

## AL won't join talks

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It also decided to take up a number of programmes including forming a human chain around the sub-jail on the Jatya Sangsad Bhaban complex where the AL chief has been detained for about a year.

Besides, a mass signature campaign would be launched across the country next month to press home the six-point demand that includes release of Hasina, lifting of the state of emergency and announcement of a schedule for the long-stalled ninth parliamentary election.

The working committee's decisions will be announced formally at the end of its meeting today. Yesterday's meeting discussed the recommendations made by the grassroots leaders.

According to meeting sources, the party will write to the government in a couple of days, asking for measures to ensure Hasina's presence in the dialogue.

It will also seek her release without delay so that she could choose in consultation with her party colleagues the other members of the AL delegation.

AL Organising Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury said they should have some plans as to what should the party do in the event of its president being convicted.

Besides, he added, it should have strategies to deal with matters relating to constituency delimitation and upazila elections. "We must be proactive not reactive," he observed.

Referring to Hasina's view in favour of election, he said the party should always keep its options open. He said the dialogue and election would have to be considered separately.

Saber, also political secretary to the AL chief, said the party should not hurry to make its stance clear when the polls are "still far off".

As the other participants agreed, the committee decided to leave the election issue to be settled later.

Abdul Mannan, another organising secretary, proposed that the party hold extended meeting in all

districts, upazilas and thanas to strengthen organisational abilities and exchange views with the like-minded political parties and professional bodies to mobilise their support.

Akhtaruzzaman, also an organising secretary, suggested initiating a countrywide mass signature campaign demanding release of the party chief and submit the signatures to the district and local administration.

The working committee adopted the proposal for the signature campaign and decided to launch it in the first week of June, meeting sources told The Daily Star.

As Information and Research Secretary Nuh-ul-Alam Lenin proposed sending the government a letter containing names of the AL delegates to the talks with Hasina's on top, Organising Secretary Abdul Rahman suggested that only the AL chief's name should be in the letter.

"On release, she will select the other representatives in consultation with party leaders, otherwise we should not participate in the dialogue," he said at the meeting. His proposal was accepted unanimously.

## Obama signaling he will fight for Western states

AP, Los Angeles

It's the first event on the first day of a campaign swing through three Western states, and Barack Obama is covering all his bases.

He's got patriotism, a Memorial Day event for veterans. He's got cowboys, the location is the Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum. He's got Hispanic voters, Gov. Bill Richardson introduced him. He's even got a nod to the environment: The Organ Mountains loom behind him as birds sing and the warm New Mexico wind blows.

Obama is signaling, even before the Democratic primary formally wraps up, that he intends to fight this fall for Western states that narrowly went Republican four years ago.

New Mexico, Nevada and Colorado aren't definitely Democratic blue or Republican red. Instead, they're known as "purple states" by political junkies.

Together, they account for only 19 of the 270 electoral votes needed to win the White House. But those votes could be vital in a close race, particularly if Obama's weakness among white, blue-collar voters carries over from the primary race and cuts his chance of winning some other states where Democrats usually do well.

"We're going to fight as hard as we can in these states. We want to send the message now that we're going to go after them and I expect to win them," the Illinois senator said Monday.

## Jalil charged

FROM PAGE 1

Jalil had been ill since his detention. He was first taken to Bangladesh University Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital on June 4 last year after complaining of chest pain.

Later, he was shifted to LabAid Cardiac Hospital for treatment of kidney complications. Five medical boards were constituted to monitor his health since his arrest.

In a letter signed on July 2 last year, Jalil pleaded with the government for his release on humanitarian grounds, and said if necessary, he would quit politics.

Considering his illness, the caretaker government set him free on parole on March 3 this year and Jalil flew off to Singapore the same night.

The former minister submitted his wealth statement of properties worth about Tk 63 lakh to the ACC on August 18, 2007 through the jail authorities.

The first information report (FIR) of the case said Jalil in his wealth statement concealed information about Tk 21.25 lakh he had spent building a house at Chakdeb in Naogaon and another Tk 33 lakh for constructing a hotel and a market in the same area.

