

Film on persecution

FROM PAGE 1 might also adopt a resolution regarding the Ahmadiyya persecution.

After the successful completion of June 17 European human rights conference on Bangladesh, the steering committee of the conference has arranged the screening. The film contains detailed account of tortures on Ahmadiyyas and capture of their mosques over the last three and a half years of BNP-led alliance government.

State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar yesterday gave the sect assurances when a delegation of the Ahmadiyyas met him at his office. He offered his sympathy for attacks on them and praised the sect leaders for exercising restraint in the face of continuous aggression.

"Hearing about torture on our community across the country, the minister has assured us that he will take steps to redress wrongs done to them and make sure that no such attacks take place in future," Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat, Bangladesh Secretary Rezaul Karim told The Daily Star.

He said the minister is of the opinion that a group is getting funds to carry out atrocities on the Ahmadiyyas.

On the anti-Ahmadiyya campaigners' demand for government move declaring the Ahmadiyyas non-Muslim, Home Secretary Safar Raj Hossain said the Constitution does not provide for declaring anyone non-Muslim. "It is possible in Pakistan since the country is an Islamic Republic. But as ours is a democratic republic, it is simply not possible here," he added.

The Ahmadiyya leaders demanded the authorities take measures to free four of their mosques now in control of the religious bigots. They also demanded that the zealots' signboards posted on the Ahmadiyya mosques in Bogra and Khulna be pulled down.

Stressing the need for more interactions between the sect leaders and the police, the minister asked the police authorities for taking steps at the

SUNAMGANJ BY-POLLS

HC rule upon EC to collect info on candidates' income source

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued a rule upon the Election Commission (EC) to show cause why it (EC) should not be directed to compel the candidates of Sunamganj-3 by-election to furnish information about their sources of income.

The HC also ordered the EC to explain why it should not be directed to properly implement the eight-point directives the court had given earlier.

The rule issued by a bench comprising Justice MA Matin and Justice Mamnoon Rahman is returnable within two weeks.

The HC directives came upon a writ petition filed as a public interest litigation by five citizens including Badiul Alam Majumder and Syed Abul Maksud of Sushasaner Jonno Nagorik (SUJAN).

The Election Commission (EC), chief election commissioner (CEC), returning officer (RO) and nine candidates contesting the Sunamganj-3 by-election scheduled for tomorrow have been made respondents.

The HC on May 24 directed the government, the EC and the CEC to compel the candidates for parliamentary elections to provide the EC with information about their academic qualification, profession, criminal records, if any, and sources of income before the election.

Four Chinese

FROM PAGE 16 The mobile court fined Mizanur Rahman Khan and Md Alamgir of City Garden Tk 50,000, Gouranga Chandra Halder of Midnight Sun Tk 40,000, Mahmud Raihan and Md Alam of G-1 Tk 40,000 and Abdul Kader Mollah of Kiangsri Tk 30,000.

They will be jailed for two years if they failed to pay the fines.

"We've found the restaurants using artificial colours and unprocessed meat, while their kitchens were too much dirty," the magistrate told The Daily Star.

The home ministry formed two mobile courts after a series of reports ran by The Daily Star on unsafe food last month.

The courts are raiding restaurants, kitchen markets and shopping malls almost everyday to curb sale of adulterated and poisonous food.

Bidisha

FROM PAGE 1 mother and father. Matters of his schooling and treatment will be decided through negotiations between the representatives of both parties.

"I waited for this moment every single second. I had no way to know where was my child. I called many to know when he would come—and finally he is on my lap," said an overwhelmed mother.

Bidisha was arrested on June 4 in a case filed by her husband, former president HM Ershad, who later divorced her. She came out of confinement on June 27.

beginning of any move against the Ahmadiyyas so that the situation cannot go out of control.

AMJB National Amir Mobasher-ur-Rahman led the delegation that included among others Nayeb-e-Amir Dr Tariq Saiful Islam.

