

Council decision

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observed that by empowering the party president and general secretary to choose leaders for the central body the AL seems to have gone back to the practice and tradition of pre-democratic days of the British rule when the viceroy would pick legislative councils for India.

Talking to The Daily Star on Friday at the Council venue, a councillor of the Magura district unit of the AL said party leadership should have been elected to avert grievances at the grassroots level.

"The district level council might also follow the tradition of the national council, and the charter for changes will remain un-implemented," the councillor said.

A councillor of Rangpur district unit said on condition of anonymity that it was frustrating that no change was seen in electing party leaders while another from Barisal said leadership quality could be increased if election was held.

Meanwhile, sources said new faces will be seen in the posts of three joint general secretaries and seven organising secretaries while a number of dedicated leaders, mostly party lawmakers who worked for the party after the 1/11 political changeover, will be included in the central committee.

"Those who either covered under the caretaker government or compromised with it will not be promoted," said a senior party leader.

The sources said there would be no major changes in the AL Presidium, the highest policymaking body of the party. Only the vacant positions will be filled up.

Zohra Tajuddin's post in the Presidium will be vacant as she has been physically ill for a long time and a senior AL leader will be given the post. Two more leaders will fill up the posts of late Abdus Samad Azad and President Zillur Rahman.

When contacted Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury told The Daily Star that the party chief will form the fully-fledged central committee with a combination of old and new leaders.

Former law minister Khasru said the council has full confidence in the party president and so empowered her to complete formation of the central committee.

He said by this the council averted rivalry and grouping within the party. "It is a long tradition of the party to elect leadership in this way for its own welfare," said Khasru, who was also a councillor.

Eminent jurist Shahdeen Malik did not agree with the AL leaders' arguments and termed the council's decision unfortunate.

"Such a decision has rendered the party constitution meaningless. However, by arranging proper election of the executive committee in accordance with the constitution, the Awami League can still re-establish its democratic credentials," Malik told The Daily Star.

Malik, a counsel of the Election Commission,

Muzaffer

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people of Bangladesh.

"We should now work together," he said, adding that Kaptai and Farakka barrages had caused environmental and biological disaster in Bangladesh. Monga is the result of the construction of Farakka Barrage.

If Tipaimukh dam is constructed Monipuri indigenous people of India will also be affected, he said, adding: "We will have to contact them. We need to convince them to raise their voices against the dam."

Muzaffer said indigenous people have always been vocal against Kaptai and Farakka dams.

Muzaffer was delivering his speech as the chief discussant at a seminar on "Impact of Tipaimukh dam construction: What we should do to prevent imminent disaster" at a restaurant in Sylhet yesterday morning.

Sylhet Paribesh Andolon and Rotary Club of Sylhet, Sunshine, jointly organised the seminar.

Muzaffer said the Tipaimukh dam would inundate low-lying areas like Sylhet and the agricultural system there would be in jeopardy.

He said during the construction of Farakka dam in the 60s people could not protest but now they are suffering from its consequences.

Muzaffer urged the elected lawmakers to inform the ministries concerned about the harmful effects of the dam.

If they discuss the issue in the House the government might take an environment-friendly decision, he added.

Sadrulldin Ahmed Chowdhury, AK Kim, Enamul Qudus Chowdhury, Bahauddin Zakaria, Debananda Bhattacharya, Emadullah Shahidul Islam, Mahbub Sobhani and ATM Kamal also spoke.

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Whip scorpions

FROM PAGE 1

I thought there could be animals hiding under those blocks.

Quickly I focused my camera on it and told the driver to lift the topmost block. As he did so I noticed a pipe-like structure, much thinner than the lead of a pencil, projecting from a hole.

On first sight, it looked like an alien. I told my companion to coax it out of its hiding place. He did so and the animal obliged for a few seconds, coming out of its hiding. It walked a few paces gaudily and then disappeared under the untuned cement block.

By that time I had taken a good look at it and also got a few shots off.

The animal is none other than a funny-looking creature known as Whip-Scorpion, False Scorpion or Vinegarroon. It is more related to the spider than their physical resemblance to the scorpions or Bichha or Bichhcha as it is called in Bengali.

The very absence of the sting and venom sac at the end of its tail and a different beaded flute-like tail convinced me that it was not a Bichha. However, I was not sure of its identity.