The ACC investigation, however, found that Jalil had amassed wealth worth Tk 36 lakh illegally and concealed information about wealth worth Tk 33 lakh in the statement.

In the charge sheet, the IO mentioned that the charges brought against the accused were primarily proved and he should be brought to trial.

Forty-three people were shown as prosecution witnesses in the case.

The case will be transferred to the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka for taking cognisance for trial. Later, the case will be moved to a special court for full trial.

The AL leader also withheld information about his wife's gold ornaments worth Tk 3 lakh and Tk 7.2 lakh spent for purchasing two cars, the FIR added.

According to the FIR, the former minister's illegally accumulated properties include a three-storey building on eight decimals of land in Naogaon worth Tk 41 lakh and 61 decimals of land worth Tk 40,000 in Bhipur of Mohadevpur.

## Falu sued

FROM PAGE 1

Ashulia police filed a case against Falu and several other unnamed officials and employees of the factory.

Falu also faces a number of other cases in connection with graft, trials of several of which already started.

His wife Mahbuba Sultana was also convicted earlier in absentia for tax evasion.

## Home mulls

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court. The case was disposed of in 2003 when all the accused were acquitted.

Officials at the home ministry told The Daily Star that the move was made after Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhrudin Ahmed last month instructed the ministry to report him about the present status of the case and the outcome of its trial.

The CA's directive came soon after his return to the country following his recent visit to the United Kingdom where expatriate Bangladeshis, especially those from Sylhet region, complained to him that justice had been denied in the murder case of the UK expatriate Bangladeshi. The CA assured the expatriate Bangladeshis of looking into the matter.

On May 5, 1996, the day UK expatriate Surat Mia of Sylhet origin came home, he was fatally injured as he was caught up in a brawl with customs officials inside the ZIA. He later succumbed to his injuries at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

A murder case was filed with Cantonment Police Station on May 25 the same year, accusing three customs officials -- Syed Humayun Akhter, Abdul Haq and Mokbul Hossain -- along with a foreign national named Edward Jacob.

Police subsequently arrested the four accused and submitted charge sheet against the accused upon completion of investigation. The court however acquitted all the four accused on grounds of weak investigation and charge sheet.

A senior home ministry official told The Daily Star on Monday, "The case had strong witnesses, but the police failed to produce them during the hearings, resulting in acquittal of the accused."

He said a report describing the details of the murder, its investigation and the outcome of the trial has been prepared for the CA. "We are going to explain the chief adviser why the accused had been acquitted."

An appeal against the judgment of the lower court was filed with the High Court (HC), but the HC upheld the verdict of the lower court. Later, a leave to appeal was also filed with the Supreme Court, which also upheld the previous verdict.

"We will soon write to the law ministry seeking its suggestions as to whether a plea to review the verdict could be filed," said the home ministry official adding that they would send a letter to the CA once the law ministry entertains their request.

## Most houses

FROM PAGE 1

covers only 30 percent buildings in the city. The rest 70 percent buildings should have soak wells, but almost none of those has it, Wasa sources say.

"Though we don't have a monitoring system, we know most of the city buildings do not have any soak well system," said a Wasa high official.

The Wasa chief engineer at a recent seminar on river pollution said, "We should not be blamed for polluting the rivers by discharging human waste. We get less excreta than our capacity in the sewage treatment plant."

The authorities say their sewage management service covers different city areas including Dhanmondi, Shayamoli, Tejgaon, Basabo, Dhaka University, Azimpur, Mohammadpur and Old Dhaka.

Right now Wasa has a 2,533.73 kilometres of underground water pipeline network against 881 kilometres of sewage pipeline.

The sources say most of the buildings in Mirpur, Uttara, Kafur, Baridhara, Kalyanpur, Amin Bazar, Gulshan, Mohakhali, Banani, Badda and other adjoining areas discharge sewage into the water bodies, as there is no sewage network in these areas.

"So, possibly house owners from these areas connect their sewage pipeline to the storm sewerage drainage," said a Wasa high official asking not to be named.

