



TO
People's Right to Know

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No scope of UZ
chairmen's
conflict with MPs
Says LGRD minister

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Mymensingh

There is no scope for conflict between the members of parliament (MP) and elected upazila representatives over the Upazila Parishad Bill passed in the Jatiya Sangsad recently, said LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashraful Islam yesterday.

The authority of the upazila representatives has not been curtailed in the bill and they should not be worried about exercising their duty, said the minister in a view exchange

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Govt plans 20pc bigger ADP to fulfil poll pledges

Tk 30,500cr outlay for next fiscal year

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The Awami League-led grand alliance government is preparing a huge annual development programme (ADP) of Tk 30,500 crore in the first year of assuming power to implement its election pledges.

If finalised, the ADP for fiscal 2009-10 would be 20 per cent bigger than the current fiscal year's (FY) original ADP and 32 per cent larger than the probable revised ADP.

The ADP size in the current FY (2008-'9) is Tk 25,600 crore. It will be revised and

brought down to Tk 23,000 crore.

Economists pointed out that statistics of ADP implementation in the last 10 to 15 years show that the government could never implement ADP of over Tk 200 billion. So, if a big ADP is taken up, the government would not be able to implement it, and there would be more possibility of wastage of public money.

Finance and planning ministry sources said the ADP for FY '10 has been primarily estimated to be of Tk 30,500 crore but it might be bigger.

The finance minister has already said

the size of the national budget for the next FY would be very big.

Planning ministry sources mentioned that since the political government came to power after two years of caretaker government rule, various demands are pouring in from different parliamentary constituencies across the country.

Following the upazila elections, the local government bodies are also seeking allocation of funds. As a result, the ADP size will be big this time.

According to statistics of last 13 years, SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Thai PM forced to cancel Asian summit

Pro-Thaksin protesters storm venue; foreign leaders evacuated by choppers; emergency declared in Pattaya

AFP, Pattaya

Thai protesters smashed their way into a major Asian summit yesterday, forcing the country's embattled prime minister to cancel the meeting and evacuate foreign leaders by helicopter.

Premier Abhisit Vejjajiva declared a state of emergency in the beach resort of Pattaya after thousands of demonstrators stormed the summit, which was supposed to focus on the financial crisis and North Korea's rocket launch.

Choppers plucked dignitaries from the roof

of the luxury hotel venue after the red-shirted supporters of ousted Thai leader Thaksin Shinawatra breached police lines, broke down glass doors and streamed into the building unopposed.

The collapse of the summit piles more pressure on British-born Abhisit, who has pledged that his four-month-old government will heal years of political turmoil since Thaksin was ousted in a 2006 coup.

"The government has a duty to take care of the leaders, who will depart from Thailand."

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

BDR CARNAGE

Govt probe report in a month

Says Commerce Minister

STAR REPORT

The government's probe committee on the BDR carnage will submit its report by the end of this month or in the first week of May, Commerce Minister Lt Col (ret'd) Faruk Khan said yesterday.

He was talking to reporters after inaugurating a trade fair in Khulna, reports private television channel ATN.

He said the government has extended time limit thrice to ensure a fair investigation into the incident.

The committee needed the extensions as they had to SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



Supporters of exiled former Thai premier Thaksin Shinawatra battle with pro-government supporters just before the 14th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Summit was to start in Pattaya yesterday. The summit had to be cancelled. PHOTO: AFP

Govt may move to bring back fugitive war criminals

Diplomatic efforts to be made for this, says foreign minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni yesterday said if necessary the government will take initiatives to have fugitive war criminals of 1971 extradited from foreign countries.

She also said that her government wants to label Bangladesh as 'a secular country with a Muslim majority', rather than as 'a moderate Muslim country'.

She made the comments at a seminar on "Bangladesh's foreign policy and foreign relations: priorities, challenges and opportunities" at Bangladesh Enterprise Institute with its president, ex-ambassador also former foreign secretary Farooq Sobhan, in the chair.

Replying to a query, the foreign minister said diplomatic efforts are on to have the liberation war criminals extradited and 'if necessary the government will take appropriate initiatives regarding the matter'.

"I hope no civilised nation in the world will stand in favour of SEE PAGE 12 COL 3

KHALEDA'S HOUSE Jubo Dal asks govt to cancel move by 48hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal, youth wing of BNP yesterday set a 48-hour ultimatum for the government to withdraw its decision of cancelling the allotment of party Chairperson Khaleda Zia's cantonment house.

The announcement came from a protest rally organised by Jubo Dal in front of the party's central office in the city's Naya Paltan.

Jubo Dal President and lawmaker Barkatullah Bulu announced fresh two-day programmes that include rallies and processions in the party's six divisional headquarters on April 13.

Protest programmes will be held in district and upazila SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

DMC opens after 10 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Medical College (DMC) authorities resumed its activities yesterday after a 10-day closure following a fierce clash between two factions of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) over establishing supremacy.

Classes and examinations at the college started around 9:00 am while the students were found busy exchanging greetings.

The three hostels—one for males and two for females—were also opened for students yesterday. The decision of reopening the college was taken on last Wednesday at the Academic Council meeting.

The authorities declared the institution closed sine die on March 31 following the clash that left college unit BCL general secretary Abul Kalam SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

ACC'S REFUSAL JS body may go for contempt move

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The parliamentary committee on public undertakings sits today to decide the next course of action regarding the Anti-Corruption Commission's (ACC) refusal to allow it to scrutinise the anti-graft body's activities.

"If the anti-graft body does not appear before the committee, it will undermine parliament. Contempt of parliament proceedings might be initiated against them," committee Chairman Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said the committee itself might initiate the contempt proceedings or will report to the House for it.