The European Human Rights Conference on Bangladesh on June 17 reminded the Bangladesh government that the ban slapped on Ahmadiyya publication in January, 2004 must be lifted, Ahmadiyya mosques must be restored to the community, and equal rights ensured for the Ahmadiyyas and other minorities in employment and delivery of public services of Bangladesh.

A special hearing was held on the human rights condition in Bangladesh at the House of Lords on June 23.

Apress release of the Bangladesh Conference 2005 Steering Committee said last week the foundations of democracy itself are threatened by the wave of violence against ethnic and religious minorities, secularists, and even development NGOs in Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, a 25-member steering committee of 18 international rights organisations plans a South Asian human rights conference in mid-October.

Zealots vandalise

FROM PAGE 1 yelling at the Ahmadiyyas for restarting the work. He also brought a couple of policemen from a nearby police post, said the Ahmadiyyas.

"They hurled a torrent of abuse at us and at one stage as I was protesting their behaviour they tried to hit me," said Tofazzal Hossain, a government employee and also an Ahmadiyya.

"Then they vandalised the wooden structure built for tin-roofing and threw it to water of the adjacent ditch."

"They left the scene after warning us that they will harm our boys if they go out of their houses," said Afzal.

Earlier when the Ahmadiyyas began the construction work in February, some 40 bigots led by local Imam Mohammad Arafat forced them to stop the work. The sect members filed a general diary with Uttara Police Station but to no effect. Uttara police have yet to initiate investigation into the matter, alleged the Ahmadiyyas.

Shortly after they resumed work the following morning, union parishad Chairman Khalil Mollah issued a notice saying that the Ahmadiyyas should stop the work as a local had staked claim on the land.

"Within minutes of issuance of the letter, he turned up with around 30 locals and ordered to stop the work," said Afzal.

Mohammad Shajahan, a land broker and grand son-in-law of Hazi Faiz Uddin laid claim to the land saying Faiz had given the land to his mother-in-law Azibussena.

"The chairman did not take any step to resolve the issue in last two months. Instead, to our dismay, he has tasked the locals with solving the dispute," said Bashir Ahmad, a local Ahmadiyya.

The sect leader Sarkar on July 8 sent a letter to the chairman, informing him of their decision to resume the work immediately as the construction materials lay exposed to damage.

The locals, however, denied the allegation of attack and barring the construction work. Some of them, including an employee of the local mosque, however said the 'Kadiyanis' have no right to construct mosque, as they are not Muslim.

"We have never asked them not to build any mosque on their land," said Mosarraf, a local leader of the ruling BNP. "They [Ahmadiyyas] have a mosque on their land for years," said Bashir who lives in the neighbourhood.

OC Akhtaruzzaman later sat down with the locals and Ahmadiyyas and settled the matter. The two parties agreed to consult their lawyers to fix the dispute soon.

JS became

FROM PAGE 16 Committee candidate Nazrul Islam.

The by-election in Sunamganj-3 constituency will be held tomorrow. The parliamentary seat fell vacant following the death of Awami League leader Abdus Samad Azami.

On the unity of 14 political parties led by the Awami League, Dr Kamal said no evil force will be able to break this unity. "This unity will move forward through all risks and challenges," he said.

Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon, Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, Pankaj Bhattacharya, Adv Zahurul Islam, Dewan Shamsul Arefin and Jagannathpur Municipality Chairman Mizanur Rashid addressed the meeting.

A separate election rally was held at Bhabar Bazar in Jagannathpur in support of four-party alliance nominee Maulana Shaheenur Pasha. IOJ chief Mufti Fazlul Huq Amineer MP and Allama Mufti Wakkas MP addressed the rally, seeking vote for "sheaf of paddy".

Besides, Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh leader Mahi B Chowdhury campaigned for their candidate Saedur Rahman Choudhury Rupa and sought vote for "Kula", his election symbol.