After returning to Dhaka I surfed several internet sites and checked the Asiatic Society's Fauna volume on Arachnida -- a class of invertebrates which include the largest number of animals after the Insects, with nearly 100,000 species of spiders, several thousand ticks, mites, harvestman, scorpions and about 100 species of scorpion look-alike Whip and False scorpions.

During 1900 British scientist Pocock described a species Hypoconus oatesii based on

Nine of top 10

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Holy Cross College 339 and Rajuk Uttara Model School and College 317 -- all in the capital, Government AH College, Bogra 289, Cantonment College, Jessore, 256, Milestone College, Dhaka, 229 and Residential Model College, Dhaka, 217.

Under Rajshahi board this year, New Govt Degree College, Rajshahi, topped the list of GPA-5 achieving institutions with 441 students securing this grade followed by Govt AH College, Bogra, 289 and Bogra Cantonment Public School and College 175.

Chittagong College was at the top under Chittagong board with 313 GPA-5 scorers while Govt Haji Muhammad Mohsin College came next to it with 312 followed by Govt Commerce College with 215.

Under Comilla board, Comilla Victoria Govt College topped the list with 158 students achieving GPA-5 followed by Ispahani Public School and College with 74 and Comilla Cadet College with 36.

The top three colleges under Barisal board are Amrital Dey College with 133 GPA-5 scorers, Barisal Government Women's College 74 and Barisal Cadet College 39.

Under Jessore board, Cantonment College, Jessore, Govt MM City College, Khulna, and Govt Girls' College, Khulna, got the top three positions.

Sylhet MC College topped the list with 145 students securing GPA-5 while Jalalabad Cantonment Public School and College, and Sylhet Govt Womens' College followed it with 63 and 61 respectively.

Under Dinajpur board, Cantonment Public School and College, Rangpur, was at the top with 182 GPA-5 scorers, followed by Rangpur Govt College with 148 and Dinajpur Govt College with 129.

The first pair of legs of this creature is modified into sensory organs and function like the antennae of insects. So, they walk on the remaining three pairs of legs.

Also all Whip Scorpions have organs at the base of the whip that can spray a special vinegar-like chemical. These creatures are absolute night animals and always hide under dark objects during daytime.

Thus they avoid sighting by people.

Police on trail

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activities following the raid on its office in 1999.

He also said Bakhtiar was the local coordinator of SSHI, and the South African and the Pakistani were the international coordinators.

The NGO had set up 750 Kawmi madrasas in cluster villages across the country. It stopped funding those madrasas following crackdown on the NGO.

Bakhtiar went into hiding after DB police arrested Mansur at a house in Saodagarbari of Dakkhin Khan on July 22.

Locals said Mansur and his family would live in a room on the first floor for Tk 1,750 a month.

Mansur's co-tenant said they used to live a simple life. Few relatives would visit them.

Bakhtiar's father and some teachers of the madrasa denied that Bakhtiar has gone into hiding. They however admitted he has not been attending the madrasa since July 22.

According to his father, Bakhtiar is around 30 years old. After completing hefz in two years he went to Pakistan sometime between 1990 and 1992 and studied in a madrasa in Karachi.

OBaidullah ON FRESH REMAND Mufti Obaidullah, another detained Indian national and LeT operative, was placed on a five-day fresh remand yesterday. He was earlier remanded for seven days and grilled by the Taskforce for Interrogation cell.

No curb on hajj

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of pilgrims from abroad.

For instance Indonesia, which has a quota of 200,008 this year, had already set a minimum age of 18, and only 0.5 percent of their pilgrims are older than 65, according to officials in the Indonesian embassy in Riyadh.

Marghali meanwhile said an Egyptian woman who died from swine flu after returning from an Umrah trip to Saudi Arabia likely contracted the disease in her home country.

The husband of the woman, the region's first reported A(H1N1) death, criticised Saudi authorities' handling of her case.

But Marghali said the woman tested negative for swine flu during hospital treatment inside Saudi Arabia for other ailments, and had also had cleared airport health checks in Cairo.

"She came with a lot of symptoms" including artery blockages and signs of pneumonia, he said, but not the flu.