The committee chief said former Indian premier Indira Gandhi, who obstructed a parliamentary probe into her son's business affairs, was arrested and jailed for a week in 1978 on charge of contempt of parliament. The Indian parliament also expelled her, Alamgir added.

Committee member Zainul Abidin Faroque told The Daily Star over telephone that the ACC misused its power in the last two years and it is not above parliamentary scrutiny.

"They will make a mistake if they do not attend today's meeting," said Faroque, also the opposition chief whip. SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Leather tech college shut after clash

Students vandalise shops, vehicles

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh College of Leather Technology in the city's Hazaribagh area was closed sine die yesterday as its students went berserk and vandalised shops and damaged vehicles for realising their six points demand, including reduction of examination fees.

At least ten students were injured when police charged batons on the agitated students to bring the situation under control during an hour long road blocking.

The college authorities also asked the students to leave the hostels by 6:30 pm yesterday.

Principal of the college Dr Fazul Karim told The Daily Star that after directives from SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

20 hurt as pro-AL workers clash at Sadarghat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two rival factions of Jatiya Ghat Sramik League clashed at Sadarghat area yesterday, leaving at least 20 activists injured.

Jatiya Ghat Sramik League is a pro-Awami League organisation.

The clashes erupted at around 3:30 pm when the feuding factions, one led by the president of the organisation -- Abdul Jalil Hawlader -- and the other by its secretary Delwar Hossain, came face to face with each other.

Both factions were scheduled to attend a reception arranged for local Lawmaker Mijanur Rahman Khan Dipu at East Bengal Field in the area.

They attacked each other with sticks, rods and brickbats, though both groups later denied attacking first. At least 20 people were injured in the clash that lasted for around 30 minutes, sources said.

Locals said traffic movement in the area was brought to a standstill and local businessmen closed their establishments when the violence ensued.

The standstill lasted for over an hour. SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

New nat'l education policy in 3 months

DU CORRESPONDENT

A new national education policy will be placed before the nation within three months for overall improvement of country's education system, said Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday.

Steps would be taken to set up institutions for imparting vocational education at all upazilas across the country, Nahid said at a function on Kalabagan playground in the capital marking the 7th anniversary of the World University of Bangladesh.

The government wants to come out of the culture of frequent shift in policies that need to be implemented, he said.

Nahid said initiatives would be taken to stop the drop out of students at primary school level to free the country from illiteracy.

The government has formed a 16-member committee headed by National Professor Kabir Chowdhury last week to review the report of Shamsul Haque Education Committee-1997 to formulate a modern national education policy in line with the Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission-1974 report, education ministry sources said.

The committee has been asked to submit its recommendations to the education ministry within 90 days from the date of its first meeting, sources added.

World University Vice Chancellor Prof Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, State Minister for science and information and SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Millionaires in Indian polls race

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Several of the big names in Indian parliamentary elections, including chief of India's ruling Congress Sonia Gandhi, her son Rahul and leader of the opposition L K Advani are millionaires and the value of their assets have gone up in the last five years.

A look at the affidavits by the candidates declaring their assets which is mandatory at the time of filing nomination papers shows a sharp rise in their wealth.

The richest among the candidates who have filed their nominations so far is 53-year-old businessman Khimji Patadia, based in India's financial capital Mumbai, who in his affidavit has declared assets worth Rs 514 crore mainly in jewellery and real estate.

A college drop-out, Patadia hails from Gujarat state and is the promoter of Swastik group of companies which has construction and jewellery businesses.

The next richest is L Rajagopal, the Congress party candidate from Vijawada in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh, worth Rs 299 crore.

Among the big guns of politics are, of course, 62-year-old Sonia Gandhi who has declared net assets worth Rs 1.37 crore. However, she does not own a house or a flat or a car, according to the affidavit filed to the Returning Officer in her parliamentary constituency Rae Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh, the home state of the Nehru-Gandhi family.

Sonia owns 15 bighas of land in Uttar Pradesh's Sultanpur district worth Rs 2.19 lakh and an ancestral house in Italy worth SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Tobacco lure

AMENA KHATUN

Violating the Narcotics Control Act, 2005, a number of local tobacco companies are offering smokers on the outskirts of the capital and elsewhere in the country "gift items" as incentives to choose their products.

Even though tobacco-product advertisement and offering incentives to tobacco consumers are prohibited under the law, the companies are offering items like cellphones, bicycles, household utensils and free cigarettes in exchange for empty cigarette packs or part of the packs.

According to Clause-4 of the Narcotics Control Act, 2005, "No one is allowed to provide any gift, incentive, scholarship or hold any tournament with the aim to encourage the use of tobacco products."

If anyone violates this law, he or she would be awarded three months' simple imprisonment or fined Tk 1,000, the law reads.

Local tobacco company--Abul Khair Tobacco Company Ltd--is offering such items on the outskirts of Dhaka to attract consumers, mainly people of low-income

group. However, the law is being abided by in the capital.

The company is distributing leaflets among shopkeepers so that they could distribute those among consumers and inform them of special items on offer. The company is running the campaign, titled "Slide Programme", at places including Amin Bazar, Kamrangirchar, Gabtoli, Kamalapur, Tongi, Gazipur, Kapasia in and around the capital and in different areas of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Sylhet and Bandarban districts to attract consumers to its brand Maries cigarette.

According to the leaflets, if one submits 15 slides, a part of the cigarette pack, to shopkeepers, they will get one melamine bowl or two packs of cigarettes free. He or she will get a free melamine plate for 26 slides, a bucket for 60 slides and a cellphone or a DVD player for 2,600 slides.

The company is also offering household utensils for buying a certain number of packs of its Special Abul Bidi. This programme is run in Noakhali, Chittagong, Bandarban and Sylhet divisions. SEE PAGE 12 COL 3

