

Poisoned food

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But, when reporters contacted Sajeda, a senior member of the AL Presidium, at her Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban office, she denied having made those comments. She said, "I did not say she [Hasina] was provided with poison-mixed food. What I said is she suffered from food poisoning after having food supplied to the sub-jail."

But the footage of a report of private TV channel ATN Bangla shows her saying Hasina became ill after having the "poison-mixed food" served to her. She also alleged that the AL chief was tortured in prison.

"After I heard the news, I requested her not to take any food there," Sajeda said. "Since no food from outside was allowed in prison, she had to eat flattened rice, puffed rice and banana."

"Because of the quantity of poison mixed in her food, her eyes... one of her ears had already been damaged... and her face got swollen," Sajeda said, adding that Hasina's face still gets swollen sometimes.

When contacted an official of the then prison authority denied the allegation outright, saying all food was checked by the doctor before serving the two former prime ministers--Hasina and Khaleda Zia--when they were in sub-jail.

US okays

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Republican House Minority Leader John Boehner warned the measure would send energy costs skyrocketing and denounced it as "the biggest job-killing bill that has ever been on the floor of the House."

The pitched political battle over a central plank of Obama's platform now shifts to the US Senate, where the prospects for action this year are uncertain and where outspoken foes of the House approach wield considerable clout.

Gulshan lake

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on those lakes are on despite officials assigned by Rajuk to protect it under the Gulshan Lake Development and Conservation Project.

Project Director (PD) engineer Zahid Hasan Faruqi said, "I cannot talk about it without the permission of the chairman."

As many as 20 powerful land grabbers are filling up the Gulshan-Baridhara lake on the Shahjahanpur Jheelpar end just next to the south of Mariam Tower-1 in violation of the wetland conservation act.

Grabbers are also active at Karail T&T colony point of the Gulshan-Banani Lake.

FM Abdul Haq Bhuiyan and his mother-in-law Sofia Begum together have filled an eight-katha area in the lake with earth.

The lake is identified as a lake in the Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan (DMDP) and the layout of the lake is in accordance with the Wetland Conservation Act, said Rajuk town planning officials.

A grabber at the end of the Gulshan Road no-23/C has constructed a six-storey building on the lake without any approval from Rajuk.

Land filling has also been going on at the end of the Ice-cream Factory Road at south Badda in broad daylight for last couple of months.

Despite repeated attempts, Rajuk Chairman Md Nurul Huda could not be contacted for his comment.

Public Works Minister Abdul Mannan Khan said, "I have repeatedly instructed Rajuk to stop it. I will look into the matter right now."

For the last two months, encroachers at Shahjahanpur Jheelpar have embarked on rampant earth filling along with construction of fresh makeshift structures and boundary walls encroaching upon the lake without any permission from the Rajuk.

During a visit to the site on June 23, this correspondent found 'caretakers' are all busy with dumping fresh earth and erecting boundary walls, despite there being a High Court (HC) stay in effect.

The site is earmarked as part of the lake in the Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan (DMDP) and in the lake's layout as per the wetland conservation act, said Rajuk town planning section officials.

Justice Abu Tarikh, a sitting HC judge, said he had just erected a boundary wall around his small plot, adding that he had only 3.5 kathas of

"How could it be possible as we the officials would have been the first to be held responsible for any accident involving such important persons as former prime ministers?" the official said while talking to The Daily Star last night.

He said they were extra cautious and that is why they were more worried about both the former premiers during their stay in sub-jail.

"It was our duty to look after them properly and there was no scope for negligence in our work," he said. "This [the allegation] is absolutely unfortunate and undesirable."

Hasina was arrested on July 16, 2007 on graft charges and was freed on June 12, 2008 on bail.

Sajeda also spoke on other issues while addressing the programme held at the auditorium of Supreme Court Bar Association.

She said there is no chance of giving the opposition BNP more seats in the front row of the House on the left of the speaker's podium as they have already been given more seats than the opposition deserves. Sajeda demanded punishment to those who distorted the real history of the Liberation War.

India to make

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judiciary into confidence before the bill is passed, he added.

Moily said his ministry's plans for judicial reforms would be made public within a month or two.

He said there was no question of taking a confrontational line with the judiciary on the issue of disclosure of judges' assets and liabilities.

So far, Supreme Court judges have voluntarily declared their assets to the Chief Justice of India who however has not placed those declarations in public, saying a law first be enacted to prevent misuse of such information.

Padma

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Sangsad Nur-e-Alam Chowdhury was also present at the rally held at Banskandi union parishad ground.

The minister said the Awami League government would ensure a balanced development of the country. It has also taken up a new policy for poverty alleviation.

He mentioned that the BNP-Jamaat alliance government did development work in some specific areas. And the caretaker government during its two-year tenure was busy with tasks for which it did not have the mandate, he added.

Meanwhile, when completed, Sheikhpur bridge would sharply reduce the distance to Kaorakandi river port benefiting people of the southern districts.

Officials said foundation stone of the bridge was laid in March 2001 during the tenure of the previous AL government.

Info commission

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Speaker Abdul Hamid said establishing the right to information is very much urgent in the country in order to ensure the government's transparency and accountability.

He said secrecy is the fundamental basis of corruptions at the government offices and right to information can prevent the abuse of political power and corruption.

There is a culture of secrecy at public offices for a long time and those who remain in the centre of power make dilly-dally in providing information, he said.

MIF Executive Director Shaheen Anam said although there are some challenges in implementing the right to information act, passing it is a good step.

The people will be able to know some urgent information about the violation of human rights and corruption from the officials concerned within a very short time after enforcement of the act, she said.

Presided over by Deputy Speaker of the Parliament Shawkat Ali, the meeting, among others, was addressed by Chief Whip of the ruling party Abdus Shahid, Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abidin Faroque, APPG vice chairpersons- Shahriar Alam, MP and Mahabub Ara Begum Gini, MP, PET Senior Policy Analyst Monowar Mostafa and barrister Tanjib-Ul Alam.

About 30 lawmakers took part in the workshop. The lawmakers said the mindset of the government officials would have to be changed to implement the right to information act.

Residents rally

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"The lake has already been choked up at many points due to illegal earth filling. It is the only natural lake in the capital. If it vanishes then the residents of the area, even the entire city will suffer immensely," he said.

During a visit to the lake site, The Daily Star correspondent also found that encroachers have already built houses in some places on the lake.

The residents alleged that encroachment is going on violating the High Court order, which says "not to disturb or destroy the greeneries and the lake for the purpose of construction of any road or creating any residential or commercial plots".

The 200-acre area of the lake was declared an Ecologically Critical Area (ECA) in 2001. It is also an important flood control reservoir in the city.

However, indiscriminate encroachment, direct discharge of untreated sewage and dumping of solid wastes into the lake have already wreaked havoc on the water body.

Zahurul Islam, secretary of Gulshan society, said Gulshan is the home to many influential people like incumbent and former ministers, secretaries and government high officials. They should care a little more about the place they live in.

The residents also demanded protection of all water bodies of the country for the next generation.

Station Master Golam Mostafa of Mobarakganj Railway Station said passengers instantly leaped out of the train after the bomb exploded.

On-duty railway personnel extinguished the fire.

Sources said the bomb was probably in an overhead luggage compartment of the bogie.

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bogie caught fire.

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Fresh swine flu

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decided to distribute the forms among the inbound passengers in every flight under the responsibility of respective airlines.

Soon after the pandemic alert of swine flu, the government has started health screening at 16 entry points of the country, including Zia International Airport. Due to a lax monitoring at the airport, a man carrying the A (H1N1) virus entered into the country and later spread it to a few others.

A total of eight persons who were detected with the virus are undergoing treatment in home confinement. They are getting well gradually, said Prof Mahmudur Rahman, adding that a total of 30 families of eight patients have been kept under close observation so that the virus cannot spread further.

The seminar was organised by One World One Health: Bangladesh Initiative at IEDCR auditorium.

Director General of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) Prof Shah Monir Hossain,

Scope bugs 8 donors

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2007, and the money laundering prevention act and the anti-terrorism act, which the present government ratified recently.

The implication of the provision in the international arena may be that sending remittance by international organisations may be hampered. Transactions between local and foreign banks for import and export may also be hindered, said the letter.

A high official of Bangladesh Bank said after formulating the draft law the NBR sent it to the law ministry for vetting. It is a mystery how the law ministry vetted the law as they are aware that it contradicts the money laundering prevention act and anti-terrorism act, the official said.

Under these acts earning money through corruption, bribe, smuggling and arms trade has been considered as a serious crime and a punishable offence. If money earned through illegal ways is made legal and no question can be raised, the acts become ineffective, the Bangladesh Bank official added.

BNP trio skips

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get all necessary documents at the meeting or he could get access to those kept at the Parliament Secretariat before the meeting.

Both the committee and Sircar remained rigid on their stance and finally Sircar decided to skip the meeting.

"There is no provision according to which we could provide him with the documents," Rabbi said.

He added the letters sent by Sircar suggest he is preparing to launch a legal battle against the committee. But he might not get the opportunity to file a case because of the way the committee replied his letters, he observed.

Contacted by The Daily Star over phone, Sircar, who was outside Dhaka when the probe body was waiting for him, said the committee was formed to "harass" him and its formation was "illegal".

"The law will take its own course," he said when asked what he would do if the probe body in its report recommends action against him.

Asked whether he would return Tk 27.86 lakh he took against medical bill "ignoring laws", he said he would return the money if the Supreme Court orders him.

In his reply to the probe body, former deputy speaker Akhtar Hamid claimed he "duly" took Tk 1.32 lakh on medical grounds, which was approved by the then speaker.

On receiving additional fuel allowance, he said he followed the previous instances.

The committee chief after reviewing Hamid's letter said it is apparent the former deputy speaker admitted the allegations against him.

The committee will sit on June 30 and July 1 to finalise the probe report and is likely to place it before the House on July 5 or July 6, a committee member told The Daily Star.

The committee after investigation accused Hamid and Delwar of illegally taking medical allowance of Tk 35 lakh and additional fuel allowance of Tk 1.36 crore.

Two separate sub-

Director General of the Department of Livestock Dr Habibur Rahman, President of One Health Nitish Devnath and Additional Inspector General of Police Aminul Islam, among others, spoke.

Our Correspondent from Kushtia adds: Another person was found with the symptoms of swine flu under the screening programme of Chaudanga Health Department yesterday.

Forty years old man who returned from Krishnanagar of India yesterday entered into the country through Darshana check post.

The health department found the man with symptoms of swine flu. Detailed information about the person was sent to Dhaka in the evening.

Civil Surgeon of the district Dr ANM Bazlur Rahman said if his condition does not improve within ten days, he would be sent to Dhaka.

The authorities concerned in Dhaka said the man is kept in his village home and steps have been taken to collect the sample of his saliva and nasal drop to be tested in the laboratory.

Last week the World Bank in its reaction to the budget proposed for fiscal year 2009-10 also said the provision is in conflict with the UN convention Bangladesh has signed and the anti-graft laws of the country.

It also said, "It is not clear in the policy how the government will differentiate between the money earned through use of arms, drug trade, robbery and stealing, and the undisclosed money earned through legal way."

Another NBR official said scopes for whitening money were given under these four provisions before the rule of the last caretaker government. The provisions were revived when this government also decided to give the scope.

Sources said the government is also contemplating whether or not to keep the money whitening scope for purchasing flats. Prices of flats have already increased three to four times following the announcement of the scope and if it remains, none other than those who have black money would be able to buy flats.

committees have already submitted their recommendations to the main probe body for recovery of the money the trio took as medical bill and additional fuel allowances.

The committee was formed on March 19 to probe alleged corruption and irregularities occurred at the Parliament Secretariat during Sircar's tenure. One of the two sub-committees has already recommended scrapping membership of Sircar in parliament and filing cases against Hamid and Delwar, who are not lawmakers.

Asked what action could be taken against Sircar, committee member Moeenuddin Khan Badal yesterday said the House will definitely take action if it thinks one of its members committed misconduct and his presence in parliament is unacceptable.

FM asks India

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Dipu Moni also called for greater cohesion among South Asian countries as, in spite of huge potential, the region got grossly disintegrated.

"As the era of colonialism was over and the countries of South Asia are now able to decide their own future, the South Asians should come together to uplift their future because the cost of isolation was very high, for the countries and the people," she said during the bilateral talks with the Indian state minister.

Dipu Moni remarked that the relations between the two countries have been growing stronger since the independence of Bangladesh when India extended help at the time of the Liberation War.

They discussed different aspects of bilateral relations and Dipu Moni observed that there were many unsettled issues between the two countries that could be solved by discussion and negotiation.

The Bangladesh minister also congratulated Preneet Kaur and the Government of India on their recent victory in elections.

Sahara sees

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The demand for industrial police is not new. The garment factory owners have been demanding the force be formed for the last few years.

The leaders of garment sector also met the finance minister recently and demanded allocation needed to form a 1,500 men industrial police force.

"The industrial police force will be formed soon," said the home minister adding that her ministry has the right intention to improve law and order as it is inseparably linked with the government's success in ruling the country.

Sahara also sought cooperation from the businessmen and people of the country in improving law and order.

