

BNP trying

FROM PAGE 1
precarious times of BNP are now trying to return to the political activities of the party, as the reformist faction appears to be on the retreat with the Khaleda-loyalists gaining ground.

Different district committees, acting on Delwar's directive, already started to take disciplinary actions against the dissident leaders who broke the chain of command by pushing for reforms in the party constitution without the consent of the detained chairperson of the party.

Barisal (north) unit of BNP on Tuesday made a decision to expel former BNP lawmakers Shah Abul Hossain, Zahiruddin Swapan and Mosharraf Hossain Mangu. The three are known to be close aides of Maj (retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed, the acting secretary general of the reformist faction.

Sunamganj district BNP has decided to relieve former lawmaker Nazir Hossain, a reformist leader, of the post of the president of the unit.

A number of other district units of the BNP are also planning similar actions against leaders loyal to the reformist faction of the party.

A Delwar-loyalist leader told The Daily Star last night, "District committee leaders don't want to accept those who tried to split the party. However, the decisions taken against the dissident leaders will be finalised after consulting the party chairperson."

Sources in the BNP said decisions of the district committees would not be implemented without the approval of secretary general who would get the final approval from BNP chief Khaleda.

When asked about the recent

Police want

FROM PAGE 1
amount of money but will yield a good result in terms of improving overall policing," he added.

Triputra also stresses the need for increasing the number of police personnel to reduce pressure on the already overburdened force.

The department has only a 122,000-strong force to fight crimes and maintain law and order in a country of about 140 million people.

AIG Hasanul said inspectors, SIs and sergeants are playing a crucial role in the force but lagging behind from others in terms of status and salary.

"If the proposal is implemented, the officials will be more inspired in discharging their duties," he observes.

Police officials said such raises have been brought to different other government services, but the post of inspector and SIs remains the same since the colonial rule.

They said they have to directly interact with the common people as well as remain very busy in conducting criminal investigations and thus deserve the proposed status and the salary structure.

"You cannot expect better services from them without offering them a better position and salary," the AIG noted.

Khaleda, Hasina

FROM PAGE 1
meaningful without the presence of Khaleda Zia," Delwar said, adding that the BNP is an election-oriented party and they want to participate in the election but before that the party chief must be released.

BNP Joint Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan said, "The dialogue would not be meaningful while the election would not be acceptable without Khaleda Zia. So, there is no reason to go to the dialogue without her."

Addressing a press conference at his Nam flat, Delwar said, "We have repeatedly said that the dialogue will not be successful without Khaleda. We said it in the pre-dialogue session too."

"How clear a stand do you want from us?" he said pointing at the government.

"The government has adopted a strategy to use the dialogue to implement its own plan but it will not be successful," he said.

Demanding the release of both Khaleda and Hasina, Delwar said the two party chiefs should be allowed to lead their parties to the dialogue for the sake of democracy.

Meanwhile, the government's chief spokesman for the dialogues Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman showed signs of stress in the government but remained optimistic about the participation of the AL and BNP.

"We have to understand the sentiments of all the political parties. We cannot say yet whether the dialogue will be successful without the participation of the two major parties," said Zillur, who is leading the talks with the two parties.

"We will sit with all parties, no matter what others say because we are trying to continue the dialogue as there is a potential for success," he said, calling on all sides to exercise patience.

Bush's ex-spokesman blasts White House on Iraq

AFP, Washington

steps taken by several district units, Lt Gen (retd) Mahbubur Rahman, a reformist leader and a member of BNP standing committee, told The Daily Star. "Some overzealous local leaders have been exploiting the situation and done these things. But I think the chairperson will not allow these."

These sorts of actions will hinder the unification process of the party and will be disastrous for the party, he added.

Meanwhile, the reformist faction that appeared to be a threat to the leadership of Khaleda is now desperately looking for dignified means to get back to the mainstream of the party and many faction leaders have been openly expressing their loyalty to the detained party chief.

The recent remarks of reformist leader M Saifur Rahman came as a major blow to his compatriots. Rahman, before departing the country for treatment overseas, said the reformists only know how to split a party.

Torrential rain kills 53 in China

AFP, Beijing

The death toll from torrential rains in China climbed to 53, state media reported yesterday, after people were killed by collapsed buildings, floods and landslides in five provinces.

A further 28 people were missing and 4,000 were stranded by floods, Xinhua news agency reported.

The southwestern province of Guizhou was the hardest hit, Xinhua said, with 36 people killed by flash floods and 14 missing.

Seventeen other people died in four other provinces in central, southern and eastern China.

Torrential rain in Guizhou on Tuesday caused a flood that destroyed 58 houses, two bridges, a highway, and power poles, causing blackouts in eight townships, affecting 26,000 people, Xinhua reported.

