

AL demands

FROM PAGE 1

year, the advisers emphasised on improving the quality of the political process, culture and system to reach a national consensus through the official dialogue with political parties.

The AL delegation also includes Amir Hossain Amu, Abdul Razzak Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Motia Chowdhury and Syed Ashraful Islam.

The advisers present at the meeting were Law Adviser AF Hassan Arif, Foreign Adviser Iftekhar A Chowdhury, Communications Adviser Ghulam Quader, Education and Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman and IGRD Adviser Anwarul Iqbal.

Earlier, the same government advisers sat with four AL leaders at the Rail Bhaban in the capital for the first round of unofficial talk last Monday. On Wednesday the AL decided not sit for any further talks without a formal invitation, then on Saturday in a reversal of that decision its presidium in a meeting decided to sit in yesterday's unofficial dialogue with the government anyhow following an SMS invitation sent by Hossain Zillur Rahman to the party's Acting President Zillur Rahman.

In yesterday's statement the AL speculated that the dialogue would not emerge from the dialogue would move on to the highest levels of both parties, which might turn out to be very difficult to solve without the presence of Sheikh Hasina at the dialogue. "If a situation like that occurs, the talks will remain only talks," the AL warned in its statement.

Saying that anger and discontent have been prevailing among the people due to skyrocketing price hikes of essentials, the AL warned the government advisers that it will be tough to keep the people's discontent under control if the trend continues.

"So immediately the price hikes of essentials must be reined in and necessary essentials must be supplied to the lower and middle income group people for affordable prices or for free, otherwise a serious famine might occur in the country," the AL advised the government.

About trials of war criminals, the AL statement said trials of the war criminals, meeting out of exemplary punishments to them, and barring them from contesting in any election have become the public demand now. "But with sadness, we are observing that the government has not yet taken any effective step to resolve the matter. If they (the government) would try these killers, and the anti-liberation oppressors of women, the nation would welcome them," the statement said.

The statement went on to say that dialogues between the government and political parties are necessary to get out of the present crises, but there have to be will and commitment among both sides.

The statement termed the formation of the present government as the outcome of the AL's movement against widespread 'misrule' of the immediate past BNP-Jamaat alliance government.

The AL in the statement observed that the present crises in the country would not even occur if the government and the AL, whose aims and targets are similar, would have cooperated mutually. It added that 'misunderstandings between the AL and the government happened due to some government adviser's irresponsible statements'.

But it is a matter of hope that the government is willing to resolve the prevailing crises through dialogues, the statement added.

Syed Ashraful Islam said they also asked the advisers not to allow anyone else including members of the civil society at the official talks.

He said they suggested that the government hold the official dialogue at the office of the chief adviser but said they would not object if it is held at any state guesthouse.

The AL also asked the government to conclude the official dialogue within May, hoping that the formal dialogue would be fruitful.

It demanded that the national election be held before local government elections and there must be a good will for establishing rule of law and political freedom.

Drawing the advisers' attention to the fact that the judiciary has been separated but it has not become independent yet, the AL leaders demanded independence of the judiciary and judicial system.

The AL also demanded immediate release of all detained party leaders including General Secretary Abdul Jalil, Presidium members Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim and Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Joint General Secretary Obaidul Quader and former home

BDR starts

FROM PAGE 16

Different varieties of coarse rice were sold at Tk 1180-1250 per maund (37.32kg) yesterday while those were sold at Tk 1280-1360 a week ago.

Wholesale prices of fine rice also decreased by Tk 50-80 per maund in the last week, said wholesalers at different markets. Some retailers reduced the price of coarse rice by Tk 1 per kg yesterday although its wholesale price has been going down for the last seven days.

The minimum price of coarse rice was Tk 34 per kg at some retail shops while it was Tk 35 per kg at most of the retail shops in the city.

Retailers have been selling coarse rice at Tk 35 per kg for the last three weeks.

