

Hasina challenges

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Around 100 lawyers accompanied Barrister Rafique when he appeared before the court to submit the petition.

The AL chief's lawyers alleged that Hasina has been implicated in the case with an ulterior motive.

Azam J Chowdhury, managing director of Eastcoast Trading Pvt Ltd, brought the charges on June 13 this year. He accused Hasina and AL presidium member Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim of extorting from him Tk 2.99 crore in 2000 for the work of Siddhirganj Power Plant.

The joint forces arrested Hasina on July 16 and later that day a magistrate court sent her to a house designated as a sub-jail on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban complex.

On July 24, Gulshan police indicted her together with her sister Sheikh Rehana and cousin Sheikh Selim.

Investigation Officer of the case Obaidul Haque submitted the charge sheet under different sections of the penal code.

He did not include in those the relevant section of the Emergency Power Rules, 2007, although the home ministry on July 16 asked for the case to be brought under the emergency rules.

According to the charge sheet, Selim, detained since May 29, has confessed to a magistrate that directed by Hasina he had taken the money from the businessman and later gave Rehana Tk 1 crore.

Twenty-four people including the

Million marooned

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Meghna at Bhairab Bazar continued to rise and may cross danger level by next 24 hours and inundate the low-lying areas in Narsingdi, Brahmanbaria and Narayanganj in next 36 hours.

Our Tangail correspondent reported that over 50,000 people of 50 villages at five upazilas of the district were marooned by floodwater.

About 20,000 families in Gangachara, Kaunia and Pirgachha upazilas have been marooned while about 30,000 families in the district were affected freshly yesterday forcing many of them to take shelter at Choula Shibdeb flood shelter in the last two days, reported our Rangpur correspondent.

Our Nilphamari correspondent reported that two more villages of Purbo Chhatnai Union went under water yesterday while rise of water in the Charalkata river is threatening Nilphamari-Dhaka via Kishoreganj Highway at Khokar Bazar.

A total of 59 unions of nine upazilas in Netrakona went under water leaving around 1.5 lakh people marooned, reported our district correspondent.

Our Gaibandha correspondent reported that Brahmaputra and Ghagot rivers flooded 20 villages under Gaibandha sadar upazila.

Around one lakh people got marooned and many of them took shelters on different flood control embankments under Fulchari and Shaghat upazilas.

Our Manikganj correspondent reported that ferry service between Paturia and Nagbari remains suspended for the last four days as the Nagbari terminal went under water.

Our Sirajganj correspondent reported that almost 90 percent of the town went under knee and waist-deep water yesterday washing away a vast part of Sirajganj-Raiganj road.

About 20 villages under Bera and Bhangura upazilas in Pabna were flooded yesterday, reported our district correspondent.

Our staff correspondent in Sylhet reported that over 30,000 labourers became jobless as three major stone quarries of Gowainghat and Companiganj upazilas went under water.

Gen Jamali

FROM PAGE 16
Mahbubul Anam-led executive committee last Tuesday.

Maj Gen Jamali replaced Agriculture Secretary M Abdul Aziz, who tendered his resignation from the hot seat on Wednesday.

NSC formed the ad-hoc committee under powers conferred in clause 20 A (b) of the amended National Sports Council Act of 1974 cancelling the BCB executive committee following voluntary resignation of the elected board.

The media had leaked a 'draft committee' two days back, which raised questions about some of the 'would-be' members, however those members' names are missing on this ad-hoc committee. The most important thing is the committee comprises 12 members instead of the speculated 16.

Only one member of the previous executive committee, Mirza Salman Ispahani who was also the vice-chairman of marketing and commercial committee, has been named in the new ad-hoc committee.