The woman also performed the strenuous rituals four times -- for various members of her family -- rather than once as is normal, he said.

Madrasa Board

FROM PAGE 1

11.36 points or 13.50 percent higher than the overall pass rate of ten educational boards that stands at 72.78 percent this year.

Out of 58,978 students, 49,626 including 18,682 female students passed in Alim examination under Madrasa Board this year. Male students have performed well this year securing 85.19 percent pass rate while the female students secured 82.46 percent.

In terms of pass rate, Madrasa board has been the most successful among the ten education boards in the past four years.

Last year, the board secured 82.43 percent pass rate while the overall pass rate of nine other boards was 76.19 percent. In 2007 the board secured 74.31 percent success rate against the overall pass rate of 65.60 percent.

A total of 1894 students, including 349 females, achieved GPA-5 under the board this year indicating that the females are lagging behind.

Considering GPA-5 achievers, the board was second last year but this year it has dropped down to fourth among all the ten education boards. The number of GPA-5 holders under the board has declined by 34.37 percent compared to previous year's 2886 GPA-5 achievers.

A total of 583 madrasas have obtained cent percent pass rate while the number was 501 last year. The number of colleges having cent percent pass rate this year stands at only 52 while it was 70 last year under seven education boards.

This year 101 students were expelled under the board while 172 students, the highest number, were expelled under the Technical Education Board.

Meanwhile, the Technical Education Board has witnessed a slight decline in pass rate, which stands at 80.74 percent earning it the second position among the ten boards. Last year, the board achieved a success rate of 81.27 percent.

Out of 59,792 candidates, 48,278 students -- 30,769 male and 17,509 female -- passed with 20 students -- 9 female and 11 male -- achieving GPA-5 this year. The number of GPA-5 achievers under the Technical Education Board was 51 last year.

HSC pass rate

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This year, 70.69 percent students passed from science group, 64.26 percent from humanities and 79.63 percent from commerce.

The Alim examinees under the Madrasa board did exceptionally well compared to other nine boards with a pass rate of 84.14. About 49,897 out of 58,978 students came out successful with 1,894 GPA-5 scorers.

The HSC business management exam students under the Technical board got the second position in terms of pass percentage with 80.74 percent pass.

Notre Dame College, Dhaka City College and Viharunissa Noon College once again came out on top in terms of GPA-5 achievers.

Notre Dame students scored highest 1,207 GPA-5 followed by Dhaka City College with 934 and Viharunissa Noon College with 531.

Bir Shreshtha Noor Mohammad Rifles Public School and College became the top college in terms of pass percentage with cent percent pass.

For the first time, HSC examinations were held under Dinajpur board where 32,722 among 58,541 students passed.

Besides, 170 students under Dhaka board sat for the exams in five centres abroad and 160 of them came out successful.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid handed over the results to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina formally around 12:00noon yesterday in presence of the chairmen of all boards.

Announcing the results at a press conference at his Secretariat office, Nahid said, "This year the examination was held amid fair and peaceful atmosphere and the results went in favour of those who prepared themselves to test their merit."

The minister thanked all officials and employees of the boards for publishing the results in 58 days as promised by his ministry. The examinations began on April 16 and ended on May 28.

The results are also available on the education board website, which was launched for the time, in all colleges and exam centres, and on cellphone through SMS.

Like the previous years, dominated with high number of GPA-5 achievers and cent percent pass records.

Statistics show almost half of GPA-5 scorers are from Dhaka board. Like the previous year, Rajshahi board students

100pc pass

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Twenty-five colleges under Dhaka board, six under Rajshahi, three under Comilla, four each under Jessore, Chittagong, Sylhet and Dinajpur boards and two under Barisal showed the excellent performance.

Last year, 674 institutions under all the education boards had obtained cent per cent success in the examinations. The number of colleges having 100 per cent pass under the seven general education boards was 70 last time.

The number of technical colleges and madrasas with cent per cent success was 434 in 2007 and 363 in 2006.

Meanwhile, four colleges each under Dhaka and Rajshahi boards, three under Jessore, two under Barisal, eight under Dinajpur board, 16 madrasas and four colleges under the technical education board showed the worst result with zero per cent success rate this year.

Comilla and Sylhet boards have achieved the success of not having a single college with zero pass rate for the past four consecutive years.

