

AL men divided

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need to be looked at. They also recommended curtailing the party president's absolute power in decision-making and bringing dynamism in the central committee.

They said for intra-party democracy to take root the party would have to rethink if its chief should continue in her position forever.

Asked about the much-talked about notion of having the two major political parties minus their current chiefs, Jali said only the leaders and councillors of the party have the right to decide how it would be run.

"It would be illegal and unconstitutional if the state acts to omit the two [from the respective parties] through formulating new laws," he said.

Jali, who was scheduled to leave for Singapore last night for medical check-up, stressed that the AL would be reformed under the leadership of Hasina.

A senior AL leader siding with anti-Hasina faction told The Daily Star that bringing reforms must not be tagged with her Hasina's presence.

Speaking in return for anonymity, some of the leaders said they are waiting for favourable conditions to come. "We will take the initiative to bring some radical changes even without her just when we would deem the time is ripe," one of them observed.

AL president's Political Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury told The Daily Star that as some discussions are going on about registration of the political parties, they will have to wait to find out exactly what legal obligations they will have to fulfil as a party. And this in turn will determine the extent and nature of the reforms, he added.

The reforms should always be viewed with an open mind and they should be continuing and sustaining for the very interest of the party, observed Saber, also an organising secretary.

He said they will support measures to ensure transparency in all matters including party finances.

"We should now seriously consider introducing state funding for the political parties as is the case in many democracies," he noted.

AL Public Secretary Asaduzzaman Noor told The Daily Star that political parties are the life force of democracies. The broader the membership base, the more will be the practice of democracy within the party. "At the end of the day it is the members of the party who will determine how it is to be run," he pointed out.

One of the leaders criticised the party for not following its constitution properly, holding in time the councils and meeting of the National Executive Committee, the largest decision-making body.

Another leader loyal to Hasina said businessmen, former civil or military bureaucrats, or whoever he/she might be should not be given any post or nomination before three to five years serving for the party.

Some leaders said the party councillors should be allowed to express their opinions freely and without fear so they could choose a better leadership.

Law, Justice and Information Adviser Barrister Mainul Hosein on April 22 said the present government is tolerant towards the politicians who are working to bring reforms in party politics. He said one should not become prime minister or party chief

UK, Bangladesh to work together for common values

UNB, Dhaka

British High Commissioner Anwar Chowdhury has said it is vital for the people of UK and Bangladesh to articulate common values of peace, tolerance, social justice, human rights and democracy.

"We will continue to work together to counter the threat of those who seek to profit from division, suspicion and violence and to address the root causes of extremism..." he said at a reception at the High Commission on Thursday evening marking the birthday of Queen Elizabeth II.

Bangladesh and Britain enjoy special bilateral relations, the envoy said, adding that the British Council is doing a great job in promoting people-to-people links and cultural exchange.

He said UK welcomes genuine applicants because they have much to offer, just as they have much to gain from Britain as a place of business, study, tourism and family life.

Chowdhury said UK remains one of the largest investors in Bangladesh and a key market for Bangladeshi exports. UK companies are taking a lead in making corporate social responsibility work in Bangladesh.

On aid programme, he said Britain intends to scale up its contribution substantially from current bilateral aid programme of 125 million pound (\$250million) a year.

The High Commissioner said the UK is committed to working in partnership with Bangladesh to achieve its millennium development goals and to lift millions out of poverty for good.

Tragic death

FROM PAGE 1
Proshika office under Gouranadip upazila on Barisal-Dhaka highway.

Barek Mridha's sons Bashar Mridha, 26, and Russel Mridha, 22, died on the spot.

Barek's son-in-law Akbar Ali, 31, and their family friends Mizanur Rahman, 24, and Ismail, 29, were admitted to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

8 hurt as live electric wire falls on them

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eight people suffered injuries when a live electric wire from an electric pole fell on them in the city's Jurain area yesterday.

The injured were Desa electricians Amir Hossain, 42, and Abdul Matin, 40, and locals Sanjida, 10, Alamgir, 10, Abdus Samad, 40, Senu, 23, Shihab, 8, and Al-Amin, 8.

They were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

The injured told reporters at the DMCH that local people saw an electric wire, torn during Thursday's storm, near Alam Super Market at around 12:20 pm and informed the Desa officials.

On information, Desa electricians and linesmen rushed to the scene and started repairing the wire. Suddenly, another electric wire tore from the pole and fell on the people gathered there, leaving the eight injured. Police said the wire tore as power supply resumed suddenly.

Of the injured, condition of Amir Hossain was stated to be critical.

repeatedly. "There should be democracy inside a party too. A family member of a party chief may be competent but they should come through the political process," the adviser added.

Speaking at the BBC Bangladesh Sanglap last week, AL President Member Suranjit Sengupta called for radical reforms including specifying for how many times one can hold presidency of the organisation.

Besides, laws should be formulated so that a person cannot hold at the same time the posts of party president and prime minister, he said apparently pointing at Sheikh Hasina.

