

Left parties ask govt

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implemented through the House.

He said similar issues in the past were settled through discussion outside parliament.

Convenor of the 11-Party and Workers Party General Secretary Bimal Biswas said the opposition combine's demand for reforms in electoral and caretaker government systems has already become a popular demand. He said the opposition will go for a united movement if the government does not take initiative to resolve the issue through discussion.

"The 11-Party will continue working towards cementing the current unity among the opposition parties that are now in a simultaneous movement," he said, calling for the other parties, who are out of the unity, to join hands with the opposition combine.

Leaders of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), a key component of the 11-Party alliance, were not present at the press conference.

"Communist Party is not with us for the time being but we hope they will join us soon," Bimal Biswas said.

Replies to a query, Dr Kamal criticised the government for describing the opposition demands as 'unrealistic and unconstitutional'.

He recalled discussion of three alliances, after the fall of military ruler HM Ershad, for reaching a consensus on interim government.

"The same person, who now holds the portfolio of law ministry, was the vice president during the despotic rule of general Ershad. At that time too, he with the same tone termed the three alliances' move for interim government unconstitutional," he said in an oblique refer-

Half-day strike

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and Pallabi areas and it has now gone beyond tolerance," said an aggrieved salesman. "After the arrest, the police negotiate with the drug store owners for bribes to settle the release of the salesmen."

The leaders of the drug stores assembling at the Mirpur section-10 roundabout on Monday and yesterday demanded immediate removal of Ziaul Hug Zia.

Rahman said, "If there is no progress on Wednesday too, we may go for tougher action like indefinite country-wide strike."

Meanwhile, the BCDA in greater Mirpur areas with solidarity from the central committee leaders in Mitford Hospital area continued their strike for the third day yesterday protesting frequent police atrocities, arrest of salesmen from certain drug stores in recent times and periodic unauthorised toll collection from drug shop owners.

Sadequr Rahman said the BCDA leaders have documents to prove that Ziaul Hug Zia claimed he is innocent and said the BCDA leaders are giving lame excuses to cover selling of illegal drugs.

"He realised the money at various times from different drug stores and threatened them not to disclose it. Those who raised voices against him fell victim to Zia's vicious practice of detaining salesmen," Rahman explained.

When contacted over telephone, Ziaul Hug Zia claimed he is innocent and said the BCDA leaders are giving lame excuses to cover selling of illegal drugs.

"Last week I arrested six people from three different drug stores in the greater Mirpur area with evidence of banned drugs like Viagra, cough syrup Tixi and alcohol. They get united and protest every time police seize unregistered drugs from the drug stores. In fact, they also tried to offer me money in a bid to write off their crime," Zia told this correspondent.

"I have full support from my senior officers and I will continue to carry out my duties as per the laws," said Zia.

The BCDA leaders will meet today at three places--Mitford Hospital area, near Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University and Mirpur section-10 roundabout--and announce further action.

Communications

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incurred loss of Tk 47.80 crore due to irregularities and mismanagement in collection of toll and fare from 13 bridges and 10 ferries from 1999 to 2003.

Admitting some earlier irregularities in the system of toll collection, senior officials of the ministry informed the committee that measures have been taken to remove all irregularities, meeting sources said.

The committee asked the ministry officials to submit a report at the next meeting about the measures taken.

On information that the ministry could not realise Tk 11 crore outstanding tolls from Meghna-Gumti bridge due to legal complexities, the PAC formed a sub-committee to look into the matter and submit report in a month.

The parliamentary body also blasted the communications ministry officials for their failure to complete a tender process regarding collection of toll from Buriganga-2 bridge in a year.

The committee disposed of 87 objections raised against Railway division from 1979 to 1985.

3 robberies

FROM PAGE 16
up, the robbers later confined them in a room.

The gang then took away Tk 30,000 in cash, gold ornaments weighing 15 tola and other valuables--worth about Tk 2.54 lakh in total.

In Motijheel, another gang of robbers cut through the window grills of one Jahangir Alam's house at 23 Khilgaon Bagicha and entered the house at 11:00pm.

Dr Kamal said, "Government could at least give any of the senior opposition leaders a call before appointing the chief election commissioner and it's a democratic norm."

"We are ready to accept any democratic and secular party in the opposition alliance," he added.

Those who want to use black money and criminals in elections, want to use religion as a tool for seeking votes, and who have made a quick buck through corruption are against the reforms, he said.

Asked about almost identical reactions of CPB General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim and ruling BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan to the proposal for consensus appointment of the caretaker government chief, Rashed Khan Menon said, "It's unfortunate for us."

CPB general secretary and BNP secretary general in their reactions had described the proposal as unrealistic.

The left alliance yesterday announced its own programme to mobilise public support in favour of the 31-point reform proposals. The left leaders will hold rallies at city's Mirpur area on July 23, Demra on July 24, and Hazaribagh on July 25. Besides, they will hold a rally at the Muktangan on July 26 to protest the price hike of essentials. They will hold rallies at district levels, starting from August 8 to continue till August 31.

ence to Moudud Ahmed.

"It's quite possible to find an acceptable person as the caretaker government chief as well as meet the other proposals if we could sit down with open minds," he said.

"I wonder why should the government be reluctant to hold discussion outside the parliament," he said.

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Fuel prices

FROM PAGE 1
thousands of crores of taka in oil purchase due to high import costs and low sales prices. The BPC is in a pretty bad shape. We cannot remain indifferent to this situation for long," he added.

Mahmudur Rahman, who was present at the meeting, said, "We have not decided about petroleum prices yet, but the way the prices are increasing [in the international market] we may be compelled to think about raising them in the domestic market."

After yesterday's sudden increase in fuel prices, the still unaware consumers locked in altercations with fuel pump staffs at various points in the city.

Myanmar

FROM PAGE 1
Bandarban Cantonment about the safety and security of the bordering areas.

In 2003, the Bandarban district administration had sent a proposal of increasing the number of BDR observatory posts between Naikhonchhari and Thanchi to protect the border from illegal intrusion of foreign criminals.

According to a statistics, the security forces have seized more than 200 sophisticated firearms, huge quantity of explosives, military blankets and combat uniforms, and communication instruments, and destroyed several dens of foreign intruders in continued operations since September last year.

Kakrail-Satrasta

FROM PAGE 1
Satrasta crossing in the capital.

An estimated Tk 450 crore will be required for construction of the flyover and the government will soon officially seek loan from Kuwait Fund to implement the project, ministry sources said.

The approval was given at the presentation ceremony of feasibility study, detailed engineering design and preparation of tender documents for the construction of the flyover that will cover Moghbazar and Mouchak intersections, two of the city's worst traffic congested areas.

An American engineering firm conducted the feasibility study with Tk three crore financial support from Kuwait Fund and prepared the design of the flyover.

Team leader of the feasibility study Roberts E Rickman presented the design.

Presided over by LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, the presentation ceremony was attended by Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain, Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, and State Minister for Home Lutfuzzaman Babar and other high officials.

Local Government Engineering Department will construct the flyover that will have four-lane deck and box girders with pedestrian bridge.

The flyover will have several links with the adjoining roads.

At Mouchak intersection, the flyover will have a three-storyed structure.

There will be stopovers at different points and staircases for pedes-

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Court warns

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Rahman and his wife Dr Begum Ferdousi of the charge and warning the complainant, Anwar Rahman, wife of DIG Anisur Rahman.

The court's warning came after the charge against the couple was found false.

Anwar Rahman filed the case against Dr Rahman and his wife Ferdousi on April 18 for torturing 11-year-old Nasrin Akther. Uttara police arrested the two the same day immediately after Anwara, landlord of the couple, filed the case under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

After an investigation, the investigation officer (IO) found the charge to be grounded in falsehood and submitted final report to the court, praying for acquittal of the doctors.

The couple at a press conference in the Court Reporters' Association, Dhaka yesterday said that the complainant had filed another false case against them after the submission of final report by the IO. The complainant and his husband had also threatened to file a dozen such cases against them, they added.

Armed with the court's warning, the couple approached the court again.

The court directed the police to develop the operation of the exchange market.

The IMF also noted that taka depreciated by 9 percent and 5 percent in nominal and real effective terms since the exchange rate was floated in May 2003.

It also pointed out that a tight monetary stance is important to contain inflationary pressures.

It also observed that a further increase in fuel price is needed in view of the rising global prices.

"The authorities [government] need to keep the domestic fuel prices under close review and make further adjustments as needed," the IMF said, adding that fuel price hike in the first half of 2005 was appropriate.

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