is currently the ambassador of Bangladesh to Oman.

Though Mustafa Kamal started his career as 2nd lieutenant in Bangladesh Army in 1977, he joined protocol wing of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1988.

Before his appointment as ambassador of Bangladesh to Oman in 2003, Mustafa Kamal served the post of Minister (Political), Director General, Director and Counsellor in Bangladesh missions in different countries and wings under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The government has also decided to appoint Golam Akbar Khondakar as the next ambassador of Bangladesh to Oman.

Golam Akbar Khondakar is currently a member of syndicate of Chittagong University and former member of parliament.

UK promises to deepen EU, Bangladesh ties

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The United Kingdom (UK), which took over the presidency of the European Union (EU) for six months from July 1, has pledged to further strengthen the EU relationship with Bangladesh.

"The EU is Bangladesh's largest trade and aid partner. We want to develop further and strengthen the other aspects of our relationship with Bangladesh. We want to provide support for strengthening its governance and democracy; extend cooperation in the fight against international crime and terrorism; work together on the environment and sustainable development; help achieve its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and promote a new multilateral trade agreement," said a statement issued by the British High Commission in Dhaka yesterday.

As presidency, the UK is also pledged to take forward the agenda inherited from the preceding Luxemburg presidency within the overall framework set out in the Multi-Annual Strategic Programme 2004-2006.

It will try to continue the EU programme with three main agendas. These are Europe's role in the world, economic reform and social justice, and security and stability.

BNP leader's son shot to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Assailants looking for a BNP leader gunned down his son after taking him out of his house in Dhaka Cantonment on Sunday night.

The victim, Sazzad Hossain Prakash alias Asif, 22, is son of Azahar Hossain, a former banker and organising secretary of cantonment thana unit BNP.

Five assailants rang the doorbell of their house at Matikata at around 8:00pm and asked Asif, a third-year student of computer information system at Daffodils University, for his father, family sources said.

The assailants dragged him out of the house at gunpoint when he said his father is not home. Azahar told reporters yesterday.

They took him about 100 yards off the house, shot him in his chest and fled the scene. Asif was pronounced dead at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) at Dhaka Cantonment.

Azhar could not say who came for him and why they have killed his son. "No-one has ever demanded toll from me and I don't have rivalry with anyone," he said.

Actions to be taken against Proshika on the basis of probe report: Bhuiyan

UNB, Dhaka

The government will take action against Proshika, a leading NGO, on the basis of inquiry report on their activities, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told Parliament yesterday.

"Inquiry has been completed. Actions will be taken against Proshika after the inquiry report is submitted," Bhuiyan said replying to a supplementary question of ASM Shahadat Hossain of Jamaat.

He said the government does not want to control the NGO activities, rather it wants to cooperate with the NGOs, which are working for the development of human resources and supplementing the government efforts to alleviate poverty.

He, however, informed the House that actions would be taken against those NGOs found involved in political or religious matters.

Proshika earned the wrath of the government following allegations that it was involved in political campaign against the government. An inquiry was launched against Proshika on an allegation that it had mobilised its members to join the street demonstrations on the eve of Awami League leader Abdul Jalil's April 30 deadline to topple the government.

Uttara Lekkhok Shilpi Club executives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Enamul Haq and MA Awwal have been elected president and general secretary of Uttara Lekkhok Shilpi Club respectively.

The election to the 15-member executive committee was held at the annual general meeting of the club recently, says a press release.

Other members are Prof Rafiqul Islam, Sherifa Kader, Prof MA Baten Mia, Rumi Khandoker, Rezaul Karim, Rumi Ajnabi, Zakir Hossain, Ramala Saha, Dr Priyomati Baroi, Md Faruque, ZA Khan, Lutful Matin and Dr Salahuddin.

CONFCE OF HEALTH SECRETARIES CONCLUDES

'Allocate more resources to address new challenges'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A two-day 10th conference of the health secretaries of 11 Southeast Asian countries ended in the city yesterday with a call to allocate more resources and technical assistance in order to address new health challenges.

"Strengthening the national public health infrastructure is the key to overcoming the health challenges in the region," said Health Secretary AFM Sarwar Kamal at a press conference at the Sonargaon Hotel.