The price of fine rice, however, remained stable at Tk 41-47 per kg.

The BDR increased the number of its fair price outlets to 75 from 50. Fewer people thronged the outlets to buy essentials yesterday than the day before while the open market sale (OMS) outlets remained closed yesterday.

There was no rush at the BDR-run outlets on Indira Road, Zakir Hossain Road, Salimullah Road, Mohammadpur Link Road, and Nawabganj in the old part of the city.

None was found standing in queue at the new BDR-run outlet at the National Institute of Ophthalmology and Hospital in Azganga.

BDR Sector Commander Col Mojibul Hoque told The Daily Star that the rush was less at the BDR-run outlets yesterday than other days following the launching of new outlets.

Pakistan-based militants may attack US: Bush

ANI, Washington

President George W Bush believes another 9/11 attack on the United States should be considered a reality, and warned that such an attack could originate from Pakistan.

Stating this in an interview to a news channel, Bush said: "If another September 11 style attack is being planned, it probably is being plotted in Pakistan, and not Afghanistan."

Bush said if the terrorists were planning such attacks, they would be routed out.

Ex-MP Shahjahan

FROM PAGE 1

him guilty of aiding and abetting the Jamaat leader in committing the crimes.

The court also fined the two accused Tk 1 lakh each, in default of which they will have to serve an additional three months in jail term.

Moreover, the court directed the government to confiscate Shahjahan's Tk 49.49 lakh sport utility vehicle (SUV), a Range Rover V8, which he did not mention in his wealth statement.

Shahjahan Chowdhury was sent to jail after surrendering before a Chittagong court on October 29 while Faisal is still on the run. Faisal's imprisonment will be effective from the day he surrenders to a court or is arrested.

On July 1 last year, ACC Deputy Director Abul Kalam filed the case with Bandar Police Station in Chittagong against Shahjahan Chowdhury, a fugitive at the time, accusing him of concealing information on Tk 50.49 lakh worth of wealth in his wealth statement. ACC Deputy Director Jahanger Alam investigated the case.

On October 1, the ACC investigator submitted charge sheet against Shahjahan and Faisal.

Charges were framed against the accused on November 4 in Chittagong Divisional Special Court. The case was shifted to the Special Court-2 in Dhaka on February 12 this year.

The Jamaat leader is accused in five other cases including three for extortion and one for murder.

THE OFFENCE

After Shahjahan Chowdhury submitted his wealth statement to the ACC on February 20 last year, the ACC investigators found the SUV in his possession and seized it as the Jamaat lawmaker did not mention the SUV in the statement.

However, Shahjahan in his wealth statement mentioned that he had imported the vehicle under duty-free privilege of members of parliament.

The automobile's importer, Motor World Ltd, did not hand it over to him as he failed to pay Tk 50 lakh for it.

The ACC discovered that in August 2006, Shahjahan had released the vehicle by making the necessary payment through an LC (letter of credit) opened with Mohakhal branch of AB Bank Ltd and AB Bank Chairman Faisal Morshed Khan assisted him in the scam.

"We will sit separately with the political parties during the final dialogues," he told reporters after a preparatory meeting with Law Adviser AF Hassan Arif, Education and Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman and Women and Children Affairs Adviser Rasheda K Chowdhury.

Ghulam Quader, who is thought to be leading the dialogues' preparatory task, said the chief adviser will formally declare the dates of the final dialogues.

Asked to comment on AL's and BNP's conditions of releasing their chiefs -- Hasina and Khaleda -- before the formal dialogues, he said, "I don't think such conditions are a hurdle. They are being resolved in the pre-dialogue meetings."

"We all will have to come to an agreement, and that is why we are continuing the discussions," Quader added.

Asked if representatives from the civil society or donor agencies will be allowed at the dialogues, he said, "The dialogues will be held between the government and political parties -- nobody else will be allowed in them."

Fazlul Haque

FROM PAGE 1

worth around Tk 67.83 lakh.

