

JS body questions

FROM PAGE 1
present in our next meeting to clarify the matter," Shaikh Muzibur Rahman, chairman of the committee said.

"Golam Maola Rony, a ruling party lawmaker raised the issue," said Nazrul Islam Monzu, the lone opposition lawmaker of BNP present in the meeting.

"Under which authority the ministry invited the tender for purchasing a vehicle mentioning the minister's name?" Monzu quoted Rony as asking in the meeting.

"Couldn't the minister visit show rooms to select a car and then invite a tender for a vehicle like that?" Rony questioned again.

"My predecessor [Iqbal Mahmud] approved the file," Monzu quoted Ali Kabir as saying.

"As the committee members quizzed the incumbent communications secretary more on the issue, he replied 'the issue should be discussed in the presence of the minister'," Monzu said.

Meanwhile,

Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain is currently abroad.

In a breach of government rules, the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) recently invited tenders for a cross-country automobile to be used by the communications minister.

In an advertisement published in a national daily on March 18, RHD invited formal tender for supplying a vehicle for official use by the communications minister. The last date for buying the tender forms was April 15.

Bids were to be accepted till 12 noon the following day, to be opened later on the same day.

Placed by Rafiqul Islam, executive engineer of RHD procurement and storage division, the tender invitation advertisement said the vehicle should be 'brand new, of the latest model with a manufacturing date of not prior to July 2008, and should be designed according to the latest technology. The interior should be stylish and elegant looking'.

Costly equipment

FROM PAGE 16
The hospital was built at a cost of Tk 223 crore and was inaugurated on August 31, 2006. Central Medical Storage Department (CMSD) supplied medical equipment worth Tk 60.71 crore for the 500-bed hospital during the four-party alliance rule.

A senior official said several pieces of costly equipment, like mammography machine worth Tk 40.64 lakh, are yet to be used due to shortage of trained manpower and chemicals.

Joynul Abedin, executive engineer of PWD, Bogra said the work proposal, which the director of the hospital sent to him, was sent to the ministry concerned three months ago for sanctioning Tk 35 lakh for the radiation-proofing work.

Earlier the government spent Tk 1.16 crore for constructing the unit but due to a faulty design the government now has to pay additional money to manage radiation leakage, said the executive engineer.

The hospital authority has been spending huge amount of money for electricity as the equipment requires a certain temperature to be kept in. The unit was opened two and a half years ago but it does not provide any service to patients.

Justice Rashid

FROM PAGE 16
The file yesterday reached the law ministry, which will soon issue a notification on the appointment. The government in consultation with the new chairman will then appoint two members of the commission, sources said.

When contacted, Justice Rashid told The Daily Star that he did not receive letter on his appointment as chairman of the Law Commission till 7:30pm yesterday.

"Let me join the office and then I will determine the tasks to make the Law Commission effective," he said.

He retired from the office of the High Court judge on January 27 this year.

Law Commission Secretary Noor Md Jahangir Sarker while talking to The Daily Star at his office yesterday afternoon expressed satisfaction on the appointment of new chairman of the commission, as the post has been lying vacant for about 16 months.

He hoped that activities of the commission will get momentum with the appointment of the new chairman.

Formed in 1996 to help modernise the country's law and judicial system, the Law Commission has been inactive due to shortage of manpower and logistic supports for a long time.

The post of chairman of the commission has remained vacant since December 5, 2007 when the term of then chairman Justice Mustafa Kamal expired.

Another member of the commission retired on February 22 last year but the government did not take initiative to fill the vacant post. Justice Md Sirajul Islam went on retirement on March 8 this year.

Apart from the two key posts, 10 official posts of the commission out of 13, including the chief research officer, two senior research officers and two translation officers, have remained vacant for the past nine months.

War crime trial

FROM PAGE 1
Ahmed Sohail Taj and Attorney General Mahbubey Alam attended the meeting.

The government on April 9 formally started the pre-trial process of holding trial of the 1971 war criminals. The trial would be conducted under the International Crimes Tribunal Act-1973.

Bangladeshi nationals who were involved in killing, raping, arson and looting directly or as auxiliary force in collaboration with the Pakistani occupation army during the liberation war will be brought to justice.

Replying to a reporter's query, Kamrul Islam said more than one department of law-enforcing agencies would be incorporated in the investigating agency.

Talking to the reporters, Sohail Taj said they have taken one more day to take decision over the appointments to the investigating agency by considering all good sides.

Earlier on April 16, Home Minister Sahara Khatun told reporters that the decision of setting up tribunal and appointment of prosecutors to try war criminals was taken to set in motion of the trial process.

UP chairman

FROM PAGE 16
following the end to a legal battle that began at the election tribunal at district level and went up to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

However, the tenure of the union parishad to which Azizul was elected had already expired over a year ago.

