

Consensus seeking alliance lacks harmony

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

While the government has called all political parties for a consensus on the alarming rise of militancy in the country, the ruling four-party alliance cannot reach any consensus within itself due to conflicts in the coalition partner Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ).

Two IOJ factions led by Azizul Haque and Fazlul Haque Amini said they will not sit in any alliance meeting if its two other factions led by Mohammad Ishaq and Izharul Islam Chowdhury are not expelled from the alliance, sources said.

They, however, urged the heads of the four parties to sit together to decide first if the Ishaq and Izharul factions will stay in the alliance.

In case these two factions stay, the alliance must be extended in terms of number from four to six, Abdur Rob Yousuf, secretary general of the Azizul faction of the IOJ, told The Daily Star yesterday. "They cannot be invited to any meeting in the existing form of the alliance," he said.

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3 militant accounts traced in Bogra

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Police yesterday traced out three bank accounts of suspected militants here at different branches of Sonali Bank.

Following information of arrested Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) member Abdul Awal, who is also the son-in-law of JMB chief Abdur Rahman, police could track a bank account at College Road branch of Sonali Bank operated by two unidentified men, Adnan Sami and Fahad Hasan. The account, opened on April 25 last year, now holds Tk 5,309. The highest ever

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150MW CHANDPUR PLANT

PDB skirts review body's decision, favours Harbin

SHARIER KHAN

The Power Development Board (PDB) is disregarding for the last six weeks the first ever decision of a government review panel under the Public Procurement Regulation (PPR) to shelve a faulty offer of Chinese company Harbin for the 150 MW Chandpur power plant.

The World Bank is pressuring the government to respect this decision given by a three-member review panel of the Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU) under the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) in mid-October.

The CPTU declared Harbin's \$41 million bid informal and void as it lacked any technical offer, and asked the PDB to begin negotiation with another Chinese company CMEC for its \$52 million responsive bid. The CPTU gave the PDB four weeks to complete this task and asked it not to re-tender the project

since there are at least two valid offers.

As per the PPR, the review panel's decision is supposed to be absolute.

But the PDB sought a legal opinion against the panel's directive. Sources said since the review panel was formed by the government, the PDB cannot resort to a private lawyer to challenge its decision. "Such actions once again prove the observations of the CPTU that the PDB is siding with Harbin," noted one source.

The IMED on November 21 wrote to the PDB seeking to know the fate of the review panel's decision. But no response has yet been made.

The power ministry meanwhile prepared a proposal seeking the Cabinet purchase committee's approval of Harbin's bid.

Sources said if the purchase committee rejects the Harbin bid, the power ministry and the PDB are

prepared for a re-tendering but they are not ready to accept the CPTU directive.

Meanwhile, diplomatic sources said Harbin has lobbied with the Chinese government to mount pressure on CMEC to give up challenging Harbin on the Chandpur project. This has apparently silenced CMEC in Bangladesh.

But the Chinese embassy in Dhaka has received a complaint from a major donor that Harbin is involved in large scale irregularities in power sector bids since the BNP-led coalition government came to power.

The present government has awarded two power projects since 2001. Both these projects—Tongi 80 MW and the Fenchuganj 90 MW—were awarded to Harbin. The Tongi plant, launched one year behind schedule keeps on tripping due to technical glitches since it

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Silk Route trip stuck at Sino-Myanmar border

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An eight member Chinese delegation, due to arrive in Bangladesh following the ancient Silk Route, got stuck at the China-Myanmar border, as the Myanmar authorities deny them entry with their vehicles.

The delegation informed their Bangladeshi counterparts through fax messages that their scheduled time of arrival in Bangladesh might be delayed, as it would take a few days to get the permission from the Myanmar authorities.

According to the message, the

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128 die as Iranian plane crashes into high-rise

AP, Tehran

A military transport plane loaded with Iranian journalists and trying to make an emergency landing slammed into a 10-story apartment building, ripping open the top of the structure and igniting a huge fire. At least 128 people were killed. All 94 people on the plane were killed, most of them Iranian journalists heading to cover military maneuvers in the south. Thirty-four residents of the apartment building also died, and 90 were injured, Tehran state radio said.

Flames leaped out of windows,

from the roof and several other floors of the building as panicked residents fled the Towhid complex, a series of high-rise apartment buildings for air force personnel in the Azadi suburb of Tehran.

Wreckage rained down, hitting a nearby gas station, police said. Cars parked below were smashed by falling debris.

At the foot of the blackened building, what appeared to be a pile of wreckage was in flames.

Firefighters managed to put out the fire in the building, which was damaged and charred but still standing. Police cordoned the

building and debris field, preventing journalists and a crowd of as many as 10,000 people from getting close to the site. Many in the crowd were screaming, afraid their relatives had been killed. Several hours after the crash, the building still was smoldering.

"It was like an earthquake," said Reza Sadeqi, a 25-year-old merchant, who saw the plane hit the building. "The force of the crash threw me about 3 meters (9 feet) inside my shop."

"I felt the heat of the fire caused

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Bol curtails land allotment to KEPZ

JASIM UDDIN KHAN

The Board of Investment (BoI) decided to curtail half of the allotment of land to the Korea Export Processing Zone (KEPZ) in Chittagong.

The decision was taken on Sunday in a meeting of a high-level BoI committee on KEPZ with the board's executive chairman, Mahmudur Rahman, in the chair.

The BoI will send a recommendation to the board of governors of Private Export Processing Zones Authority headed by the prime minister to allow the KEPZ to have an operating license soon.

No representatives from the KEPZ participated in the meeting

despite invitation from the BoI.

The board also decided to allocate the remaining allotted land to the KEPZ authorities gradually based on deserving requirement.

Sources said the KEPZ project worth \$1.02 billion could not start its development work in the last six years due to the government's delay in issuing an operating license.

The Awami League (AL) government had allowed a Korean company, Young One, to establish an EPZ in 1996 through passing of an act in the parliament.

It also awarded 2492 acres of land on the southern bank of the river Karnaphuli to the KEPZ to start its operation.

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UNI-TRACK SYSTEM POSTPONEMENT

Textbook supply now uncertain

ASHIQUR RAHMAN

Timely supply of the class nine textbooks to the students in 2006 has become uncertain as the government now has to start all the formalities afresh after postponement of the proposed uni-track education system just 25 days before the new academic year.

"Now it is quite impossible for National Curriculum and Textbook Board [NCTB] to supply the textbooks under the present syllabus before mid-February," Bangladesh Book Publishers and Sellers Association President Abu Taher

said.

The book publishers have no preparation for timely publication of textbooks under the present system as only 25 days remain before the year-end, he said, adding, "We sold out the previous stock of textbooks as waste paper because of the government's strict decision to introduce uni-track education system from the next year."

"Now if the government gives work order to the last year's bid winners again for publishing the textbooks for the next academic

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PHOTO: STAR

An empty classroom of Gazipur Government Girls' High School. The school authorities suspended annual examinations until tomorrow in the wake of two suicide bomb attacks in the town last week that panicked the students and teachers.

7 killed, 30 hurt in road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Seven people were killed and 30 others injured, 11 of them critically, in a road accident on the Nagarbari-Bogra Highway in Santhia upazila in Pabna yesterday noon.

The accident occurred when a Pabna-bound passenger bus from

Sirajganj fell into a roadside ditch due to a punctured tyre, police and witnesses said.

Four of the dead were identified as Shamsul Mollah, 70, of village Salanga in Ullahpara upazila, Abdul Matin, 60, of Chalchara

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Prayer Timing		
December 7		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	5-15	5-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-19	5-22
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation