

House passes tax ombudsman bill

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The parliament yesterday passed a bill clearing way for appointment of a tax ombudsman with judicial power to probe taxpayers' complaints in the process of tax payment.

The bill was passed by voice votes of the ruling coalition lawmakers, who rejected as many as 34 proposals placed by the three opposition lawmakers for amendments to the bill.

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman told the House before proposing for passage of the bill that the government would consider appointing ombudsman in other sectors if the idea of tax ombudsman works.

According to the bill, the president will appoint the tax ombudsman for a four-year term and the appointee will head a separate office with necessary staff. The ombudsman will deal with NBR-related taxes including VAT, import duty and income tax.

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AL, BNP stalwarts agree to talk political impasse

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two top leaders of the main opposition Awami League (AL) and the ruling BNP at a roundtable yesterday agreed to sit down and discuss ways to end the existing political impasse.

Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil and ruling BNP's standing committee member Dr Khondaker Mosharruf Hossain expressed views in favour of discussion, responding to a demand of the other speakers at the roundtable.

They agreed to open talks on issues like reforms in caretaker government and electoral systems, and measures to hold free and fair election and strengthen the parliament.

Leading politicians, members of parliament, economists, business leaders, former government high

officials, and civil society members took part in the discussion arranged by national daily the Prothom Alo at a city hotel yesterday morning.

The speakers called on all the political parties to foster better relations between them and work together on issues like attracting investment, facilitating economic growth, and creating employment opportunities for the country's youth.

"We are ready to hold talks with Awami League. Such dialogues could be arranged either in parliament or outside," Khondaker Mosharruf Hossain, minister for health, said speaking at the roundtable.

He, however, said that consensus nomination to the post of next caretaker government chief might not be possible as both the parties appear intent on opposing each other's proposals regarding the

selection. AL general secretary in his address urged the political parties to reach a consensus on ways to free the nation from terrorism and the influence of black money.

"There must be a consensus among all political parties that parliament would be a place for politicians, not for businessmen or profit mongers," he observed.

Jalil also said that reforms in the caretaker government, and empowerment of the election commission are absolutely imperative for the next general election to be free and fair.

The health minister observed that parliament should be considered the most appropriate place for discussion on all national issues.

"It is a false statement that a

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SSC RESULT Zero-performing institutions to face music

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The education ministry is contemplating punitive measures against the educational institutions from which none came out successful in the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations for three consecutive years.

The punishments include cancellation of the MPO (monthly pay order) and issuance of warning to improve performance in public examinations.

"MPO and approval are no permanent privileges," Education Minister Dr Osman Farruk told reporters, adding that the ministry will cancel the MPOs of the educational institutions with zero pass records for three consecutive years.

Education ministry officials said warning will be issued against institutions from which none came out

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Forces fight with foreign groups in CHT

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Security forces fought an hour-long gunbattle with alleged foreign miscreants and recovered some ammunition at Naikkhangchhari border in Bandarban district in the early hours of yesterday.

After the gunfight, the joint forces of army and BDR divided in more than 40 groups are keeping a close watch on some 288-kilometre long Bangladesh-Myanmar border.

The government sources expressed ignorance about the identity of the miscreants who attacked the joint forces resulting in the gunfight trading more than 300 rounds of bullet. However, several local sources said they are members of an "outlawed guerrilla group

of a neighbouring country".

A Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) source confirmed that there were no casualties on the government side while any casualty on the miscreants' part could not be known immediately.

The security forces' raid is on in and around Tengra Murong, yesterday's battlefield surrounded by thick forest.

The joint forces recovered 970 rounds of bullet of AK47 rifle and light machine gun, four walkie-talkies, two hand microphones, 20 sets of military uniforms, 10 monkey caps and a good number of army blankets from the spot.

An unofficial source said the guerrilla attack was in retaliation of the joint forces' continued raid in

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Don't run stories that tarnish image even if they're objective

Press council says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Justice Abu Sayeed Ahmad, chairman of Bangladesh Press Council, has called upon newspaper owners, editors and journalists to refrain from running even objective stories that may tarnish the country's image.

"It's a matter of regret our newspapers carry news of politicians and influential personalities in such a manner that it damages the country's image," Justice Sayeed said in a press release yesterday.

He has asked the newspapers to refrain from publishing such news items.

He suggested amendment to the Press Council Act, 1974, saying the existing rules and regulations of the council are not enough to cope with

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Still there is no respite in road digging in this rainy season. This road in Madhya Badda has been dug up for repair of telephone cables.

PHOTO STAR

'Outlaw' killed in 'shootout' with police

UNB, Jhenidah

An alleged cadre of underground Purba Banglar Communist Party's (PBCP) Janajuddha faction died in an encounter with police in the early hours yesterday.

Police said they raided a PBCP hideout in Batpukuria, 20km away from the town, and ran into a hail of bullets at 3:30am.

They law enforcers repelled the attack and found Nazrul, 20, dead on the spot. Two constables were injured in the shootout, the police claimed.

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AUTOPSY REPORT Blood clots found in Dipu's body

DMCH CORRESPONDENT

Doctors said blood clots found in the head, back, hands and legs of schoolboy Dipu Islam's exhumed body suggest that he had been beaten severely.

"There may be other causes also, but it seems he was beaten," a member of the medical board that carried out autopsy on Dipu's body said, adding that they will be certain

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Hartal, rally at Sunamganj against Niko activities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The half-day hartal called by the citizens' forum "Sunamganj Bancho Andolan" to protest the activities of Niko led to a standstill in Sunamganj town yesterday.

At a protest rally, the speakers demanded immediate scrapping of the contract signed with the Canadian company responsible for repeated disasters at the Tengratila gas field.

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GRENADE ATTACKS

Hasina reiterates demand for int'l probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday once again blamed the government for August 21 grenade attacks on AL rally and demanded international investigation into all grenade attacks.

"The probes into the August 21 and Habiganj grenade attacks are mere eyewash as the real perpetrators are still behind the scene,"

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Prayer Timing		
July 11		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-10	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-57	7-00
Esha	8-17	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation