

## MPs duck JS

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disappointment at the absence of the ministers, Prime Minister and Leader of the House Sheikh Hasina tried to defend her cabinet colleagues, saying they had an important meeting which just ended.

In response, the speaker said he still could not accept their being absent since the prime minister herself managed to reach the House.

Hasina said the finance minister returned home from abroad on Friday. "He talked to me. He is preparing some points to talk on the draft PRSP. Therefore, I suggest you defer the discussion," the premier told the speaker, adding that the discussion can be held on Tuesday.

The speaker then postponed the discussion on PRSP draft and resumed the question-answer hour.

State Minister for Environment and Forest Hasan Mahmud was scheduled to reply the lawmakers' queries during the question-answer hour yesterday but he was absent. State Minister for Land Mostafizur Rahman gave the replies on behalf of Hasan Mahmud.

The sitting of parliament resumed 15 minutes after the scheduled time yesterday.

Planning Minister Air Vice Marshal (ret'd) AK Khandker yesterday placed the draft of the amended second PRSP with an estimated expenditure of Tk 3,108 billion to achieve the goals and targets set out in the modified document.

He placed the amended PRSP titled "Steps towards Change: National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction-II" for holding discussion in the House as the government wants to finalise it by December.

However, the discussion could not be held.

For a parliament that targets poverty alleviation as one of the new government's objectives, this seemed unusual and unprecedented.

The ruling Awami League's electoral manifesto titled "charter for changes" also promised to take all required steps to make the House functional to ensure accountability and transparency of the executive branch of the government.

Unfortunately, the new parliament seems to have stumbled over the ruling party's promises with lawmakers of the main opposition BNP having remained absent from the House since the budget session in June.

The discord arose between the AL and the BNP centring the seating arrangement in the House. The BNP lawmakers started boycotting the House as their demand for more seats in the front bench of the chamber was not met.

## Drive launched

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two structures for HC stay order."

Aminur Rahman Suman, authorised officer for Rajuk Dhanmondi zone, said their drive would start tomorrow from Science Laboratory to Lazz Pharma on Mirpur Road.

Asked Rajuk official Suman said there are around 80 buildings in Dhanmondi zone, which use their car park for business purposes.

Talking to The Daily Star, Rajuk Director (Development Control) SK Abdul Mannan said they did not receive any copy of the HC stay orders, which made the drive difficult. They also do not have enough manpower to execute the mammoth task, he added.

Asked, he said more than 50 percent of the buildings have managed to obtain stay orders to evade the drive.

According to DMP, the government owns a number of the 198 buildings while others are hospitals, banks, business centres and educational institutes.

Meanwhile, the traffic department of the DMP carried out a futile eviction drive against the occupants of the main road at Karwan Bazar kitchen market yesterday.

Within moments of the police personnel leaving the place, the evicted hawkers and traders and rental vehicles returned and reoccupied the spot.

A team led by Assistant Commissioner (AC) Quamrul of DMP traffic department along with Tejaگون police officer managed to remove a few illegal makeshift shops on the main road in their hour-long drive.

The roads in Karwan Bazar, especially the main road, perennially remain occupied by petty traders, rental vehicles, transport vehicles of government and private offices. However, the eviction team did not do anything to scores of vehicles parked illegally on the road.

"Eviction of illegal occupancy on the roads depends on time and instructions from the higher authorities," said AC Quamrul.

There are 29 seats in the front row, of which 23 were allocated for the ruling alliance's lawmakers and ministers and five for the BNP and one for the Liberal Democratic Party MP.

The presence in the front row improved a little when senior AL lawmaker Amir Hossain Amu and Jatiya Party MP Rawshan Ershad joined the sitting after around half an hour of the beginning of the House proceeding.

However, overall presence of lawmakers in the House at the beginning was very poor. Only around 70 lawmakers were present while the ruling alliance alone has a total of over 300 MPs.

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed, Commerce Minister Faruk Khan, Land Minister Rezaul Karim Hira, Water Resources Minister Ramesh Chandra Sen, Civil Aviation Minister GM Quader, the state minister for land, and AL lawmakers Obaidul Quader, Abdul Matin Khasru, Rafiqul Islam and Shamsur Rahman Sharif, and Jatiya Party lawmaker Ruhul Amin Hawlader were present in the second row at the beginning of yesterday's sitting. There are 36 seats in that row.

