

Private university

FROM PAGE 16

The government directed the UGC to prepare a new act in the wake of allegations against many private universities of selling certificates and providing sub-standard education cashing in on loopholes of the existing act.

The discussants said the government as well as the UGC should not take so many monitoring responsibilities rather they should play their supportive role.

Educationalist Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui said, a large scope to interfere in the university activities has been given to the government and UGC in the proposed act.

He suggested bringing amendments to sections of board of trustee, academic council, curriculum committee and teachers appointment committee in the proposed bill.

Prof Ajoy Roy said the private universities will be controlled by three authorities -- government, UGC and board of trustee-- if the act is formulated.

Syndicate should be the highest authority of a private university, he said adding the board of trustee should play a policymaking role and will not meddle in the internal affairs of the university.

Opposing the move, Abul Quasem Haider, vice-president of Private University Association, said the Private University Act 1992 amended in 1998 is sufficient to run the private universities.

"There is no need to formulate a new law as the development of private universities will be hampered severely if the new law is enacted," he said.

Conflict may arise between the syndicate and trustee board and accountability of the VCs will not be ensured in the proposed law, Haider added.

In fact, there is no provision in the bill to stop the alleged selling of certificates or other malpractices of the private

Stop construction

FROM PAGE 16

the red tape in this regard.

Oli, lone lawmaker from Liberal Democratic Party, said the committee also recommended that the education ministry take measures so that no-one with education below SSC level can become a member of the school managing committee.

"We have also asked the ministry to ensure that all public educational institutions are built with an option to raise it by at least four storeys," Col (ret'd) Oli also said.

About different ministries' performance, he said the trend of going slow during the caretaker government tenure is still there.

"We have asked them to quicken the pace in their activities especially in development projects."

152 industries

FROM PAGE 1

Since the beginning the government was providing tax holiday for five years and no import duty and VAT for capital machinery for these polluters.

Stinky blackish water was seen flowing in the Turag as liquid waste falls in the river directly from the industries.

Massive suffering of the people was witnessed during visits to the surrounding villages including Baimail, Koddá, Kashimpur and Konabari. Besides industrial waste, dust from the brick kilns around adds to the suffering of the local inhabitants.

"We cannot use the river water in any way. Even we cannot take a bath there. Besides, dust from the brick kilns is also causing much suffering to us," says Bayezid Hossain from Baimail village.

"At least 20 of our neighbours have left the village and settled in Gazipur town or nearby areas due to this environmental pollution," he adds.

While describing his childhood memories, Uday Sarkar of the area said, "Just 12 years ago the Turag and Baimail Jheel had a variety of fish. Now no fish can survive there."

"The industry waste has spoiled everything. We cannot afford moving from our village, so we are living here and suffering," he said.

Villagers from Kashimpur say it is a big problem for them to collect water from tubewells for bathing, washing and drinking.

"For the last few years we are not getting fruits from coconut, banana, mango and some other trees," said Shamsur Rahman from Majlisapur.

"If I wash my hand in the river waters, it stinks like kerosene," says a villager. He adds their corrugated tin-made houses are being damaged within two to three years these days thanks to the dust from brick kilns.

universities, he said.

North South University VC Prof Dr Hafiz GA Siddiqui suggested inclusion of a provision in the act so that the poor meritorious students can study in the private universities without any cost.

Dr A Mazid Khan, VC of University of Information Technology and Sciences (UITS), said there should be a specification of required space and land for establishing a private university.

UGC Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam said the government has taken the matter very seriously and a timely private university act is needed to ensure quality education in private universities though the owners' association had opposed it and still opposing it.

Establishing some new universities will be allowed soon outside Dhaka and the new act will help this process, the UGC chairman said adding some important suggestions came from this meeting would help make a balance in the proposed bill.

The UGC is likely to submit the draft act within a week, he added.

VCs and high officials of different universities also spoke at the meeting.

2 women killed

FROM PAGE 16

"As I cried out for help, Reza started chasing me. He attacked me on my face repeatedly and after tying up my hands and legs, fled the house."

Brishti was stabbed with a sharp object on her cheeks and neck.

Deputy commissioner Monirul Islam of the Detective Branch (DB) of police said that they suspected that besides Reza at least two to three others might have entered the house at some point before the killings.