Referring to Friday's murders at the city's Karwan Bazar, Sahara said there is no alternative to improving law and order to maintain the image of the government.

At the function, the home minister handed over a pick-up truck to Steerup Police Station in Gazipur. BGMEA donated the pick-up truck.

Garment workers

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to the authorities to raise their salary. They allege the authorities tried to dismiss the petitioners on this reason.

The Ansars personnel who were on duty at the factory intervened and fired three rounds of bullets, injuring two and resulting in a huge protest.

Following the shooting, the workers took to the Dhaka-Tangail Highway and started vandalising vehicles blocking the road.

On information, police rushed to the spot and removed the protesters from the road after an effort for half an hour at 10:30am.

Police said as they cleared the highway the workers entered the factory compound from behind and set fire to the Ansars camp.

During the arson attack the Ansars fired another blank shot that worsened the situation. The infuriated workers hurled brickbats at the factory damaging the windowpanes and doors, police said.

At this stage, workers from nearby garments, which were shut fearing a possible attack, joined the agitators, witnesses say.

Monwar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Ashulia police station, said, "We picked up the Ansars personnel along with their arms to ease the situation and save them from the angry mob."

BNP warns

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Hafiz was taking part in BBC's Bangladesh Sanglap at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the capital.

Speaking at the Sanglap, Food and Agriculture Minister Abdur Razzak said the Asian Highway would bring the country economic gains. Getting connected with it is not giving India a corridor, and the past government had made Bangladesh incur economic losses by opposing it.

BNP is opposing the country's linking with the Asian Highway just to confuse the people by doing anti-Indian politics, he said.

On the proclamation of independence, Hafiz said, "Ziaur Rahman had proclaimed independence of the nation on behalf of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and what is the problem in giving him due recognition?"

He went on, "Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was undoubtedly the hero of the Liberation War, and there cannot be any comparison between him and others. But Awami League (AL) does not want to give any other person their due recognition for their role in the war."

The BNP leader further said since the AL did not have any remarkable success in the near past, it uses the name of Sheikh Mujib in its campaigns.

Abdur Razzak said the AL recognises everybody who sacrificed their lives in the Liberation War. But there can be no comparison between Bangabandhu and any others for their role in achieving independence.

It is BNP which does not want to utter the name of Bangabandhu, and spraked debate over the proclaimer of independence.

Moazzem Hossain, editor of The Financial Express said, "I did not hear Ziaur Rahman claiming that he is the proclaimer of independence."

Other speakers at the discussion said the law and order in the country has deteriorated, and it has to be improved.

Street urchins

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prepared for use in repairing or joining items of leather, rubber etc. After opening the cover of a solution packet, it is kept in a polythene bag. And then the vapour of solution is taken by inhaling and exhaling until it is exhausted.

In addition to popular narcotics, rubber solutions have become popular amongst the teenagers specially in underprivileged class, for the last couple of years. Even some adolescents from middle class are also inhaling solutions as supplementary drugs without knowing its bad impact on their health. Experts say it may destroy central nervous system and damage vital organs such as liver and lungs.

Uzzal and his gang were found taking vapour of a locally made synthetic rubber adhesive's popular brand 'Diamondal'. Other brands such as 'Fresh' are also easily available in hardware shops in the country.

"We buy one solution from hardware shops paying around Tk 25. Even sellers of the shops also know the reason behind the purchase since there are thousands of 'dandy' addicts in the city," said Uzzal who has been taking dandy and other drugs for last few years with his friends most of whom are ragpickers.

"After taking the vapour for half an hour we feel very relaxed," said a 15-year old Ibrahim of the gang adding, "We begin our day taking 'dandy'. We also take other drugs such as ganja collecting from Fokirni Bazar Bosti under Tejaon Police Station."

All the members of the group are teenagers and ragpickers by profession. For collecting money to buy drugs they steal valuables at different corners of the city. They spend the day together taking various drugs at different scrap shops near Tejaon level crossing.

"We take ganja throughout the daytime and at evening we take jhakk, (jhakk is a cocktail of drugs such as uncin, seduxen, phenergan and citin). We collect these from Karwan Bazar area," said Rajib, a ragpicker.

Well, Tejaon is not the lone place for such drug abusers in the city. Karwan Bazar, Begunbari, Kamalapur and Sadarghat are other hot spots where the teenage ragpickers take various types of drugs.

New crime baron

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39 Awami League, and Nuruddin Sarkar Jewel, 35, bodyguard of Faruque, were killed in the Friday's gun attack.