Only eight lawmakers were present in the third row, which has 38 seats.

## Conspiracy

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As the police failed to recover arms and ammunition spread across the country, the army was assigned to do the job. A number of untoward incidents took place with the troops out of the barracks for recovery drive, he said.

In one instance, Major Dalim and some other officers raided the house of Gazi Golam Mostafa, then a top leader of city Awami League, after a bust-up with Gazi's son at a social function in 1973.

Dalim lost his job in the fallout from the unpleasant developments. Incensed at the decision, Major Nur, then PS to the deputy chief of staff, made some aggressive comments against the government. Consequently, he too was axed.

Some quarters used the incidents to fan anger among the army men.

Bearing in mind these incidents and also the extrajudicial activities affecting the training of the army, Shafiullah requested Bangabandhu to assign some other organisation to aid the overstretched police force.

As the government formed Rakkhi Bahini, some vested interests spread rumours that it all was to disband the army.

Then in 1974, one Lt Col Ziauddin wrote an article scathing about the government.

Shafiullah asked that officer to withdraw his article and took him to President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Deputy Chief of Staff Major General Ziaur Rahman was also present at that time.

But as Ziauddin refused to do that, he lost his job. This added to the disaffection among the army ranks.

Shafiullah said he got support from Ziaur Rahman whenever he took disciplinary measures against any officer.

The HC judgment observed this was the backdrop against which Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was killed along with most members of his family.

## Students

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charged bats on protesters to bring the situation under control, he added.

Students told reporters that the notification is inequitable to those who passed SSC and HSC in the years 2001 and 2003. They demanded a new policy, which would not discriminate any section of students.

The protesters vandalised at least 15 vehicles causing a huge tailback on Mirpur Road during the clash.

The traffic movement resumed around 2:00pm. The GPA system in SSC and HSC was first introduced in 2001 and 2003 and several changes were brought in the system within next two years.

With a view to bringing equality between existing GPA system and previous division system at SSC and HSC levels, the education ministry on June 2 published a gazette notification that says students who did their SSC and HSC after the year 2004 securing below GPA 3 would be considered to have scored third division and those below GPA 4, second division.

It also reads that students who completed SSC and HSC in 2001 and 2003 with GPA below 2.5 would be considered to have scored third division and below 3.5, second division.

## Myanmar

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Haq Tuku yesterday and 'normally' discussed the border situation.

"I am going to place some proposals tomorrow (Monday) to include construction of more Border Operations Outposts across the border and a few more battalions to strengthen the border guards," he told The Daily Star.

An intelligence agency official said Myanmar has doubled its military presence at the border over the last couple of weeks, a move that has prompted Bangladesh to take similar measures.

"Myanmar has sent in 37/57mm artillery guns that will bring Chittagong under their firing range," the Navy officer told The Daily Star after the foreign minister claimed normalcy at the border.

Based on the information so far gathered, we suspect that Myanmar is making preparation for a short-scale naval conflict, he said.

"Suspicious military preparations have been going on at the Myanmar side of the border over the last two months," an intelligence official said, adding that the Myanmar army has newly deployed two battle units at their side.

Earlier Myanmar had deployed nine Light Infantry Battalions in its border with Bangladesh. As part of their repeated provocative acts, the junta has violated international border rules and constructed illegal barbed wire fences along the frontier.

"We in the Bangladesh Navy suspect that Myanmar wants to intrude into our sea and declare a large chunk of area as their Maritime Exclusive Zone," the Navy official said.

The Myanmar junta can intrude into the Bangladeshi waters any time to claim ten nautical miles area, which covers the disputed block, which is thought to be a big source of oil and natural gas, he said.

Sources said after Bangladesh's maritime boundary talks with Myanmar ended inconclusively in April, Bangladesh Navy made a deployment plan last September and sent it to the government for immediate action.

The deployment plan urged the government to strengthen maritime patrol at the Bay of Bengal and arrange joint naval exercises with friendly countries.

Meanwhile, sources in Sitwe (formerly known as Akiab) said that Myanmar Air Force Tatmadaw has stationed three fighter planes at the Sitwe airfield. Sitwe is only 80km away from Chittagong airport.