A total of nine candidates are contesting the by-election. The number of voters is 2,18,450 while number of polling centers is 127.

CPD to prepare

FROM PAGE 16 the decision at a meeting in the city on Sunday.

As per the decision, a number of task forces will be constituted on priority areas identified through consultations with the stakeholders and it will follow extensive country-wide open dialogues on the vision paper and the task force reports.

The programme objective is to stimulate policy debates on critical national issues during elections, a CPD press release said, adding, "The high point of the programme will be organisation of a national policy forum with wide participation of major political actors and civil society activists."

The CPD will also undertake, in collaboration with other organisations, a number of other activities including outreach to younger generation, publication and disseminating of policy documents, media campaign and awareness building activities for improving policy accountability of the political process and development administration.

CPD Chairman Professor Rehman Sobhan chaired the meeting attended, among others, by CPD trustees professor Muhammad Yunus, M Syedurazzaman, Fazle Hasan Abed, Laila Rahman Kabir, Syed Manzur Elahi, Professor Anisuzzaman, Khushi Kabir, Nurul Haq and CPD Executive Director Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya.

Rules for use

FROM PAGE 1 40 ministries several times to hand over project cars to the transport pool and clarify the position of government cars, but only a few ministries responded.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Establishment had also asked the government to stop unauthorised use of the project cars.

Still the number of handed over project cars to the transport pool is less than 400.

Since independence, over 4,000 expensive cars were bought against various development projects under different ministries.

The cars were supposed to be handed over to the government transport pool after completion of the development projects but government high officials are allegedly using those for their office and family purposes.

Finance Secretary Zakir Ahmed Khan, Establishment Secretary Abdul Halim and high officials of different ministries were present at the meeting.

Malaysian firm

FROM PAGE 1 constructed keeping the existing Dhaka-Chittagong Highway intact, will be named Dhaka-Chittagong Highway-2.

The new highway will go through Dhaka, Narayanganj, Munshiganj, Chandpur, Laxmipur, Sonagazi, Sitakunda and Hathazari.

The two bridges over the rivers Meghna and Gumti will be widened for facilitating the expressway.

The highway will have facilities like parking spaces, rest houses, terminals, toilets, CNG pump stations, food courts and mosques at reasonable distances.

Meanwhile, a high powered meeting at the communications ministry that discussed the matter yesterday observed that the government should call international tender and try to get better proposals.

Floating open tender is also necessary for bringing transparency in the project, the meeting observed.

But a high official of the communications ministry told The Daily Star that the government is likely to accept the Malaysian proposal as hardly any other company will come up with such a big investment.

The Malaysian organisation is a consortium of six internationally renowned construction companies and it has long experience of constructing roads and highways in different countries, sources said.

Communications Minister Nazmul Huda told yesterday's meeting that the government wants to start the construction of the expressway in the first quarter of next year.

He asked the officials concerned to make all out preparations.

Floods

FROM PAGE 1 Cracks have developed in flood protection embankments, threatening millions of people.

Rainfall is adding to the sufferings of homeless and water-marooned people.

With fall of water level of Someshwary, Magra, Kongsa, Maharashi, Jurga Chalkhali, Dashedani, Karnajura Dhonu rivers in Netrakona and Sherpur districts, the flood situation there has improved, our Netrokona correspondent reports.

But erosion is observed with recession of water levels in several places. The erosion by the rivers Someshwary and Kongsa rivers has devoured some 300 dwelling houses of Barhatta and Kalmakanda upazilas in Netrakona district, compelling about 2500 people move for shelters.

Water born diseases like diarrhoea and dysentery have also broken out in the two districts. Farmers are facing scarcity of fodder.

Meanwhile, prices of rice and other essentials have gone up.

Massive changes

FROM PAGE 16 holding party portfolio in BNP. They are BNP Chairperson's Advisory Council member and former secretary MM Rezaul Karim and Chittagong (North) BNP unit President Golam Akbar Khandaker.