The traders also alleged that recently Faruque got himself involved in the collection of extortion and distributed the sum money among criminal gangs, except that of Ashiq.

Meanwhile, a brother of Faruque filed a case with Tejaon Police Station Friday night against four local BNP leaders and seven other unknown persons.

According to the case statement, Faruque had a dispute over business with the four BNP leaders who hired gunmen to kill him.

After the killing, Faruque's family members blamed any of the criminal groups involved in extortion at Karwan Bazar for the murder. They also alleged that different criminals used to call on his cellphone and issued death threats.

Businessmen close to Faruque's family said they had to accuse the local BNP leaders in the case following pressure from different quarters.

The four local BNP leaders are L Rahman, president of BNP's 39 ward, Nabi Solaiman, ex-religious affairs secretary of Jubo Dal central committee, and Sayeed and Nurul Islam, two ward level leaders.

Deputy Commissioner of Tejaon Zone of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Chowdhury Manjurul Kabir told The Daily Star that they have arrested two people suspecting their involvement in the killings. The arrested persons are being interrogated, he said, refusing to disclose their names.

The condition of Abdur Rahim, vice-president of ward-39, who received three bullets in the chest during the gun attacks, is still critical. He is undergoing treatment at Chest Diseases Hospital at Mohakhali.

Meanwhile, panic gripped the Karwan Bazar traders following the triple murder incident. Though trading was

Even it is quite popular in other district towns such as Sylhet and Bogra. Unaware of dangerous effect, teenagers from other classes are also becoming addict to dandy.

Sources at the Department of Narcotics Control said they are well informed about the use of solutions as substitute drugs in the city and other district towns. But action against such drug abuse is quite difficult since solutions are not banned, according to the sources.

Even doctors who deal with drug abusers are concerned of the matter but they do not have in-depth study in that, said Dr. M. Khosru Parvez Chowdhury, a teacher of National Mental Health Institute and Hospital.

He said "For the last couple of years we know that the underprivileged children are addicted to solutions. But they never approach us for rehabilitation."

Dr. Chowdhury suggests to carry out in-depth study on the drug abusers belonging to underprivileged class. "We consider drug abuse as a mental disorder. If it is addressed properly, social crime will be reduced," he said.

About the bad impact of taking rubber solutions ABM Faroque, professor of Pharmaceuticals Engineering department of Dhaka University, said "The main element of any leather solution is organic solvents for which its users feel drowsiness. These organic solvents contain toxic chemicals such as carbon tri-chloride, toluene, acetone and benzene. Vapour of such toxic substances has an adverse impact on the central nervous system (CNS)."

"If CNS is affected by the drug, the users will feel listless. It will damage their memory and affect their lungs drastically. There is every possibility of growing lung cancer and asthma. Moreover, such organic solvents may cause liver cirrhosis and even liver cancer."

But police is unaware of the use of rubber solutions as an alternative drug amongst the underprivileged teenagers.

When contacted, the duty officer of Tejaon Police Station said they did not know anything about the drug abuse. They will investigate the matter, he said.

as usual, many business leaders did not dare to come to their business establishments yesterday.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner AK Shahidul Haque said he would take steps to contain the number of crimes at Karwan Bazar. He held a meeting with officials concerned in this regard yesterday.

"I know Karwan Bazar was a crime prone zone. But Friday's killings are astonishing," said the police commissioner.

He said, "I heard about the telephone calls by top listed criminal Ashiq following the triple murder. Police found all the calls were made from local cellphone operators' numbers though Ashiq was known to be in India."

Namaz-e-janaza of slain traders Ashraf Miah and Faruque Mollah were held at Karwan Bazar mosque after Zohr prayers yesterday. Faruque was buried at Azimpur graveyard yesterday. Among others, Jatiya Party Secretary General Ruhul Amin Howlader attended the janaza.

Up to 300MW

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Work is already underway to set up a windmill at Kutubdia to produce power on a trial basis, he said.

Besides, the ministry has taken steps to assemble a solar powersystem.

In response to AL lawmaker M. Abdul Latif's query, Tuku said the government is also working to generate 100 MW of electricity at Kaptai water power plant.

Meanwhile, Industries Minister Dilip Barua said Tata Group, the Indian industrial giant, did not invest in Bangladesh because of gas crisis here.

Three out of four Tata proposals were for setting up gas-based industries, he continued. "But it wasn't possible to assure them of an uninterrupted gas supply due to the energy crisis at home."