Twelve warships are constantly patrolling the Bay area, which borders Bangladesh, the sources added.

According to Bangladesh Navy sources, a new Myanmar navy frigate, built with the Chinese help at Yangon, has arrived at the Bay of Bengal.

"There have also been new tanks and armoured columns are pouring in using the 40km road that they have recently built," said another Navy officer.

He said Bangladesh has kept around 30 warships standby in Chittagong and Khulna to repulse any Myanmar incursion. "The Myanmar army personnel are regularly infiltrating into Bangladesh territory in the guise of civilians to gather information."

Briefing newsmen, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni also said he had no information about whether Myanmar's border guards were trying to push Rohingya refugees across the border.

In reply to a question, the foreign minister said Myanmar is not violating international laws by erecting barbed wire fences along Bangladesh border as well. "Myanmar is constructing fences in their territory conforming to international laws," he said.

Dipu Moni also said the movement of the Myanmar security forces has no link with Bangladesh's decision to seek UN arbitration to determine maritime boundary between the two neighbouring countries.

Asked whether Bangladesh asked China to mediate to resolve the crisis, she replied that she had no idea about any official proposal in this regard.

Meanwhile, no new leave for the navy men are now being granted, as all leaves in the Bangladesh Navy have been restricted, sources at the navy said.

## Bela serves

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Katra in city's Chawkbazar, is listed as a historical monument by the Department of Archaeology. The authorities also gave directions to protect and conserve the monument under the Building Construction Act, 1952, the release added.

Bela also urged the government to take ownership of the monument and protect the same considering the status.

The remedies are sought to restore the monument to its original state at the expense of the wrongdoers and evict all illegal structures including the Madrasa from the vicinity of Bara Katra, said the release.

## Anti-graft probes

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The commission has submitted recommendations to the government for amending the ACC Act.

"We have recommended amending the Anti-Corruption Commission Act besides ensuring that the act prevails over any other law in case of any conflict," ACC Chairman Ghulam Rahman told The Daily Star on October 7.

Sources in the cabinet division, however, said amendment to the ACC law in resolving the crisis is unlikely to be made because members of the cabinet division committee for reviewing the act do not agree with the proposal.

The ACC notice appears to have hammered in the last nail in the commission's coffin. The commission has been literally ineffective since the Awami League-led government assumed power, officials involved in anti-corruption drives said.

"I do not see any remedy to the crisis unless the commission is given special powers in this regard," ACC Secretary Khandaker Md Asaduzzaman, who signed the notice, told The Daily Star.

ACC issued the notice following a Bangladesh Bank request for maintaining legal procedure while seeking documents from banks.

But ACC sources said different associations of banks and bankers that had bitter experience during the caretaker government's rule forced the government to impose this notice so that they can maintain secrecy of their clients' details. This will pave the way for the corrupt to deposit more money in the banks and increase flow of black money, they said.

According to the ACC act, the commission conducts an enquiry before accusing someone in a case and goes for investigation after filing a case.

Getting court orders for seeking documents seems problematic and complex under the existing laws as it involves both the lower and higher courts besides two stages of ACC activities--enquiry and investigation.

"It is not possible to get a court order during enquiry as the court passes such orders only against a filed case," said an ACC officer who is enquiring into a case.

"If an individual is not accused or a case is not filed against him or her, they cannot be produced before a court. So, gaining orders from the court during enquiry [for their bank documents] is not possible, which leaves the enquiry incomplete," he

added.

The ACC will have to take the High Court's permission while dealing with offences under laws other than sections 403, 406, 408, 409, sections 421-424, and sections 465-477 of the penal code. The lower court can pass an order for these sections.

So, the commission will have to take the HC's permission for seeking one's bank statements during enquiry and investigation of a case filed under its own act.

But getting the HC permission also seems very unlikely. "The High Court has never given an order asking for documents from an institution for enquiry or investigation," said an ACC investigator preferring anonymity.

The situation is likely to complicate further as the National Board of Revenue recently placed a proposal to the cabinet division, saying it will not give the ACC any document since its law ensures secrecy of information it possesses.

## 4 JMB men

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Judge Shafiqul Karim of Chittagong Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal also penalised each with a fine of Tk 5,000 in default of which they will have to suffer another year's imprisonment.

