

Grassroots leaders

FROM PAGE 1
10:00am in the auditorium of the Institution of Engineers' Bangladesh in the capital, amid tight security.

Meanwhile, a small section of grassroots leaders told The Daily Star that their recommendations will include refraining from adopting tougher agitation programmes for the time being as the programmes might collide with the state of emergency, instead they will suggest chalking out of programmes that are best-suited in the context of the prevailing situation.

Recommendations of thana and upazila unit leaders will also be placed at today's meeting.

Sources said AL President Sheikh Hasina advised the leaders of the party to organise the extended meeting to devise future agitation programmes by gathering comprehensive recommendations from all tiers of the party.

AL Organising Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury, who is responsible for overseeing Dhaka divisions' organisational activities said, "The mood of the grassroots level leaders, as I sense, is uncompromisingly in favour of participating in the dialogues and for contesting in the election under a freed Sheikh Hasina."

"There might be different perspectives in terms of strategies to be deployed to achieve that," Saber, also the political secretary to the AL chief, told The Daily Star.

Today's meeting is likely to discuss various crucial issues including ways to free the party chief and take decisions on joining the dialogue with the government and participating in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Presidents and general secretaries of all 74 organisational districts of the party, members of advisory council, former lawmakers, members of national committee, associate members, assistant secretaries and representatives of all its front organisations and Dhaka city unit AL will take part in the extended meeting. The meeting will enable the AL to finalise its next course of action within a couple of days.

Syed Ashrafur Islam, acting general secretary of AL, told reporters after a meeting of the party's secretary level leaders in Hasina's political office in Dhanmondi yesterday, "We will take the final decision on crucial issues including the release of Sheikh Hasina, the dialogues, and the elections, based on the recommendations received from the party's grassroots level leaders in a meeting of the central working committee within a few days."

Chaired by Ashraf, yesterday's meeting suggested that at least one leader from each district, the advisory council, and former lawmakers should be given the opportunity to express their opinions at today's meeting, in a bid to have a clear picture of the overall mood in the party.

The grassroots leaders in the meeting will also submit detailed organisational reports as well as their assessment reports on their rival parties. They will also submit lists of cases filed against their leaders and workers during the caretaker government and the BNP-Jamaat coalition regime.

Around 870 leaders will attend the meeting today.

Azadul Islam Azad, general secretary of AL Chuadanga district unit, told The Daily Star that although party workers and the general followers want agitation programmes, his unit will urge the party to refrain from announcing any tougher agitation programmes yet and press for the six-point demand since the party still needs to be more organised.

The AL however should not sign

Saifur group

FROM PAGE 1
situation including the ongoing dialogue between the government and political parties.

Insiders said most of the leaders criticised Delwar for creating obstacles to reuniting the party.

Asked about decisions at the meeting, standing committee member Lt Gen (ret'd) Mahbubur Rahman told The Daily Star last night, "We hope the chairperson will take note of the present circumstances and give the signal to unify the party."

He said they believe she would nod in favour of unity when she would be produced before court twice this week including today.

Asked if they would attend the talks with the government in case of a failure of the reconciliation efforts, he said, "We will take the decision in consultation with the party colleagues. Besides, we might have to take our cue from other major political parties."

The caretaker government has invited both the factions to the dialogue.

Former BNP ministers Osman Faruk, Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, Rejaul Karim, advisers to the chairperson Major Gen (ret'd) ZA Khan, former lawmakers Abdul Alim, Sarder Shahkawat Hossain Bakul, Nazir Hossain, Mosharraf Hossain Mangun, Rustam Ali Farazi and Zahriduddin Swapan, among others, were present at the meeting.

any charter or accept any decision imposed by the government, he added.

"We want to take part in the election under the leadership of our party chief," but the AL should not do anything that would leave room for shifting the blame on the party in case the national election is not held, Azad said.

Presidents of Moulvibazar and Tangail district units, Syed Mohsin Ali and Mohammad Fazlur Rahman Faruk, told The Daily Star that they will recommend the party not to join the dialogues or take part in the parliamentary poll without the AL chief's release.

"Without our chief we will neither accept a dialogue nor an election, so we'll recommend the party to go for a tougher agitation programme for freeing her. We are ready for any kind of movements," said Mohsin Ali.

Faruk said they will suggest the party to launch an agitation programme similar to the one that was announced to free Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who had been arrested on charges of sedition in the Agartala conspiracy case.

Bhola district AL President Mofazzal Hossain Shahin said, "We will suggest the party not to take part in the upcoming elections without the release of our party chief."

