

## Wrath of dowry

FROM PAGE 16

Only three months ago, her father, Mohammad Abdul Alek, a day labourer, had to endure immense hardship to arrange a dowry for his daughter's wedding.

"I didn't know from where my father would get the extra amount. However I went to my parents, but returned empty handed two days later," Parvin said as tears rolled down her cheeks.

"I'm the only daughter with three sons in the family, and I could feel the pain of my parents and the brothers, who were feeling totally helpless," she added.

When Parvin tried to explain to her husband and the in-laws that her parents are too poor to meet their demand, her husband's entire family became furious. They started citing, day and night, examples of other families in the village who had received larger amounts of dowries.

One Saturday morning in October 2000, her mother-in-law and sister-in-law asked her to collect hay from the harvest of paddy, and pile them up in front of their house. As she gathered the hay, she found two neatly wrapped packets underneath.

"My mother-in-law and sister-in-law asked me to take the packets to my room and to open them. They ran out of the room, and I don't remember anything after that," Parvin said.

She was admitted to Rajshahi Sadar Hospital with horrendous injuries, where doctors amputated both of her hands from the wrists. She lost one of her eyes, and can hardly see with the other. She said all her body bears marks of injuries.

As usual a case was filed with Paba police station, which kept dragging on. At one point a village shalish (an unofficial court of village

elders and influential people) 'settled the matter' by ordering her husband and his family to return the entire amount of dowry that Parvin's family had paid at the time her wedding, and granted her husband's family immunity from any punishment.

"They did return the dowry to my parents, but I got nothing. Now I'm struggling hard to live on as a handicapped person," Parvin sobbed.

## Moitree

FROM PAGE 16

The attackers, more than 50 in number, were equipped with hammers, axes, pipes and iron rods, said witnesses.

The incident took place an hour after the college authorities started selling admission forms in the morning.

Prof Farida Sultana, principal of the college, describing the incident said the attackers stormed into her office around 11:00am and threatened her of ominous consequences if she did not stop the admission process at once.

In a few minutes the cadres ransacked teachers room, Staff Council Office and the store beside it. They vandalised the furniture and electronic goods including phones and fax machines. At the time they were chanting slogans-- "Duniyar majdurekhao."

Police arrested three Chhatra Moitree leaders-- city unit president Motiur Rahman Mati, general secretary Asaruzzaman Sumon and joint secretary Muhaimeul Haque Rana-- from the scene. The three were seen directing the attackers, said police and witnesses.

However, Chhatra Moitree blamed Bangladesh Chhatra League, student front of the ruling Awami League, for the incident terming themselves victims of a conspiracy.

Additional police were later deployed at the college.

## Daylight saving

FROM PAGE 1

Shops and malls that usually remain open till 8:00pm closed after 8:00pm last night, with the clock running an hour ahead.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Friday night inaugurated the DST in Bangladesh at her official residence.

She urged all to be more conscious about using electricity and saving energy by utilising the daylight.

The government has adopted the DST so that people can best use the natural resource of sunlight, she said.

The government expects a five percent reduction in the national power demand, equivalent to 200 megawatt of power, during the evening peak hour--7:00pm to 8:00pm.

As per the government decision, the daylight saving measure begins this year from June 19 and ends on October 1, when the clock is to be set an hour back. From next year on, the clock would be set an hour forward on April 1 and set an hour back on October 1.

Professor AAMS Arefin Siddique, vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, said the university's classes, libraries, laboratories and examinations will be held according to the new DST.

"Initially we may feel something unusual while adopting the new time," he said adding that from the national perspective the decision is very much scientific.

Siddique said our social life style would also develop with the new time as its benefits have already been proven by some developed countries.

He thinks DST should remain even after electricity problems are solved.

A number of private and government schools were found not complying with the DST. Sources said some of those schools start their morning shifts as early as 7:00am which makes it very difficult for students, who live far away, to get to school. This forced the schools to advance their morning shift times which also had an impact on day shift timings.

Nur Mohammad Rifles Public School and College was one of those. The school's day shift started at noon, which was earlier 11:00am, said a guardian over phone to The Daily Star. As per the DST, the school should have started as usual at 11:00am.

Mobile phone operators, complied with the DST. The operators through short message service (SMS) and advertisements had informed the customers about DST and what would be considered peak and off-peak hours.

## Ashraf

FROM PAGE 1

office at Dhanmondi following a party sub-committee meeting on AL's 60th founding anniversary.

AL Presidium Member Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, who heads the sub-committee, chaired the meeting attended by leaders of the party's city unit and those in the districts adjoining Dhaka as well as lawmakers from the capital.

The meeting drew up a two-day programme to observe the founding anniversary on June 23.

The programme would begin with hoisting of the National Flag and party flag atop AL offices across the country, and placing of floral wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi by Sheikh Hasina and other party leaders in the morning.

A colourful procession brought out from Shikha Chirantan at Suhrawardy Udyan will then march to Bangabandhu Bhaban at Dhanmondi.

In the evening, a cultural function will be held at Paltan Maidan.

On June 24, a discussion followed by a cultural programme will be held at the same venue at 4:00pm. Sheikh Hasina will be the chief guest at the discussion.

Responding to a query on holding the party's national council within the deadline set by the Election Commission (EC), Ashraf said they would take a decision in this regard at a meeting of the party's highest policy making body following party's founding anniversary.

He however said if they fail to do so, they would seek extending the time limit.

## Shops burnt

FROM PAGE 16

the chemical warehouses on Road-23 of Rupnagar around 10:30am and quickly spread to the adjacent houses.

Locals said the four sustained burn injuries trying to douse the fire and recover their belongings from the burning houses.

Fire brigade sources said five fire engines form four fire stations reached the spot and doused the fire after an hour of effort.

## Learning English

FROM PAGE 1

initiative by The Daily Star and AKTEL.

Around 150 teachers of 77 high schools of Comilla, Brahmanbaria, Chandpur and Laxmipur attended the programme.

Under EIS, over 1,000 schools across the country will get three copies of The Daily Star each five days a week for free. The distribution already began in 286 schools in Dhaka and Mymensingh zones. More schools in Comilla zone will be brought under the programme on June 24.

The Daily Star will bring out an extra page featuring helpful materials and discussions every week to help students learn English language.

The venture also includes organising contests on spelling, vocabulary and book reading, among others.

Lauding the initiative, Comilla University Vice Chancellor Professor AHM Zehadul Karim said English is still a major problem, which is why many students fail in the Secondary School Certificate Exam.

This happens because of problems in the English teaching method, which was made complicated that scare students, he said addressing the occasion as the chief guest.

"Such complications and fear must go," Dr Zehadul Karim said, adding that EIS programme could greatly help remove such problems.

Comilla Education Board Chairman Prof Atiqur Rahman said, "There are many good English teachers but still the rate of failures in English in SSC level is increasing."

Math Olympiad, a country-wide programme by Prothom Alo to popularise Math, has significantly helped decrease the rate of failures in Math, he said expecting that the EIS will also help decrease the rate of failures in English.

He said a research found that secondary to degree level

students in Comilla have enough knowledge about English but they cannot speak or write only because they do not practise.

Termining secondary education the backbone of education, Atiqur Rahman said introduction of EIS would make students efficient at the language.

The Daily Star Senior Assistant Editor Shahnoor Wahid said, "Wherever your students work, they must need English to compete in the globalised world dominated by information technology."

AKTEL Head of Corporate Business Segufta Yesmin Samad said, "Teachers are playing the major role in educating the nation; we are here only to tell that we are with you."

"There might be many problems in the process but we will remove those with your feedbacks," she said.

AKTEL Chief Commercial Officer Bidyut Kumar Basu said under EIS, the schools would be brought under Internet facilities gradually.

Prof Shaheen Kabir of Jahangirnagar University delivered a presentation on the special page on English language, which will be distributed once a week along with The Daily Star.

## Minister blames

FROM PAGE 1

Citing examples of obtaining clemency from the Truth Commission by many government officials including engineers, forest officials and policemen by depositing a portion of their illegal money, Shafique Ahmed said these officials have committed corruption and actions should be taken against them after investigation.

Urging all to play an integrated role in combating corruption in the country, he said the government has taken steps to strengthen the Anti-corruption Commission.

## RMG factory

FROM PAGE 16

workers' leader Tania, and Aleya when they appeared with two sacked workers-- Mahfuza and Farzana-- at the sixth floor of the factory around 7:30am and demanded reinstatement of the two.

