

300 MP-advisers

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But technocrat ministers and women lawmakers elected to reserved seats are not recommended for the empowerment. All other ministers and lawmakers including the chief whip and other whips will become advisers to the municipalities if the bill is passed by the House.

Lawmakers were already made advisers to upazila parishads, another level of local governments, burying ruling Awami League's (AL) electoral pledge of making local governments self-reliant and autonomous.

Forty five lawmakers elected to reserved seats for women in the parliament however will not be made advisers to the municipalities, since they do not have constituencies to represent. For the same reason, they had not been made advisers to upazila parishads either.

The parliamentary committee however did not recommend making it mandatory for the municipalities to seek suggestions of advisers for running their administrations, unlike a provision made in the Upazila Parishads Act.

It however also did not specify the functions of the advisers, neither did it make it amply clear whether it is incumbent upon the local government institutions to seek suggestions of the advisers.

AL lawmaker Rahmat Ali, chairman of the committee, placed the report in the parliament.

In its report on the scrutiny of the municipalities' bill, the committee also recommended introduction of two posts of deputy mayors in each municipality, one of which will be reserved for women. The post of the chairman will be renamed as mayor, and ward commissioners will be called councillors.

The committee also recommended introduction of a municipality service for the local governments' employees. It also recommended giving legality to the municipality administrations that were elected under the now defunct municipality ordinance.

The LGRD ministry placed the municipalities bill in the parliament as the

Crossfire

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"If a case is filed in connection with the killings, actions will be taken against the people responsible through proper investigation," Sohel Taj told reporters after a meeting at the home ministry's conference room.

Mohammad Jinnah Ali, a student of mechanical engineering, and Mohsin Sheikh, a student of electrical engineering of the institute were killed in a 'shootout' with Rab members near the city's Manik Mia Avenue on May 28.

The students of the institute termed the incident 'planned killings by law enforcers' and demanded exemplary punishment to the culprits after a fair probe.

Replies to a query, Sohel Taj categorically said there is neither any instance of 'crossfire' nor violation of human rights in the country.

The state minister said special measures have been taken to prevent criminal activities.

Federer wins

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finalist Soderling 6-1, 7-6 (1), 6-4 on Sunday to complete a career Grand Slam and win his 14th major title, matching Sampras' record.

On his fourth try at Roland Garros, Federer became the sixth man to win all four Grand Slam championships.

"It's maybe my greatest victory, or certainly the one that removes the most pressure off my shoulders," Federer said. "I think that now and until the end of my career, I can really play with my mind at peace, and no longer hear that I've never won Roland Garros."

Midway through the match, a spectator ran onto the court and tried to put a hat on Federer. That only briefly delayed Federer's march to the title.

When the stylish Swiss hit a service winner on championship point, he fell on his knees to the clay that had vexed him for so long, screamed and briefly buried his face in his hands. He was teary by the time he met Soderling at the net, and fans gave Federer a standing ovation as he raised his arms in triumph.

Over 200 kids

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Our Natore correspondent reports: About 200 children were taken to the Singra Hospital with vomiting tendency and stomachache after they took Vitamin-A capsules and deworming tablets in Singra upazila.

However, only 16 of them were admitted to the hospital while the rest were released after giving treatment.

Our correspondent from Jhenidah adds: At least 33 children fell ill on Saturday after taking the medicines. They were admitted to the Jhenidah Sadar Hospital.

Some of them had been released after receiving treatment, said Civil Surgeon Niranjan Kumar Sikdar.

Our Faridpur correspondent reports: At least 10 more children fell sick in several areas in the district after taking Vitamin-A capsules and deworming tablets. Of them, six were admitted to the Faridpur General Hospital and two to the Nagarkanda Health Complex.

Our correspondent from Magura adds: several hundred parents thronged the Magura Sadar Hospital for check-up of their children on Saturday following the rumour of deaths of a few children in Faridpur, Jhenidah and Rajbari.

Meanwhile, the health minister in a statement said the Vitamin-A capsules were manufactured by a renowned Canadian pharmaceutical company and certified by the World Health Organization (WHO). The expiry date of the capsules was 2012.

The deworming tablets with validity till 2010 were supplied directly by the UNICEF said the minister.

He said the Vitamin-A campaign has been going on successfully in the country for the last three decades.

The minister assured that the capsules are by no means harmful to children and requested the parents not to panic.

While talking to the electronic media in the afternoon the minister said about 2,521 children in some remote areas of Charbaghara upazila in Faridpur were given Vitamin-A capsules and deworming tablets on June 4.

Of them, 29 in a particular area got admitted to the District Sadar Hospital with diarrhoea and vomiting tendency.

Quoting the district health officials the minister said examining the facts it could be easily understood that the sickness was caused not only by the side effects of the capsules but also malnutrition, excessive heat and environmental reasons.

Moreover, the area had experienced an outbreak of diarrhoea for the last few days.

The children, who fell ill after having Vitamin-A capsules and deworming tablets, received treatment at various hospitals in Faridpur, Sirajganj, Jhenidah, Madaripur, Magura and Natore, Directorate General of Health Services said, adding that most of them had already been released.

Photo show

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June 1 at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsads Bhaban, which was inaugurated by Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsads Abdul Hamid.

A photography exhibition on river pollution and encroachment was also held there.

Another photography exhibition will be held at Bahadurshah Park in the capital on June 14-16.

Mamun seeks

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inhumanly while in remand and then forced to give that statement in which he named several others in connection with the extortion.

Mamun was produced before the court under tight security yesterday. He is convicted to a total of 20 years' imprisonment in three cases.

After the hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate Tania Kamal ordered that the retraction petition be kept in the case record.

In his confession given on April 9 of 2007, Mamun said that he along with five others -- including former BNP lawmaker Khairul Kabir Khokon -- extorted the money from a construction firm owner in June 2005.

In the case he filed with Kafrul police on March 27 of 2007, Khan Mohammad Attaf Uddin, managing director of Reza Construction Ltd, complained that Mamun, Khokon and the five others extorted Tk 16 lakh from him in 2005.

Mamun, a close friend and business partner of former BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman, was arrested from his house on March 26, 2007.

Later, police seized a .22 bore pistol and eight bullets from him.

Mamun, an accused in a dozen extortion cases, was sentenced to a total of 20 years' imprisonment in separate cases for possessing firearms and ammunition, for not submitting his wealth statement, and for amassing wealth through illegal means.

Clean Heart

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personnel along with paramilitary BDR, police and Ansar joined the operation aiming to quell countrywide violent crimes.

As many as 44 people died in custody and hundreds sustained injuries following torture during the drive, triggering criticism for violation of human rights.

The then government, however, confirmed only 12 deaths and said all the victims died of heart attack in hospital after being handed over to justice.

During the operation several

murder cases were filed with

different police stations in the

country. But the indemnity law

precludes any move to seek

justice in the court of law for

custodial deaths and human

rights violation during the

countrywide clampdown on

crime.

The Joint Drive Indemnity

Act, 2003 says no-one can seek

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be filed against anyone involved

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death, torture, violation of

rights and for any damage of

physical, mental or financial

nature between October 16 and

January 9.

Moreover, no complaints can

be lodged against the person

or persons who had ordered the

drive.

The law says, "It is necessary and pertinent in the interest of the people to indemnify all the persons, including the members of the armed forces and law enforcers, for all the acts done during the joint drive from October 16, 2002 till the workday of January 9, 2003."

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in the country's history after the

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