

Govt ready for dialogue with opposition

Bhuiyan reiterates at discussion on Dr Milton Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

LGRD and Co-operatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday said the government is ready to sit down with the opposition and discuss any issue.

He once again made a call for the opposition camp to set the time and place for such dialogue.

"Any issue can be resolved through discussion. Instead of enforcing hartals, strikes or any other destructive programmes, let's have some talks between us," Bhuiyan, also secretary-general of ruling BNP, said to the opposition.

He was speaking at a discussion in the city on the 15th death anniversary of Dr Shamsul Alam Khan Milon.

Bhuiyan's renewed proposal for dialogue came after leaders of the mainstream opposition parties on Friday asked the ruling party to come up with a precise proposal and agenda for dialogue.

Besides Mannan Bhuiyan, a number of leaders of the 14-party opposition combine addressed yesterday's discussion. They criticised the government for patronising militant groups in the country.

In response to the opposition's allegation, the BNP secretary general said the militants had started to grow during the last Awami League rule. "But they [AL government] stayed mum about those alarming developments and the people all along were left in the dark about the problem. Unlike them, we are fighting to resist the militants," he observed.

The LRGD minister also alleged that instead of helping the government in the fight against militancy, the opposition is trying to reap political benefits.

The discussion held on Dhaka Medical College premises was organised by Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) to commemorate the death anniversary of Milon who was shot dead in 1990 while on his way home from a meeting against autocratic rule of Ershad.

Dr Milon's mother Selina Akhtar, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Haq Inu, AL Presidium Member Motia Chowdhury, Commerce Ministry Adviser Barkatullah Bulu, State Minister for Health Amanullah Aman,

Khairul Kabir Khokon, Habibur Rahman Habib and BMA Secretary General Dr AZM Zahid Hossain among others spoke at the discussion presided over by BMA President Dr MA Hadi.

Rashed Khan Menon said militant groups with the government on their side are getting stronger day by day.

"Religious extremists are desperate to destroy our democracy and the rule of law," he said, criticising the government's alleged failure to deal with the menace.

AL Presidium Member Motia Chowdhury said ruling coalition partner Jamaat has long been working behind the militant activities in the country. "The government is indifferent to taking stern actions against the militants only to save its alliance with Jamaat," she said.

JSD President Hasanul Haq Inu said the religious fanatics have waged a war against the rule of law. He said the militancy has its root outside the country.

"Attacks on judges are an attack on country's democracy and the rule of law while those on shrines are an assault on religion," he observed.

SUTRAPUR DOUBLE MURDER

Verdict today

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Judgement of the sensational Sutrapur double murder case against Jubo Dal leader Rafiqul Islam Kajal and eight others will be given today.

Judge Shahed Noor Uddin of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 will deliver the verdict at 12:30pm, court sources said.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of 23 prosecution witnesses.

According to the prosecution, Kajal and his accomplices allegedly abducted Mohammad Shamsul Haq, 52, owner of a hosiery market in Old Dhaka, his son Russel Sheikh, 29, and chauffeur Moazzem Hossain, 37, on March 26 last year and killed them in a bid to grab Shamsul Haq's hosiery market and Tk5 lakh.

The gang cut the bodies of the victims into 159 pieces and dumped those at different places of Gazipur and Savar to destroy the evidences.

Eight other accused are Kajal's brother Mohammad Sirajul Islam, Moloy Sarker, Bhutto alias Abu Taleb, Kazi Noor Qaiyum, Kalam alias 'Narsingdi' Kalam, Mohammad Mintoo, Nizam and Mohammad Rahim.

Of them, Rahim is now in the custody while Kajal and seven others have been absconding since the incident.

Sufia Khatun, wife of Shamsul Haq, filed a murder case against the Sutrapur Police Station with Kajal the following day.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of Police pressed charges against Kajal and eight others on October 5 last year showing 59 people as prosecution witnesses.

During the investigation, Rahim gave confessional statement to a magistrate disclosing the names of his accomplices.

Special Public Prosecutor Abdul Latif Talukder appeared for the state while Advocate Mosharrar Hossain Kajol defended the accused in the case.

DINAJPUR BY-POLLS

Army to be deployed

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday decided to deploy army along with other law enforcement agencies in the by-election of Dinajpur in a bid to hold the election in a free and fair manner on December 5.

The EC at a meeting discussed about the preparations to hold the by-election with Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice MA Aziz in the chair.

Two other Election Commissioners, AK Mohammad Ali and M Munsef Ali, were also present in the meeting.

Justice Aziz said the EC will do everything required for a free and fair polling there.

Responding to a query, whether the army would be deployed there or not, he said in brief Obviously.

The Dinajpur-1 parliamentary constituency (Jatiya Sangsad-6) comprising Beerganj and Kaharol upazilas fell vacant following the death of Jamaat-e-Islami lawmaker Abdullah-Al-Kafi on September 12.

Six candidates are competing in the by-election to woo 233,818 voters.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Abdul Qayyum, principal staff officer of the armed forces division Maj Gen Mustafa Reza Noor, DG of BDR Maj Gen Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, DG of Ansar and VDP Maj Gen M Akbar Aktar, representatives from different intelligence agencies, divisional- and district-level officials attended the meeting.

11-party to stage agitation December 29

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the opposition 11-party at a meeting yesterday decided to stage demonstration in different districts and upazilas including one in Chapainabaganj on December 29 to press home the 23-point demand of the 14-party opposition coalitions.

"We will hold rallies from our side to implement the 23-point demand of the 14-party oppositions," Bimal Biswas, general secretary of the Workers' Party told The Daily Star. He said they would also organise discussions on the rise of militancy in different parts of the country.

The meeting held at the central office of the Gono Forum in the city also blasted the role of the government on militancy. The meeting also accused that the alliance government had been patronising the militants.

Advocate Zahirul Islam presided over the meeting while Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon, Gono Forum General Secretary Saifuddin Ahmed Manir, Dilip Barua of Samya Badi Dal, Nurul Islam of Ganotantri Party, Pankaz Bhattacharjee, Mostafa Mohsin Mantu, Giasuddin Haider Kamal attended.



PHOTO: STAR

Participants at a condolence meeting in memory of AZM Enayetullah Khan, editor of the New Age and editor-in-chief of the weekly Holiday. The National Press Club organised the meeting on its premises yesterday.

Uphold democratic values, freedom of press

Speakers tell condolence meeting on Enayetullah

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Paying a glowing tribute to AZM Enayetullah Khan, editor of the New Age and editor-in-chief of the weekly Holiday, eminent journalists and politicians yesterday called for upholding democratic values and freedom of the press in the country.

They also underscored the need for promoting secular democracy, freedom of speech and courageous journalism to uphold the ideals of Enayetullah, popularly known as Mintu Bhai.

At a citizens' condolence meeting organised by the National Press Club on its premises, Press Club General Secretary Shawkat Mahmud read out a message expressing deep condolence at the death of Enayetullah and sympathy for the bereaved family members.

"Enayetullah Khan was not only a leading journalist but also a politically conscious person who always upheld a non-communal principle, democratic practices and the freedom of speech in his writings. We feel his absence greatly," said BNP Secretary General and LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

He did whatever he believed in and never tried to harm anybody, which is a rare quality in today's life, Bhuiyan said.

Lauding Khan's diversified qualities as reporter, editor, social leader and diplomat, Information Minister

M Shamsul Islam said, "We hope that we can continue to promote freedom of the press following the way Enayetullah showed to us."

Describing the late journalist as a 'dignified person', Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain said Enayetullah had a rare quality of respecting the differences of opinion.

Recalling Khan's courageous write-ups during the critical moments of the nations, the eminent jurist said, "We must promote his ideals by protecting freedom of the press that we have established after a great sacrifice."

Dr Kamal also suggested airing a half-an-hour weekly talk show on any topic on the BTV and Bangladesh Betar in honour of Enayetullah Khan.

"At the death of Enayetullah, I have lost one of my hands and the nation has lost a courageous and uncompromising journalist," said senior journalist Nirmal Sen in his written speech.

"Who will now write strong pieces when the lawmakers are speaking against the journalists in the parliament?" he questioned.

Senior journalist ABM Musa said Enayetullah made a revolution by publishing the extraordinary English weekly Holiday.

Mahfuz Anam, editor of the Daily Star, said there are two ways to respect Enayetullah -- one is to establish the freedom of speech and the other is to maintain the dignity of the profession

as a journalist.

He urged all journalists not to use his or her pen either out of hatred or favour for anybody. That would be the proper way to show respect to the memory of late Enayetullah Khan, he added.

Syed Kamal Uddin, editor of the Holiday, requested all to help continue to publish the weekly with the ideals of Enayetullah Khan.

"The tendency to restrict freedom of speech is a major hindrance in this country," he said.