But during his stint as the adviser, his assets rose to stand at Tk 1.14 crore in tax year 2006-2007 and 1.24 crore in 2007-2008, which primary investigations found had been earned through dishonest means.

In the income tax return filed for tax year 2007-2008, he did not submit any documents to back up his claim of having liabilities amounting to Tk 28 lakh, and this all was done to conceal his actual wealth.

The case was filed under sections 26(2) and 27(1) of the Anti-Corruption Act-2004 and section 5(2) of article 2 of the Corruption Prevention Act-1947 and section 15 of Emergency Power Rules-2007.

On October 23 last year, the joint forces conducted a five-hour raid on Justice Haque's Al-Baraka Tower apartment in the city's Kataban area and quizzed the former adviser for hours.

Earlier on October 4, his name came up on the ACC list of graft suspects.

He made a fortune out of a 'trade in appointments and postings of public servants'. He allegedly received Tk 80 lakh in bribe to arrange for a forest official's transfer while Tk 45 lakh from Bashundhara Group to allocate them 84 acres of khas land.

Though nine advisers including President Iajuddin Ahmed, the then chief adviser, resigned their positions on January 11, Fazlul Haque, most senior of them, did not quit. He continued to claim to be an adviser even after a new advisory council had taken over.

UNB adds: The ACC will serve notices on Fazlul Haque's son Afzal Hossain Raj, son-in-law Tariqur Raj's friend Sujon, and Abdul Malek, an official of the Justice Fazlul Haque Foundation.

In the graft case, the four were accused of aiding and abetting Justice Haque in his illegal income.

ACC Director General (admin) Col Hanif Iqbal said, "Yes, the commission today approved the issuance of notices on them, directing them to turn in wealth statements."

The anti-graft body has also decided to obtain the permission from Khandaker Azadur Rahman, former additional chief engineer of Roads and Highways, asking him to report his wealth to the anti-graft body.

Leaders must quit

FROM PAGE 1

group of union parishad chairmen under the banner of Bangladesh Union Parishad Oikya Jote at the EC Secretariat conference room.

However, the EC and the government have reached an understanding that such political leaders will have to resign from their party posts before taking oath as elected representatives to the local government bodies, Huda added.

He said he enquired about the progress of formulating the electoral laws and was informed that the Council of Advisers to the caretaker government would finalise the laws this week.

"We will announce the schedule for holding polls to four city corporations and seven municipalities in May when the laws are finalised," the CEC said, adding, "We are ready for the elections, but we cannot proceed with the elections due to lack of laws."

Senior officials in the EC Secretariat said the restriction has been initially imposed for city corporations and municipalities and that similar restrictions would be included in the laws dealing with other local government bodies.

In response to the union parishad chairmen's demand for holding the long due polls to upazila parishads before the parliamentary polls, Huda said, "We will inform you soon whether the upazila elections would be held before or simultaneously with the parliamentary elections."

The president promulgated an amendment ordinance for the Upazila Parishads Act 1998 on April 7, giving back the authority to fix the time for upazila elections to the

Pro-Saifur BNP

FROM PAGE 1

Communications Adviser Ghulam Quader yesterday afternoon made a phone call to Maj (ret'd) Hafizuddin Ahmed, acting secretary general of Saifur loyalists, inviting the faction to an introductory dialogue with the government seeking a date for it.

The adviser talked to me over the phone, and now we are discussing the matter among ourselves. We will also talk to the other faction of the party before sitting for the dialogue with the government," Hafiz told The Daily Star last night.

Earlier in the day, after a meeting with leaders of Jatiyatabad Tanti Dal, handloom weavers' wing of BNP, Hafiz told reporters in his Banani residence, "I've told the adviser that we are contacting Khandaker Delwar and others in an effort to sit with the government together. So we will wait a little longer."

"If they (Khaleda loyalists) don't come with us, we will sit with the government by ourselves soon, under the leadership of our Acting Chairperson Saifur Rahman," he said.

