

Changes in cabinet

FROM PAGE 1
expansion was made to ease the council of ministers' tremendous workload, and to implement her government's first national budget which will finance the implementation of her party's charter for change.

Hasina earlier also appointed seven advisers with status of cabinet ministers to assist her in running the government.

Political analysts observed that the latest inclusion in the council of ministers suggests that Hasina, also the AL chief, stuck to her plan of building two separate set ups -- one for running the government and another for her party.

With the appointment of Shirin Sharmin as the state minister for women and children affairs, the number of women in the ministers' council rose to six. The premier herself had been looking after the ministry until yesterday's appointment, as any ministry without a minister or a state minister automatically becomes the responsibility of the premier.

Talking to reporters in Bangabhaban yesterday, Hasina said all new members of the council of ministers are quite competent. "Let's see how they perform," she added.

The premier on May 4 warned her ministers and state ministers of being dropped from the council unless they show satisfactory performance within the next couple of months.

None however was dropped in yesterday's reshuffle, unlike the veteran AL leaders dropped from AL's central working committee announced on Thursday.

Yesterday's expansion of the ministers' council proved wrong the rumour that two or three veteran AL leaders, who were dropped from the party's central committee, would be made ministers.

Ruling party insiders however said two ex-presidium members -- Abdul Razzaq and Tofail Ahmed, newly made presidium member Obaidul Quader, and also a Jatiya Party leader might still be inducted into the cabinet in the future.

With yesterday's expansion of the ministers' council, the country now has the second highest number of ministers and advisers to assist the premier, since the last BNP-Jamaat-led four-party alliance government.

On winning a two-third majority in the 2001 parliamentary election, the BNP-Jamaat alliance formed its government with a 60-member council of ministers, the largest in the country's history, and also drew a lot of flak for that.

Former premier Khaleda Zia, also the BNP chief, formed her first government in 1991 with a 33-member council of ministers, after her party won a simple majority in a parliamentary election.

In the December 29, 2008 national election, AL-led grand alliance won a whopping 262 seats in the parliament. Hasina's party alone bagged 230, a number which is much higher than that of BNP's in the 2001 election.

Hasina however formed a medium-sized council on January 6 this year with 23 ministers and eight state ministers. She added six more state ministers on January 24.

In 1996, Hasina had only 19 ministers to assist her in running the erstwhile government at the beginning, which she formed after winning a simple majority in the parliament. Few members were later added to that council of ministers as well.

PORTFOLIOS
Immediately after inducting the new minister and state ministers, the premier distributed portfolios among them reshuffling the council.

Newly inducted Shajahan Khan was made the shipping minister while his predecessor Afsarul Amin was transferred to the primary and mass education ministry where Motahar

Hossain is the state minister. State Minister Shamsul Haque Tuku was made the deputy of Home Minister Sahara Khatun. The post had been vacant since former state minister for home Tanjim Ahmad Sohel Taj's resignation on May 3.

Newly inducted Enamul Haque was put in Tuku's former position as the state minister for power, energy, and mineral resources.

Hasan Mahmud, who had been performing as the state minister for foreign affairs since January 6, was made the state minister for forest and environment, leaving Dipu Moni alone to take care of the foreign ministry. Sources in the cabinet said Hasan was 'not feeling comfortable' with Dipu.

Hasan's predecessor in the forest and environment ministry, state minister Mustafizur Rahman Fizar, was made the deputy of Land Minister Rezaul Karim Hira.

Promod Mankin, who had been the chief of the parliamentary standing committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs, was made the state minister for cultural affairs.

Mujibur Rahman Fakir was made the state minister for health and family welfare under Minister AFM Ruhul Haque, and Mahbubur Rahman was made the state minister for water resources under Minister Ramesh Chandra Sen.

CLEANER IMAGES OF STATE MINISTERS
The five new state ministers maintain clean image, keeping themselves free from being accused in criminal charges, according to the affidavits they submitted along with their applications to the Election Commission for seeking candidacy in the last parliamentary election.

However, Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan has so far faced five criminal charges in his long political career.

The new state ministers Mujibur Rahman Fakir, Mahbubur Rahman, Promod Mankin, Enamul Haque and Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury declared in their affidavits that they never faced criminal charges in their lives.

Mujibur, a physician, was elected MP on Awami League's (AL) nomination from Myemensingh-3 parliamentary constituency. He was also elected lawmaker from that constituency in 2001 election.

Promod Mankin was given the charge of the cultural affairs ministry. He was elected MP on AL's ticket from Myemensingh-1 constituency in the December 29 polls. He also became MP from the same constituency in 2001.

Mahbubur, a part time businessman, was elected on AL's nomination from Patuakhali-4 constituency in the last parliamentary election. He was also elected lawmaker from the same constituency in 2001 election.

Retired army officer Enamul, also an electrical engineer, was elected lawmaker on AL's nomination from Chapinawabganj-1 for the first time.

Shirin Sharmin, a lawyer by profession, was elected MP to women reserved seat in parliament on AL's nomination.

Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan was convicted in two separate criminal cases in the mid 1970s. He was dropped from charge sheet in two cases while one is pending against him, according to the affidavit.

Shajahan was first elected lawmaker as an independent candidate from Madaripur-2 in 1986. He later was elected lawmaker on AL's nomination in 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2008.

As a labour leader, he held various important posts at different national labour organisations.

Mahbubur Rahman, Sadeque Hossain Khoka, Osman Farruk and Maj (ret'd) Hafizuddin Ahmed and asked them to work for the party.

Mahbubur Rahman was made standing committee member while party Vice President Osman Farruk headed the party panel formed to analyse the budget for fiscal 2009-10.

The BNP chief also assigned Hafiz to handle the Tipaimukh dam issue on the party's behalf. Besides, Khaleda might appoint Khoka the convener of the Dhaka city unit.

Some party leaders who remained loyal to the chairperson after the 1/11 changeover believe that the leaders known as corrupt and patrons of militants are more harmful for the party than the reformists.

"The party has to single out those who dragged the party into crisis through their misdeeds and persuaded the chairperson to take some wrong decisions that led to the 1/11 changeover," said a former state minister, preferring anonymity.

If the changeover was the result of a conspiracy, the party must find out whether any BNP leader was involved in it and if found guilty, actions should be taken against the person, he added.

Earlier, a number of BNP leaders including Joint Secretary General Mirza Abbas on several occasions urged Khaleda not to consider for party leadership those who sided with party's expelled leader Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan after the 1/11 changeover.

Party insiders however think that it would be tough to run the party smoothly if all pro-reform leaders are dropped from party committees. Taking the matter into consideration, the party chairperson has already engaged a number of reformist leaders in party activities.

They said the BNP chief has held talks with a few pro-reform leaders including Lt Gen (ret'd)

PORTFOLIOS

State Minister for Land Mustafizur Rahman (Fizar)
State Minister for Cultural Affairs Promod Mankin
State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Mujibur Rahman Fakir
State Minister for Water Resources Mahbubur Rahman
State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Enamul Haque
State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury

AL on path

FROM PAGE 1
secretary were not announced yet.

Awami League announced its 73-member new central committee on Thursday leaving veteran politicians Amir Hossain Amu, Abdur Razzaq, Tofail Ahmed and Suranjit Sengupta who were members of the Presidium, and bringing in many fresh faces.

Talking to the press after the oath-taking ceremony of new minister and five state ministers at Bangabhaban, Sheikh Hasina said they had to make path for the future leadership.

She said, "Awami League is 60 years old and we are aging too. So we have to create new leadership for the future. We have done what is acceptable to our grassroots level leaders and party councilors."

Those who have been made new leaders are well tested, she said, adding, "I think they will perform their duties properly."

Briefing the reporters at Jamuna AL General Secretary Ashrafur Islam said the names of the working committee members would soon be announced.