He said a balanced health workforce and development of a robust surveillance and monitoring mechanism must accompany the

infrastructure building.

At the conference, the delegates from 11 WHO-member states called for a joint approach towards elimination of both infectious and deadly diseases from the region.

They focussed on four key issues -- health action in emergencies and disaster management, polio eradication, revision of international health regulations and Asia-Pacific strategy on emerging diseases.

The delegates also called on the World Health Organisation (WHO) to support the member states in systematically addressing their needs in emergency preparedness and response.

On polio eradication issue, they recommended that the countries should ensure that adequate resources are provided for increasing and maintaining high routine immunisation coverage and surveillance in order to maintain their polio free status.

They also recommended that the countries need to develop the core capacity and further strengthen the health system.

Dr Samlee Plianbangchang, regional director of WHO, Dr Duang Veedi Shankobol, WHO representative in Bangladesh, Dr Abdur Rahman Khan, director general of Health Services, were present at the conference.

JS witnesses dull sitting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday witnessed a dull sitting when most of the lawmakers were seen busy talking among themselves instead of paying attention to the day's business.

Apparently annoyed with the noisy situation, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan during the question-answer session drew the speaker's attention to it.

"Look at the House and see all are talking," Bhuiyan told the speaker pointing his finger to the lawmakers. "I hope you will look into it as it is a matter of discipline."

Foreign Minister Morshed Khan, State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Ziaul Haq Zia, Whip Wahidul Haq and BNP lawmaker

MA Hashem were talking in a group just behind the LGRD minister who was answering to questions about his ministry.

Jamaat lawmaker Delwar Hossain Saidee was seen talking to Social Welfare Minister Ali Ahsan Muhammad Mujahid.

Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas was seen talking with BNP lawmakers Shakhawat Hossain Bakul, Shahid Uddin Chowdhury Anney and Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu.

Yesterday's sitting began at 5:40pm, 10 minutes behind schedule.

Prime Minister and Leader of the House Khaleda Zia was not present. The main opposition Awami League lawmakers continued to boycott the session.

CONVENTION OF ISLAMIC ORGANISATIONS

'Jamaat main enemy of Islam'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

No political party would be able to go to power in the future ignoring the country's Ulama (Islamic scholars) community, said the leaders of Islamic organisations at a convention yesterday.

They also strongly demanded immediate establishment of an Islamic Arabic University.

"Ulama-Mashayekh is such a potential force that no political party can ascend to power bypassing them," said Mufti Fazlul Haq Amini MP at the convention organised by the daily Inqilab at Osmani Memorial Hall in the city.

Referring to the secular political parties, Amini said that none can dismiss the Ulama community from the politics and that no party will be able to manipulate them for political gains.

"Jamaat-e-Islami is the main enemy of Islam today," said Moulana Syed Fazlul Karim of Islami Shashantantra Andolon, accusing the Islamist party of creating a split in the Madrasa teachers' organisation.

Disunity among the Alems and religious leaders has undermined the pro-Islamic forces, said Moulana Obaidul Haq, Khatib of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque.

"Many of the leaders who run different political fronts and Islamic institutions behave like dictators, causing resentment among others," he said and called on the Islamic leaders to work on the basis of consensus and amity.

"Despite being a majority, the Muslims in Bangladesh do not cause any harm to Qadiani community but Muslims are firm to consider Qadianis as non-Muslim and non-believer," said AMM Bahauddin, editor of the Inqilab.

Justice Abdur Rouf, Vice-chancellor of the National University Dr Aftab Ahmad and Moulana Muhiuddin Khan also spoke.

Several hundred leaders of most Islamic political parties, except the Jamaat, and institutions from across the country attended the convention.

Jamaat's threat to close down female hostels condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different organisations yesterday condemned the threats of Jamaat-e-Islami to close down the hostels of female students in Bogra town.

In a joint statement, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haque Inu and General Secretary Syed Jafar Sajjad demanded immediate arrest of local Jamaat leaders including the district Amir who gave the threats to the owners of female hostels to shut them immediately.

"The anti-women attitude of Jamaat has been exposed clearly through these threats," they said.

