

MPs trade stinkers in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lawmakers kept on using defamatory, indecent and unparliamentary words to attack each other in parliament yesterday, ignoring the rules of procedure of the Jatiya Sangsad (JS).

Offensive expressions by a number of lawmakers of both ruling BNP and main opposition Awami League (AL), forced the speaker to remind the House repeatedly that all unparliamentary words will be expunged from the House proceedings.

According to the rules of JS procedure, "a member shall not make a personal charge against a member, minister or the holder of a public office except in so far as it may be strictly necessary in regard to the subject matter before the House." A member cannot also use any offensive, abusive vulgar expressions.

But a number of lawmakers

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Nat'l Professor Shamsul Huq passes away

BSS, Dhaka

Eminent educationist and National Professor Shamsul Huq died in the city yesterday.

He was 94.
Prof Huq, also a former foreign minister of the country and central education minister of the erstwhile Pakistan, died at his Eskaton Garden residence due to old age complications.

Former vice-chancellor of the Rajshahi and Dhaka universities, Huq was well-known at national and international levels as a scholar.

Educated in Kolkata, Dhaka and London, Huq was associated with many institutions at home and abroad. He is survived by two sons, Khaled Shams and Tarique Shams.

The namaz-e-janaza of Prof Shamsul Huq will be held today at Eskaton Garden Mosque after Juma prayers. He will be buried at the family graveyard at Savar.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and President Iajuddin Ahmed have expressed deep shock at the death of former foreign minister and eminent educationist Prof Shamsul Huq.

In a message, the prime minister recalled the great contribution

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Nizami sees no fertiliser crisis

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Minister for Industries Matiur Rahman Nizami claimed the country has no fertiliser crisis as there is enough supply of urea fertiliser.

He said this while giving a statement under rule 300 in the parliament yesterday.

He said misleading news of fertiliser crisis was published in newspapers as well as in the electronic media. But there is sufficient supply of urea fertiliser in the country.

He said the agriculture ministry estimated the total demand of urea fertiliser in the current fiscal to be 27 lakh tons. A programme to collect 30.62lakh tons fertiliser was

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44 die in Moscow market collapse

AFP, Moscow

The snow-laden roof of a Moscow food market collapsed before dawn yesterday as traders started their day, killing at least 44 people, injuring 29 and trapping others in the wreckage.

The roof of the Baumansky market fell in at about 5:00 am (0200 GMT) on a national holiday -- Defenders of the Fatherland Day -- and before the market was open to the public, likely preventing

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Prayer Timing		
February 24		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-20	5-55
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-03	6-07
Esha	7-30	8-00
Source: Islamic Foundation		

130 shot dead in Iraq sectarian bloodshed

AFP, Baghdad

Gunmen have shot dead 130 people in two days of sectarian violence in Iraq after the bombing of a revered Shia shrine, prompting renewed political paralysis and warnings of civil war.

The spiralling violence threatens to derail negotiations on setting up a government of national unity, with the main Sunni political party declaring a boycott of talks with the Shia-led government over the reprisal attacks.

The main Sunni alliance, the National Concord Front, also boycotted an emergency meeting of national leaders held by President Jalal Talabani in a bid to restore calm.

"To put out the fire is a holy duty

and will be achieved through national unity," Talabani told reporters after the meeting.

The surge in sectarian violence follows the bombing Wednesday morning of a Shia shrine in Samarra, north of Baghdad, and reprisals against Sunni mosques nationwide.

Eighty bullet-riddled corpses were brought to the Baghdad morgue between Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning, the deputy director of the morgue, Doctor Kais Mohammed, told AFP.

"I've only been able to carry out autopsies on 25 of them," he said, adding that all had been shot. Many of the bodies, which were dumped in Baghdad and its suburbs, could not immediately be identified, but they were widely

believed to be those of Sunnis.

Another 47 bodies of men shot to death were discovered along with 10 burned out cars alongside a road near Nahrawan, southeast of Baghdad, police said.

The corpses were found near a brick factory and it was not immediately known if the victims were workers from the factory.

One Sunni was also killed Thursday and two wounded in a drive by shooting outside a Sunni mosque in Baquba, northeast of the capital, and a Sunni sheikh was shot dead in Hillah, south of Baghdad, police said.

Iraq has placed its security forces on high alert and cancelled all leave. The night curfew in Baghdad was brought forward

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Hasina for clear govt stance on electoral reforms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the prime minister to come up with a clear stand if her government would accept the opposition's proposed reforms in the caretaker government system and the Election Commission (EC).

"If the prime minister does not accept our reform proposals, the people know how to get those implemented," said Hasina, also president of the main opposition Awami League.

She was speaking while welcoming some new entrants to her party at her Dhanmondi office in the capital. Former additional secretary Shamsul Islam, Barrister Maksudul Islam, former deputy secretary Aminur Rahman and industrialist Tanvir Chowdhury Sagor joined the AL yesterday.