Enayetullah Khan was always against communal politics, said Nurul Kabir, acting editor of The New Age.

Prof Moniruzzaman Mia, member of Anti-Corruption Commission, said Enayetullah always encouraged people to play a courageous role in the critical moments of the nation.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mirza Fakrul Islam Alamgir, State Minister for Cultural Affairs Begum Selima Rahman, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon and leader Haider Akbar Khan Rono, Prof Zillur Rahman Khan, journalists Ataus Samad, Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Gias Kamal Chowdhury, Ruhul Amin Gazi, Gazul Hasan Khan, Kazi Serajuddin Ahmed and DP Barua, and poet Fazal Shahabuddin also spoke at the meeting, presided by Jatiya Press Club President Reazuddin Ahmed.



PHOTO: STAR

Members of the family of Shaheed Dr Shamsul Alam Khan Milon place wreath at his grave in the city yesterday.

Dr Milon's mother calls on PM

BSS, Dhaka

Selina Akhtar, mother of Dr Shamsul Alam Milon, called on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office on the occasion of Milon Day yesterday.

She thanked as well as expressed gratitude to the Prime Minister for her government's steps taken to preserve the memory of Dr Milon, who was killed in the democratic movement of 1990.

The Prime Minister said the nation would remember forever the contribution of Shaheed Milon in the establishment of democracy in the country.

His supreme sacrifice would encourage all to protect democracy and carry on development, she added.

Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) President Prof MA Hadi, Secretary General Dr AZM Zahid Hossain, Joint Secretary Dr Foroz Mahmud Iqbal and Doctors Association of Bangladesh (DAB) President Dr Azizul Haq were present during the meeting.

CAMPAIGN TO CREATE AWARENESS ABOUT RIGHTS OF FEMALE WORKERS 'Ensure violence-free migration'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several human rights groups yesterday launched a month-long signature campaign across the country in a bid to raise awareness of the rights of the female migrant workers.

Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira) President Mosharrar Hossain MP inaugurated the campaign at the association's training centre in the city with a call to ensure violence-free migration of the female workers and secure future of their migration.

At the programme organised by the women right groups Karmojibi Nari, Shosti and Shishuk, Mosharrar said, "The dream of equal rights of women will never come true unless women are not empowered."

And the empowerment is not possible until and unless they are engaged in work. Baira is trying to create scope for them in the foreign

countries, as there is an acute crisis of employment in the country, he noted.

"There was a negative social attitude in the 1980's when women began coming out of the houses but today they have become the examples of women empowerment," he added.

He assured that Baira is against all sorts of malpractices in migration management of female workers but also sought help of all to curb such incidents if any.

Karmojibi Nari President Shirin Akhtar said the provisions of equal rights of men and women are only in the constitution, not in practice.

Akhtar regretted that women have become the victims of political violence nowadays, which should be resisted with creating awareness at every level.

Baira Executive Committee Member Abdul Alim and Shosti Director Nahid Sultana also spoke.

WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather may remain dry over the country in the next 24 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins of the country during the morning.

Slight fall in night temperature is expected over the country during the period, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 31.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakundu and lowest 14.7 degree Celsius at Rajshahi.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:10pm today and rises at 6:23am 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
Dhaka	27.5	18.0
Chittagong	30.5	17.2
Rajshahi	25.5	14.7
Khulna	27.3	17.0
Barisal	28.5	16.5
Sylhet	30.0	16.9
Cox's Bazar	30.0	17.5

New Cabinet Secy meets President

BSS, Dhaka

Newly appointed Cabinet Secretary ASM Abdul Halim made a courtesy call on President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday.

Congratulating the new cabinet secretary, the president hoped that he (Halim) would perform his duties with honesty and sincerity at the highest administrative post.

Injuddin assured him of all sorts of cooperation during performing his duties vested upon him.

The cabinet secretary said he would try his best to perform his duties following the direction of the government.

During the meeting, secretary to President M Abu Solaiman Chowdhury and press secretary M Mokhesur Rahman Chowdhury were present.



PHOTO: STAR

A university student speaks at a debate competition organised by the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) at a city hotel yesterday.

Govt engaged in nasty business over Hajj: Hasina

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina said the government has been practising an immoral business over the holy Hajj.

In a statement yesterday, Hasina condemned the government's unscrupulous Hajj business, corruption and mismanagement that increased misery of the pilgrims.

She said the Saudi government gave clearance to 60,000 citizens of Bangladesh to perform Hajj this time.