As the partners of alliance government, the communal forces including Jamaat are violating women's rights in the country, the statement added.

Workers' Party has also condemned the attempt of Islami Chhatra Shibir to evict the female students from the hostels.

Party President Rashed Khan Menon and General Secretary Bimol Biswas, in a joint statement, said under the leadership of the local ward commissioner, who is a Jamaat leader, the shibir cadres are threatening the female students to leave the hostels.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad also expressed grave concern over the attempt to evict 200 female students of Bogra Government Azizul Haq College from the private hostels allegedly by Islami Chhatra Shibir, student wing of Jamaat.

50 hurt as police club jute mill staff

UNB, Sirajganj

At least 50 employees and workers of state-owned Qawmi Jute Mill were injured, as police yesterday charged baton to break up their demonstration on demand for their dues.

The employees and workers observed a half-day hartal here yesterday as part of their protest programmes.

"When the jute mill staff tried to block roads to disrupt traffic, police charged baton and fired teargas shells to disperse them," witnesses said.

Thirty-two of the injured were admitted to Qawmi Jute Mill Hospital and clinics in the town while others released after first aid. The president and the secretary of the mill trade union were also injured in

the incident.

Sources said the employees of the mill were not paid their salaries and other dues for the last 27 weeks, and they declared the hartal programme last month to realise their arrears.

First, the workers tried stage a sit-in at Qawmi crossing on the western side of the Jamuna Bridge, but as armed police were deployed in the area to foil their protest, they changed their venue. When they marched towards Jhaoli area, police lobbed teargas and charged baton.

The workers also hurled brick chips at the policemen.

During the clash, vehicular movement on both sides of the road remained suspended for 15 minutes during the clash.

SSKOP ultimatum to govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the Sangbadik-Sramik-Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SSKOP), a forum of journalists and employees, yesterday gave an ultimatum to the information ministry to form the 6th wage board for the newspaper industry by July 15.

Otherwise, they would announce their next course of action at a grand rally of the journalists and employees on July 17, the leaders said in a joint statement.

A token strike would also be observed in all newspapers and news agencies from 11:00am to 2:00pm on the day.

Protesting the long delay in forming the wage board, the leaders said that although the cabinet has approved its formation four months ago, the information ministry has failed to act.

They also said that while the government has awarded new pay scale to the officers and employees, the newspapermen are facing financial hardships due to price spiral.

The signatories to the statement included SSKOP leaders Gias Kamal Chowdhury, Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Fazle Imam, Ruhul Amin Gazi, Motiur Rahman Talukder, Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, Abul Hashem, Khairul Islam, Altaf Mahmud, Elahi Neaz Khan, Shah Alamgir and Sarder Farid.

14 Indians rescued in Bay

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Fourteen Indian fishermen were rescued in the coastal belt in Patakhali yesterday after their motorboat drifted in the Bay of Bengal for 16 days due to an engine malfunction.

The Indians, all hailed from 24 Pargana district in West Bangla, are now in the custody of Kalapara Police Station. Police have also detained their trawler, Ma-Shakti-3.

The fishermen said they set sail from Noinan village in Diamond Harbour of 24 Pargana on June 16. But the engine of their boat became out of order just after two days.

A Bangladeshi trawler met the Indian boat near the coast in Allipur under Kalapara upazila and rescued it.

The fishermen said they had faced acute crisis of food and drinking water during the drift.

The rescued Indians are Hemanta, Soroj, Dhananjay, Bikash, Samar, Pachu Mondol, Biduth Kathal, Uttam Das, Prohlad, Omori, Tusher, Dipak, Razzak Molla and Habib Sheikh.

Several mounds of hilshas were found in their boat.

Obituary



Saturday due to old-age complications at the age of 82, says a press release.

He is survived by his wife, three sons and three daughters.

He was buried at his family graveyard in Jamalpur.

Death anniversary



Today is the fifth death anniversary of Dr AKM Shamsul Huda, a renowned physician and language movement veteran, says a press release.

A milad mahfil will be held at his residence at Shah Ali Bagh at Mirpur Section No.-1 after Asr prayers.

Quranikhwani and distribution of food among the orphans have also been arranged.