Ashraf, also the LGRD and cooperatives minister, said after announcing the names of the working committee members the full-fledged central committee would sit and start collecting primary party members.

The meeting also finalised party programmes for August 15, national mourning day, and August 21, the day of barbaric grenade attack on an AL rally that killed 25 party leaders and workers in 2004.

The new presidium members exchanged greetings with the AL chief at the meeting.

Wishing anonymity, a presidium member told The Daily Star that the presidium yesterday empowered both the party chief and the general secretary to finalise the names of 26 members.

The AL general secretary said the members of the central working committee would be drawn from different regions with inclusion of both new and old faces.

He said the presidium decided to hold council of all unit committees.

Ashraf said the party's central working committee would make the final decision on the matter soon. AL has over 46,000 grassroots committees across the country, he added.

Free ride

FROM PAGE 16
Sabujbag zone of DMP was seen intercepting minibuses and buses near Malibagh level crossing to check necessary documents of the vehicles while non-motorised vehicles were passing by.

When asked, he said his team does not bar rickshaws and vans from plying the road as those are not creating any problem at off-peak hours around 12:00 noon. However, they prevent rickshaws from plying the road during peak hours, he added.

Road users observe that accidents occur in many cases on city streets as the slow moving rickshaws and rickshaw vans often fail to notice the vehicles coming from behind. The non-motorised vehicles often turn without noticing the vehicles rushing from behind and cause accidents, they added.

Joint Commissioner (traffic) Manjur Kader Khan said, "With the inadequate manpower we can hardly cope with the traffic problems. The government takes decision to make a road off-limits to non-motorised vehicles and we only enforce the decision and our enforcement reflects the government's desire."

He added that rickshaw pullers cater for the transport need of the city dwellers substantially and the government has to think about them also.

DMP Commissioner AKM Shahidul Haque said around five lakh rickshaws ply the city roads involving around 10 lakh rickshaw pullers.

"We will take steps against the illegal rickshaws first and then in phases we will remove the rest from the busy roads and intersections," he added.

An AFP reporter saw dozens of bodies strewn on the grounds leading to the Taliban base that was the epicentre of the bloodbath.

A source at a Maiduguri hospital said "the corpses are countless."

"Some of the patients who are injured from the fighting

Int'l help in probe

FROM PAGE 16
"There is international experience in trying war criminals across the globe. In dealing with such a huge issue you need to be very pragmatic; you need to coordinate and organise the evidence," said Constanze Oehlrich.

Oehlrich, who is visiting Bangladesh currently to attend the "2nd international conference on genocide, truth and justice," expressed the view while explaining several features of Cambodian model for trial of war criminals with The Daily Star.

EU Parliament Member Helmut Scholz on Thursday said, "A legal analysis similar to the Cambodian model combined with international support is highly recommended for Bangladesh."

Explaining the Cambodian model of court she said the Cambodian trial was backed by the United Nations. She mentioned that the Cambodian court was a mixed court involving judges from both national and international communities.

She mentioned that there was both national and international funding in Cambodian court.

"We have two prosecutors -- one is national and the other is international. We have both national judges and international judges. In case of taking decision both the national and international judges have to take decision unanimously," she said.

She said that the trial of war criminals in Cambodia is divided into three parts -- pre-trial, trial and Supreme Court chamber -- and majority of the judges are national.

There are, however, international judges in each step of the courts, she said.

"Decision in every step must be taken after getting super votes -- like four votes out of five," she added.

For example, if a decision is to be taken by the pre-trial court, which is consisted of

five judges -- three Cambodian and two international judges, four judges must approve the decision.

She cited an example saying that Cambodian president at one stage ordered not to expand trial and limit it within the five accused. Later an international judge felt the necessity of conducting investigation against six more and then the matter was forwarded to pre-trial court for hearing.

She said it is tough to arrange a trial after 38 years of the incident. Newspaper reports can be used as written evidence and there are accounts of witnesses too.

