

BNP stages walkout

Protests expunging of its women MPs' 'discourteous' remarks
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-led opposition lawmakers yesterday walked out of the House in protest against expunging of speeches of its newly elected women lawmakers in the reserved seats in parliament.

The opposition lawmakers, who staged the walkout at 8:05 pm and did not return to the House yesterday, said they will decide later when they will return to parliament.

"We will discuss the issue at the party forum and decide our next course of action," BNP lawmaker Salauddin Quader Chowdhury said after the walkout.

The BNP lawmaker said his party lawmakers did not make any 'indecent' remark, but the

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Focus on mutiny beyond Dhaka

Investigators identify abortive attempts at 37 BDR locations; 6 more arrested

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK and SHARIFUL ISLAM

After some initial headway in the probe into the Pikhana carnage, investigators are also training their focus on successive events at different BDR battalions across the country which could have led to a "civil war".

The investigators say they have so far identified 37 spots where a group of jawans either mutinied or attempted to do so.

"In many BDR battalion offices a band of soldiers took up arms and ammunition from the arsenals and attempted to commit the same offences that occurred in Pikhana," an investigator told The Daily Star wishing anonymity.

At the first coordination meeting of BDR at Dhaka Cantonment on March 9, new Director General Brig General Md Mainul Islam listened

in details to the incidents that occurred at different BDR battalions across the country.

Sources say following that meeting a move to investigate the mutiny in BDR battalions outside Dhaka was initiated and the investigators have almost done their preliminary task.

They have detected 37 spots where in some cases soldiers not only attempted to hold hostage the officers but also came out in civil areas with arms. They have yet to name the places until cases are filed in this connection.

The investigators say they have made a good progress in identifying the mutineers but did not give details.

They add at the coordination meeting with the new DG, army officers from different battalions outside the capital gave a vivid account of

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BNP found oblivious, AL report ready

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of BNP, main opposition in parliament have expressed ignorance about submission of the party's poll expenditure report to the Election Commission (EC) despite political parties' obligation to submit the report by tomorrow.

Even most senior BNP leaders are in the dark about the party's poll funds and their disbursement before the ninth parliamentary election, sources said.

Meanwhile, ruling Awami League (AL) has completed all preparations for submitting the party's poll expenditure report to the EC within the stipulated time.

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Most parties yet to report to EC

Polls expenditure submission deadline expires tomorrow

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Thirty-four out of 38 registered political parties that contested the December 29 parliamentary election are yet to submit their poll expenditure reports to the Election Commission (EC) with the deadline for submission expiring tomorrow.

None of Awami League, BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal and Workers Party representing the ninth parliament submitted their election expenditure reports to this day, EC Secretariat officials said yesterday.

Referring to the legal provision, the officials said registration of a party might be cancelled if it fails to submit the report with details of poll expenditure and sources of funds.

The EC Secretariat on Thursday and yesterday sent letters to political parties reminding them of the legal provision following their lukewarm response to submission of the report within the March 31 deadline.

Only four political parties -- Gono Forum, Jatiya Gonotantrik Party, Jatiya Party (Manju) and Islami Oikya Jote -- submitted poll expenditure reports to the EC till yesterday, EC Secretariat sources said.

The EC on January 27 sent letters to the 38 political parties that contested the December 29 parliamentary polls asking them to submit expenditure reports on or before March 31, as the election results of 299 constituencies were published in official gazette on January 1.

Since the poll result of Noakhali-1 was

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Ershad's motorcade attacked

MP among 6 hurt
STAR REPORT

At least six people, including a Jatiya Party (JP) lawmaker, were injured and 10 vehicles damaged partially when the motorcade of JP Chairman HM Ershad came under attack in Sadar upazila of Kurigram yesterday.

Police and local sources said Ershad along with party leaders and activists was going to Kurigram-2 constituency for by-elections campaign in favour of his party candidate at about 11:00am.