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PHOTO: STAR

From left: British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury, Water Resources Minister Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, BNP lawmaker Nurul Kabir Shaheen and AL lawmaker Faruk chatting at New DOHS Cricket Ground during a friendly cricket match between legislators and foreign envoys yesterday.

FRESH VOTER LIST

Hearing on EC appeal deferred

UNB, Dhaka

The hearing on Election Commission's (EC's) petition for leave to appeal for overturning the High Court (HC) judgement on voter list was yesterday deferred further, as the Appellate Division remained hamstrung by quorum crisis due to sickness of a judge of the six-member full court.

According to court sources, the hearing will now be held on March 2. On February 19, the hearing was deferred to February 23, as Justice MM Ruhul Amin was down with sickness.

The Election Commission moved the Supreme Court against the January 4 High Court judgment that had asked the EC to update the voter list based on the existing one.

The HC ruling came upon two writ petitions filed by three Awami League lawmakers as part of the opposition movement for electoral reforms for free and fair general election.

Earlier on February 5, a three-member bench of the Appellate Division had deferred the hearing following an application moved by the counsel for the Election Commission for a full-court hearing.

RU TEACHER KILLING

Shibir leader still at large, cops' role questioned

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Rajshahi University Islami Chhatra Shibir President Mahbubul Alam Shalehi, a key suspect in the killing of Prof S Taher Ahmed, is still not arrested despite his public appearance, giving rise to suspicions that authorities are reluctant to arrest him.

Rajshahi Metropolitan Police Commissioner Nayeem Ahmed has confirmed five people including Shalehi are found to be involved in the murder. "Four were arrested and we are looking for Shalehi."

Police sources said there could not arrest Shalehi even after he took part in a Shibir rally due to "a deliberate delay" by the government high-ups in giving a green signal in this connection. The delay was a result of the pressure by Jamaat-e-Islami, a major component of the four-party ruling alliance, they added.

The police on February 5 sought the government nod to arrest

Mohiuddin and Shalehi, who the arrestees -- Jahangir, Abdus Salam and Nazmul -- named as the masterminds.

The approval for Mohiuddin's arrest came just hours before the confession made by Jahangir before a magistrate on February 7. But the police had to wait five more days to get the nod to arrest Shalehi.

However, the police delayed their efforts to arrest the Shibir leader apparently due to threats of creating violence by top Jamaat-Shibir leaders.

Police officials said there are similarities in the killings of Prof Taher and his economics department colleague Prof Yunus, who was killed in December 2004.

In both the cases the suspected killers were found to have had links with Shibir, student wing of Jamaat, and were sheltered by party's top leaders.

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Mirza Abbas gets bail in cop murder case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted bail to Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas, his brother Mirza Khokan and three others in connection with the constable Abu Naser murder case.

Judge Mohammad Momin Ullah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court issued the bail as Abbas and four others appeared before the court praying for bail.

The three other accused are Shahab Uddin Lallu, former president of Jatityabadi Chhatra Dal, student wing of ruling BNP, Yusuf Bin Jailil and Abu Iqbal. Another accused Sumon is still at large and

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PM asks armed forces to fight all kinds of terrorism

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday asked the armed forces to move ahead upholding the state principles to protect world peace and to fight all kinds of terrorism.

"Bangladesh believes in peaceful solution to various bilateral, regional and international problems in every corner of the world. The basic principles of our foreign policy is friendship with all on the basis of equality and malice to none," she said.

The prime minister, who is also in charge of the defence ministry, was addressing a staff course graduation ceremony of the armed forces.

A total of 140 officers of army, navy and air force graduated from the Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC) at Mirpur Cantonment.

Of them, 26 officers from China, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, the Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi

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Boucher replaces Rocca

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Former spokesman for the US Department of State Richard A Boucher has taken over the responsibility of Bureau of South and

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PHOTO: STAR

A farmer prepares molasses on a large frying pan while his helper feeds the burner near Sona Masjid in Chapainawabganj.

Teenage home help tortured, left in coma at hospital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An adolescent domestic help has been fighting for her life at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) after her employer allegedly tortured her.

The 11-year-old Shilpi was admitted to the DMCH on Monday night in an unconscious state. She did not regain consciousness till 7:00pm yesterday.

Police arrested the employer Nazrul Islam on Wednesday night, who identified Shilpi as his daughter during admission and informed the doctors that she suffered head injury when she fell on the stairs while playing.

On duty physicians said Shilpi

was in a critical condition, adding that she had suffered severe head injury. She was being fed through feeding tube.

Her whole body bore marks of numerous bruises and old burns and her hands were a bit swollen.

One of Nazrul's next-door neighbours seeking anonymity said apart from beating Shilpi mercilessly, Nazrul used to burn her with heated utensils and hot water if she made any mistake in her work.

The neighbour also said that they protested the torture on many occasions, but Nazrul did not pay heed.

Noor Banu, mother-in-law of

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