

UP role infringed by bureaucrats

BUPF leaders tell journalists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite being a vital local government body, the role of union parishad (UP) is seriously infringed by bureaucratic interference, said the leaders of Bangladesh Union Parishad Forum (BUPF) at a press briefing yesterday.

They presented a number of serious constraints that have made this age-old local government body virtually ineffective and possible ways to overcome those constraints at the briefing.

The press briefing was held following a workshop on 'Funding and Financial Management of Union Parishad' organised by the BUPF with assistance from Local Government Initiative ARD at the Brac Centre Inn in the city.

"Government must loosen its

control over the local revenue sources and let the UPs become financially viable," said Chairman Gazi Tafsir Ahmed of Roghunathpur Union Parishad of Khulna.

"At present, we are allowed to collect only the holding taxes within the UP areas, and we don't have authority to lease out local jalmahal, haat and bazar," he said, adding, "The UPs cannot spend whatever revenue is generated from those sources."

Ahmed said the unwanted and arbitrary interference of parliament members in the development works makes the role of UP chairmen and members insignificant.

"The MPs create pressures on the UP chairmen and members in many ways to carryout the development activities," he added.

The BUPF leaders demanded

separate budgetary allocation for the UPs, authority to collect taxes from local sources saying that they were ready to utilise the collected revenue maintaining full transparency and accountability.

The workshop was the part of three divisional level workshops on 'UP revenue collection, poor financial management and its impact' with previous two held in Sylhet and Khulna.

The forum has representation from 3, 899 out of total 4, 475 union parishads all over the country.

BUPF leaders Aminul Huq, Nargis Aktar, Md Ashiqul Huq, Abdur Razzak, Abdul Mannan Khan, Shamiul Huq Abul, Salma Aktar, Saiduzzaman Bulbul, Shafiqul Kader, Golam Mortuza and Izadur Rahman were present at the press conference.

Survey report on waste management submitted

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The survey report on the waste management of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) jointly conducted by the DCC and Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) was handed over to the DCC mayor and the LGRD and cooperatives minister yesterday.

Jica's Resident Representative in Bangladesh Akio Arai handed over the report at a ceremony at the Nagar Bhaban.

Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Matsushiro Horiguchi and Chief Executive Officer of the DCC Saifuddin Ahmed spoke on the occasion.

Mannan Bhuiyan, in his speech, thanked the Japan government and the Jica for taking up the waste management project in the city.

He said it has become a difficult job to remove the waste from the city. Environment is being degraded due to acute shortage of dumping station. There is only one dumping station in the city.

Bhuiyan said there was no proper plan for the waste management of the DCC. The government has taken an initiative to dispose of garbage in a planned way, he added.

He said installation of two dumping stations is underway. He stressed the need for two more stations in the city.

The LGRD minister criticised the new budget of the DCC for not imposing tax, saying if tax is not imposed and arrears taxes not realised, how the DCC will run?

"Development is not possible through only government assistance", the minister said.

The Japanese ambassador assured all-out support from the Japan government in different sectors, including the waste management, in a bid to make Dhaka a clean city.

Hasina condemns harassment of AL activists

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday condemned the harassment of her party leaders and activists by police in Faridpur by implicating them in a case of attack on a motorcycle of BNP leader Kazi Siraj in Madhukhali.

Hasina in a statement said Kazi Siraj joined BNP betraying the people of Boalmari-Alfadanga-Madhukhali who spontaneously obstructed the motorcycle condemning his floor crossing.

Describing him as an "opportunistic", she said by joining BNP Kazi Siraj insulted the people who elected him. "He has betrayed them to gain his personal interest, but the people didn't accept it and resisted him while he was entering Faridpur on June 29," she said.

She said the ruling party later filed a "false" case in this connection against 150 Awami League leaders and activists of Boalmari, Alfadanga and Madhukhali out of political vendetta.

Hasina demanded immediate withdrawal of the "false" case and urged the government to refrain from torturing her party leaders and activists.

