Debate in JS

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allegation that both Iajuddin Ahmed and Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar are now holding the presidency, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed said the Speaker is discharging duties as the 'acting president' since President Iajuddin is still under physicians' supervision after a bypass surgery.

"The Speaker will return to his office when the president will take charge again," Moudud said.

The law minister said the president has returned from Singapore and now he is in the intensive care unit (ICU) of the Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka on advice of his physicians who performed the president's bypass.

The AL lawmakers questioned why the president did not take charge of his office on returning from Singapore.

"President Iajuddin Ahmed has returned home recovering from illness. He is the president from the moment he arrived at the airport," AL lawmaker Abdur Razzak told the House on a point of order. "We want to know whether any conspiracy is going on confining the president at the CMH," he questioned.

Explaining the constitutional provision, the law minister rejected the AL lawmaker' claim and said the Speaker is performing as the acting president as per the constitution.

Earlier, AL lawmaker Mohammad Nasim on a point of order questioned how many presidents are now in the country.

Referring to the hospitalisation of former president Shahabuddin Ahmed during his tenure, Nasim said the then Speaker was ready to take charge as the acting president. "But the president said he would discharge his duties staying at the CMH."

Replying to him, Moudud said Shahabuddin Ahmed could do it because he had the physical ability. "But President Iajuddin is still in the ICU."

Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, parliamentary affairs adviser to the prime minister, also took part in the debate and said the president will return to his office after completely recovering from illness.

PM unveils book by Shahin MP

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia unveiled the cover of a book titled 'Jatyia Sangsade MM Shahin: Swadesh O Probasher Priya Pratinidhi' at a simple function at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday.

The 282-page book, written by MM Shahin, an independent Member of Parliament from Moulvibazar-2 (Kulaura-Juri), contains his own proceedings in Parliament. Thikana Group of Publications and Media published the book.

The Prime Minister thanked the writer for doing "an excellent job" and hoped that the book would be used as reference.

JS body to complain

FROM PAGE 1

repeatedly recommended the ministry not to purchase any new ship as it will not be economically viable for the BSC, a losing concern, he said.

Raising question over transparency in the tender process, the parliamentary body decided to refer the matter to the ACC if it finds any irregularities.

The BSC, which has 13 ships in its fleet including eight old ones, has already floated the tender for procuring a new ship through advertisement in a local newspaper in Chittagong.

It has deposits of Tk 100 crore in local accounts and around $60 lakh in foreign accounts. After spending more than Tk 100 crore for the new ship, its coffer will definitely become empty, sources added.

Talking to reporters after the meeting, Awami League (AL) lawmaker and committee member Fazle Karim said, "The decision to purchase a new ship is nothing but a means to plunder public money at the fag end of the present government's tenure."

Fazle Karim also protested the ministry's decision to increase budgetary allocation for dredging in the Karnaphuli river from Tk 74 crore to Tk 253 crore.

The parliamentary body also asked the government to set up a hanging bridge on the Karnaphuli to help maintain proper navigation at the port and take immediate steps to make the New Mooring Container Terminal operative, sources said.

Although the AL committee members did not show interest in discussing the issue in the absence of the shipping minister and threatened to walk out of the meeting, they eventually participated in the meeting upon request of the committee chairman.

Loss of Certificate

I am S M Kausar, son of S M Arif, Residence-1014, Ibrahimpur, Eidgah Road, PS-Kafrul, Dhaka-1206 recently lost my Diploma Engineering Certificate in Civil Technology from Bangladesh Technical Education Board, Dhaka (Serial No. 24764, Registration No. 2694, Dated 20th August, 1986). Kafrul Police Station General Diary No. 1159, Dated: 21st June, 2006.

S M Kausar
C-1489 Phone No. 9871082

Media now enjoys highest level of freedom: Bhuiyan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday said the media is now enjoying the highest level of freedom, compared to the tenure of previous governments.

This is the golden time for the press as the BNP government believes in full freedom of the press, he added.

However, the freedom of reporters is yet to be achieved as sometimes they are forced to write stories as per the dictates of the newspaper owners, the minister said at a roundtable on 'Freedom of Bangladesh Newspaper: Past and Present'.

Unlike during the tenure of the previous government, the media now does not face any legal obstacles, he added.

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) organised the discussion at the National Press Club in the city.