According to the deposition of the case, police arrested Ayub Ali with 53 types of explosives in his possession at a rental house in Nur Para under Cox's Bazar headquarters on December 11, 2005.

In this connection, Sub Inspector Abul Hashem of Cox's Bazar Police Station filed a case under Special Powers Act 1974 on December 13 accusing seven persons, including JMB chief Shaekh Abdur Rahman, his military chief Ataur Rahman Sunny and Mashur Rahman alias Milon.

Police submitted the charge sheet of the case on February 28, 2007 and the charge was framed on March 31 this year.

Abdur Rahman and Sunny have already been executed, and Mashur Rahman was exempted from the case.

Public Prosecutor Ayub Khan said the accused confessed that they stockpiled the explosives to attack on Brac, other NGO offices and churches.

The court delivered its verdict yesterday after hearing 18 witnesses, he added.

With this verdict, the JMB Chittagong divisional chief Mohammad is awarded 229 years' imprisonment.

Stray bullets hit Akter outside the BDR headquarters at Pihkhana at around 9:15 am on February 25, while he was out on his usual rounds selling tea on the streets.

Locals rescued him and took him to DMCH in an unconscious state. His story received wide coverage in the media, including The Daily Star. If no one has come forward to his help then it is easy to understand what the condition of others injured in the same incident can be.

## 200 industries

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industries asking them to compensate for environment and river pollution.

"A process is underway to serve notices on another 40 industries who should compensate for damaging environment," the state minister said in his scripted answer.

He said the government is also working to ensure setting up of central Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) by June 30, 2010 in line with the HC order.

On saving water bodies, the state minister said the government has taken initiatives to amend the Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act 1995 to stop filling up water bodies.

He said the draft proposal to amend the act has already been sent to the cabinet division.

On behalf of the state minister for environment and forest, State Minister for Land Advocate Mostafizur Rahman informed the House that the government would take actions against the forestland grabbers in Bhawal area.

Replying to lawmakers' queries, Land Minister Rezaul Karim Hira said the government would take measures to stop building of structures on farmland.

## Govt to go

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religion are enemies of the country."

Matia said a conspiracy was hatched to push the country towards civil war through the Pihkhana carnage within 50 days of assuming power by the present government.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina saved the country by tackling the situation with well-thought-out plans and patience," she said.

She noted that the country was without democracy during the tenure of four-party alliance government as well as the subsequent caretaker government.

"Militancy raised its ugly head during the rule of four-party alliance government," the ministers said.

She said top priority has been given to agriculture for making the country self-sufficient in food, and arrangement has been made for distributing fertilisers and insecticides among 2.80 lakh farmers during rainy season.

She said that the government has taken initiative to explore and lift gas for solving country's problems.

City Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran and AL leaders and administration officials, among others, were present at the meeting.

## Aide to Ctg

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Shamsul Alam at about 12:00 noon.

Earlier, two other accused--Golam Mostafa and Shahabuddin who were arrested in the case on Thursday night--were also freed on bail on Friday.

Some journalists came under the attack while they went to cover a reported land grabbing allegedly by Kashem's two sons--SM Al Mamun and SM Al Noman--at coastal Aekdia Jora Amtal of Kumira in Sitakunda upazila on Wednesday with the help of 200 hired goons by Manna.

In the evening, Rashed Mahmud, a senior photojournalist of Prothom Alo of Chittagong office, filed the case against 20 persons including Mamun, Noman and Manna with the police for assaulting him and his colleague staff reporter Pranab Baul.

Following the case, Kashem came to Prothom Alo Chittagong office at about 5:30pm on Saturday and sought apology for the attack. He also assured them of help to nab Manna.

## All Razakars

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under government consideration, and a complete list of them will be prepared at a convenient time, the state minister for liberation war affairs informed the House yesterday.

Replying to lawmakers' queries, ABM Tajul Islam also said a list of Razakars was prepared during the war.

"We have received part of the list. We will now prepare a complete list of Razakars and Al Badr members," the state minister said. The government wants to bring all of them to book. The process of their trial will begin with the trial of war criminals, he added.