They said a group of angry people attacked the motorcade at Kanthalbari Bazar on Rangpur-Kurigram highway

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MPs ignored EC request

Says CEC about their travel restriction ahead of by-polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Local lawmakers ignored the Election Commission (EC) request not to visit their constituencies before and during the by-elections, alleged Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday.

He made the allegation at a meeting with administrative officials and presiding officers of by-election to Bogra-6 (Sadar) constituency at Bogra Sadar Upazila Parishad Auditorium yesterday morning.

He said the EC had sent a letter to the Parliamentary Secretariat asking MPs

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PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

Lightning flashes ahead of yesterday evening's hailstorm that swept through the capital. The photo was taken from Karwan Bazar around 6:15pm. Story on page 16.

Help democracy get stronger

PM seeks media's help for its uninterrupted run

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister (PM) Sheikh Hasina yesterday sought cooperation from the media in strengthening the foundation of democracy and ensuring its uninterrupted run.

The present government's main aim is to achieve people's economic emancipation through democracy without which country's "smooth and sustainable development is not possible," she said at a meeting with the chiefs and editors of the country's national dailies and electronic media at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

"Before the nation, we have put forward a specific vision of

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RTI bill passed

Certain agencies' blanket authority to refuse info curtailed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The House yesterday passed the much-awaited bill to continue people's right to information, incorporating a parliamentary body's recommendation to limit a few organisations' absolute authority to refuse to divulge information.

As per the provisions of the bill, all organisations registered under the law of the land will be bound to provide citizens with information on matters of public interests.

Organisations that enjoy legal coverage to keep some information undisclosed will have to take permission of the information commission to deny information sought, the parliamentary standing committee on information ministry recommended in its scrutiny report on the bill.

The bill had proposed continuing the provision for blanket

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A fervent appeal to the Honorable Prime Minister From Bangladesh Shipping Agents Association

The shipping agency business has prevailed in Bangladesh for several decades catering to the needs of foreign vessels in port of Chittagong and Mongla and handling the major portion of export/import. Skilled and professional Bangladeshi entrepreneurs have been making significant contribution in earning foreign exchange worth several hundred crore taka and also ensuring stable employment to thousands of workers through more than 300 (three hundred) shipping agency houses in Bangladesh.

Sad but true, some vested quarters have ignored the national interest and managed to issue shipping agency license to some foreign shipping companies to do trading business in Bangladesh without any investment. This has threatened the very existence of this well organized business which the Bangladeshis have been doing through ages and within the provisions of existing rule. This is causing serious concern to us especially at a time when our government is trying to cope up with the effect of global economic melt down threatening multiple sectors.

Our association appealed to the relevant wing of the government to stop issuing shipping agency license to foreign shipping companies and also prayed for cancellation of the licenses already issued beyond the purview of the law. The relevant Government authority suspended the license of one foreign shipping company and in response, the foreign shipping company took the shelter of the law and obtained a stay order on the decision of NBR. The stay order eventually was not tenable and was vacated in the highest Court of the country in favour of the government which reflected the greater national interest of the country as against the interest of the foreign shipping company.

Some vested quarters, without any regard for the law and interest of the country, is doing all it can to work in favour of the foreign shipping companies.

Under the circumstances, being compelled, we make an appeal to our beloved leader, the Prime Minister to kindly intervene so that the law is not violated and licenses are not issued to the foreign shipping companies to the detriment of the national interest.

BDR CARNAGE Jamaat leader Razzak to be questioned He obtains anticipatory bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has decided to interrogate top Jamaat-e-Islami leader barrister Abdur Razzak in order to verify information that indicated his 'involvement' in the carnage at the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) headquarters on February 25-26.

"We have found some information from various sources on his (Razzak's) involvement in Pikhana carnage and therefore, we need to question him to verify the information," Investigation Officer (IO) of the case Abdul Kahar Akond told The Daily Star last night. He however refused to say anything to substantiate the CID claim.

Senior Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP)

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