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AL walks out of JS protesting Mujahid's bill placing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lawmakers of the main opposition Awami League walked out of parliament again yesterday during a session protesting the placing of a bill by a technocrat minister, Ali Ahsan Muhammad Mujahid, alleging that he does not have the authority to place the specific bill.

Five new bills were placed in parliament yesterday which the AL lawmakers termed 'election bills' alleging that the government did nothing in the last five years, but now it is placing bills in the House to showcase those for the people ahead of the next general election.

The bill placed by Social Welfare Minister Mujahid is regarding providing special facilities to women prisoners. The opposition lawmakers termed it a finance bill.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

ELECTORAL REFORMS

Whirlwind move to make two parties sit

Businessmen shuttle between Jalil, Bhuiyan; Butenis meets Hasina; Sikri meets Jalil

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Business leaders and diplomats took massive initiatives in the last two days to bring ruling BNP and main opposition Awami League (AL) to the negotiation table over electoral reforms to break the existing political deadlock.

As part of the move, business leaders held two meetings with BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and one with AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil in the last two days, urging both the leaders to sit immediately.

US Ambassador in Dhaka

Patricia A Butenis held a meeting with Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina while Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri met with Jalil yesterday. Both the envoys stressed the need for immediate dialogue to break the political standoff.

Meanwhile, Bhuiyan and Jalil had informal telephone conversations yesterday regarding their initiatives for the dialogue.

Jalil said Bhuiyan told him that he might make another phone call at any time last night to convey a formal proposal for the dialogue. He told reporters that he is ready

for the talks to resolve disputes about the caretaker government and Election Commission if Bhuiyan comes up with a formal proposal.

However, Bhuiyan did not make the phone call last night. Sources said he may call Jalil tonight.

Earlier, talking to newsmen at his Mercantile Bank office yesterday, Jalil said, "If the ruling party gives a specific proposal for talks even over telephone, I will discuss it with my party chief and my colleagues in the party and the alliance. If they allow, we can sit to

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Scuffle in court as convicted JMB militants rough up Rab Sunny, Jewel get 60-yr jail in 2 cases

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) military commander Aatur Rahman Sunny and Gazipur unit regional commander Enayet Ullah Jewel roughed up several Rab men on the premises of a Dhaka court yesterday after the court sentenced them to 60-years' jail in two cases.

The scuffles broke out when the media men drew near the convicts to have their comments on the verdict of the cases filed for possessing illegal firearms, ammunition and explosives.

As the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel obstructed Sunny and Jewel from expressing their comments, the angry JMB leaders started to kick the law enforcers who in turns began to beat them up.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Clarification

The Korean EPZ authorities, in a clarification on The Daily Star report headlined "KEPZ gets licence after 5 years of wait" published yesterday, denied having approached by a powerful minister's son in the past to resolve its problems for a fee of 3 million dollars. "We would like to inform all concerned... that there has never been any such approach as stated in the above news item," said the clarification.

Confusion over JMB militants' execution

SC registrar, Jail Code differ on SC letter's implication

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) registrar yesterday categorically said its letter, following a leave to appeal petition by one of the seven condemned Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) militants, has only stayed the particular militant's execution.

As confusion arose whether the death sentences -- handed for killing two Jhalakathi judges -- on all of the seven JMB militants

would be stayed after the SC letter, the SC registrar told The Daily Star yesterday that the petition of Iftekhar Hasan al Mamun will have no effect on the penalty on six other JMB men.

Meantime, the Jail Code says if the SC orders for postponing the death sentence on only the petitioner, the sentence of others getting death penalty in the same case will remain postponed.

Correction slip V of Section 991 of the Jail Code reads: "If sentences

of death have been passed on more than one person in the same case, and if intimation is received from, or on behalf of only one or more but not all of them of an intention to apply for leave to appeal to Privy Council, the execution of the sentence shall be postponed not only in the case of the person or persons from whom, or on whose behalf, such intimation has been received

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

People go berserk for power

STAR REPORT

Outraged by frequent power outages, thousands of people swooped on local power distribution offices in Islambagh, Dhalpur and Shanir Akhra areas of the capital last night and disrupted road and rail communications.

Angry people also attacked power offices in six districts--Narayanganj, Narsingdi, Cox's Bazar, Manikganj, Sylhet and Sherpur--last night and the night before.

Thousands of power-hungry people besieged the local power distribution offices at Dhalpur at 7:00pm and at Shanir Akhra at 9:30pm.

People started coming out to streets from 7:00pm at Sayedabad, Jatrahari, Shyampur, Koratitola and Islambagh, protesting repeated load shedding during the day.

The angry crowd also blocked rail communication on the Kamalapur-Narayanganj rail route.

Earlier, the mob formed a human-chain on Elephant Road and demonstrated on Nazimuddin Road at Lalbagh demanding uninterrupted supply of electricity.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



Workers, at the expense of commuters' woe, enjoy one-hour break out on the Elephant Road as their employers keep shops closed from noon yesterday to protest against frequent power outages.

Nagorik Committee sets tasks for caretaker, next governments



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Nagorik Committee 2006 formed to prepare a vision paper for Bangladesh in 2021 yesterday put forward a set of 16 urgent tasks for the caretaker government and a 38-point priority action plan for the next elected government.

Formulation of the tasks and action plan is based on regional dialogues in major cities and towns of the country for the last four months, organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue in collaboration with The Daily Star, the Prothom Alo and Channelli.

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, member-secretary of the Nagorik Committee presented the priorities for the caretaker government and immediate action plan for the elected government at a discussion meeting in the capital.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Caretaker govt can carry out reforms

Says Prof Yunus as ex-advisers say it has limited power

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although some former advisers to caretaker governments remarked that a caretaker government enjoys 'very little power', Prof Muhammad Yunus, the micro credit guru, thinks it is sufficiently empowered to undertake necessary reforms for making the next election free and fair.

Expressing his firm hope that

the next election will be free and fair, Yunus, managing director of Grameen Bank, yesterday made the comment during a Nagorik Committee 2006 dialogue. He suggested a policy guideline for priorities of the next caretaker government and a 100-day action plan for the next elected government.

The caretaker government can

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

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