Hasina's son, Saejeeb Wazed Joy told The Daily Star last night, "Some people forget that Sheikh Hasina was not made the party president by her father. Rather, the Awami League itself had elected her as its president while she was in exile. Anyone who wants to run for the presidency needs just two persons—one to propose their name and the other to second it."

He added that reform is an ongoing process. Over the years, the party has adopted new ideas, changed its core policies and even its name once. It will be continuing to grow and evolve the way it has been since its founding.

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Robber killed in encounter with Rab

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A robber was killed in an encounter with Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) at Shamlapur village under Barchara Union of Teknaf upazila early yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab raided a place at the village where the robber, Sayed Kashem, 32, and his accomplices were holding a secret meeting at around 4:00am.

Sensing the presence of the Rab men, the gang opened fire, forcing the law enforcers to retaliate.

Rab sources said, Kashem received bullets during the "shoot-out" and died instantly, while his cohorts managed to flee.

Two Rab members—Zaker and Hasan—were injured in the gunfire, the sources added.

Five guns and seven bullets were recovered from the spot.

SIM, scratch cards

FROM PAGE 16
An inspection team led by Wahida Rahman, deputy director of Excise and VAT for Tejgaon zone, conducted the raid at the offices of Banglalink concerns on Thursday.

The team recovered 4,03,663 SIM cards and 27,61,329 scratch cards at the office of Oras Invest while it recovered 4,65,906 SIM cards and 81,87,837 scratch cards at the office of Ring Distribution.

The team also seized packaging materials of Banglalink SIM and scratch cards from the two offices.

"Oras Invest does not have any VAT registration while Ring Distribution is registered as a supervisory and consulting firm. So, whatever was found at the two offices is illegal," Wahida Rahman told The Daily Star.

Both the companies have violated sections 6, 15, 31, 32, 35 and 37 (1&2) of the VAT law.

"They could not show any paper of their annual audit reports, number of active SIM cards and their total stocks," she added.

Quoting officials of the companies, a Customs office press release said they were working as Banglalink warehouses and that the recovered SIM and scratch cards were imported in the name of Banglalink.

The VAT department is going to file cases against the two companies.

Wahida said they will continue the drive against such forgery.

Earlier on April 25, Wahida and her team visited the Banglalink head office and found information about the two companies.

Banglalink recently got Tk 5 crore tax rebate by submitting false papers to the government. The rebate was cancelled after the drive.

After a lot of efforts, Yasir Haider of Banglalink's media wing was available for comments. "It is not possible for me to make a comment on the matter without having exact details of the today [Friday] since it is weekly holiday," he told The Daily Star last night.

Road link

FROM PAGE 1
in the meeting.

On Thursday Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury held official talks with his Myanmar counterpart Nyan Win.

During the talks, both sides agreed to resolve the outstanding issues, including Rohingya repatriation, through negotiations.

Direct road link, border security, trade and investment and maritime boundary between the two countries figured prominently in the talks.

False case

FROM PAGE 1
inspector general of police (IGP) to take departmental action against Sub-Inspector Shawkat Hossain of Digholia Police Station who submitted the charge-sheet after investigation.

Akbar Molla lodged an FIR (first information report) with Digholia Police Station on October 3, 2003, accusing the 13 of snatching Tk 25,820 from him at gunpoint.

The investigating officer (IO) of the case submitted charge-sheet to a court, saying that allegation against the FIR-named accused was primarily proved.

The case was tried under Section 4(1) of the Speedy Tribunal Act, 2003.

Correction

FROM PAGE 1
Commission (EC) was inadvertently misquoted.

The report said Debapriya opposed the proposal that says a civil or military bureaucrat or a statutory body official cannot participate in the polls before three years from their retirement.

In fact, he said NGO officials, teachers and other professionals should get the opportunity to participate in the polls after resigning from their respective positions otherwise it would be difficult to find honest people in the next election.

High government officials can influence their own electoral prospects while in service, but the NGO employees have little opportunity to do so, he said.

Debapriya, however, welcomed the other provision restraining civil or military officials from participating in the election for three years from their retirement.

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Australia-Sri Lanka

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Ponting, it will pave the way for spin bowler Muttiah Muralidaran to weave his magic against the middle order.

Muralidaran believes Sri Lanka can only prosper by playing their own game, and not worrying in advance about what Australia might do.

Sri Lanka are likely to make one change with Farveez Maharoof returning in place of Dilshan Fernando, who struggled with the semifinal against New Zealand after being warned for running down the pitch in his follow-through.

Australia, by contrast, are certain to be unchanged, barring any last-minute injury problems and skipper Ricky Ponting has backed his side to lift their standards even higher.

It is a fair bet that whatever the outcome, there will be a wicket or two for seam bowler McGrath to add to his current career total of 380.

Australia have won five of the previous World Cup meetings between the two sides but the lone defeat, perhaps significantly, came in the final 11 years ago.

Based on Australia's form this time around, another Sri Lanka win would be an even greater achievement.

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