In reprisal, around 70 workers of the floor took to the street and started hurling brickbats at the factory and blocked DIT road.

When police reached the spot and tried to lift the barricade, chase and counter chase took place between police and the agitating workers, police said.

Sub-inspector of Khilgaon Police Station told The Daily Star that around 11:00am police moved the barricade from the road.

Managing Director of the factory Lutfur Rahman told The Daily Star that the two ex-workers brought false allegation of illicit relationship against worker Jharna and supervisor Saiful. The complaint resulted in similar incident at the floor during lunch hour on June 16.

Following the incident the authorities investigated into the allegation and found

nothing, Mafuza and Farzana, as a result, were fired on June 17, he said adding, but yesterday garment workers Aleya and some others who work in another unit of the group took the two to create chaos in the factory.

A worker of the floor said people of the authorities first attacked the workers. Later when police took some of the agitating workers upstairs for settlement, they also assaulted them (workers) in front of police.

Lutfur Rahman said they closed the factory for the day fearing further damage by the agitating workers.

Patrol Inspector of Khilgaon Police Station Mohammad Golam Mortuza said, "We handed Deputy General Manager Biswajit Barua and two female workers over to police for interrogation."

No case was filed in this connection till 7:00pm, as a meeting was on progress at BGMEA among the workers' representative, officials of the garment factory and BGMEA leaders.

Police have been deployed at the garment.

## Govt expects

FROM PAGE 1

criticisms from discussants present at the dialogue styled "State of Bangladesh Economy and Budget Responses 2009-10". He said those who take the opportunity would have to submit a three-year plan of what they want to do with the amount to be legalised.

The finance minister said the facility has been offered to attract investment. Currently, constraint on investment is the biggest challenge in the absence of adequate energy supply.

Noted economist Prof Rehman Sobhan chaired the discussion attended by former finance adviser to the caretaker government Mirza Azizul Islam, former agriculture minister MK Anwar and a number of economists and businessmen.

CPD Executive Director Prof Mustafizur Rahman presented a keynote paper.

Economists, civil society members and leaders of business chambers, including Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), raised voices against the provision for whitening black money.

The proposed budget for fiscal year 2009-10 has offered an opportunity to legalise

untaxed money at a flat rate of just 10 percent tax, which is much lower than the highest 25 percent tax rate for taxpayers.

Mirza Azizul Islam said untaxed money is already in the market and there is hardly any possibility of bringing back the untaxed money already sent abroad.

MK Anwar expressed worries that black money would dominate the society. He advised the finance minister to impose real tax rate in addition to a penalty for the amnesty so that honest taxpayers do not feel discouraged.

MCCI President Abdul Hafiz Choudhury said the practice of whitening black money should be stopped as it has hardly generated much revenue.

The CPD also opposed the provision, saying it would be injustice to the honest taxpayers.

According to government documents since independence, scopes for whitening money have been given nine times in different ways and Tk 18,091 crore was legalised but the government got only Tk 1,480 crore as tax on the amount.

Highest Tk 9,682 crore was whitened in two phases during the last caretaker rule.

## Sircar, Akhtar

FROM PAGE 1

It also suggested taking legal actions if they do not return the money.

Earlier, another sub-committee recommended retrieving Tk 35 lakh that Sircar, Akhtar and Delwar took illegally.

Shajahan Khan said they are only working to ensure transparency and accountability in the Parliament Secretariat's spending and thus uphold the dignity of the House.

In another development yesterday, the all-party committee met Speaker Abdul Hamid at his office and apprised him of the progress in its work. It also informed him about the decision to summon Sircar, Akhtar Hamid and Delwar on June 27, added the meeting sources.

The committee today starts compiling the findings of its three sub-committees who have turned in reports recommending stern legal actions against the three.

Parliament will decide on the next course of action once it has the final probe report from the main probe body on or before July 9.

"We want to hear their versions before finalising our reports," Rabbi said, adding that the probe committee believes they would show up at the June 27 meeting.

Sircar, also a lawmaker of the ninth parliament, said he would decide whether to attend the committee's meeting after going through the letter.

Earlier, the committee had decided to summon them to be present at its meeting on June 10.

Asked about deferral, its chief said they had changed the date as a sub-committee could not submit its report on time.