EC Secretariat officials said Azizul, who won every stage of the lengthy legal battle, would be able to serve as chairman for a few months since the polls to union parishads will be delayed.

They said the case is a glaring example of how long it takes to settle an election dispute and how anyone can exploit the lengthy legal procedure to their advantage.

Election Commissioner Muhammed Sohul Hussain yesterday said the case exemplifies the proverb-- justice delayed, justice denied.

"But we tried to ensure justice to him," he said referring to the EC's decision.

When contacted, Azizul said he came to know about the EC decision after he communicated with the EC Secretariat.

"I am happy to get justice at last. But people who voted for me have been deprived of my service," Azizul said.

Eminent jurist Shahdeen Malik told The Daily Star that there are plenty of examples of similar poll disputes that took a long time to get disposed of. He said election-related cases need to be expedited.

An election tribunal, headed by a senior assistant judge, first declared Azizul chairman after recounting ballots on April 9, 2006. Azizul filed a petition for recounting

the ballots immediately after the election to the union parishad in February 2003.

But Abdur Rahman, whom the returning officer declared chairman in the February polls, filed a petition on April 9, 2006 with the appellate authorities, led by Rangpur joint district judge, challenging the tribunal's order.

The appellate authorities on October 1, 2006 rejected the appeal upholding the election tribunal's order to replace Rahman with Azizul.

Later, Rahman filed civil revision petition with the High Court, which on November 30, 2008 rejected the petition. Rahman then moved to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court and filed a civil revision petition with it against the HC order.

The Appellate Division on March 1, 2009 dismissed the petition.

"The period of five years has already expired and as such the Civil Petition for leave to appeal has become infructuous. We do not find any cogent reason to interfere with the judgment and order of the High Court Division," the Appellate Division said.

Sohul Hussain said Abdur Rahman remained in office by obtaining stay orders from courts. The local government laws should be reformed to address such problems, he said.

The people of Damodar union parishad mandated Azizul but Rahman, who was defeated in the election, enjoyed the office of chairman.

Dhaka's detailed

FROM PAGE 16
development companies to extend their work in those plots of land.

These zones have been proposed as zones for urban housing, mixed use, commercial zones, heavy industrial zones and general industrial zones in the draft DAP.

The report also said an extensive area of land have been left in the name of open spaces, water bodies, flood flow zones, overlay areas, special zones etc without specific definitions for their use.

Prof Ishrat Islam of Buet, another member of the TWG, said that one foremost anomaly in the DAP is that both high value agricultural land and agricultural land identified in the structural plan, have been proposed as 'rural home-steads' for housing and mixed uses in the draft DAP.

"Flood flow zones and sub-flood flow zones have also been proposed for housing, mixed-use and waste dumping purposes," she said.

The population of the capital is projected to be 16 million by the year 2015 and at least 35 percent of that will be the migrated rural poor, she said, "But the proposed DAP is silent on the housing needs for this large number of poor."

Though the terms of reference (TOR) require that the DAP identifies unauthorised and illegal land use by housing companies, it remains silent on the issue.

"In our report, we have pointed out all the illegal housing projects undertaken in the city that are destroying flood flow zones, sub-flood flow zones, retention ponds and high value agricultural plots of land," Dr Ishrat said.

Iqbal Habib said, "The draft DAP has proposed housing land for 2.75 crore people against the government's projected figure of 1.5 crore population by 2015."

The open space, water bodies, flood retention ponds, roads and other civic amenities envisaged in the plan for 1.5 crore people are extremely inadequate, he said.

DAP Project Director Tapan Kumar Nath said that they have asked the consultants to incorporate the review committee's observations and recommendations.

State Minister for Public Works Abdul Mannan Khan also said, "We will take note of the review committee recommendations accordingly."

Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, president of the environmentalist group Bapa, said, "Consultants were required to hold local level public consultations at the time of field survey as per the TOR for a meaningful public participation which they did not do."

Rajuk arranged a two-month long public hearing on the DAP's draft final reports from October 5 last year at Rajuk's central office and three zone offices in Mohakhali, Uttara and Dhanmohi, inviting interested persons through newspaper advertisements.

Experts criticised the attempts a futile exercise.

The DMPD was initiated in 1992, completed in 1995 and officially gazetted in 1997. But Rajuk took years to initiate it, finally starting work in November 2004. Despite the delay, Rajuk extended the

deadline for completion of the plan three to four more times. The latest extension expires end of June.

The delays have resulted in filling up of vast low-lying areas in and around the city increasing the threat of environmental hazards, flooding and water logging in the city, environmentalists say.

Rajuk hired four consulting firms -- Sheltech Private Limited, Development Design Consultants Limited (DDC), Engineering and Planning Consultants Limited (EPC) and Ganibangla Limited -- for the DAP project at a cost of Tk 23.22 crore to study an area of 1,528 square kilometres. The project allocated Tk 26 crore for consultancy.