## Minus-2 'conspiracy'

FROM PAGE 1

Alam of Special Court 1, set up on Jatya Sangsad Bhaban premises in the capital, fixed the next date for hearing the deposition of prosecution witness Sub-inspector AK Anwarul Islam, recording officer of the case.

Sajawar Hossain, a counsel of former power secretary Dr Toufique-e-Elahi Chowdhury, cross examined MM Sabir Hasan, an Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) deputy director also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, for the fifth day.

The court yesterday also witnessed a rather heated argument of 15 minutes between Judge Firoz Alam and defence lawyer Sajawar Hossain before the trial proceeding began.

At the beginning of the proceedings the judge asked Sajawar to start cross examining the witness, but the defence counsel started with a grievance against the judge's conduct during the proceedings of the day before. Sajawar said the judge scolded him on Monday, "which he cannot do." "You can't scold me," the defence counsel said.

In reply, the judge said the court was not Sajawar's "drawing room" and as a lawyer he cannot ask the court to explain its conduct. The judge told Sajawar that his behaviour was "tantamount to contempt of the court." Then he asked Sajawar again to start cross examining the witness.

As the defence lawyer did not heed the judge's command and kept harping on the matter instead, the judge got angry and slammed a bundle of files he was holding on the table saying, "I've been a judge for the last 28 years and now you are teaching me the proceedings?"

The judge said Sajawar was not allowed to ask the judge for any explanation for his behaviour in the court, but he has the right to file an appeal with the High Court if he had been hurt by the judge's behaviour in the court on Monday. He can also petition the HC for changing the court, but cannot ask the court to

He however admitted that they "don't have any sort of monitoring system."

When the city groundwater level is depleting several metres a year and Wasa has to put extra chemicals to treat supply water, the government does not have any effective steps to manage excreta or stop discharging excreta into the water bodies.

Asked why they don't ensure sewage connection for the house owners where a network is available, Wasa officials say they don't have any such system.

Over the years, lack of effective management and proper maintenance by the authorities has made the sewage connections more and more ineffective.

Officials say the city storm sewerage drainage and sewage connections have crossed and got mixed up at several spots.

During a recent visit to Narinda central sewage pumping station, one of the pump operators said they were not supposed to get stuffs other than excreta as they are only dealing with sewage connections.

"But we find the city dwellers shit shoes, cow horns, green coconut, brick bats and what not. Storm sewerage drainage network and sewage connection crossed in several places. So all the other rubbish is getting mixed with excreta and coming to the treatment plant," he said.

explain its conduct, the judge added.

"I can hold you in contempt of the court," the judge warned Sajawar.

"You must start the cross examination as the court has asked you to do," the judge told the defence counsel, pointing out that it is only right for the court to ask him to elaborate if it does not understand his suggestions.

Sajawar's conduct in the court in the presence of a former prime minister was regrettable, the judge said adding that counsels should have been mindful of the court's dignity considering the presence of a former premier in the dock.

Sajawar started the cross examination after senior defence lawyers apologised to the court for his conduct.

Before starting the trial proceedings, the detained AL chief told her counsels that the court may pronounce whatever verdict it pleases, but her conscience will know that she is innocent.

"Many big fishes are being released because they have money," she said adding, "Love and money can never be hidden."

Hasina's counsels said she told them that whether she had been involved in corruption can be known by inspecting the wealth she had before her tenure as a prime minister and what she has now.

Quoting Hasina, the defence lawyers told reporters that the AL chief is very ill and she feels that she has lost 50 percent of her eyesight.

They also said they petitioned the court seeking regular medical check-up for Hasina.

Defence lawyer Abdul Mannan said AL is in favour of elections and dialogues but the dialogues will not be successful unless the government meets the demands of the rank and file of AL.

During a news briefing after yesterday's court proceedings Sajawar Hossain said he did not do anything in the court that might be considered as contempt of the court.

## Cultivable lands

FROM PAGE 16

subsidised due to the geological fault.

The coalmine tried to repair the 200-foot stretch of road that subsidised but angry villagers drove the repairmen away saying they first want compensation for their damaged houses, lands and livelihood.

The coalmine, a project of Petrobangla, faced several land subsidence issues since it started coal extraction early 2006. The company officials, however, termed the issue of land subsiding "common in underground mining".