He however said his unit believes that the party should join the dialogues and strongly press for Hasina's release before the elections.

"If the government does not pay heed to our demands ahead of the election, we will suggest that the central [AL] announce vigorous agitation programmes to free our leader [Hasina]," Mofazzal told The Daily Star.

Advocate Nurul Islam Sujon, president of Panchagarh district AL, told The Daily Star that they would not yet suggest the AL central to go for any agitation programme that might collide with the state of emergency. "We will urge them to avoid any tougher agitation programmes in the present context."

They will also urge the AL to take all decisions after consulting the grassroots leaders of the party, he added.

Salahuddin Ahmed, general secretary of Cox's Bazar district AL, told The Daily Star that their prime demand would be the release of Hasina. "We will suggest them to adopt policies based on reality."

He also said his unit will suggest the AL central not to take any decision that will pave the way for the anti-liberation war forces and the BNP to assume power.

ACC official

FROM PAGE 16
the trial within the stipulated time.

During the trial yesterday, the defence lawyer advocate Syed Rezanur Rahman asked the plaintiff Sabir whether in his investigation he had found that the New England Power Company had become ineligible for the contract as it had breached several conditions. He replied that he had not.

The defence asked Sabir whether he knew anything about when the negotiation committee was formed, how many members it had and how many meetings it held. He replied that he didn't know.

The defence also asked the plaintiff in which month the negotiation committee sent its report and whether he knew which country Wartila was from.

The plaintiff replied in the negative to both questions.

When the defence stated that neither the Summit Group nor the United Group was a permanent representative of Wartila, the plaintiff said that that was not true.

When the defence stated that the FIR statement 'Hasina had benefited economically' was false and ill-motivated, the plaintiff said that that was not true.

The defence lawyers later told reporters that the court's one-sided behaviour in the case was regrettable. "The court is trying to conclude the case quickly and carelessly and if this goes on then justice will not be served," advocate Kamrul Islam said.

Other defence lawyers said that the apparent hurry of the court makes it seem like a verdict in the case has already been decided. Rezanur Rahman pointed out that there was no similarity between the plaintiff's statements in the court and the statements in the FIR.

The plaintiff also could not give clear answers to some questions, he added.

He alleged that a certain group, including some within the ACC, had made the IO fabricate the case to undermine Sheikh Hasina.

The ACC filed the case with Tejgaon Police Station on September 2, 2007.

Meanwhile in reply to a question, advocate Abdul Mannan told reporters that Sheikh Hasina had expressed hope that the right decision would emerge from the extended meeting of Awami League scheduled for today.

Law and order

FROM PAGE 1
situation at this office.

The chief adviser also inquired about some criminal incidents he came to know through reports published in newspapers.

Fakhruddin directed the authorities concerned to expedite police patrols, set up checkpoints, recover illegal arms, update the list of criminals and take other necessary measures to curb crimes.

The meeting was informed that the overall law and order situation was normal across the country, excepting some isolated incidents that took place in the last few days.

It was also mentioned at the meeting that some preventive measures including increasing the number of police-patrol teams had already been taken.

Home Adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) MA Matin, cabinet secretary, home secretary, CA's press secretary and chiefs of various intelligence agencies, among others, were present.

Ex-army chief

FROM PAGE 1
Sangsad Bhaban premises issued the warrant on May 20 as Mustafizur Rahman failed to appear before the court on different dates.

Detained former premier Sheikh Hasina and six others including the former army chief are accused in the case.

The now defunct bureau of anti-corruption filed the case on December 11, 2001 with Tejgaon Police Station.

Between 1996 and 2001, when Hasina was the premier, eight MiG-29 fighter planes were procured from Russia for Bangladesh Air Force.

In 2003, charges were pressed against Hasina and six others in the MiG-29 purchase scam case.

UNHCR chief

FROM PAGE 16
Guterres will spend a day in Kutupalong Refugee Camp, home to almost 10,800 refugees, and meet refugees, visit medical and feeding centres as well as inspect new housing units that are being built for the refugees.

During the last two years, the government allowed the UN refugee agency, other UN agencies and non-governmental organisations to make many improvements there, he released said.

António Guterres, former Portuguese prime minister, has led UNHCR since June 15, 2005. The UN General Assembly had elected him for a five-year term and he is the UN refugee agency's 10th high commissioner.

As high commissioner, he heads one of the world's principal humanitarian agencies.