Sharing her experience of work in the trial of war criminals in Cambodia Constanze said that there is a documentation centre in Cambodia, which has been collecting information soon after the killings in Cambodia.

She explained that the centre even visited countryside taking interviews and accounts of witnesses.

She and Nafia Tasmin Din, Victim's Unit, Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, said that there are individual groups in Bangladesh who collected information after the Liberation War and that can be used during trial as evidence.

The genocide tribunal in Cambodia backed by UN began holding its first historic trial on November 20, 2007, 30 years into the killing of 1.7 million people, nearly a quarter of the Cambodian population.

Mudslide kills
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Tk 25,000 cash and six tonnes of rice for the victims.

In 1996, at least 11 people were killed in a series of mudslides and landslides at Chittar Tali, Chiwni Para and Muslim Para adjacent to Aziz Nagar Industrial Area in the district.

The Daily Star, "Marisur" said ARCF leaders led by a moulana handed over the grenades to Tajuddin."

Quoting Mansur, Sanwar also said most of the grenade throwers were Afghan war veterans with skills in handling explosives.

He added some others who took part in the attack were not fighters but were trained up by the war veterans.

The CID submitted the charge sheet in the grenade attack case on June 11 last year accusing 22 people including Abdus Salam Pintu and Huji leader Mufti Hannan.

According to the charge sheet, apart from Pintu, all other accused are Huji leaders and activists.

Of them, 14 are now behind bars, including Pintu, Mufti Hannan and his brother Mohibullah, Moulana Abu Sayeed, Moulana Abu Taher, Mufti Moimuddin Sheikh alias Abu Zaid.

The eight absconding accused are Pintu's brothers Tajuddin and Moulana Liton, Anisul Mursalin and his brother Mahibul Muttakin, Iqbal, Moulana Abu Bakar alias Selim Howlader, Jahangir Alam Badar and Khalilur Rahman.

Then, under a timeline set by President Barack Obama, all combat troops will withdraw from Iraq by August 2010.

Heavy rain
FROM PAGE 1
which was scheduled to return to Delhi yesterday evening, stayed back in Guwahati and would make another attempt to visit the site today, Bangladesh officials here said.

The delegation's attempt to visit the Tipaimukh site came a day after Indian Power Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde and officials assured the delegation that no irrigation project would come up downstream of the Tipaimukh and there would be no diversion of water from the river Barak on which the 1,500MW power project, entailing an investment of Rs 9,000 crore, is being developed.

Since its arrival in Delhi on July 29, the delegation had held talks with officials of Indian power, water resources and external affairs ministries besides Indian External Affairs Minister SM Krishna and Power Minister Shinde.

Both Krishna and Shinde assured the delegation that India would not do anything about the Tipaimukh project, which would harm Bangladesh's interest.

The Tipaimukh project is being developed in impoverished Churachandpur district of Manipur by government owned national hydropower corporation in joint venture with Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam and Manipur Government.

Police sources said nationals of Niger and possibly Chad had fought alongside the Nigerian militants during the clashes this week.

The unrest in Nigeria since November last year when human rights groups say up to 700 were killed in the central city of Jos in direct clashes between Muslims and Christians.

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Call for UN

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"The issues of management of trauma, reparations, witness protection, extradition, trials in other countries need to be studied further," Tariq Ali read from the declaration.

The government should draw from international tribunals and institutions in formulating the rules and procedures of the tribunal.

Earlier, at a discussion on the trial process in Bangladesh and the role of civil society, Prof Syed Anwar Hossain of Dhaka University said the government should pursue proactive diplomacy in the global and regional arena to garner support in favour of themove.

"Although the trial of war criminals is primarily a domestic issue, it has regional and global ramifications," he said.

Dr Rashiduddin Ahmed proposed building a single platform of various organisations to work in favour of trying the war criminals.

Wali Ur Rahman, director of Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs, said the government should form a national committee comprised of educationists, civil society members and legal experts to assist the government in the trial.

The Liberation War Museum can also play a vital role in this regard and mount pressure on the government to expedite the trial process, he added.