Meanwhile, BNP Joint Secretary General Goyeshwar Chandra Roy, a Khaleda loyalist, yesterday said if the government wants to have a dialogue with BNP it will have to send an invitation to Khandaker Delwar Hossain, otherwise the party will not talk.

Waving aside Hafizuddin's remarks, he said, "Who is Hafiz to

Train rolls to Kolkata

FROM PAGE 1

democratic and secular India seek to develop such intimate links with Islamic Bangladesh?"

Communication ministry's Additional Secretary ATKM Ismail told The Daily Star last night, "We have heard the news... As far as we know the inaugural run of the Maitree Express will go ahead."

He said security has been beefed up on both sides of the border and the Bangladesh authorities stepped up searches along the railway lines on this side of the border.

Meanwhile, the 43-year hiatus in Dhaka-Kolkata rail link will end today when two passenger trains called the Maitree Express start simultaneously from Dhaka and Kolkata this morning.

The Bangladeshi authorities were compelled to add another compartment to the train due to the high demand of tickets. The train will leave Dhaka Cantonment Railway Station at 8:30am.

The train starting from Chitpur station in Kolkata will be greeted with Pahela Baishakh festivities at the Dhaka cantonment station on its arrival around 8:30pm.

The train, which has the capacity of 418 passengers--36 AC cabin, 80 AC chair and 302 Non-AC chair--in the seven compartments, will carry 80 passengers more in the added air-conditioned compartment.

The passenger train service between the two countries that was introduced during the British rule was snapped in March 1965 due to India-Pakistan war. Though government of the two countries signed a five-year deal in 2001 to resume direct train service, it was not implemented.

On April 10, Bangladesh and India signed a supplementary agreement, clearing the way for cross-border runs of trains on Dhaka-Kolkata route.

The two close neighbours are now ready to receive and welcome the guests and passengers of the inaugural trains. Government officials and distinguished personalities from both sides will be aboard the first train. Fifty-six newsmen from Bangladesh are also travelling to Kolkata.

Communications Adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) Ghulam Quader will inaugurate the service at

EC.

The CEC said the EC announced the electoral roadmap on July 15 last year considering all aspects and giving a tentative timeline for the local government elections and nobody raised any objection to it.

"But now, when we are seriously thinking about holding the local government polls, objections have been raised," Huda said, referring to the political parties' demand for not holding the local government elections before parliamentary polls.

Gulam Sarwar Milon, coordinator of Bangladesh Union Parishads Oikya Jote, submitted to the CEC a six-point recommendation that includes holding upazila elections before the parliamentary polls and cancelling the permanent poll symbols in parliamentary elections.

In defence of their proposal for holding upazila elections before the national polls, the Jote leaders said the political governments in the last 17 years did not hold the polls and they fear the future political government will also follow the footsteps of their predecessors.

"The Election Commission can begin holding upazila elections in areas where the voter lists are ready," said Mahbubur Rahman Tulu, a leader of the alliance.

Bangladesh Union Parishad Oikya Jote urged the CEC to initiate steps so the union parishad chairmen and members can contest elections to other local government bodies without resigning from their current posts.

A number of union parishad chairmen told the CEC about their miseries and shortage of resources.

invite us? BNP leaders and workers don't accept him as a leader. He is known just as a vice-president of the party."

"Khandaker Delwar Hossain is the lawful secretary general of the party," Goyeshwar told reporters in former BNP lawmaker Md Shahjahan's NAM flat in the capital.

On April 7, Education and Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman made a phone call to pro-Khaleda leader also BNP's Acting Office Secretary Rizvi Ahmed and invited Khaleda loyalists to sit with the government in an 'informal' talk.

The next day, Communications Adviser Ghulam Quader talked to Maj (ret'd) Hafizuddin Ahmed, acting secretary general of pro-Saifur faction, over the phone extending the same invitation to his group too.