Shajahan Khan, head of the sub-committee that submitted its report yesterday, however said the date was deferred because the legislature was in budget session then.

In response to a growing call from the lawmakers, the speaker on March 19 formed the all-party parliamentary body to investigate alleged corruption in the Parliament Secretariat during the tenure of former speaker Sircar and Hamid.

The probe body and its sub-committees have already disclosed details of financial irregularities by Sircar, Akhtar Hamid and Delwar.

Sircar and Delwar have refuted the allegations and questioned the legality of the probe.

## UN probe

FROM PAGE 16

"The duty of determining criminal responsibility of the perpetrators of the assassination remains with the Pakistani authorities," said the statement.

The other members of the commission, set up in response to a request from the Pakistani government, is Marzuki Darusman, former attorney general of Indonesia, and Peter Fitzgerald, a veteran of the Irish National Police who has served the UN in a number of capacities.

The commission will submit its report to the secretary-general within six months of the start of its work. Ban will share the report with the government and submit it to the Security Council for information.

Noting that the anniversary of Benazir's birth on Sunday, the statement added that the UN is committed to assisting Pakistan by determining the facts and circumstances of her death.

Meanwhile, UN agencies and their partners are pressing ahead with their efforts to support the 2.5 million people forced to flee their homes by the ongoing conflict between government forces and militants in Pakistan's North West Frontier Province (NWFP). The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) has welcomed the airlift on Friday of more than 35,000kg of relief supplies, donated by the Irish and the Norwegian governments, for its operations on behalf of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The urgently-needed relief goods, which include tents, blankets, kitchen sets and mosquito nets, are now on their way to the agency's operational hub in the province, where they will be used to support the camps housing many of the displaced.

The UN said that the \$543 million humanitarian appeal launched about a month ago to deal with the needs of Pakistan's displaced has so far received only 30 percent of the necessary funding.

## POLICE WARNINGS

# Iranian rally organiser backs down

AFP, Tehran

One of the organisers of a mass rally in Tehran backed down yesterday after authorities threatened a harsh response, but it was unclear if people would stay away as riot police were deploying onto the streets.

The reformist Combatant Clerics Assembly said "permission was asked to hold a rally, but since it has not been issued, there will be no rally held."

But an aide to defeated candidate Mehdi Karroubi, who had earlier said his supporters planned to go ahead with a rally, later said he was unsure whether they would demonstrate or not.

The interior ministry said no rally anywhere in the country was authorised and warned that "those who violate this will be confronted according to the law."

At the same time, police said the organisers of any future rallies would be arrested, with the police chief saying firm action would be taken against any demonstration.

Following those warnings, witnesses said hundreds of riot police were deploying to Enghelab Square, where the rally was to have taken place.

An aide to Karroubi had told AFP early on Saturday that a rally would be held at 4:00 pm (1330 GMT), but an hour beforehand there were no reports of any people massing to demonstrate.

On Friday, Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei demanded an end to marches and warned that candidates would be "responsible for the blood, violence and chaos."

Meanwhile, the Guardians Council electoral watchdog offered to randomly recount up to 10 percent of the ballot boxes from the disputed June 12 presidential election, state television said.

The council made its partial recount offer after meeting to study the 646 alleged poll

## Coal mining

FROM PAGE 16

preserved. This statement however reflects the outcome of the four-day session.

Other NRB and local experts who attended the four-day session said that Khalequzzaman misrepresented the discussions that took place at the Jamuna Resource on coal policy, land subsidence, resettlement and environment issues arising out of coal mining.

"He gave an impression to the public that this four-day session was designed to legitimise open pit mining and coal export and they sat with the same group of people which is termed that session a grand conspiracy," said a Petrobangla official who attended the Jamuna sessions.

"While the session was highly academic and focused, we had a lot of discussions with Dr Khalequzzaman and we had converged that the policy will not be bent on any particular style of mining. Instead, we recommended that the method of mining will be determined by cost-benefit ratio. In certain areas, underground mining method would be more beneficial for the nation, while in some other areas, open pit would be more beneficial," he added.

NRB Saleque Sufi who is working on mines and minerals with Queens Monarch University said, "It was unofficially agreed among the NRBs that we would not make any isolated statement to the press."