"It is not easy to ascertain what happened. Some contraceptive materials were recovered from the house which may hold some clue to the incident," Monirul said adding, "If the fugitive youth is arrested, the mystery will be unearthed."

Shanta's brother-in-law Shamim Ahmed confirmed that Shanta and Halima came from Bagerhat district and were cousins.

He told The Daily Star that Shanta did have a brother by the name of Reza, but that he has no way of knowing if the youth who had visited the house the previous night was indeed Reza.

Manmohan

FROM PAGE 16

The Congress-led coalition captured 261 seats in India's 543-seat Parliament, far more than most analysts predicted, but still 11 short of a majority.

On Tuesday, two key regional parties Bahujan Samaj Party and Samajwadi Party, which together will control 43 seats offered to support Singh's government.

Congress has governed for nearly 50 years of modern India's 61 years of independence.

Sonia Gandhi, the Italian-born widow at the head of the country's most powerful political dynasty, turned down the prime minister's job five years ago, paving the way for Singh to take power.

An economist and technocrat, Singh shifted India away from decades of socialist-style policies and toward a more open economy when he was finance minister in the early 1990s.

But over the past five years, many additional market reforms that Congress backed were blocked by India's once-powerful communist parties. In the election results announced Saturday, the communists lost more than half their seats.

With a free hand, Singh is likely to open India's insurance, retail and banking sectors to greater foreign investment. The nation's pension regulator could also get proper legal standing, which would also encourage greater investment. And some steps might be taken to loosen hidebound labour laws, like allowing contract labour.

The Congress Party, however, is keenly aware that a third of India's nearly 1.2 billion people live in extreme poverty and more than 90 percent work in informal, unorganised sectors.

In his last term, Singh oversaw a costly initiative to guarantee employment for the poor in rural India and alleviate farmer debt. But those programmes have added to the nation's already onerous fiscal deficit and antagonised factory owners who say workers have grown lazy on government aid.

BSF kills 2

FROM PAGE 1

sons of late Nur Mohammad of South Algar Char under Raumari upazila in Kurigram. The injured were Abdul Jalil, 28, and Abdul Kader, 32, of Chanshikari under Bholahat upazila in Chapainawabganj.

Our Kurigram correspondent reports: BDR and locals said the two brothers--Ayub Ali and Amir Islam--went to the nearest border from their house around 12:15am. On spotting them, BSF fired at least 11 rounds leaving the two spot dead on no-man's-land. BSF later dragged the body into their territory, they added.

Baliarni BOP Company Commander of BDR sent a protest letter to BSF around 6:00am asking them to return the bodies. A flag meeting between BDR and BSF was held at Algar Char border no-mans area where the police of both countries were present. In the meeting the BDR Company Commander Subedar Jalal Uddin represented Bangladesh and BSF Deputy Commander of 1 Battalion KM Mukherjee represented India.

The BDR Company Commander told The Daily Star that the Indian police returned the bodies to our police in presence of BSF and BDR personnel. The Raumari police handed over the bodies to the victims' younger brother Azizul Haque around 4:00 pm, he added.

Our Chapainawabganj correspondent reports: Two cattle traders--Abdul Jalil and Abdul Kader--were injured as BSF of Indian Krishnapur camp opened fire around 4:00am yesterday.

The victims were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

Acting commanding officer Major Aftab Uddin of Naogaon 43 Rifles Battalion said BSF members of Krishnapur camp fired at least 14 rounds on the men as they entered Bangladesh territory with cattle around 4:00am. They sustained bullet wounds and later were rescued and sent to hospital by the locals, he added.

BDR strongly protested the incident.

Legal notice

FROM PAGE 16

take initiatives to remove all illegal temporary and permanent structures built on the river.

The notice said Buriganga, Turag and Shitalakshya rivers have been the main source of water for millions of people residing in Dhaka and Narayanganj.

Moreover, the rivers are playing a key role in the transport sector as well as maintaining the environmental equilibrium.

But encroachment, earth-filling and setting up of illegal structures continue on the river in violation of the provisions of the Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act 1995 (Amended in 2000 and 2002), leaving negative impacts on the environment, it said.

The secretaries of the planning, environment and forest, land, finance, shipping and water resources ministries and the chairman of BIWTA, the director general of the Department of Environment, the deputy commissioner of Dhaka and the police commissioner of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police have been made respondents.

Advocate Manzil Murshid served the demand of justice notice on behalf of the HRPB asking the respondents to initiate steps within four days for removing the unauthorised constructions. Otherwise, legal steps will be taken against them.

Major General

FROM PAGE 16

attention after he was appointed director (counter-terrorism) of the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) during the caretaker government's tenure.

Later, he was promoted to the rank of major general and made DG of Ansar and VDP.

Meanwhile, another much talked-about former DGFI director, Brig Gen Fazul Bari, who was given the job of defence attaché to Bangladesh embassy in Washington DC at the end of the caretaker government rule, has been called back to Dhaka.

As he did not respond to the orders immediately, the government has lately specified a time frame for him to return, said foreign ministry sources.

Before being transferred to the military intelligence agency, Bari was additional DG of the Rapid Action Battalion during the BNP-led four-party alliance rule.

Only 25 BDR men

FROM PAGE 1

"We are hopeful about arresting the absconding BDR jawans and when they are arrested more significant leads into the carnage will be gleaned from them," Faruk Khan yesterday said at a press briefing arranged at Pilkhana to update the media about the investigation and progress of the national probe committee report.

However, the briefing ended with some unwanted debates over media reports on the army probe findings as Faruk Khan termed media reports "speculative".

As the minister said he did not see the army probe report and that it has not yet been submitted to the government, reporters asked him how could he then term media reports "speculative".

"In world history, coming out of a probe report on any incident within two days after its completion is unprecedented," Faruk said, adding that he does not think publishing the army probe report was necessary.

Reporters asked him how and why did he term the news reports "speculative" while the army itself has not yet protested those news items.

Faruk then tried to explain the word "speculative" as "writing a news item on a report which is not yet officially published".

He said the army would do whatever is necessary in the force in the wake of the carnage on the basis of its probe report.

Faruk Khan said if the government feels necessary to make probe reports public in the interest of the nation, it would publish them.

He also said the national probe committee formed to investigate the carnage would submit its report in a few days.

He quickly wound up the press conference amid arguments.

BDR RESTRUCTURING

The committee formed to report on restructuring and renaming of Bangladesh Rifles yesterday submitted a partial report, suggesting logos, mottos, designs of uniform, and new names for the border guards.

The four-member body headed by BDR Director General Maj Gen Md Mainul Islam will submit the complete report in a few weeks.

Chaired by Faruk Khan, the committee held a four-hour long meeting at the BDR headquarters from 9:00am.

Elaborating on the partial

Rahim

FROM PAGE 1

of police (SSP) in Chittagong CID.

Rahim, who along with another ex-NSC boss Major Gen (ret'd) Rezaqul Haider, was held on Saturday in connection with 10 truckloads of arms and ammunition seized in Chittagong five years ago, needed several stitches to close a cut on the upper-lid.

As he was under treatment, the interrogators did not quiz him.

They however continued questioning Rezaqul who gave some information on the last day of his three-day remand yesterday, said sources close to the interrogators of Criminal Investigation Department.

His information bears some similarity to the confessional statement made by former NSI director (security) Sahab Uddin, they added.

Meanwhile, State Minister for Home Tanjim Ahmad Sohail yesterday told journalists that the sources of funds for the arms shipment and persons involved are coming out gradually.

He said the BNP-Jamaat coalition government had attempted to cover up the truth and divert attention from the arms haul case.

Our Chittagong office adds: The two ex-NSI chiefs might be brought face to face with Sahab Uddin to verify the information gleaned so far, said SSP Muslim.

The two would be produced before the court with a prayer for fresh remand today, he told The Daily Star.

CID sources said Rahim was first rushed to the police hospital in adjoining Dampara Police Lines. Later, he was taken to Chittagong Eye Infirmary and Training Complex at Pahartali.

He came out of the hospital at around 1:30pm, said the sources and witnesses.

SOHELTAJ

About the investigation into the Chittagong arms haul, the state minister for home said, "We have given the investigators a free rein. In no circumstances will we allow the probe to be influenced by any quarters."

About BNP Joint General Secretary Nazrul Islam Khan's remark that there's an ulterior motive behind bringing up Tarique Rahman's name in the arms smuggling, he said they did not name anyone.