Rezaul has been appointed ambassador to Egypt and Akbar to Oman.

Abul Kashem, a former secretary, was also made ambassador to the Philippines.

Additional Foreign Secretary Major (ret) Khairuzzaman has been appointed ambassador to Myanmar, DG (Administration wing) of the foreign ministry Azizul Haq to Sweden, DG (Europe wing) Nasima Haider to South Africa, DG (UN wing) Ismat Jahan to the Netherlands and DG (Research and ICT wing) Mizarul Kayes has been appointed high commissioner to the Maldives.

Deputy High Commissioner in Kolkata mission Touhid Hossain has been made additional foreign secretary and given the charge of Fareast and South Asia desk.

He has been replaced by Mohammad Imran of the foreign ministry.

Saifur hints at oil price

FROM PAGE 1 low price of selling. Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation is in a bad shape. We cannot remain indifferent to this situation for long," he added.

Adviser to the energy ministry Mahmudur Rahman, who was present at the meeting, said, "We have not decided about petroleum price, but the way the price is increasing we may be compelled to think about raising the prices for domestic market."

The finance minister said earning from remittance has been adversely affected by incidents like the London bomb attacks. "Poor countries like ours are the innocent victims of such international incidents," he observed.

PAYMENT FOR KPC The Cabinet Purchase Committee okayed a payment of Tk 5.59 crore to Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) as extra premium for oil purchase.

Under an unsolicited deal for two years signed in October 2004, the KPC will supply 6 lakh tonnes of diesel during July-December period

Tk 5cr wasted

FROM PAGE 16 contractor finished installation in 2003.

As per the contract with the TPE, after the Siddhirganj plant came into operation, it had been providing operation and maintenance support services to the plant with 24 technical hands. The company was also supposed to train the PDB staff at the plant, so that they can eventually take over the responsibility.

The PDB technical staff are typically comfortable with handling Russian plants, as these have been in operation in the country for the last 36 years, a PDB official says. "They know how to operate Russian and German machine [in Ashuganj], because they already have the experience," he quips.

But, strangely, the project director of Siddhirganj plant last year came up with a proposal to contract out the operation and maintenance work of the plant to the TPE, claiming the PDB staff lacks the experience and efficiency to do that. This is why, he argued, the TPE has been asked to submit a proposal to run the plant.

The TPE initially proposed to employ 28 additional operation experts at a cost of \$123,000 a year. The PDB scaled the number down to 20.

At the board meeting last

BDR pushes back 5 Indians

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) yesterday pushed back five Bangla-speaking Indian Muslims through Sapahar border in Naogaon one hour after Border Security Force (BSF) pushed them into the country.

The BSF pushed three men and two women into Bangladesh by opening the barbed-wire fence on the border near Bamonpara BDR outpost at dawn.

Tension is prevailing on the border following the push-in and push-back incidents. The BDR had pushed back seven Hindi-speaking Indian Muslims a few days ago.

BDR sources said they still have beefed up security on the border.

Belal murder

FROM PAGE 16 dead on June 8 this year at Shirmoni under Khanjahan Ali Police Station of Khulna city.

Meanwhile, the Khulna city unit of Islami Chhatra Shibir yesterday submitted a memorandum to the prime minister through the deputy commissioner demanding immediate arrest of the culprits involved in the murder of journalist Belal.

Assistant Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Conference AHA Moniruzzaman has also been appointed additional foreign secretary and given the desk of Multilateral Economic Affairs wing and UNCLOS.

The government has transferred Bangladesh envoy to Sweden Sabihuddin Ahmed to UK as high commissioner and Mostafa Kamal to South Korea from Oman.