UNHCR has twice won the Nobel Peace Prize and it works in over 110 countries providing protection and assistance to nearly 33 million refugees and others of concern. The agency's total budget for 2008 is more than \$1.6 billion.

Truth commission

FROM PAGE 1
The commission will be passed through promulgation of the Voluntary Disclosure of Information Ordinance 2008, approved in the cabinet's weekly meeting yesterday after months of scrutiny and vetting by the interim administration.

TAC will have four sub-commissions in Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi and Bogra, with its headquarters in Dhaka.

The idea of the commission emerged last year as an alternative for dealing with graft cases and graft suspects to give the offenders opportunities to admit to their culpability and to be instantly penalised monetarily instead of going through prolonged legal processes and convictions by courts.

2 jail guards

FROM PAGE 16
demanding exemplary punishment to Nazrul Islam and others involved with the incident.

Sources said jail guards Al Amin and Mizanur were stand-released on Saturday night.

Mirza Shakil was severely beaten up by some 12 jail guards on Tangail jail compound on Saturday while working on a report of graft and harassment of the visitors at the local prison.

Meanwhile, journalists and civil society members across the country have condemned the attack on Mirza Shakil.

Senior journalists KG Mustafa, ABM Musa, Nirmal Sen and Kamal Lohani in a statement expressed anxiety over threats to and attacks on journalists.

They said, "We have already witnessed some incidents of threats to and harassment of journalists. We will launch programmes for 'freedom of media' movement."

Our Sirajganj correspondent reported that a number of journalists from local and national news media yesterday condemned and protested at the barbaric attack on The Daily Star correspondent.

Sirajganj Zilla Sangbadik Forum and Sirajganj Zilla Press Club jointly held an emergency meeting at the forum's office where speakers demanded exemplary punishment to those involved in the incident.

Journalists of local and national news media in Kishoreganj also condemned the attack on Shakil and demanded exemplary punishment to the jailer and the guards of Tangail Jail involved with the incident.

Hasina, Khaleda

FROM PAGE 1
September 3 last year. She faces trial proceedings against her in the Niko graft case.

Judge Khondker Kamal Uz-Zaman will conduct the Special Judge-Court-9 on the parliament complex before which Khaleda will be produced.

On the other hand, judge Amar Kumar Roy will conduct the trial proceedings against Awami League President Sheikh Hasina at the Special Judge-Court-2 on the same premises to face the same case.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the case with Tejgaon Police Station against Khaleda Zia, former law minister Moudud Ahmed and former state minister for energy AKM Mosharraf Hossain, former acting energy secretary Khandaker Shahidul Islam and vice-president (South Asia) of Niko Resources Bangladesh Ltd Kashem Sharif on December 9 last year.

Six others were named as defendants later after a probe found their involvement. On the same day, ACC also filed similar charges against Sheikh Hasina at the same police station.

On May 5, SM Sahidur Rahman, ACC assistant director and the investigation officer (IO), submitted charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court in Dhaka against Khaleda Zia and 10 others for abuse of power and graft in awarding a gas exploration and extraction deal to Canadian company Niko.

SM Sahidur Rahman submitted the charge sheet showing 68 people as prosecution witnesses.

On May 7 last, ACC deputy director Sabir Hasan, who is also the investigating officer of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the

DAB leader

FROM PAGE 16
illegally and three years' simple imprisonment for concealing information about his true wealth in the wealth statement submitted to the ACC. The sentences will run consecutively.

As the couple is absconding, their sentences will come into effect the day of their arrest or surrender.

ACC Assistant Director Nasiruddin Ahmed lodged the case with Ramna Police Station on October 3 last year in connection with hiding information about their wealth worth over Tk 2.22 crore.

The court framed charges against the couple on March 18 this year.

Zahid's name was on the second list of corruption suspects published by the ACC.

Private university

FROM PAGE 16
Several hundred policemen stepped in to control the situation when students of Asian University retaliated the attack.

The students of Shanto-Mariam University attacked the police, who lobbed teargas shells and charged truncheons.

Meanwhile, two groups of students of Asian University marched towards the Shanto-Mariam University campuses in Sector-13 and Sector-3. They vandalised the university campus in Sector-3 and set fire to the Design Centre of the university.

Students of Shanto-Mariam University told The Daily Star that Rana's sister Ruman was assaulted by Asian University student Samrat on May 20 and hearing about the incident Rana along with two friends went to Asian University.

They said when Rana went there Samrat along with Setu, Tareq, Aslam, Newton, Nuru, Shakil and Tawak beat him up. Rana was admitted to Central Hospital in Dhanmondi in a critical condition.