In immediate reactions to the invitations, pro-Khaleda faction said their Secretary General Khandaker Delwar must talk to the detained party chief Khaleda Zia before accepting the invitation, while rival Saifur loyalists immediately accepted the invitation in principle, pending finalisation of it in an appropriate forum.

Later, Delwar sent a letter to the jail authority seeking permission to meet the detained party chairperson, also a former premier of the country, to discuss the government proposal but has yet to get the permission.

Pahela Baishakh

FROM PAGE 1

2001 terrorist attack on the heart of the celebrations at Ramna Batamul.

The security agency personnel will also distribute drinking water around Ramna Park area, while Fire Brigade and ambulance services will also be deployed.

Roads stretching from Matsya Bhaban through Shahbagh to Doel Chatterji inside Dhaka University campus are off-limits to all vehicles during the carnival. A total of 24 closed circuit TVs have been installed across the capital.

Dog squads, bomb squads, close-circuit security cameras, and metal detectors have also been deployed as part of the security detail.

Replying to a question, Karim said they had not yet got any threat from any terrorist organisation like Harkatul Jihad, neither had they got any report of calls for boycotting the celebrations.

PRESIDENT, CAGREET NATION

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, through separate messages, conveyed new year's greetings to the nation yesterday.

Referring to the language, culture, literature, agriculture and economic activities of the nation that are deeply rooted in the Bangla calendar, President Iajuddin said, "Pahela Baishakh is a unique day of nurturing our everlasting tradition and self-realisation."

He hoped that the Bangla New Year will 'enrich all with welfare-oriented thinking through forgetting all previous conflicts and also will be the harbinger of joy for all'.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin said celebration of Pahela Baishakh has been an integral part of the Bangalee culture, tradition and livelihood since time immemorial.

RMG unrest

FROM PAGE 16

attacking police while bus owner Anwar Hossain filed another case in connection with setting ablaze buses.

According to witnesses, workers of Liberty Garments, Cadtex Garments, Microfibre Factory and Palmal Garments at Sostapur, Shibpur Market, Katherpool and Post Office Road went to work but only staged demonstrations inside the factories.

Authorities concerned of Chitex Garments, TexAsia Garments, Mishwear Garments, Gamsons Garments, Rupashi Garments and Times Garments kept their factories closed fearing untoward incidents.

Around 40 to 50 non-workers of Chitex Garments attacked the factory and tried to get the workers out of the factory yesterday. The workers, however, resisted their attempt resulting in chases and counter-chases.

Army and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel, police and different intelligence agencies patrolled the area from the morning to avert further clashes.

In the first information report (FIR), police said provocation of vested quarters might have led to the violence. They said they are looking for the pajama-panjabi clad bearded young men who joined the agitating workers and attacked the law enforcers Saturday.

More than 50 people including 27 law enforcers were injured during clashes between a few thousand garment workers and police at Fatullah Saturday.

The three-hour-long clash, which ensued after police tried to stop a group of garment workers from demonstrating, had turned Dhaka-Narayanganj link road at Shibpur Market area into a virtual battlefield.

Hasina

FROM PAGE 1

Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises at about 11:00am.

Four specialists -- Dr Shaheen Mahmud, Dr Shah Alam, Dr Mizan and Dr Sanwar -- examined her ears and carried out other medical check-up.

Deputy Inspector General (Prisons) Maj Shamsul Haider Siddiqui told UNB that her physical condition is better than before.

"She's now feeling better with her new glasses and her earache has lessened," he added.

299 foreign

FROM PAGE 16

"In most cases, we do not get response from them. After receiving our letters, the authorities concerned sometime inform us that they failed to trace the detainees' origin," he said.

The IG-Prisons said a few NGOs have been working with foreign prisoners and their repatriation issues but they could not make any headway in this regard. He said the state has to count the extra cost of keeping them in jail.