Speaking at the roundtable, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed said the media cannot be controlled by enforcing laws as freedom of the press is a precondition for democracy and good governance.

Some newspapers are abusing their freedom as they publish incorrect news sometimes, he said, adding that they even do not publish rejoinders.

The minister called on the newsmen to initiate a code of conduct for responsible journalism.

The media can also play the role as a second parliament, he added.

Stressing the need for empowering the Press Council, he suggested appointing a neutral person as the head of the Press Council in order to ensure accountability of the newsmen.

Journalist Mahfuz Ullah presented a keynote paper depicting the condition of the press in the past and present.

Deputy Minister for Information Abdus Salam Pintu, National Press Club President Reazuddin Ahmed, BFUJ Secretary General Ruhul Amin Gazi, Acting Editor of the Khabarparta Gias Kamal Chowdhury, Acting Editor of the Dinkal Quazi Siraj and journalist Mahbubullah took part in the roundtable moderated by BFUJ President Mozammel Haque.

STAR: PHOTO

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) President Mozammel Haque speaks at a roundtable at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

Primary teachers

FROM PAGE 1

assurance and so they will not comply with her request to return to the school and teach the children.

They received such type of assurance from several ministers including LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan during the four-party alliance government's tenure, they added.

Under the banner of the association, the government primary school teachers announced to go for indefinite hunger strike at the Central Shaheed Minar from June 24.

"A team of 10 teachers from each school have already been listed to join the hunger strike and teachers will come to Dhaka with processions from different parts of the country," said Kazi AK Fazlul Huq, general secretary of Bangladesh Primary Teachers Association, told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said two teachers -- Siddiqur Rahman, president of Dhaka Mohanagar Comimittee of the association and Selimuzzaman, member of the same committee, who were arrested from Osmani Memorial Auditorium where PM addressed at the closing ceremony of National Primary Week 2006 on Tuesday, were released on the deep night of Tuesday.

The government primary school teachers went on an indefinite strike across the country from last Saturday demanding elimination of wage discrimination and introduction of school-based exam system.

Teachers of community primary schools under the banner of Bangladesh Community Primary Teachers Association have continued their hunger strike until death in the capital from the same day. They have kept their educational institutions closed.

The pro-BNP and the pro-Awami League community primary teachers were observing hunger strike at Muktangon and the Central Shaheed Minar demanding their five-point demand that includes nationalisation of their jobs.

Meanwhile, Shikkhak Karmachari Oikya Jote yesterday submitted memorandums to deputy commissioners of all districts demanding nationalisation of job of teachers of non-government high schools and colleges and resignation of the finance minister.

They will also hold a rally at the TSC intersection on the Dhaka University campus at 3:00pm today.

Following the rally, a procession will march toward Jatiya Sangsad and submit memorandum to the Speaker of parliament, a press release said.

PHOTO: STAR

Prof Abdul Aziz speaks at a roundtable titled "Investment Opportunities: Sylhet Perspective" at a local hotel in Sylhet on Tuesday. The Daily Star organised the roundtable.

Mirersarai AL leader hacked to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

An Awami League leader was hacked to death by a gang of miscreants early yesterday while he was returning home after watching World Cup football match between England and Sweden at a local hotel at Mirersarai upazila here.

Police arrested five AL activists in this connection while local AL leaders said an influential ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leader is the mastermind of the killing.

The dead was identified as Abu Yousuf Nizami alias Khairati, 45, also the assistant manager of Sonali Bank's Mirersarai Branch, sources said.

Seven to eight criminals swooped on Nizami when he was returning home at South Olinagar in Karerhat Union after watching the match at a restaurant at Battali. They stabbed Nizami indiscriminately and left him in a pool of blood.

He was rushed to a local health complex from where he was shifted to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) as his condition deteriorated. The on-duty doctors declared him dead at the CMCH.

Victims' brother-in-law Nasiruddin filed a case in this connection with the Mirersarai Police Station accusing some local AL leaders and activists.

Police later arrested five AL leaders --- Jamaluddin, Enam, Jahangir, Shamsuddin and Harunur Rashid.

Meanwhile, Karerhat AL leaders and activists put up barricade on the Karerhat-Ramgarh Road for five hours until 3.00pm protesting the killing of Nizami and arrest of its leaders. They demanded arrest of real killers and their godfather.

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