Talking to The Daily Star, Registrar of Asian University Abdus Samad

MM Ruhul Amin

FROM PAGE 1
In terms of seniority, the CJ-elect comes after Justice Mohammad Fazlur Karim, who was superseded once before. Karim's term as the Appellate Division judge will end on September 30, 2010.

The president has appointed Justice MM Ruhul Amin as the 16th CJ as per article 95(1) of the constitution.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) has decided not to give a farewell to the outgoing CJ in protest at the Appellate Division's recent judgment forbidding the High Court (HC) not to grant bail in any case under the emergency power rules.

By the same token, they will not arrange any reception for the new CJ.

Justice MM Ruhul Amin was elevated as a judge of the Appellate Division on July 13, 2003. He was appointed an additional judge of the HC on February 10, 1994 and his service was confirmed on February 8, 1996.

He has been serving as the chairman of Bangladesh Judicial Service Commission since 2004.

Born in 1942 in Laxmipur, MM Ruhul Amin earned a master's

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court against Sheikh Hasina, detained former state minister for energy Prof Rafiqul Islam and seven others in this case.

The charge sheet showed 51 persons as prosecution witnesses.

Sheikh Hasina was arrested on July 16 last year from her Dhanmondi Sudhasadan residence in connection with an extortion case filed by businessman Azam J Chowdhury.

Hasina, who is facing about 15 cases, has several times appeared before the courts since her arrest.

After scrutinising the case docket and other relevant documents of the Niko case, Judge Mohammad Azizul Haque of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka on May 19 and 21 sent the cases to the Special Judge Courts for the trials.

Khaleda Zia recently filed a petition with the High Court (HC) to quash the proceedings against her in the Niko graft case.

A division bench the HC heard the petition yesterday for the third day and fixed Tuesday for a further hearing in the matter.

US envoy

FROM PAGE 16
The US is optimistic about the holding of a credible election in time, he said, adding, "There is a process underway and we support the process. All the sides have to compromise for holding a free, fair and credible election in December."

The US envoy observed that the state of emergency should not be there during the electoral campaign. "We believe it would be difficult to have a credible election if the state of emergency is still in place," he said.

On the ongoing drive against corruption, he said one of the biggest problems the country had to face was tackling corruption.

"However, corruption does not have a broad-based support in the society and the people of Bangladesh are expected to win," Moriarty said.

Replying to a question about US assistance in combating corruption and terrorism, he said, "To deny space for terrorism there has to be an effective government, effective democracy and development that would provide alternative to turning to terrorism... The US government is giving assistance to Bangladesh to uproot both."

He said the current food aid aims at promoting all the three goals since food security is crucial for the social safety net.

The US ambassador lauded the considerable improvement made in the management of Chittagong Port.

confirmed the Asian University students' assault on Ruman and her brother Rana on May 20.

He said, "We tried to resolve the issue through the authorities concerned of both universities. But, the students engaged themselves in clashes before a solution could be achieved."

He claimed that a case was filed accusing 400-500 students and security personnel of Shanto-Mariam University in connection with damaging and setting fire to valuables worth over Tk 1.5 crore.

A teacher of Shanto-Mariam University said a general diary was filed following the assaults on Ruman and her brother.

He claimed that Asian University students caused a loss of about Tk 2 crore to the Design Centre of this university.

Manjurul Zaman, assistant commissioner of Uttara Zone of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star that the clashes took place over the rumour of the death of Rana and they resorted to truncheons and firing teargas shells to disperse the agitating students. He said none was so far arrested in this connection.

Tarique files

FROM PAGE 16
On October 4 last year, Abul Kashem, deputy assistant director of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), filed the bribery case with Ramna Police Station, accusing six people including former state minister for home Lutfuzzaman Babar. The ACC on May 6 pressed charges against Tarique Rahman, Lutfuzzaman Babar and six others in the case.

The ACC on February 26 filed a case against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and 15 others including Jamaat-e-Islami Amir Motiur Rahman Nizami and Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed for corruption in awarding operations contract of Barapukuria coal mine to a Chinese firm.

JSD proposes

FROM PAGE 1
JSD demanded immediate withdrawal of the state of emergency and lifting restrictions on activities of political parties and trade unions.

"We are looking into the legal aspects of allowing trade unions to carry out their activities," said Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman.

Meanwhile, the JSD president suggested achieving a pre-election consensus among parties to form a 'national government' after the elections. "The tenure of the national government could last for three to five years," he added.