Asked if the CID would be allowed to grill the influential persons of the previous alliance government, Sohail Taj said they would back the investigators to reveal the truth.

report, Faruk said a questionnaire with 18 questions on restructuring of the BDR was sent to 6,000 people in the armed forces, police, ansar, Rapid Action Battalion, former BDR officials and bureaucrats.

The report, prepared on the basis of suggestions of these people, has suggested 10 names for the border guards in English and Bangla, 10 mottos, and two designs of uniforms--one for those who will work in the office and a combat uniform for those on duty at the border.

Replying to a query, Faruk said the government will see if the BDR jawans who revolted after declaration of the general amnesty by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February 25 will come under it.

The BDR DG told reporters that BDR men who revolted after February 25 across the country committed more grave crimes.

STATUS OF INVESTIGATION
Faruk Khan said 1,390 people have so far been arrested in connection with the Pilkhana carnage and of them 580 were interrogated on remand.

He also informed that 85 BDR jawans have made confessional statements under section 164 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) while statements of 500 others have been recorded under section 161 of the CrPC.

He said 3,207 BDR jawans have so far been questioned about the carnage.

A total of 1,581 BDR men have been arrested in 29 districts outside Dhaka for staging mutiny, breaking in arsenals and looting firearms following the Pilkhana carnage, he said, adding that the number of firearms missing from Pilkhana now stands at 93. These include revolvers, rifles and SMGs.

Fuel bill

FROM PAGE 1

detected anomalies in the expenditures," he said.

Bakr said he would submit the findings to the main probe body.

He has already submitted a probe report to the main committee, asking it to recover Tk 35 lakh from Sircar, Akhtar Hamid and Delwar, which they took as medical bills illegally.

Both Sircar and Delwar have refuted the allegations and questioned the authority of the probe body to investigate the alleged corruption against them. Akhtar Hamid is now behind bars.

Nat'l ID cards

FROM PAGE 16

The meeting decided to start MRP and MRV after April next year in compliance with an international deadline. It also decided not to issue any non-machine readable passports from April next year. Passports that have validity beyond that period will be acceptable.

During the meeting Muhith proposed linking the national ID card to MRP. "If the national ID cards are linked with machine-readable passports then it would be digitised and it would prevent corruption," said the finance minister adding that digitisation is the main enemy of corruption.

He said the land registration cell and the police department are the country's top corruption infested sectors. "Probably the third one is LGRD or the judiciary. I do not know," he added.

The finance minister said an authority for the national ID cards would be set up. Currently the Election Commission is in authority, he said.

Briefing the newsmen after the meeting, Sahara said the army would place samples of the MRP and MRV soon and then the ministry would give its approval to start the job.

She said Tk 283 crore will be spent on the MRP project and the army will be given the job of preparing machine-readable passports as per the decision of Enec. Machine-readable passports will be launched in four colours--red, black, green and yellow.

Currently, 1.20 crore non-machine readable passports are in use and 10 lakh such passports are issued every year.

Sohail Taj said a steering committee on the MRP would be formed with Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder as its head and a project director from the army would be appointed soon on deputation to start the project.

"The project will be implemented through civil and military cooperation," he said, adding, "The MRP project has been designed keeping the e-passport (a passport that uses biometrics to identify a person) in mind so that we can upgrade to e-passport when time comes."

The meeting formed an eight-member technical committee, with director general of immigration and passport directorate as its convener, to deal with the MRP project and oversee its technical affairs. The committee has been asked to submit its report within 10 days.

UK House

FROM PAGE 16

the first person to quit the prestigious post since 1695 after losing moral authority among lawmakers, 23 of whom had signed a motion of no confidence.

Although there had been questions over his leadership for years, Martin's fate was sealed by his failure to embrace reforms which his opponents said were necessary to rebuild public confidence in politicians after the expenses furore.

"In order that unity can be maintained, I have decided that I will relinquish the office of speaker on Sunday June 21," he said in a brief statement to the lower house.

Martin, a former sheet metal worker and trade unionist, is also stepping down as a lawmaker for his home city, Glasgow.

This will leave Prime Minister Gordon Brown's struggling Labour government to fight a by-election in what was once a safe seat but could now be a magnet for anti-sleaze campaigners.