Hundreds of buildings were buried by landslides or inundated by floods, officials with the provincial government told the news agency.

Tents, quilts and clothes have been sent to the affected area in Guizhou. About 4,000 people yesterday were stranded by floods caused by the weather in eastern Jiangxi province, Xinhua reported.

Around 100,000 people in the province were affected by the rainstorms, Xinhua said, quoting a local official.

The China Meteorological Administration warned yesterday more rain could hit the eastern and southern parts of the country over the next three days.

The prospect of bad weather in Sichuan - struck by an earthquake over two weeks ago - has threatened to hamper recovery efforts.

The quake measuring 8.0 on the Richter scale has killed more than 68,000 people and over 19,800 are still missing.

EPR bail

FROM PAGE 1

Court Bar Association (SCBA) against the earlier SC judgment, the court finally changed its decision and observed that the HC may consider bail petitions on three grounds in cases filed under EPR.

"Right to get bail is a fundamental and democratic right of the people. The earlier SC judgment had revoked that right. Lawyers and human rights organisations at home and abroad strongly protested and criticised the earlier judgment," Rafique said.

"Over 90 percent of the people detained under the state of emergency were arrested under EPR and they will now have a chance to get bail according to the observations in the Supreme Court judgment published today," he added.

SCBA President Barrister Shafique Ahmed said the SC's latest judgment proves that the association's stand for establishing the rule of law and fundamental human rights was correct.

"The earlier judgment of the Supreme Court was against democracy and the constitution," he said.

Following a writ petition filed by Moyez Uddin Sikder, a businessman of Khulna, the HC on April 22 last year, ruled that it has the jurisdiction to adjudicate bail petitions from persons facing criminal cases filed under the Emergency Power Rules 2007.

The amended EPR revoked the right to bail of those who are accused in criminal cases filed under EPR.

US Ambassador James F Moriarty also told the press yesterday that there is room for compromise. "I hope to see a comprise in next weeks or months. But I don't know what would be the compromise, it's up to the people to decide," Moriarty said.

Meanwhile, Hasina endorsed her party's "democratic" decision, expressing her satisfaction that the party has remained united against the odds.

AL Law Secretary Shahara Khatun read out Hasina's message at the party's working committee meeting.

The AL announced a country-wide campaign for collecting signatures from June 7 to June 30 and endorsed the Dhaka City unit's human chain programme around the makeshift jail where Hasina has been detained to press home the party's six-point demand.

Quoting Aklima's relatives, Officer-in-Charge of Phulpur Police Station Abul Quasem Azad said Aklima might have been suffering from mental illness.

"We are yet to figure out why she committed suicide after killing her three daughters," he added.

"We will sit with all parties, no matter what others say because we are trying to continue the dialogue as there is a potential for success," he said, calling on all sides to exercise patience.

Bush's ex-spokesman blasts White House on Iraq

AFP, Washington

US President George W Bush's former chief spokesman sharply assailed the White House and the media over the Iraq war in book excerpts published yesterday, five months before the November elections.

These sorts of actions will hinder the unification process of the party and will be disastrous for the party, he added.

Meanwhile, the reformist faction that appeared to be a threat to the leadership of Khaleda is now desperately looking for dignified means to get back to the mainstream of the party and many faction leaders have been openly expressing their loyalty to the detained party chief.

The recent remarks of reformist leader M Saifur Rahman came as a major blow to his compatriots. Rahman, before departing the country for treatment overseas, said the reformists only know how to split a party.

Nepal's monarchy

FROM PAGE 16

king and royal family will automatically come to an end," it says, also declaring May 29 as "Republic Day."

The declaration also states that Gyanendra's main palace will be transformed into a museum.

Saudi govt

FROM PAGE 16

the Bangladeshi Embassy in Riyadh of the matter, it's yet to take any step.

However, Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Secretary Abdul Matin Chowdhury said Riyadh has not officially informed them of any decision on not issuing residential permits for Bangladeshi workers who want to join new jobs on expiry of their present contracts.

Saudi Arabia in March this year decided to introduce a nation-based quota system for foreign workers.

Later, Saudi Labour Minister Ghazi Al-Gosaibi declared a partial ban on recruitment of Bangladeshi workers as house help and agricultural labourers.

He also said recruitment of Bangladeshi workers would be limited to Saudi organisations that need qualified workers in the medical and engineering sectors.

Binod Bihari Chy

FROM PAGE 16

his blood below than normal.

Binod, one of the few surviving revolutionaries, who fought against the British colonial regime alongside Master Surya Sen, is now 98.

He is now under the supervision of CMCH Cardiology Department Head Dr AKM Manjur Morshed.

Dr Manjur said Binod is suffering from anaemia and lung complications.