It also includes Press Secretary to the Chief Adviser Syed Fahim Munaim, former BCB director Ahmed Sajjadul Alam Abboy, Shafiqur Rahman Munna, former national skipper Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu, former national cricketer Ishlaque Ahmed, former manager of national cricket team Lt Col (ret'd) M Abdul Latif Khan, former MCCI president M Abdul Momen and Dhaka Club president M Selim Bhuiyan, businessman Firoz Ahmed and former woman cricketer Monwara Anis Khan.

The new committee will take over immediately and take necessary steps to form a full-fledged executive committee.

complainant and the magistrate, who recorded the confessional statement, were shown as prosecution witnesses.

Also a former health minister, Selim has been made the prime accused. He was shown arrested in the case on June 14, and four days later, placed on a two-day remand.

NOORALI CASE
In response to a petition by Tejgaon police, Metropolitan Magistrate Mizanur Rahman yesterday ordered Hasina to be shown arrested in the extortion case filed by Noor Ali on June 13.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Tejgaon Police Station Jane Alam, also the investigation officer (IO), submitted the petition.

In the forwarding report, he said that Hasina has been arrested in a case filed with the Gulshan Police Station and is now in a sub-jail. She needs to be shown arrested in this case as well.

Noor Ali, managing director of Unique Group of Companies, in his case also accused Hasina's cousin Sheikh Helal and his wife Rupa Chowdhury.

Meanwhile, a witness gave a judicial statement in the extortion case filed against Hasina, her sister Sheikh Rehana and Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim with Gulshan police.

GULSHAN CASE
Meanwhile, Sheikh Selim's close friend Hafizuddin Khoka yesterday gave a judicial statement to a magistrate as an additional witness in the extortion case with the Gulshan Police Station.

Hafiz, a businessman, told Magistrate ABM Abdul Fattah that he had withdrawn a large amount of money from South-East Bank at Gulshan and Standard Chartered Bank Motijheel branch in six cheques on different dates.

In the forwarding report, OC Obaidul Haq said Hafiz was not around during the investigation of the case. Now that he was available, he agreed to give statement.

Everest highway plans on hold

AP, Lhasa, China

Environmental experts must conduct a study and give their approval before workers can build a planned paved road up to the Mount Everest base camp, a Tibet government official said.

The \$20 million project 'a show-

case for the 2008 Olympic torch relay

was to have turned a 67-mile stone-

and-dirt path into a blacktop highway

that snaked from the foot of the moun-

tain to a base camp at 17,600 feet.

But some activists have expressed concern about the road's environmental impact on the region, where global warming is causing glacial retreat.

"We'll have to get the environmental specialists' analysis. After the analysis we will need to seek the approval of the authorities of the nature reserve of Mount Qomolangma," Hao Peng, vice chairman of the Tibet Autonomous Region, told reporters, using the Chinese name for Mount Everest.

Hao said it was not clear when a final decision on the road would be made. Workers were now repairing the existing road, and later an environmental impact assessment will be done, he said.

"Environmental protection authorities always have the right to veto this kind of project," Tibet vice chairman Nima Ciren said at the news conference.

The new highway was to be a major route for tourists and mountaineers, and officials have praised it as a way to make life easier for locals.

In April, organizers for the Beijing Summer Olympics announced ambitious plans for the longest torch relay in Olympic history - an 85,000-mile, 130-day route that would cross five continents and reach the 29,035-foot summit of Everest, the world's highest peak.

China says it has ruled Tibet for centuries, although many Tibetans say their homeland was essentially an independent state for most of that time. Chinese communist troops occupied Tibet in 1951, and Beijing continues to rule the region with a heavy hand.

BSMMU

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recommendations also include taking action regarding the irregularities in procurement of costly instruments worth lakhs, even crores of taka. Anomaly of around Tk 3 crore was found in case of purchasing Cathlab, an important instrument for heart surgery.

During the period of the immediate past government some 3,600 teachers and employees were recruited against 1,600 posts and most of the administrative officials who still hold the important positions were involved in the process.