OTHER CHANGES

Minister at Bangladesh embassy in Washington Imitiaz Ahmed has been made DG (Europe wing). Deputy Chief of Protocol wing at the foreign ministry Golam Sarwar appointed Councillor in Washington, Consul General in Hong Kong Atiqur Rahman made DG (General Services wing) in the foreign ministry, Minister in Bangladesh embassy in Beijing Imitiaz Ahmed has been transferred as Consul General to Bangladesh mission in New York, and foreign ministry directors Syed Masud Mahmud Khandaker and Syeda Muna Tashnim have been appointed councillors to France and London.

al-Qaeda suspect walks free in Germany after court decision

AFP, Hamburg

A suspected top al-Qaeda operative walked free from jail in Germany on Monday after the country's highest court blocked his extradition to Spain on a new EU arrest warrant.

The federal constitutional court ruled that handing over Syrian-German businessman Mamoun Darkazanli to Spain under the EU policy would violate Germany's basic law.

Darkazanli, sporting a short beard and wearing a white T-shirt and jeans, was released from custody in Hamburg a few hours later, an AFP correspondent reported.

Spain accuses Darkazanli, 46, of being Osama bin Laden's "permanent interlocutor and assistant" in Europe and having provided the al-Qaeda terror network with logistical and financial support between 1997 and 2002.

German Justice Minister Brigitte Zypries condemned the Karlsruhe-based court's decision as "another setback for the German government in the fight against international terrorism".

Businessman's

FROM PAGE 1 undergoing treatment at Central Hospital in Dhanmondi, may not survive.

The 34-year-old garment factory owner is now being treated under life support system. Doctors on Sunday night plastered his fractured hands and legs.

Rab Director General Fazlul Bari Chowdhury told The Daily Star last night a departmental enquiry into the incident is on, adding, "We'll take steps after we get the report."

The Rab headquarters have asked the probe committee to submit its report in three days.

Headed by Director (finance and administration) Mokhlesur Rahman, the committee includes Deputy Director (intelligence) Zafur Haq, Senior Assistant Director Anul Bari and Deputy Assistant Director Moshin Kabir.

Bidhan's sister Khadija Rahman Maya filed a general diary (GD) with Uttara Police Station on Saturday night.

She alleged in the GD Rab ASP (assistant superintendent of police) Ashraf Islam and his colleagues beat Bidhan up for his protest against their assault on an elderly man.

The Rab had earlier filed a GD against the victim, accusing him of assaulting ASP Ashraf.

The investigation officer, Abu Sayeed, yesterday submitted a prayer before a court seeking permission to probe the incident. "I will consider both the GDs," he said.

Students

FROM PAGE 1 The students of the female dormitory have been agitating for the last three months to realise their demands that include reduction of hall charges, compliance with seat distribution rules, bus service from the hall to the campus and library facilities.

A meeting between the students and hall authorities on Sunday night ended after serious altercations between the students and the teachers. After the meet, the students kept Acting Provost Dr Sharmina Nasrin and four house tutors confined in the TV room.

Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof AFM Yusuf Haider went to the hall at 2:30am and requested the students to release the teachers. But the protestors continued their demonstration. The pro-VC left the hall at about 4:00am in the face of agitation.

The agitating students however released the acting provost and the house tutors at about 2:00pm yesterday after Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz went to the hall and assured them of meeting their demands within a week.

Prof Nasrin Ahmed yesterday told The Daily Star that she had resigned Sunday as the situation in the hall was going beyond her control. She said the agitating students misbehaved with the teachers during the 14-hour confinement.

"I believe this was a politically motivated agitation," she said.

The students, on the other hand, alleged that the acting provost misbehaved with them and threatened to make a blacklist of the students who were demonstrating.

At a press conference at the hall, the students said the hall and university authorities did not pay heed to their demands in the last three months. They demanded immediate solution to the problems of the resident students.

JCD muggers

FROM PAGE 1 witnesses.

The police arrested Liton and Azizul for mugging the sum from a jewellery shop employee in Motijheel on June 19, while Ruhul is still at large.