But contrary to the spirit of the group, Khalequzzaman Mohammad and Sarwat Chowdhury appeared at a press conference of a group which is agitating against mining in Bangladesh within less than 24 hours of the formal conclusion of the programme. He noted that a leader of the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas and Mineral Resources--that has been campaigning against any coal sector development--was present at the conference.

"As invited guests of Petrobangla and part of the group, normal courtesy demands that they should have consulted with Petrobangla chairman or at least the group co-ordinator before joining the conference," he added.

"NRBs in the brain storming session did not recommend any particular mining method but discussed in-depth all forms mining methods and associated impacts. It was agreed that mining methods would only be adopted after extensive feasibility study and on detailed cost benefit analysis. Yet within less than 24 hours of agreed position these two professionals from USA disowned the agreed position," he pointed out.

Another participant noted, "This was not a discussion to give Asia Energy's Phulbari project a go-ahead. But unfortunately some people are giving that impression."

"Some asked why did we meet at Jamuna resort. I ask how do you get people fully devoted to discussion and debates for four days if you don't take them out from Dhaka?" he added.

violations registered by the three defeated candidates -- former parliament speaker Karroubi, former premier Mir Hossein Mousavi and ex-Revolutionary Guards chief Mohsen Rezaei.

Neither Mousavi nor Karroubi showed up at the meeting, Press TV reported, without saying why.

Early on Saturday afternoon, Mousavi's newspaper website said he would soon make an "important" announcement, but did not elaborate.

However, powerful former president and Mousavi supporter Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani denied reports that he too was to issue a statement.

In demanding an end to protests, Khamenei warned that otherwise there could be further bloodshed beyond the seven deaths reported by state radio.

Amnesty International said on Friday it had information of up to 10 deaths.

Beyond Khamenei's general warning, Mousavi was singled out by the head of Iran's security council on Saturday for a specific one.

## Notre Dame

FROM PAGE 16

before other classmates. Iqbal said he had complained to a couple of teachers, but to no avail.

In the meantime, Babu and Rao kept on fraying his temper.

To avenge humiliation, Iqbal said, he took Babu to a house in Motijheel on June 4 and stabbed him.

The following day he learnt from newspapers that Babu had succumbed to his injuries.

## Warehouses

FROM PAGE 16

that the drive is being hindered due to court's stay orders against eviction.

BIWTA Deputy Director Saiful Islam said that they could not evict 11 out of 33 structures constructed on Gabtali bank of Turag because of such stay orders.

He said encroachers often get stay order on the basis of lease deal made by different agencies.

Foreshore and port area of the river should remain under the conservancy of BIWTA, he said, adding that district administration, district councils and city corporations lease out land of the riverbanks for commercial uses.

Another BIWTA official engaged in the eviction drive along Shitalakha river said that they also would not be able to evict Ekota Samobay Samity and Samata Samobay Samity and their 42 small structures opposite to Narayanganj river port terminal.

The encroachers have obtained court's stay order, as assistant commissioner (land) of Narayanganj leased out foreshore land to them although they were once evicted during caretaker government in 2007.

After lunch break, the eviction team in Narayanganj engaged labourers to demolish part of a poultry farm owned by Ferdous and two residential houses owned by Shah Alam and Shikdar in Syedpur area.

The team, however, could not knock down a mosque, built by Popular Jute Mills on the river, fearful of hurting religious sentiment.

Meanwhile, authorities have identified a total of 70 illegal structures on Gabtali and Amin Bazar banks of Turag. The encroachers have occupied a total of 7.5 acres foreshore of the river.

BIWTA and district administration of Dhaka and Gazipur demolished more than 132 illegal structures near Tongi river port in Turag during the nine-day drive that ended on June 11.

Executive magistrate Irin Jahan led the Shitalakha drive while Mokbl Hossain led the drive in Turag.

The drive continues both in Shitalakha and Turag today.

Canal Recovery Drive  
Wasa launched yesterday's eviction drive to reclaim Hazaribagh Canal and demolished a number of makeshift illegal structures erected on the canal.

A total of 15 makeshift structures, four concrete toilets and portion of a two-storey building were demolished during the drive. Wasa chairman Golam Mostafa and managing director Md Shahjahan Ali Mollah supervised the drive.

Special Metropolitan Magistrate Kazi Wasi Uddin said that they would conduct the next drive to reclaim Kalyanpur Cha Khal and Rupnagar Khal in Mirpur.