Brig Gen (ret'd) Shahedul Anam Khan said the media has to play a key role in informing the people of the complexities of the issue. The government must make sure that the trial process is flawless.

"A slip in investigation may result in dire consequences," he added.

State Minister for Liberation War Affairs AB Tazul Islam said the government is doing everything to ensure a fair trial of war criminals.

"The trial process can begin anytime," he added.

Chairing the closing session, National Professor Kabir Chowdhury said the perpetrators of war crimes must be brought to book not to take revenge, but to establish justice.

The bulk of the war criminals are religious fundamentalists and militants who must be brought to justice without further delay, he added.

Prof Chanwahn Kim of Korea, Dr Suzanne Linton of Hong Kong University, Liberation War Museum Trustees Mofidul Haque, Aly Zaker and Akku Chowdhury also spoke.

28 killed
FROM PAGE 1
wounding seven worshippers.

The officials all spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to release the information.

Only two months before this year have seen fewer Iraqis killed since the AP began tracking war-related fatalities in May 2005. There were 242 deaths in January and 225 deaths in May.

But US commanders say security gains are fragile and reversible, and the Iraqi government needs years of further assistance.

US commanders have also warned attacks could escalate ahead of national elections next year. The United States has about 130,000 forces in Iraq, with current plans calling for most combat forces to remain in the country until after the Jan. 16 vote.

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Iran blames

FROM PAGE 16
Tehran and as the Islamic republic prepares to put around 30 protesters on trial on charges of rioting and vandalism.

Western and European countries, with their overt and covert capabilities, interfered in Iran's election... the worst among them being Britain," Mottaki was quoted as saying by the state broadcaster's website.

"The countries who interfered through their television networks by telling how to instigate riots, build explosives and other tension creating activities are accomplices in all the committed crimes, murders and are held responsible."

Iran has consistently blamed foreign countries, especially Western and European nations, for fuelling the post-election violence in Tehran in which officials say about 30 people died and several hundred were wounded.

Tehran has particularly targeted London and had detained nine local employees of the British embassy for their alleged role in the violence that broke out following the disputed re-election of Ahmadinejad.

The embassy staff were later released.

The ISNA news agency, meanwhile, said "about 30" people will be put on trial in a revolutionary court on Saturday alleged to have "participated in riots" and accused of "acting against national security, disturbing public order and vandalising public and government property."

It added without elaborating, that several of the accused are alleged to have links with Mohareb (enemies of God) groups.

Some 2,000 protesters, political activists, reformists and journalists were initially detained as authorities cracked down on opposition groups protesting the victory of Ahmadinejad, whom they say won only due to massive rigging of votes.

Most of the detainees have been released but about 250 remain behind bars and their continued detention has become a rallying point for the anti-Ahmadinejad movement.

The Islamic republic is engulfed in its worst crisis in its 30-year existence as anti-Ahmadinejad groups led by

former premier Mir Hossein Mousavi refuse to acknowledge his victory in the June 12 poll and regularly launch protests.

In the latest opposition show of force, thousands of people mourning the slain protesters clashed with riot police at the Behesht-e Zahra cemetery and in central Tehran on Thursday, witnesses said.

They said riot police hit mourners with batons and belts at the defiant graveside commemoration at the cemetery south of Tehran as they marked the 40th day since the death of Neda Agha-Soltan, a young woman who came to symbolise the public uprising over Ahmadinejad's victory.

A graphic Internet video of Neda bleeding to death was seen around the world and triggered an outcry over the sometimes brutal crackdown on demonstrators.

Police forced Mousavi out of the graveyard minutes after his arrival but although they initially surrounded fellow campaigner Mehdi Karroubi, he was able to give graveside readings from the Koran.

Ayatollah Ahmad Janati, Iran's hardline cleric and head of the Guardians Council, the powerful electoral watchdog which upheld Ahmadinejad's victory, on Friday blamed Mousavi and Karroubi for the deaths of the protesters.