Fire burns 8 vehicles at hotel garage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fire burnt seven minibuses and a car parked on the basement garage of Hotel Manhattan at Malibagh in the capital early yesterday.

The fire originated from a short circuit in the basement garage at 1:40am and engulfed the eight vehicles belonging to the hotel guests, fire service sources said.

Six vehicles from Fire Service and Civil Defence headquarters and Khilgoan unit doused the fire at around 3:20am.

"We tried to douse the fire with the extinguishers we have in the hotel but could not manage it," said Shamsul Islam, an employee of the hotel.

The fire was confined to the basement of the 14-storey hotel, Shamsul said, adding that electric wires and boards were also burnt in the fire.

Golden jubilee of Little Jewels School Aug 8

Little Jewels Nursery Infant and Junior School will celebrate its golden jubilee on August 8, says a press release.

All interested ex-students and teachers from home and abroad are requested to register in person at the school at 19 Purana Paltan on any weekday, except Saturday, between 1:00pm and 3:00pm or on the website at www.ljs-school.com by July 14.



PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia addresses the President's Guard Regiment officers and jawans at Dhaka Cantonment in the city yesterday.

Perform duty with utmost sincerity

President tells members of PGR

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday urged the President's Guard Regiment (PGR) to keep performing their duty with utmost sincerity as they have been doing it since 1981.

"The nation will always remember with due respect the unique examples set by the President's Guard Regiment in performing their duty," he told a function marking the 30th founding anniversary of President Guard Regiment at its headquarters at Dhaka Cantonment.

Iajuddin said the PGR has earned appreciation of all with their presence in different state programmes alongside providing security and maintaining protocol. "I feel that the duties you are performing are glorious on one hand and riskier on the other," he told the regiments.

Earlier, Chief of Army Staff Lt

General Moeen U Ahmed, Principal Staff Officer of the Armed Forces Division Major General Mustafa Reza Noor and Brig Gen M Sharifuddin and Brig Gen of PGR Commandant Abu Sohail received the President on his arrival at the headquarters.

He was also given a guard of honour by the PGR members.

Chief of Naval Staff Rear Admiral M Hasan Ali Khan, Chief of Air Staff Air Vice Marshal Fakhru Azam and high officials of army, and present and former PGR members were present on the occasion.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday said there was no alternative to training and exercise for facing the new challenges and strengthening the PGR.

She expressed her happiness that PGR has given importance to training apart from providing security and maintaining protocol.

She was addressing the PGR officers and jawans in the afternoon

on occasion of the 30th founding anniversary of the unit at Dhaka Cantonment.

On her arrival at the PGR unit, Khaleda Zia was received by Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Moeen U Ahmed, Principal Staff Officer of the Armed Forces Division Maj Gen Mustafa Reza Noor, Brigade Commander of the 46th Brigade Brig Gen Md Sharifuddin and Commandant of the PGR Brig Gen Abu Sohail.

The Prime Minister inspected the Quarter Guards and took salute.

Formed in 1975 with 407 members, PGR has now developed into a unit of 1473 members providing protocol and security to the President, the Prime Minister and visiting foreign dignitaries.

In her address, the Prime Minister said her government has always gives emphasis on necessary reform and expansion of the unit for the welfare of its members apart from equipping it.

Robber sergeant remanded again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sergeant Julfikar Ali, who robbed a businessman of Tk 14.47 lakh in local and foreign currencies, was placed again on a day's remand yesterday.

Ali was produced before the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka yesterday on completion of a four-day remand. Detective Branch of police petitioned for him to be remanded for two more days for interrogation.

Police said during the interrogation in his last remand Ali had admitted to having the looted money but did not disclose where he had kept the money hidden.

The sergeant looted Tk 5,35,000 and 50,000 Saudi Riyal from money exchange businessman Azhar Ali on June 29.

The crime, which has frequently been detected and reported against the law enforcers in recent months, has prompted Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) to take up a 'clean-up drive'. The DMP on Monday transferred 20 sergeants out of the capital for their alleged links to extortion, mugging, drug peddling, and other criminal activities.