"Without the involvement of the administration it would not be possible to conduct such financial corruption and irregularities. The matter was proved during the investigation," said one of the probe committee members.

"We worked hard to prepare the

report. And we want implementation of

the recommendations of the report,"

Prof Nazrul Islam, chairman of the

probe committee, told The Daily Star.

It will make the university clean and

people will be afraid to do any corrup-

tion later, he added.

The government had asked for

investigating the financial irregularities

and recruitment related corruption that

took place during the last five years,

but the university authorities directed

the committee to enquire into the

corruption incidents of last nine years.

Many women

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names on the electoral roll, the number of women voters will be reduced drastically, he added.

Considering all the aspects, the EC is asking the deputy commissioners to launch a campaign to raise awareness among the people in an effort to keep the voter list unhampered.

"We have been asked to launch an awareness raising campaign involving local eminent persons and religious leaders," a deputy commissioner told The Daily Star yesterday. "Iams of local mosques will be involved in the campaign to dispel confusions about religious customs regarding women visiting the registration centres," he added.

The EC already warned that punitive actions will be taken if anybody prevents or discourages eligible citizens from visiting the voter registration centres to have their photographs taken for the voter list.

Besides, the EC earlier held meetings with Masjid Mission and Imam Samity to dispel any confusion regarding religious dictates about women visiting the voter registration centres. The religious leaders, who met the EC, assured the commission that they will launch a campaign to raise awareness among the people regarding the matter.

Outsourcing

FROM PAGE 16
There is a general practice in Bangladesh that the recruiting agents collect workers through manpower brokers who also make a good amount from the workers pushing the total amount two to three times higher than the actual cost, it said.

"We are concerned over the 'cuts' the different parties are taking from the total fees paid by the poor Bangladeshi workers," the statement of the human rights body said.

Demanding actions against the outsourcing companies under the Anti Trafficking in Persons Act, Tenaganita said, "We want the outsourcing strategy for labour employment be scrapped as it has failed and brought human rights violations."

The human rights body in its report also quoted the workers as saying that they were given neither jobs nor food.

"The living conditions were deplorable, unhealthy and overcrowded. The workers' passports were taken away on arrival," the Tenaganita report said.

"The workers had a contract attested both by the Malaysian home ministry and the Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur. The attestation was made only after verification of work and demand is confirmed with the principal company. Why then the workers did not get the jobs?" it posed a question.

The Malaysian human rights organisation also demanded the stranded Bangladeshi workers be compensated for their sufferings, repatriated to their native countries safely or employed directly to companies that need workers.

More than one lakh workers have been sent to Malaysia since August last year.

Ex-BNP MP

FROM PAGE 16
officer of the case, submitted the charge sheet before the court on April 17 in Shahidul's absence. The court framed charge against him on June 17 and started trial. The court had recorded 19 out of the 24 witnesses accounts.

Yunus

FROM PAGE 1
They also said the Grameen Trust will implement a micro-credit programme for the poor in Hainan.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between Grameen Trust and the Hainan provincial government at the Chinese embassy on July 25 to initiate the programme.

Executive Trustee of Grameen Trust Dr Muhammad Yunus and Hainan Rural Credit Union executive Weixong signed the MoU of behalf of the two organisations.

Hainan's Vice-governor Chen Cheng, now leading a six-member Chinese delegation, was also present at the MoU signing ceremony.

The Hainan provincial government has also undertaken an initiative to set up a micro-credit institution after the name of Dr Yunus. The institution, Yunus Micro-credit Forum, will be inaugurated by the governor of Hainan in December.

Mass hysteria

FROM PAGE 16
Iftekhar told the reporters that the

gift from India was for strengthening

the relationship between the two

countries and it would come in

handy in the upcoming month of

Ramadan.

Asked to comment on Ramesh's

remark last week that India wants to

see Bangladesh as 'a secular and

democratic' nation, Chakraborty

said "You (Bangladeshis) should

live in whichever way that makes

you happy."

