



Let Sangsad be centre of all activities

Says Sircar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Immediate past Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar yesterday hoped that the new parliament would be the focal point of all activities and the symbol of people's expectation.

"Success of the parliament is the success of democracy and democratic government," Sircar said in his speech at the inaugural session of the ninth parliament that later elected advocate Abdul Hamid as new speaker.

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'JS for change' set in motion

President draws govt attention to food prices, anti-graft fight, trial of war criminals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday termed the new Jatiya Sangsad a "parliament for change" and said poverty alleviation, elimination of corruption and terrorism, trial of war criminals and establishment of good governance would be the main objectives of the newly elected government.

"No hurdle is insurmountable for a nation, which has achieved freedom through struggle and a prolonged war of independence," the president said in his speech in the inaugural session of the ninth parliament that began journey over two years later amid high expectations for changes.

In the inaugural session, newly elected Speaker advocate Abdul Hamid, his immediate predecessor Jamiruddin Sircar and a number of lawmakers

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MPs pray for the salvation of the departed and the nation's wellbeing during the first day of the inaugural session of the ninth parliament yesterday.

Iajuddin violated constitution

Says Khaleda-led opposition after boycotting president's speech

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-led opposition lawmakers yesterday walked out of the inaugural session of parliament and boycotted President Iajuddin Ahmed's address.

They said they were not interested to hear a president who had "violated the constitution".

BNP Jamaat-e-Islami and Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP) also blasted the treasury for not "making good on its pledge to elect deputy speaker from the opposition".

After the break for Maghrib prayers, BNP lawmaker Salauddin Quader Chowdhury rose from his seat, seeking the floor. But new Speaker Abdul Hamid declined to let him speak, saying that the president was going to address the legislature.

Without a microphone,



Salauddin said they would not attend the president's speech. In reply, the speaker said, "After all, he is your president. You should hear him speak."

Moments later, BNP, Jamaat and BJP lawmakers led by Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia staged the walk-out. They did not return to the House yesterday.

Talking to reporters at the entrance to Jatiya Sangsad

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FROZEN ACCOUNTS
NBR blushes to deal with AL men on list
Files may be sent to PM for decision

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) is embarrassed to deal with the list of frozen bank account holders that include lawmakers and influential leaders of the ruling party.

Finance ministry sources said the files on the bank accounts frozen during the tenure of the caretaker government might be sent to the prime minister for a decision.

The frozen accounts would not be reactivated on a whole sale basis, Finance Minister AMA Muhiith told reporters at his office yesterday after a meeting with two trade bodies.

He said decisions on the frozen accounts would be made through a process.

The finance minister also said, "The bank accounts of

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UPAZILA POLLS AL to probe minister's influence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) will launch an internal investigation into the alleged influencing of Thursday's upazila elections by a cabinet minister and a lawmaker.

The AL move comes after the Election Commission (EC) raised allegations that Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdul Latif Biswas and AL lawmaker Abdur Rahman Bodi influenced Thursday's elections.

The Election Commission investigates the allegations it

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UPAZILA POLLS IRREGULARITIES Over 100 complaints lodged with EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) Secretariat yesterday received around 100 complaints from losing upazila election candidates, alleging that ruling Awami League (AL) lawmakers and activists influenced voting, intimidated voters, stuffed ballot boxes, and beat up their polling agents.

There was a similar complaint against BNP leaders and activists in relation to the election in an upazila.

The EC is now investigating the complaints and figuring out legal actions to take if any of the allegations prove to be true.

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POLLS IN 450 UPAZILAS Result sheets show 72pc turnout

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Widespread speculations on the low voter turnout in the January 22 upazila parishad elections seem to be wrong as result sheets from 450 upazilas show that 71.57 percent votes were cast.

Tally of the result sheets displayed at the Election Commission (EC) Secretariat shows that highest 92.57 percent votes were cast in Kalai upazila of Joypurhat while lowest 39.89 percent votes were cast in Savar

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Hold ruling party accountable

New Speaker Abdul Hamid urges opposition; Shawkat Ali made dy speaker

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Advocate Abdul Hamid and Col (ret'd) Shawkat Ali were unanimously elected speaker and deputy speaker of the ninth parliament respectively in the inaugural session of the House yesterday.

Sworn into the office for a second term, Hamid, also a veteran parliamentarian, urged all members of the House to work towards the



country's economic development, 'staying above all political interests'.

"Let our aim be to free this country from poverty,"

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Govt mulling steps to ease sufferings of litigants

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is thinking about developing a new case-management system to reduce sufferings of litigants.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shafiqul Islam said this yesterday in a meeting with US Ambassador James Moriarty at his Bangladesh Secretariat office.

The minister informed the US ambassador about the government's plans to bring reforms to the judiciary including resumption of

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Brick kilns cannot use firewood in its furnace according to the Brick Burning Control Ordinance, 2001 (revised). The lawbreakers are supposed to be fined Tk 50,000 or sentenced to six months' imprisonment but the government is not strict in implementing this law. This photo taken at Amin Bazar on the outskirts of the capital shows firewood stockpiled in front of a brick kiln.

Major shake-up in administration

7 promoted to secretary rank

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday brought major changes in the civil administration, promoting seven officers to the rank of secretary and making one secretary and two additional secretaries the officer-on-special-duty (OSD).

The government also gave postings to a number of officers who were made OSD by the BNP-led four-party government and the immediate-past caretaker administration.

The promoted secretaries are acting secretary to the establishment ministry ASM Ali Kabir, additional secretary to the education ministry Abu Taher Khandakar Md Ismail, acting secretary to the shipping ministry Abdus Sobhan Shikder,

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CHT Land Commission to be recast

Says state minister

UNB, Dhaka

State Minister for Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Affairs Dipankar Talukdar yesterday said the CHT Land Commission would be reformed soon to permanently end the land disputes in the CHT region.

"The Land Commission will be reformed through the ministry concerned for permanent solution to the

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Hajj pilgrims now need int'l passport

UNB, Dhaka

The intending hajj pilgrims will have to collect international passport to perform hajj from this year.

Hajj Ministry of Saudi Arabia says as the system of pilgrim pass has been abolished the pilgrims will require international passport, said an official release yesterday.

The intending pilgrims have been asked to collect international passport for performing hajj in Makkah.

RAILWAY BREAK-INS 3 investigations find 3 different reasons

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three probe committees that investigated the recent break-ins at Rail Bhaban in Dhaka and a railway office in Chittagong came up with three different conclusions.

However, all the reports said no important files went missing.

The probe committee formed by Bangladesh Railway yesterday filed its report saying "organised criminal gangs" took advantage of security guards' negligence in duty and committed the burglary at Rail Bhaban. The committee formed by the communication

ministry said "criminals broke in to search for something valuable but illegal" and it was not a mere theft incident.

The other probe committee investigating the Chittagong railway office break-in said it was "a simple lifting incident".

Lack of coordination and difference of opinion became more visible after the two committees probing the Rail Bhaban break-in submitted their reports and Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and Detective Branch (DB) of police made arrests separately.

Bangladesh Railway's four-member

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3 killed in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three people were killed in separate criminal attacks in the city's Tejgaon, Sabujbagh and Kadamtoli yesterday.

Unidentified gunmen shot dead vegetables trader Jahangir Hossain, 30, of West Tejguribazar in front of his home while criminals strangled 80-year-old security guard Jamir Ali at Sabujbagh and slit an unidentified youth's throat in Kadamtoli.

Jahangir, a trader of Karwan Bazar, was shot as he was walking home around 10:30pm.

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