JSD also demanded trial of war criminals through a special tribunal and barring them from contesting polls.

Inu said the government should include minorities in the dialogue, especially representatives of indigenous people from the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The government will sit with the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) and the Liberal Democratic Party today.

In a press conference yesterday, the CPB said it will place before the government a 26-point proposal including trial of war criminals, withdrawal of the state of emergency and the re-establishment of the four pillars of the 1972 constitution.

Dialogues

FROM PAGE 16
When asked about the progress in bringing detained former premiers Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina to the dialogues, as demanded by different political parties, Ghulam Quader, who led the previous round of 'unofficial' talks with political parties, the civil society, businessmen and union parishad representatives, said, "It is very difficult for me to reply to that as the matter involves a legal process."

On May 8, the adviser to the caretaker government said the dialogues will not be fruitful without participation of the two largest political parties.

Asked the same question again yesterday, he avoided a direct answer and said, "We feel they will want to see the dialogues successful in all aspects."

Refuting a complaint of AL presidium members that the chief adviser (CA) does not remain present all through the dialogue sessions, Ghulam Quader said the CA attends main discussions for over an hour. "He will remain present when necessary. He has to run the state. It'll be problematic if he remains there for three, four or six hours."

The communications adviser also brushed aside an AL allegation that the CA is only playing the role of a referee.

Horror strikes

FROM PAGE 1
decision to kill my only son when he tried to sell our house, our only source of income," Momtaz said.

DB police said they first arrested Prashun in Mohamadpur area on Friday and following his statement they arrested the two other suspected killers in the same area.

They seized a laptop and a cellphone set from the possession of Zakir and Khalilur, who are tenants at Momtaz's house.

The DB police presented all the arrestees before journalists at the press conference, where the three youths also admitted to killing Suman without any money at the directives of Momtaz and her daughter as Suman's mother and they are the disciples of the same Pir (spiritual leader).

They said Suman's mother called them in March and revealed her plan to kill her son.

The police said as per the plan Momtaz pretended to be ill and called her son on May 15. When Suman opened the door of his bedroom Zakir, Khalilur and Prashun grabbed him, tied his mouth with duct tape and killed him.

One of Suman's cousins told reporters the following day that Suman, a student of pharmacy at a private university, stopped his study in second year after becoming addicted to drugs like cannabis, phensydid and heroin.

Suman's father Amir Hossain died in 1999 while serving as the director (finance) at the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board.

CEC for holding

FROM PAGE 16
adding, "Besides, we will have to see if there is any major festival or other events like the Ramadan or Eid in the coming months."

He however negated the possibility of holding elections to some upazila parishads between September and October.

The EC meanwhile is scheduled to kick-off talks with different levels of the public administration today by holding a meeting with divisional commissioners, in its secretariat in the capital, in an effort to prepare an administration conducive to holding the upcoming elections to local governments and the parliament in a free and fair manner.

The six divisional commissioners are expected to give information to the EC about the current situation at field levels. The EC asked the divisional commissioners to come up with the data in consultation with their deputy commissioners, EC sources said.

The EC's move to consult different tiers of the public administration was inspired by its plan to hold polls to city corporations of Rajshahi, Khulna, Sylhet and Barisal in July and to Dhaka City Corporation in September this year.

Asked whether the EC will seek

opinions of the divisional commissioners on holding the upazila and parliamentary polls together, the polls chief said it will.

The CEC said they also have a plan to hold discussion meetings with district level public administrations, which will be held in respective divisional headquarters.

Regarding different political parties' objection to holding upazila elections first because, in their words, that would pave the way for rigging the parliament election, the CEC said the commission is not holding the elections for the convenience or inconvenience of any party, but in the greater interest of the people.

He said a strong local government is the foundation of democracy. "We don't believe that will disrupt the national election or pave the way for any dictatorship."

About EC's preparation for holding the parliamentary election, CEC Huda said the hardest part was preparing the voter list, which will be ready in October.

"We have already ordered transparent ballot boxes for the parliamentary election. A list of prospective polling stations is also being prepared," CEC Huda said about the progress in the commission's preparations for the upcoming election.

Powerful aftershock

FROM PAGE 16
Earlier Sunday, the Cabinet said the confirmed death toll from the quake rose to 62,664, with another 23,775 people missing. Premier Wen Jiabao has said the number of dead could surpass 80,000.

Millions have been left homeless, and some are now at risk of being inundated by floods from new lakes created when landslides from the quake and aftershocks dammed rivers.