A court had earlier issued a warrant of arrest against Ruhul and ordered attachment of his movable properties.

Dhanmondi police had seized about Tk 10 lakh from a room at the International Hostel of Dhaka College soon after the arrest.

Mohammad Abul Kashem, manager of Uma Jewellers, filed a case against the three with Motijheel Police Station under the Speedy Trial (Law and Order Disruption) Act the same day.

Police filed another case under the Arms Act against Liton and Azizul.

Manmohan, Bush

FROM PAGE 16 ism as he formally opened a state visit to the United States. As US and Indian flags fluttered together over Pennsylvania avenue outside the White House, Bush and Singh shook hands and stood in the sweltering Washington heat as a US Army band played their respective national anthems.

"We meet as leaders of two great democracies, committed to working together for a better and a safer world. Your visit reflects the growing bonds of cooperation between your nation and mine," said the president.

"The relationship between our two nations has never been stronger, and it will grow even closer in the days and years to come," said Bush, who noted that both countries were "confronting global terrorism."

"I'm confident that my visit today will give us an opportunity to develop and take forward the strategic partnership between India and the United States," said Singh.

"I am confident that from our talks today will emerge an agenda of cooperation that reflects a real transformation of our relationship. Its realisation would help India meet the expectations of its people for the better quality of life and more secure future," he added.

As the excitement builds up for the summit meeting on the first day of Dr Singh's three-day visit to Washington, officials of both sides have reportedly given the final touches to the 16 agreements that will be signed, which include pacts on investment, energy, space exploration, agriculture, science and preserving the endangered Royal Bengal Tiger.

The outcome of the meeting will depend on the two sides signing pacts on nuclear energy and space technology. There is unconfirmed speculation that these two pacts will also be announced, though Washington is yet to remove restrictions on the export of hi-tech to India after the 1998 Pokhran nuclear blasts.

External Affairs Minister K Natwar Singh has joined Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's team in Washington after he had held meetings with other G-4 and African Union members to discuss the expansion of the membership of the UN Security Council.

On Sunday, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice paid a courtesy visit to Natwar Singh at his hotel. Officials described the meeting as an indication of the transformation of Indo-US ties since the Cold War era.

It is understood that Rice and Singh reviewed bilateral relations and took note of the broad issues expected to come up at Monday's talks.

Terrorism, trade and technology

Backing US in Iraq

FROM PAGE 16 percent in favour of such a move but 44 percent against.

The proposed new law is meant to protect people of all faiths from abuse but critics say it curbs free speech.

The poll of 1,005 people found those who were religious almost as likely to be against it as those who were not.

Prime Minister Tony Blair will meet leaders of the 1.6 million strong Muslim community in Britain today to forge a consensus on confronting Islamic extremism, his spokesman said yesterday.

Michael Howard and Charles Kennedy, leaders of the opposition Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties, will also participate in the Downing Street talks prompted by the July 7 bombings in London.

"The whole idea is that collectively, we listen to what Muslim leaders have to say, and they try to reach a consensus on how to move forward, not just in terms of expressions of solidarity but also in practical ways as well," Blair's spokesman said.

With the police investigation into the apparent suicide bombings in London gaining pace, the prime minister declared Saturday that Islamic extremism was an "evil ideology" that must be confronted head on.

Blair's government suspects the suicide attacks — in which at least 55 people died on three Underground subway trains and a double-decker bus — had a link to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network.

Besides consulting Muslim community leaders, Blair is to meet Thursday with senior police and intelligence chiefs on the need for any new legal powers to combat terrorism.

Blair will also hold talks at Downing Street with visiting Australian prime minister John Howard, who like Blair is a staunch ally of US President George W. Bush on Iraq and the broader "war on terror".

In addition, Home Secretary Charles Clarke — the cabinet minister in charge of public security — is to make a statement in parliament on Wednesday on the July 7 investigation, Blair's spokesman said.