Revelations about lawmakers' lavish expense claims have dominated the headlines for nearly two weeks, prompting public fury in Britain as it struggles with its worst recession since World War II.

The Daily Telegraph newspaper has published leaked documents showing how MPs claimed from the public purse for everything from food and drink to repairs to a swimming pool, tennis court and a castle moat and installing a chandelier.

Both of the main political parties have announced action to crack down on over-extravagant spending.

Brown said that no MP who had defied expenses rules would be allowed to stand at the next general election.

David Cameron, leader of the main opposition Conservatives who polls tip to be premier within about a year, has forced some of his lawmakers to pay back expenses and is publishing all the party's claims online.

Meanwhile, Douglas Hogg, a backbench Conservative who charged taxpayers for the cost of cleaning the moat at his country home, said he would not stand at the next election, which must be held by mid-2010.

Commentators said Martin was doomed following a stumbling, bad-tempered session in the House of Commons on Monday when he made a statement on the row but still faced repeated calls to quit.

News of his departure was welcomed by MPs from across the political divide.

Stuart Bell, a Labour lawmaker and Martin ally, said the speaker had "paid a heavy price for trying to be an establishment figure when the establishment was falling away."

Muhith blasts

FROM PAGE 16

journalists after a meeting with the Association of Travel Agents in Bangladesh.

He said trade unions have been creating obstacles in proper functioning of the government whereas they should be easing the government's work.

The finance minister expressed dissatisfaction over trade union activities in different organisations including Biman Bangladesh Airlines, Bangladesh Bank etc.

Muhith said, the ministry of labour and employment is working to make the trade unions more welfare-oriented.

Sources at Bangladesh Bank and other state-owned banks said, after the government came to power Awami League supporting trade unions have been creating pressure on the management to allow irregularities.

Earlier during the BNP-led alliance's rule, BNP-backed trade unions did the same.

During the immediate past caretaker government's rule, trade union leaders were given promotions up to officer ranks so that they cannot participate in disruptive trade union activities any more.

Now, after the present government assumed power, these promoted officers are creating pressure on the management to demote them to their precious ranks again.

An official of Janata Bank alleged that the trade union leaders constantly pressurize the management for promotion and transfer of officials according to their choice.

These leaders have connections with government high ups and threaten to get management officials transferred, or their jobs terminated, if they don't comply, officials alleged.

Sahab talks

FROM PAGE 1

ammunition, which he did not mention in the statement recorded by a magistrate.

Sahab disclosed the involvement of high-profile politicians in it and also Sahab's presence at several secret meetings a few days before the consignment of illegal firearms and ammunition arrived in Chittagong.

"He earlier revealed the involvement of a country's high commission but did not mention about it in his confessional statement," said a NSI official.

Following Sahab's confessional statement, two former NSI chiefs -- Maj Gen (ret'd) Rezaqul Haider and Brig Gen (ret'd) Abdur Rahim -- were arrested. They are being grilled now.

During interrogation, Sahab said Dubai-based ARY funded the shipment of the illegal arms and ammunition while the NSI officers were given the task to transport those to Haluaghat in Mymensingh from Chittagong.

Sahab said he came close to a number of officials of various countries, including the consular and defence attaché of the high commission of a country, after he became the NSI director.

The former NSI official said in 2002, the then DG of NSI went to Dubai and held a meeting with the chief of a country's intelligence agency. He also sent an official to the US to keep track of the then leader of the opposition Sheikh Hasina's visit to the US in 2003.

He said ARY group Managing Director Salman Yusuf Rahman along with a person visited Dhaka to hold a meeting with the DG of NSI in 2003. ULFA chief Paresh Barua, two officials of ARY

group and the high commissioner and defence attaché of a country were present at the meeting at the DG's safe house.

Sahab said after a week of their departure, the DG held a meeting with him, Brig Wasim, Brig DS Shawkat Reza and Maj Liakat.

During questioning, Sahab also said Abdur Rahim's wife went to Dubai in 2003 on an invitation from ARY group and held a meeting with the chief of a country's intelligence agency.

The former NSI official said he handed over £40,000 as 'gift' from ARY group to the DG.

He said two officials of ARY group visited Dhaka in 2004. Maj Liakat received them at the airport. Later, the DG held a meeting with them in presence of Tarique Rahman at the Sonargaon Hotel.