The number of least performing colleges and madrasas was 41 last year, 60 in 2007 and 70 in 2006.

Articulated buses (either motorbuses or trolleybuses), also known as tandem buses, bendy buses, banana buses, slinky buses, caterpillar buses or accordion buses (and not to be confused with flexible buses), are buses of a type with an increased passenger capacity.

Found almost exclusively in public transportation use, these buses are approximately 18m (60 ft) long, while regular buses are 11 to 14m (35-45 ft) long. To make them nimble enough to safely navigate streets at their increased length, they are fitted with an extra axle (set of wheels) and a joint usually located slightly behind the midpoint of

the bus, behind the second axle. The special features of an articulated bus are rapid simultaneous boarding and disembarkation through more and larger doors, much larger passenger capacity (120+ versus 80-90), increased stability from a lower centre of gravity, a sometimes smaller turning radius, higher maximum speed, and accessibility to people with disabilities and the elderly.

The meeting also decided to reorganize the committee to look into the feasibility of introducing articulated buses in the city. The BRTC chairman will be the chairman of the committee while the DTICB executive director co-chairman. A representative from the BRTA will be co-opted as member.

The committee will submit a report to the communication ministry.

The meeting asked the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) to submit a study report within the next one month describing the merits and demerits of dedicating the left-lanes of the city roads for articulated bus service.

The meeting also directed the DCC to repair and renovate the left side of the roads where articulated buses will ply the Gabtali-Asadgate-Farmgate-Shahbag-Gulistan route and mark the sides with color within the shortest possible time.

The match will start at 8.30pm Bangladesh time. Bangladesh Television and TEN Sports will beam live coverage from Dominica.

Bangladesh will definitely miss the services of leading pacesman Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, who returned home with an injured knee having done very little in the Test series, as the Windsor Park pitch is likely to offer both pace and bounce.

The pitches have been prepared to nullify the Bangladesh spinners who made the difference in the Test series and to aid the West Indian pacesmen.

The second match will be held at the same venue on July 28 and the third and final ODI is scheduled for July 31 at Warner Park in St. Kitts.

City lacks gas

FROM PAGE 1

for gas but the production has not increased proportionately.

The residents of Mirpur especially block C of section-12 are the worst sufferers because of the old network of one-inch-pipeline in the area, which needs to be replaced, he said.

Jumbo buses

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run by diesel--will ply Gabtali-Asadgate-Farmgate-Shahbag-Gulistan route under the articulated bus service project.

Executive Director of Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTICB) Abu Bakar Mohammad Shahjahan was learned to have told the meeting that there is no alternative to introducing the articulated bus service in Dhaka as traffic congestion in the city is getting worse day by day.

He said some 4,000 mini-buses are now plying in the city and those need to be phased out to ease the traffic jam.

The DTICB executive director also called for making the city roads free from rickshaws before introducing the articulated bus services.

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Boro farming

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efficiency in the country is 30 percent, which could be increased up to 42 percent.

"This means the water we use to cultivate 30 acres of land would be enough to irrigate 42 acres."

Huge water is misused when it is distributed, he said, adding that cemented drains in distributing water to the paddy fields could check such misuse.

Besides, farmers traditionally keep paddy fields flooded with water, which is not right, he added. "Irrigating fields off and on could also save a lot of water and give better yield."

According to BRRI, 1500 litres of water is enough to produce one kilogramme of rice, but farmers generally apply 3,000 to 5,000 litres to grow a kg of rice.

A technology called Alternative Wetting and Drying to grow rice using less water could require 20 to 25 percent less irrigation, MA Sattar told The Daily Star.

"We must make the best use of this technology to save underground water. Besides, conservation of rainwater is a must at a time when rainfall is declining," he said.

Dr Sattar said at the same time the government must ensure that water from the upstream of the rivers is not withdrawn that originated in other countries and are flowing through Bangladesh.

Dr MA Sattar, head of Irrigation and Water Management Division at Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI), said they also found almost similar features in many of these districts.

"During dry season, around 72 percent irrigation is met by underground water," he said.

Both the experts said climatic changes are contributing to such decrease in rainfalls and therefore the authorities must take immediate measures to increase irrigation efficiency and make the best use of surface water.