Pilkhana carnage

FROM PAGE 1
60 jawans and have primarily interrogated them at Pilkhana."

Meanwhile, five other BDR jawans have been taken to the Task Force for Interrogation (TFI) cell for intensive interrogation after investigators found their active involvement in the mutiny.

Two other jawans yesterday confessed to their involvement with the killings and lootings at Pilkhana during the mutiny while eleven others were placed on remand for interrogation by a Dhaka court.

The court also sent sixteen jawans to jail after they were produced before it in the case primarily filed with Lalbagh police station and later shifted to New Market Police Station.

Another investigator said the five taken to TFI for interrogation were directly found to be involved in the mutiny.

"We expect to get important information from them," he added.

Our Court Correspondent adds: Two more Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) jawans -- sepoy Mohammad Rajib and Rian Ahmed -- made statements yesterday confessing their involvement in the killings and lootings at Pilkhana.

Metropolitan Magistrates Jufikar Hayat and Tofael Hassan recorded statements of sepoy Mohammad Rajib and Rian Ahmed after the investigation officer of the case produced them before the court.

After recording their statements, the two were sent to jail.

Meanwhile, a metropolitan magistrate court placed seven jawans on five days remand and five others on four days remand each for interrogation in the case.

The jawans facing a five-day remand are sepoy Abdur Rashid, Abdur Rashid (2), Habibur Rahman, Habib Ullah, Suman Miah, Suman Mollah and Mintu Sheikh while subedar Ramendra Nath Bishwas, Lance Nayek Shariful Islam, sepoy Syed Anwar Hossain and Zikrul Haque were remanded for four-day each.

Thirty-nine jawans and civilians, including yesterday's two, have so far given confessional statements on different dates. A total of around 1,050 jawans and civilians are now shown arrested in the mutiny case.

Deccan win

FROM PAGE 16
off 26 balls and Rohit Sharma hitting a 32-ball 36. Ashok Dinda took one wicket while the other came through a run out in a forgettable performance from last year's high-fliers.

Kolkata would rue dropping Tigers vice-captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Sri Lankan mystery bowler Ajantha Mendis as the wicket had equal amount of juice for the seam bowler and turn for the spinner.

But their formidable top order was handcuffed by Deccan's new-ball bowlers. Fidel Edwards was fast and frugal - consistently around the 140kph mark, he gave away only six runs, the lowest conceded in a completed IPL spell - and RP Singh evicted the Kolkata openers early.

Everything was going right for Deccan. With Kolkata on 2 for 1 after three overs, Gayle broke free with a crash point for four and a mow over midwicket for six. Then Adam Gilchrist pushed a fielder back to long-on, where Gayle promptly holed out next ball.

Sourav Ganguly had a short-lived and uncomfortable stay, beaten several times, and was unable to find the gap through the off side when he connected. Even fans protesting his removal from the captaincy can't defend the shot that brought about his dismissal - backing away and then stabbing at a wide, full delivery, only to nick it to the wicketkeeper.

Despite rain and a floodlight failure causing the game to be delayed by nearly an hour-and-a-half, the organisers decided to have the seven-and-a-half-minute interval after the tenth over. Aakash Chopra and Brad Hodge had dragged Kolkata to 31 for 3 by then, but also found Pragyan Ojha's left-arm spin a handful. Both Chopra and Laxmi Shukla perished giving Ojha the charge, only to be undone by the turn.

Hodge, the leading run-getter in Twenty20s, played a sensible hand. He entered in the fifth over and knocked around the singles before opening out in the 16th. Hodge slammed a couple of boundaries before slapping Scott Styris straight to Herschelle Gibbs at point. The lower order managed to take Kolkata past 100, barely, but this is a total Deccan comfortably chased down, particularly as all of their opposition's big-name foreign players are batsmen.

FBI agents

FROM PAGE 16
India has blamed the Muslim militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba.

Pakistani officials have acknowledged the November attacks were partly plotted on their soil and announced criminal proceedings against eight suspects. They also have acknowledged that Kasab is Pakistani but have repeatedly denied their intelligence agencies were involved in the attack.

Kasab and his co-defendants - two Indians accused of helping plot the attack - have been charged with 12 criminal counts, including murder and waging war against India. If convicted, all could face death by hanging.

Six hurt as BCL factions clash at CU

CU CORRESPONDENT

At least six activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) Chittagong University (CU) unit were injured during a clash between two groups yesterday morning.

Sources said an altercation took place between two BCL groups over teasing a female student on the university campus Saturday afternoon.

Following the incident, activists of both groups flew at each other with sticks at around 8:30am yesterday when a university-bound shuttle train reached Sholoshahar Railway Station.