Chakraborty also talked about a

number of upcoming Saarc and

bilateral meetings and other discus-

sions in the pipeline.

The bilateral Joint Rivers

Commission is set to meet next

month, while the home ministers are

also set to meet early in August.

Waterlogged

FROM PAGE 1
the ground, while the depth of the DND canal is only 6.5 feet. Due to siltation at various points the canal lost its original depth at those places and overflowing.

Waterlogging on Matuail Medical Road, at Shyamnagar, and Shahidnagar can be considered as disasters with people crossing roads by boats, living in the same room with domestic animals, and eating only dried rice, puffed rice, biscuits and bananas.

Amid such a disaster boat sellers

are however earning quick bucks.

Nurunnobi, a boat maker, said in the last five or six days they sold at least five boats a day. A 16 feet long and 3 feet wide boat is selling for Tk 2,800, he said.

"I hope within this week we will be selling the same type of boat for Tk 4,000, and if the flood continues for long the price will go up some more", he added.

Besides, a good number of people have temporarily changed their professions and started ferrying people from one place to another in exchange for fees.

Mohammad Inamul Haque, director general of Water Resources Planning Organisation under the Ministry of Water Resources, told The Daily Star that it is not possible to evacuate 10 lakh people from the dam area. Water Development Board already has a project that recommended increasing the number of pumps by three to four times. "We have to increase the

number of pumps as soon as possible," he said.

Meanwhile, Save the Environment organised a seminar on 'waterlogging in the city and what should be done for immediate remedy' in the conference room of the daily Amar Desh, where the speakers said the accumulated water is finding no outlet despite having several rivers like the Buriganga, Sitalakkhya, Balu and the Turag around the capital.

Amanullah Kabir, editor of the Amar Desh, in his speech as the chief guest, observed that unplanned construction of buildings in Dhaka city is responsible for the crisis, not the rainfall.

Engineer MA Sobhan presented the keynote speech where he recommended rehabilitation of the lost canals without delay. He said, "The problem of waterlogging in the city has deteriorated with the existing drainage system getting clogged by rubbish. Some careless city residents dump all sorts of rubbish in the drains blocking free flow of water."

The speakers at the seminar stressed on coordination among all utility service providers including Wasa, DCC, WDB, the Department of Environment, Rajuk, Land Directorate and the rail authorities.

Abu Naser, president of Save the Environment Movement also spoke.

AL asks CG

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At present, three presidium members -- Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and Kazi Zafarullah -- have been arrested and in jail while Amir Hossain Amu and Suranjit Sengupta are abroad. Another member Sayeda Johra Tajuddin is sick.

Talking to the reporters in the afternoon, Zillur Rahman said that they want to observe August 15 like the way they did in previous years, but as indoor politics has been banned under the state of emergency, they would have to get permission. He hoped that the government will permit them to hold different programmes in observance of the day and the government itself will also observe the day with state honour.

Over AL's move to get Hasina released, the AL leader said, "As we have filed a writ petition in the High Court, we hope that we will get justice."

Expressing deep sympathy for the flood affected people, Zillur directed the party leaders and workers across the country to stand beside the flood victims.

At the meeting, the acting AL president announced the August 15 programmes, subject to permission, that include discussions, milad mahfils and destitute feeding.

Marking the day, both national and party flags will be flown at half-mast at all AL and its front organisations' offices across the country at 5:30am. Wreaths will be placed at the portrait of Bangabandhu at the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in the capital at 8:00am and special prayers will be offered at Banani graveyard at 8:30am.

The AL will also hoist black flags across the country and the party leaders and workers will wear black badges. Foods will be distributed among poor people after Johr prayers and doa mahfil will be held in front of Bangabandhu Bhaban on Road 32 in Dhanmondi after Asr prayers.

The party will also arrange a discussion at the Institute of Engineering at 3:00pm the following day.