The DMP has also formed a five-member committee to probe why the money was yet to be recovered from Ali.

Petition to show Arman arrested in another murder case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday submitted a petition to a Dhaka court for showing Arman Khan, one of the 23 most wanted criminals, arrested in a murder case in Mirpur in August last year.

The investigation officer (IO) of the case placed the petition before the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate as his fourth-phase remand ended yesterday.

The IO said an unidentified youth, aged around 27, was gunned down in Mirpur on August 4 last year.

Earlier, the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on June 28 took Arman on a seven-day remand in connection with the killing of an unidentified youth in Mirpur in September last year.

Arman and his accomplices killed a man on September 7 last year at Lalkuthi First Colony in Mirpur.

Rab-4 Sub-Inspector Rifat Khan Rajib, who is also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, is interrogating Arman.

Arman will be produced before the court on completion of his seven-day remand today and the Rab may seek remand in the murder case. After his appearance before court, he will be shown arrested in the case, court sources said.

Arrested on June 4, Arman had been on remand for the last 31 days -- the first 10 days in an arms case, the second seven days in a murder case, the third seven days in another murder case and another seven days in a separate murder case.

DESECRATION OF QURAN

Dargah Mazar

Fed holds protest rally today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Dargah Mazar Federation will stage a demonstration in the city today to protest against the desecration of the Holy Quran at Guantanamo Bay prison in Cuba by the US soldiers.

The federation will also protest the bomb attacks on different mazars in the country.

As part of the demonstration, it will hold a rally at the Engineers' Institution auditorium at 3:00pm, with Federation President Alhaj Syed Nazibul Bashar Maizbhandari in the chair.

Islamic scholars and pirs will attend the rally.

A procession will also be brought out in the city, said a press release.

Pro-opposition lawyers to observe Justice Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sammilita Ainjibi Samannay Parishad, a forum of pro-opposition lawyers, will observe 'Justice Day' today at all courts across the country demanding a judiciary free from 'corruption' and 'executive influence.'

Announcing this at a press conference yesterday, parishad convenor Barrister Amir-UI Islam said instead of the Chief Justice, the senior most judge of the High Court (HC) should be given the authority to from benches in the HC.

He said the Chief Justice dissolved the bench that issued a rule against a writ petition filed with the HC challenging the appointment of new chief election commissioner.

If the Chief Justice interferes with the activities of judges then where will the people get justice?" he questioned.

Amir-UI Islam alleged that the country's judiciary is under the grip of politics causing hindrances to its smooth functioning.

"The country's judiciary is now facing image crisis as the government appointed 34 judges in the HC in two phases considering their political affiliation," Amir-UI Islam said, adding that the appointment of 16 judges was not confirmed.

The parishad demanded formation of an independent commission after consulting with the opposition political parties to ensure fairness and competency while appointing judges in the HC.

Referring to the verdict of Majdar Hossain Case (Supreme Court's 12-point directives regarding separation of judiciary from the executive), the parishad said the appointment, promotion and transfer of judges at the lower courts must be brought under the control of Judicial Service Commission.

The rules that are being formulated violating the verdict of Majdar Hossain Case must be repealed, it added.

Reforms must be brought to stop misuse of sections 54 and 167 of the Criminal Procedure Code in line with the High Court directives and Law Commission Report.

Demanding stopping of 'crossfire' by law enforcement agencies, the parishad said the arrested persons should be taken outside the custody along with a magistrate for arms recovery.

Supreme Court Bar Association President Advocate Mahbubey Alam, Secretary Enayetur Rahim, Advocate Abdul Basat Majumder, Advocate Abdul Matin Khasru, Advocate Subrata Chowdhury and Barrister Shafiq Ahmed were present at the press conference.

Undersea cable hook-up by Dec

Minister tells Ispab delegation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will hook up to the global information superhighway through a undersea cable by this December, Post and Telecommunication Minister Aminul Haq told a delegation of Internet Service Providers Association, Bangladesh (Ispab) yesterday.