In May 2006, around 1.2 square km area of four villages subsidised. The mine compensated a number of villagers for the damage done to their homes, lands and livelihood in 2006. However, locals claimed that the money was not enough.

Experts say that it is necessary to fill a mine phase with sand or other cheap materials when the extraction is done.

Sources in the coalmine claimed that there was no provision in the project proposal for filling up the phases after coal extraction. They say that filling up a phase is expensive and not viable economically as it would hike coal prices and which would consequently raise the price of power generated in a plant next door to the mine.

According to locals and mine sources, the villages affected are Kalupara, Gopalpara, Baidyanathpur, Balarampur, Chowhati, Dhulazul, Patigram, Mou-Pokor, Ziagari, Bash-Pokor, Shakgam, Durgapur, Rasulpur and Hamidpur.

The villages sometimes face water crisis as well, which force farmers to use the untreated water pumped out of the mine to irrigate their land. Locals claim this practice has drastically reduced their production.

MA Aziz, managing director of the coalmine, told The Daily Star that the situation is under their control and necessary measures have been taken.

## Tangail jailer

FROM PAGE 16

the attack on journalist Mirza Shakil.

Jail Super Sagor Miah told The Daily Star yesterday, "Jailer Nazrul has been transferred punitively to Meherpur jail. But the investigation into the attack continues."

The jail super said that all the allegations against him at present and earlier is being investigated.

Maj Shamsul Haider Siddique, deputy inspector general of prisons (DIG-Prisons), said on Monday, "If the jailer is found guilty in the investigation, stern action will be taken against him."

On May 24, at the directives of Jailer Nazrul Islam, 10 to 12 jail guards of Tangail jail beat up Mirza Shakil when he went there to gather information on a report on the corruption and irregularities at the jail and of the jail authorities.

## 2 ex-MPs

FROM PAGE 16

MP Mujibur Rahman Monju (Kishoreganj-6) for acquiring wealth worth Tk 74.12 lakh beyond his known sources of income and concealing information about it.

The official filed another FIR with the same police station against former Awami League MP Atique (Sherpur-1) for amassing illegal wealth worth Tk 55.4 lakh and concealing information of it.

Both the cases were filed under sections 26(2) and 27(1) of the Anti-Corruption Commission Act, 2004 and section 15 of the Emergency Power Rules, 2007.

## Rohingya

FROM PAGE 1

increase the quotas of Rohingyas in the future," Guterres said.

Canada by far accepted the highest number of Rohingya refugees, with countries such as the United States, Britain, Australia and the Scandinavian countries also high on the list. However, the number of 'resettled' Rohingyas still remains low.

A 1992 agreement among Myanmar, the UNHCR and Bangladesh allowing voluntary repatriation of Rohingya refugees has not been in force since 2006 when 92 refugees decided to return to their home in Myanmar. Most of the refugees are still reluctant to go back to the country in fear of attacks from the military junta that rules Myanmar.

Around 258,000 ethnic Rohingyas from the bordering state of Rakhine in Myanmar fled to Bangladesh in 1991, following alleged atrocities against them by the military junta. They were registered as refugees by the government of Bangladesh, but without any proper legal sanction.

Until 2006, around 237,000 refugees returned to Myanmar. Most of the remaining refugees live in two camps in Nayapara and Kutupalong in Cox's Bazar, where they receive assistance from the UNHCR and World Food Program.

A large number of Rohingyas, mostly unregistered, continue to live in southern Cox's Bazar without any facilities.

## HSC exams begin

FROM PAGE 16

The Education Adviser Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman, during a press briefing at the Secretariat yesterday, said that the HSC examination would be completed with the concerted effort of all in a fair and peaceful atmosphere.

He urged all the candidates to sit for their examinations without any worry or fear of intimidation in an environment free of any cheating.

The advisor also told reporters that the concerned department has been asked to ensure power supply during the examination hours. "A letter has been sent to the power department in this regard," he said.

A total of 55.43 per cent of the total candidates are male while 44.57 per cent are female.