Moitree Express

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cage-fencing and customs immigration are among the issues that will be discussed between the two countries.

AE Ahmed, Additional Secretary of the Indian Home Ministry, will lead the host side at the talks.

Earlier on July 8, a cross-border trial train carrying a 31-member Indian official delegation arrived in Bangladesh to introduce the Dhaka-Kolkata rail communications.

Delhi offers

FROM PAGE 16
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New 'Red Mosque' springs up in Pak tribal area

AFP, Peshawar

Pro-Taliban militants have occupied a mosque in a Pakistani tribal area and named it after the radical Red Mosque where more than 100 people died in clashes between militants and security forces, residents said yesterday.

Around 150 armed masked men late Saturday took control of Turangzai Sahib Mosque in Lakaro village in the lawless Mohmand tribal district bordering Afghanistan, some 60km northwest of Peshawar, and renamed it the Red Mosque, they said.

The move came after a suicide bombing which killed 14 people during protests Friday at Islamabad's Red Mosque. It was the 13th suicide blast to hit the country since the bloody army raid on the mosque on July 10.

A militant leader who identified himself as Khalid told local journalists that the group had renamed the mosque "La'l Masjid" (Red Mosque) and a female madrasa like Islamabad's Jamia Hafsa would be set up shortly.

Residents said militants had taken positions on the roof of the mosque and in the surrounding area.

A local administration official confirmed the occupation of the mosque, but gave no further details.

Following heavy fighting between troops and militants at Islamabad's Red Mosque earlier this month, the badly-damaged building was repaired and the adjoining girls' religious school called Jamia Hafsa demolished.

The formerly red building was repainted pale yellow and bullet holes and scorch marks from explosions were patched up before it was formally reopened for Friday's traditional prayers, but was closed again after violence erupted.

The government originally cracked down on the mosque after it led a Taliban-style vigilante campaign for Sharia law that climaxed with the abduction in Islamabad of seven Chinese nationals.

Pro-Taliban militants still hold sway in the rugged Pakistani tribal districts bordering Afghanistan despite the deployment of more than 90,000 troops.

SQ system

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examinations," Bablu Kumar Saha, deputy secretary of the education ministry, told The Daily Star yesterday.

He also said that by this November, 8,800 teachers will be trained in dealing with the new question pattern that will be included in the next year's textbooks.

The education ministry on May 6 decided that the students who are now in Class IX would face structured questions in the 2009 Secondary School Certificate examinations. Currently, the essay types are in practice.

A structured question is divided into three or four parts. The first part is intended to be easier to answer while the other ones gradually become harder.

Sources in the ministry said the method would be introduced as part of a Tk 793-crore Secondary Education Sector Development Project (SESDF).

According to the plan, there will be 60 marks for SQ method, instead of 50 marks as is now customary with essay-type questions.

There will be 40 marks for multiple choice questions, instead of 50. The new system will not be applicable to the English papers and the Bangla second paper.

Govt denied

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high expectations for the prime minister."

Previous prime ministers have resigned following upper house defeats that were less severe.

Analysts said that while the Liberal Democrats were worried that they did not have anyone better than

Abe, it would be impossible for him now to govern.

"Abe is finished," said Gerald Curtis, a Japan expert at New York's Columbia University. "I think if he's smart, he'll quit tonight."

The longer he stays, "it will just be more and more chaotic politically," Curtis said.

If Abe were to leave, it could stir memories of the 1990s, when Japan had a new prime minister nearly every year.

Foreign Minister Taro Aso has made it an open secret that he would like to succeed Abe, but critics say he shares much of the same agenda and is prone to gaffes.

Public broadcaster NHK projected that the Liberal Democratic Party-led coalition won anywhere between 31 and 43 seats of the 76 it was defending.

It would mark the first time that the

main opposition Democratic Party --

formed in 1998 as an unwieldy

alliance between Liberal Democrat