Of those, 22,000 were scheduled to perform Hajj as ballottees under government management while the rest 38,000 as non-ballottees.

Though the concerned ministry issued notice for several times in this regard, only 8000 Hajj pilgrims applied to the government to perform Hajj under government management as most of the pilgrims do not have faith in the Hajj management of the government.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines fixed the airfare for the ballottee Hajj pilgrims at

950 US dollar per head. The private airlines also announced to carry the non-ballottee Hajj pilgrims at the same tariff.

Hasina, also Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, said the then state minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism, Mir Nasir, who is well known as a 'member of the Prime Minister's family', after a negotiation with the concerned airlines decided to increase the airfare taking 200 US dollar per passenger as illegal commission from the airlines in October.

She said Prime Minister Khaleda Zia took Mir Nasir to perform Umrah in the last week of October leaving the Hajj pilgrims in uncertainty after increasing the airfare suddenly.

The AL chief said after returning to Bangladesh, Mir Nasir played a mysterious role in fixing the airfare for the Hajj pilgrims. At one stage, the PM sacked him in a bid to protect him and conceal the fact.

Hasina also said the Prime Minister, who herself is in charge of the Civil

Aviation and Tourism ministry, sought refuge to the leaders of Jamaat in exchange of commission to tackle the prevailing situation.

The airfare for the non-ballottee Hajj pilgrims was readjusted at 1050 US dollar per head while there is no logic in charging extra fare, Hasina added.

Dhaka elected IMO council member

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh has been elected a council member of International Maritime Organisation (IMO) for the year 2006-07, said a press release yesterday.

The election for membership of the IMO Executive Council was held on Saturday at its headquarters in London during the ongoing 24th session. The Assembly takes place every two years.

Cop robbed of Tk 10000

DMCH CORRESPONDENT

A police constable fell unconscious while travelling in a bus and lost Tk 10,000 yesterday.

Md Azimuddin, 45, a constable of Aditmari Police Station in Lalmonirhat was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital after the bus helpers of a double-decker bus he was travelling in found him unconscious.

His nephew Aminur Rahman told newsmen that his uncle boarded a Gulistan bound bus at Gabtoli in the morning after coming from Lalmonirhat. He came to Dhaka to submit a sealed drug sample at Narcotics Department.

In the bus Azimuddin was somehow made unconscious and all his clothes and Tk 10,000 he was carrying was robbed of, Rahman said. He brought money for a work at the Shikha Bhabhan.

The sealed packet bearing the drug sample was however torn and left behind.

Though Azimuddin had recovered a little, he could not tell how he was made unconscious.

Fog delays 3 flights at ZIA

UNB, Dhaka

Three flights of different airlines were grounded for about two hours at Zia International Airport (ZIA) yesterday due to thick fog over its runway.

"Three flights of Qatar Airways, Emirates and Gulf Air were delayed for about two hours early Sunday due to poor visibility caused by milky fog over the runway," said an official at the airport this evening.

'Arguments of debate to help check corruption'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country can never stand on its own foot and the next generation will be ruined if corruption is not checked right away said speakers at an inaugural session of a debate competition.

The arguments of debate will help check corruption in the country, they said at the debate competition organised by the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) at a city hotel yesterday.

TIB organised the four-day debate competition as part of its programmes ahead of 'International Anti-corruption Day' on December 9.

Besides the debate competitions, TIB will also hold a national seminar, essay competition and rallies at the six divisional cities to uphold the significance of the day.

Addressing the occasion, poet Asad Chowdhury said, "Though the country is at the peak of corruption, we should not lose hope rather we should work together to fight against the muscular corruption."

Quoting from Rabindranath Tagor, poet Asad said "Megh deke keu korisne bhoi arale tar surja achhe (Don't be afraid of the cloud, the sun is behind it)".

TIB Research Director SI Lasker said corruption must be checked from every sector right now.

Dhaka University Asst Prof Rubaet Ferdous said the arguments of debate competition would help stop corruption.

The organiser said 36 teams from public and private universities including Dhaka University, Chittagong University, Rajshahi University, Jahangirnagar University, Agricultural University and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) are participating in this competition.

In the knockout-based competition, the participants will debate on corruption, democracy, good governance, poverty, development and other issues.

The competition will continue till November 30 and the champion team will be awarded at the national seminar to be held to mark the Anti-corruption Day on December 9.

TIB Programme Director Abu Md Mohsin and Executive Director of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) Rezwana Hasan also spoke.