Former adviser to a caretaker government Sultana Kamal, executive director of Ain O Shalish Kendra, told The Daily Star yesterday, "We have been working with the jail authorities and also contacting the embassies concerned."

"The process is lengthy," the former adviser said, adding, "There are some specific cases that depend on diplomatic and bureaucratic decisions."

A total of 961 prisoners of 14 countries are in different Bangladeshi jails. Of them, 521 people, 509 males and 12 females, are under trial while 141 people, 132 males and nine females, are serving time.

Jail sources said 541 inmates of foreign nationality are Myanmar, 380 Indian, 17 Pakistani, six Nepali, five Tanzanian, two Nigerian, two Filipino, one Malaysian, one Saudi Arabian, one Ghanaian, one Kenyan, one Hungarian and one is from Ivory Coast.

Tigers stumble

FROM PAGE 16

But the game's turning point was definitely the wicket of opener Tamim Iqbal, who sparked with 63 off 69 balls before failing to beat Fawad Alam's brilliant throw from the third man fence. Left-hander Tamim, who smashed eight boundaries, shared 90 for the second wicket with Aftab Ahmed. But once the two Chittagongians fell and captain Mohammad Ashraful was run out while chasing a single which was never there, Bangladesh's hopes faded.

But the visitors showed tremendous fighting spirit that was amiss in the first two games with Shakib whisking off to his seventh half-century and sharing a 59-run stand with Mahmudullah Riyad, who chipped in with 24. Then Mashrafe Bin Mortuza and wicketkeeper Dhiman Ghosh took 19 off Rao Ifkhar's eighth over but the tight 48th over from Sohail Tanveer gave Pakistan the series victory.

AFP adds, earlier openers Salman Butt and Kamran Akmal scored centuries to punish a hapless Bangladesh attack and helped Pakistan reach 308-8 in the day-night international.

Butt made a career-best 132 for his fifth one-day hundred while Akmal notched an entertaining 100 for his fourth as the home batsmen once again let loose on a flat pitch after they won the toss.

Butt and Akmal were in punishing mood right from the start as they shared an opening stand of 151 by the 24th over, hitting the bowlers to all corners of the park.

Akmal, who survived a confident leg-before appeal against paceman Mashrafe Mortaza when on one, was the fastest of the two, reaching his fifty off just 42 balls with the help of eight boundaries.

The 23-year-old Butt was steady, reaching his hundred off 106 balls with eleven boundaries and ensured Pakistan did not spoil a good start after losing Bazid Khan (two), Mohammad Yousof (two) and Shahid Afridi (13) in quick succession.

Butt, who struck 15 boundaries in his 137-ball knock, added 80 runs for the fifth wicket with captain Shoaib Malik (33) and 30 with

Misbahul Haq (10) for the next before he was caught behind off Mashrafe in the penultimate over.

Pakistan brought in Fawad Alam, Sohail Khan and Bazid in place of Jamshed, Umar Gul and Younis Khan. Bangladesh brought in paceman Shahadat Hossain in place of Syed Raseel.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Pakistan innings in the third one-day international against Bangladesh at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Sunday:

PAKISTAN

Butt c Dhiman b Mashrafe	132
Akmal b Mahmudullah	100
Bazid run out	2
Yousuf st Ghosh b Shakib	2
Afridi c Mortaza b Shakib	13
Malik lbw b Reza	33
Misbahul c Razzak b Shahadat	10
Tanveer b Mashrafe	1
Fawad not out	2
Ifkhar not out	5
Extras: (lb-2, nb-1, w-5)	8
Total: (For 7 wks in 50 overs)	308

Did not bat: Sohail Khan

Tamim run out	63
Nafees c Butt b Tanveer	0
Aftab c Akmal b Malik	42
Ashrafu! run out	16
Shakib b Afridi	75
Riyad b Ifukhar	24
Forhad st Akmal b Afridi	13
Mashrafe not out	15
Dhiman not out	18