The clash left at least six activists of the both groups injured. One of the injured was Poreh, a student of BBA, while the identities of the rest five could not be known immediately.

The angry activists also vandalised windowpanes of a compartment of the shuttle train during the clash, said the sources.

Later, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Police searched the shuttle train when it reached the CU Railway Station after an hour's delay, but did not find anything, said Mohammad Ismail, officer-in-charge of Hathazari Police Station.

BCL CU unit General Secretary Ershad Hossain claimed that BCL had no involvement with the incident and they would welcome any step taken by the university authority against the unruly students.

CU Assistant Proctor Chandan Kumar Poddar said necessary steps were taken to fend off any untoward incident in the campus and in all the railway stations in between the university and the port city.

No sign of LTTE chief as troops close in

AFP, Colombo

As Sri Lanka's decades-long civil war moves into what appears to be a bloody end game, all eyes are on a small strip of coastal jungle, looking for signs of the elusive leader of the Tamil Tigers.

The rotund rebel chief Velupillai Prabhakaran, a 54-year-old with decades of experience surviving military onslaughts and political intrigue, has not been seen at the guerrillas' public functions for nearly 18 months.

In that time he is thought to have commanded his forces from the safety of underground jungle bunkers, and his mystique is likely to continue to hold sway until he is found -- dead or alive.

"We can't find anyone who has seen Prabhakaran recently," said

Dharmalingam Sithadthan, a former associate of the rebel leader who is now the head of a Tamil group allied to the island's government.

"The army can truly claim victory only after they can show what happened to Prabhakaran. They must either show his body or capture him alive."

50 hurt

FROM PAGE 16
BNP leader Abdul Mabud swooped on villagers of Konarpara with stick and sharp weapons around 2:00pm.

As they were ransacking and looting the houses and shops, locals came forward to resist them. Sensing strong resistance, the armed criminals fired bullets indiscriminately that wounded 50. Four of them sustained bullet injuries.

Of the injured, 15 were admitted to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital. Amanullah, 45, Russel Ahmed, 34, Shafiq Begum, 40, Monira Begum, 32, Salma Akhter, 26, Bulbul Akter, 45, Sofia Khatun, 36, Nurul Alam, 23, Champa Begum, 6, Sohel, 10 and Yasmin, 10, were among the wounded.

Resident physician of the hospital Saiful Islam said of the injured the condition of four including Shafiq and Bulbul Akter was critical.

Police reached the spot around 3:00pm and brought the situation under control.

MP's men

FROM PAGE 1
divisional commissioner in Rajshahi, told The Daily Star in the evening.

Sources said, following the reports published in The Daily Star, the Prime Minister's Office directed Bhuiyan to report within 12 hours about the fate of the cheques granted by the premier for the victims in Bagmara.

When the victims following instructions of the MP's men gathered at Bhawaniganj, upazila AL Organising Secretary Mahabubur Rahman and Md. Ghufrun Uddin AL General Secretary Abdur Razzak Mollah returned cheques, each worth Tk 1 lakh, to 16 victims at around 11:00am.

Victims Asir Uddin and Manik Pramanik got back their cheques on Saturday.

Three of the victims -- Ataur Rahman, Rafikul Islam and Amjad Hossain Dugu -- earlier refused to hand over their cheques to the local lawmaker's men.

The MP's men took all 18 victims to the local Sonali Bank branch to deposit the grant money with their accounts at the bank.

"We helped them in bank affairs as most of them don't know anything about it," said upazila Jubo League president Abdus Salam.

When contacted, victims Asir Uddin and Abdul Gafur said they had no other option but to tell the investigation officer what the MP's men had asked them to say.

The two said they told the investigation officer that the cheques had never been taken away from them.

Diarrhoea

FROM PAGE 1
If it crosses 350 and the situation remains the same for three consecutive days, it is called an epidemic and so we can describe this situation as epidemic in the capital," he added.

So far 28 people died of diarrhoea this year while every day more than 800 patients from the city and its outskirts are coming to the hospital.

Excessive heat and polluted drinking water are the reasons for the city people suffering so badly this year, said the experts of ICDDR,B adding that the centre has to deal with almost triple the patients than usual every day.

Patients from city's Mirpur, Khilgaon, Kamrangirchar, Mohammadpur and Badda areas are the worst sufferers of the waterborne disease, experts said.

They also said that the government should take immediate steps to avoid unwanted situation and the 'diarrhoea corners' that were established in every hospital during the period of the caretaker government should be reactivated to provide immediate treatment to the patients.

The ICDDR,B experienced record number of diarrhoea patients in 2007 in post-monsoon season. But this year, in pre-monsoon season, the record numbers of patients have been attacked with diarrhoea, the experts added.