"Besides, he has been suffering from heart complications for a long time," he said, adding that a medical board would be formed today to examine the overall condition of the veteran revolutionary who had a pacemaker fitted four years back.

Relatives and well-wishers of the revolutionary leader thronged the hospital since morning to know about his physical condition.

Special court

FROM PAGE 1

forces, including the army, para-military forces and the police, of violating human rights with impunity through "torture and other ill-treatment and alleged extra-judicial executions".

"Army personnel accused of human rights violations remained almost entirely outside the purview of civilian judicial accountability mechanisms," reports the AI.

AI Secretary General Irene Khan wrote to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed last November, urging him to launch an unrestricted enquiry into human rights violations by security forces.

The report observes that the police lack adequate training and equipment, effective accountability and oversight mechanisms.

It reports that wide-ranging media restrictions, although not strictly enforced, compelled the media to intensify self-censorship.

"Journalists were threatened with arrest if they criticised intelligence agencies or the army," it says, adding that human rights activists and lawyers have also fallen victims to state detention, torture or threats.

"As in previous years, human rights defenders were subjected to arbitrary detention and torture. Lawyers were allegedly threatened with arrest on corruption charges if they took up high-profile cases," says the AI, which operates in over 150 countries.

The report also reports of continued violence against women and the lack of government action to bring war criminals to justice.

Earlier, Ambassador Moriarty met Communications Adviser Ghulam Quader at his ministry.

"We have to understand the sentiments of all the political parties. We cannot say yet whether the dialogue will be successful without the participation of the two major parties," said Zillur, who is leading the talks with the two parties.

"We will sit with all parties, no matter what others say because we are trying to continue the dialogue as there is a potential for success," he said, calling on all sides to exercise patience.

CG-formed PAC

FROM PAGE 1

objected to the inclusion of incumbent government secretaries as members in the committee. The ad hoc PAC has three incumbent secretaries as its members.

CAG officials said incumbent government secretaries cannot be members of a PAC that investigates financial irregularities in government ministries and other government organisations. For the same reason, no incumbent minister can also be a member of a PAC, they added.

After the formation of the ad hoc PAC on December 18, its member secretary, Mahbub Ahmed who is also an additional secretary to the finance ministry, held an informal meeting with officials of CAG in an effort to start the operations of the committee, CAG officials said.

CAG suggested the government last year to form an ad hoc PAC comprising former justices, former government officials, academics, and politicians.

The law ministry also okayed the formation of an ad hoc PAC, and the finance ministry formed the committee headed by the then law adviser Mainul Hosein, sources in the finance ministry said.

The other ten members of the ad hoc PAC are the incumbent director general of National Security Intelligence, incumbent secretary to the Parliament Secretariat, incumbent secretary to the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division of planning ministry, incumbent chairman of the National Board of Revenue, an incumbent additional secretary to the Finance Division of finance ministry, incumbent president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry, President of the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, former president of Dhaka District Bar Association, Fakir Delwar Hossain, President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants Farhad Hossain, and Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman who was the chief of Power and Participation Research Centre before becoming an adviser to the caretaker government.

Now a new parliament is expected to be formed in early 2009, as the stalled election is scheduled to be held on the third week of December this year. So, resumption of PAC's activity is unlikely in the next eight months.

In absence of a PAC, the number of unresolved audit reports involving hundreds of crores of taka, and the cases of retired government officials who are not getting their pensions due to unsettled objections, are increasing. Moreover, recovery of

Police arrested Gen (retd) Mustafiz on May 25 at the hospital following an arrest warrant issued against him on May 20.

Talking to the newsmen later, the defence lawyer said that the former army chief is gravely ill and his movement is strictly prohibited by the doctors.

Hasina's counsels said that the AL chief told them that she did not commit any corruption rather she had saved money through purchasing the MiG-29 fighter jets, which increased the country's dignity.

According to the doctors, he needs to undergo a bypass surgery, the lawyer said adding that in this situation, taking him out of hospital might prove fatal for him.

At that point, Sheikh Hasina from the dock said, "Who will take responsibility if he dies while being taken to the court?" If that happens, a murder case will be filed, she warned.

All other accused in the case were also present in the court yesterday.

As the trial proceedings began, the defence lawyers told the judge that they would not be able to take part in the hearing until they receive necessary case documents. The defence also appealed to meet Sheikh Hasina next Saturday to discuss about the case.

Chief Special Public Prosecutor Sharifuddin Khan Mukul proposed granting interim bail to Gen (retd) Mustafiz until the next date of the hearing.

The now-defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption (Bac) filed the case against Hasina and four others with the Tejgaon Police Station on December 11, 2001, accusing them of causing a loss of Tk 700 crore to the national exchequer by purchasing eight MiG-29 jets while Has