Of them, 1,51,287 will appear in the exams under Dhaka Education Board, 1,36,745 under Rajshahi, 50,719 under Comilla, 70,809 under Jessore, 41,515 under Chittagong, 32,164 under Barisal,

19,597 and under Sylhet Education Board.

Some 62,505 students will appear in Alim exams under Bangladesh Madrasa Education Board and 54,719 students will sit for the HSC (BM) exams under Bangladesh Technical Education Board.

Besides, some 166 candidates will sit for the HSC exams under Dhaka Education Board at five centres abroad. The centres are Jeddah, Riyadh, Tripoli, Doha and Abu Dhabi.

The education adviser pointed the increase in the number of examinees this year to the press.

"There is a 14.52 per cent increase in the seven education boards, 19.24 per cent in Madrasa board and 10.10 per cent in technical education board," the adviser added.

"The results would be published within two months after the completion of the exams," he said.

## 100-acre land

FROM PAGE 16

path-breaking project for a South Asian University will help realise the dream of thousands of young men and women who will gather here not only for high quality education but also in a spirit of fraternity and friendship".

The main campus at Maidargarhi neighbourhood will host nearly 5,000 students and an international faculty. It will also be connected to related campuses in each of the eight Saarc countries -- Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, the Maldives, Nepal and Bhutan, Mukherjee said.

Prof GK Chadha, a member of the Indian prime minister's Economic Advisory Council and former vice chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University, has been appointed as the first chief executive officer of the South Asian University.

India has offered to bear the entire cost of setting up the university which is expected to be a non-profit public-private partnership project.

The project office would oversee the construction of the university and draw up its charter, by-laws, business plan, governance plan and curriculum.

Gowhar Rizvi, director of Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University, who was entrusted with the task of preparing a concept note for the university, has recommended a middle path between government-funded and private education to facilitate autonomy from bureaucratic

stranglehold while maintaining social commitment towards the have-nots.

The role of the Saarc governments will have to be confined to providing capital for setting up the university, Rizvi has suggested.

Once fully operational, the region's governments are not expected to provide annual subsidies and grants; rather the institution would have to look for corporate and private donors without allowing them to influence its administrative and academic autonomy, he suggested.

## EC gets

FROM PAGE 16

Sylhet-4, Barguna-1, Patuakhali-2, Mymensingh-3, Feni-3, Jessore-5 and Brahmanbaria-5.

Sakhawat said the EC has sent draft rules on conducting polls to city corporations and municipalities to the law ministry for vetting, and hoped the rules will be finalised soon.

In the draft rules, the EC proposed to increase election expenditures of candidates in these elections. It proposed fixing polls on conducting polls to city corporations and municipalities to the law ministry for vetting, and hoped the rules will be finalised soon.

The EC plans to announce by the middle of next month the schedules for polls to four city corporations and seven municipalities in the third week of July.

"We will meet the chief adviser soon to ask the government to create an atmosphere conducive to holding local government polls either by relaxing or lifting the state of emergency in the areas where polls will take place," Sakhawat said.

The EC wants to hold workshops to assist prospective candidates in filling up nomination forms in these polls.

"We have plans to organise such workshops ahead all elections," he said.

On the progress of preparing voter list with photographs, the election commissioner said 7.17 crore voters were enrolled till May 24.

Field level task of preparing voter list will be completed next month, registering around eight crore voters, and the final list will be ready by early October, EC sources said.

## Village named

FROM PAGE 16

Language Martyr Abdus Salam Library and Memorial Museum at a cost of Tk 62.90 lakh.

Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed of Bishwa Sahitya Kendra inaugurated the library and museum at Salammagar on Monday. Special Assistant to the Chief Adviser Mahbub Jamil was the chief guest at the function, said an official handout.

Presided over by Deputy Commissioner M Masum Khan, the function was attended, among others, by Cultural Secretary M Sharful Alam and DG of Social Welfare Department Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury.

a historic meeting that is expected to abolish the country's 240-year-old monarchy.

Two small bombs were hurled outside the meeting venue Monday, along with a note by a previously unknown Hindu nationalist group claiming responsibility. Another explosion targeted the home of a key pro-republic rights activist.

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