The delegation discussed the possible use of bandwidth of the submarine cable and informed the minister that the country's current rate of data consumption is about 2 megabyte.

Ispab urged the minister to form two committees on administration and management for proper utilisation of the undersea cable, and asked for representation of private parties in the proposed committees.

The delegates also requested the minister to ensure a competitive pricing for the bandwidth in line with tariff in the neighbouring countries.

They said the private ISPs would be the major users of the submarine cable backbone linking South East Asia, Middle East and Western Europe (SEA-ME-WE-3) alongside the state-owned telecoms operator Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB).

The submarine cable was instrumental in providing cost-effective connectivity to so many developing countries -- linking them to key hubs and markets like Japan, Asean and Europe. It formed the infrastructure that helped countries like India and the Philippines build up the IT and outsourcing industries.

The delegation referred to

Condolence meet on Dr Sitara July 9

DU CORRESPONDENT

A meeting to condole the death of Dr Sitara Parvin, professor of mass communication and journalism department of Dhaka University (DU), will be held on July 9.

Organised by the department, the meeting will be held at Room No 1022 of the Arts Building at 12.00 noon.

Sitara, daughter of former president Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and wife Dr Ahaduzzaman Mohammad Ali who is also the professor of the same department, died in a tragic car accident in the USA on June 24.

DHAKA TODAY

BIISS seminar

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies organises a seminar on 'Budget 2005/06 and Economic Security of Bangladesh' with Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman as chief guest. Venue: BIISS Auditorium. Time: 10.30am.

DU seminar

Department of World Religions of Dhaka University organises an international seminar on 'Justice, fairness and communal harmony in the present world.' Venue: RC Majumder Auditorium. Time: 4.00pm.

Gas seminar

Geology Department of Dhaka University and Save Environment Movement jointly organise a seminar on 'Tengratta Gas Well Explosion: A review and what is to be done.' Venue: Geology Department Auditorium. Time: 2.30pm.

Panel discussion

Department of Islamic History and Culture of Dhaka University will hold a panel discussion on 'Islam and Inter-faith Dialogue.' Venue: RC Majumder Auditorium. Time: 10.00am.

Certificate awarding ceremony

Voluntary Health Services Society in collaboration with Training Advocacy and Research on Infant Feeding organises a certificate awarding ceremony of the seminar on 'Working women and maternity protection' with

Deputy Speaker Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui as chief guest. Venue: WVA Auditorium, Dhanmondi. Time: 11.00am.

Cirdap seminar

A seminar on 'Strategic framework of Cirdap: A new perspective' will be held with Chairman of Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad Dr Oazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad in the chair. Venue: Cirdap Auditorium, Tophkhana Road. Time: 4.00pm.

Workshop

The inaugural session of a workshop on 'Draft Bangladesh National Implementation Plan for Phase Out of Persistent Organic Pollutants under Stockholm Convention' will be held with Environment and Forest Minister Tariqueul Islam as chief guest. Venue: IDB Bhaban Auditorium, Rokeya Sarani. Time: 9.15am.

Launching ceremony

The launching ceremony of 11 Metre Gauge Diesel Electric Locomotives procured from the Republic of Korea will be held with Communications Minister Nazmul Huda as chief guest. Venue: Kamalapur Railway Station. Time: 3.00pm.

Publication ceremony

The publication ceremony of a book titled 'Clinical Jakkha' will be held with Education Minister Dr M Osman Faruk as chief guest. Venue: Gonowasthya Nagar Hospital, Dhanmondi. Time: 10.00am.

WEATHER TODAY

No change in day temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at most places over the country with moderately heavy to heavy falls at places till 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, met office said.

Highest temperature 32.4 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 24 degree Celsius at Dhaka.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:50pm today and rises at 5:17am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	29.9	24.0	98	83
Chittagong	30.0	25.0	91	81
Rajshahi	32.4	24.5	90	78
Khulna	27.5	24.2	78	92
Barisal	27.2	24.5	100	95
Sylhet	31.4	24.6	92	72