Tajul Islam said the government has planned to build a replica of boat at the Shishu Park at Shahbagh in the capital so that people get a scope to know the history of the Liberation War.

"Bangabandhu (Sheikh Mujibur Rahman) delivered the historic March 7 speech from a dais built on a boat at the site where the Shishu Park was set up later," he said.

The state minister said the then military ruler Ziaur Rahman set up the park at the historic place to destroy the history of the Liberation War.

"The prime minister has instructed us not to demolish the Shishu Park since it has become a place for children's amusement. We will develop the park and also build a replica of boat," he said.

Police said the buses were trying to overtake each other causing the accident.

Police took the bodies to DMC morgue for autopsy.

## Triple attacks kill 19 in western Iraq

AFP, Ramadi

Twin car bombs near a government office and an apparently coordinated suicide attack at a hospital killed 19 people in an explosion of violence blamed on police collusion.

Officials said more than 80 people were injured in the blasts, which shattered a relative lull in Iraqi violence.

The two car bombs exploded in quick succession in Ramadi, the capital of Anbar province, near the offices of the provincial governor while a meeting was in progress, a police official said.

The attacks killed 19 people, including nine police, an interior ministry official told AFP. "Eighty-one other people are wounded and 30 cars are completely burned."

The official said 80 percent of the wounded were police, and 10 percent of the injured were in critical condition.

An AFP journalist in the building said the first bomb went off at around 12:30 pm (0930 GMT) about 20 metres (yards) from the building in a civilian parking lot, speeding the arrival of firemen and police.

A second car bomb then exploded, the journalist said, leading police to seal off the area, which was littered with body parts.

Shortly afterwards at Ramadi General Hospital, where victims had been rushed for treatment, a suicide bomber killed at least two people and wounded four others.

Anbar Deputy Governor Hekmat Jassim Zaidan blamed police inaction and collaboration for the attacks.

"Anbar police did not perform their duties well," he told AFP.

"They were unable to provide security to innocent civilians. Someone inside the security forces is behind these security violations."

The meeting in the government offices was between provincial officials, including directors for services such as health care and water, and tribal leaders.

Provincial governor Qasim Mohammed Abid said in an

interview with Al-Jazeera television that the attack had not been directed against the government buildings but targeted a nearby parking lot for civilian cars.

"The attack took place 500 metres (yards) from my office. It was a crime against civilians. It was at a normal garage for cars of the people," Abid said.

Iraqi police and soldiers dramatically increased their presence on Ramadi's streets in the aftermath of the attacks, and security forces also imposed a curfew, blocking any cars from entering or exiting the city.

Anbar police, meanwhile, announced a reward of 10 million Iraqi dinars (8,700 dollars) for any information related to those behind the blasts.

The US military did not immediately give details on whether it was providing support to Iraqi security forces in the area.

The attacks are the latest sign that unrest in Iraq's biggest province of Anbar is on the rise.

## President's

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Commanding, hours after a media report linking him with militants.

Highly placed sources at the Prime Minister's Office last night confirmed that Ehtesham has been transferred following a Prothom Alo report yesterday. The report linked him with militants who have been charged with attempting to assassinate Sheikh Hasina on Sep 26, 2001 during an election campaign.

The militants involved in the conspiracy to attack Hasina in their confessional statement mentioned Ehtesham's name.

Sources said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who also holds the defence portfolio, ordered the transfer of the two-star general to Rangpur.

Meanwhile, GOC of Rangpur Major General Abul Karim Humayun Kabir was appointed military secretary to the president.

## Pak raid ends

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Headquarters in Rawalpindi on Saturday, which left four of its militants and eight soldiers dead, and demanded a halt in ongoing military campaign in the NWFP.

The Amjad Farooqi group of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) umbrella grouping claimed that it was behind the audacious attack and demanded that former President Pervez Musharraf be put on trial.

The group took the responsibility in a telephone call made to Geo News. They also asked for closure of all Western NGOs and expulsion of US private security firm Blackwater.

The audacious attack exposed Pakistan's vulnerability in the face of a Taliban militia who have regrouped after the death of their leader and are determined to thwart an army assault on their tribal hideouts, analysts said.

The latest militant attack in Pakistan shows an "increasing" threat to the state, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said in London Sunday, but voiced confidence Islamabad was in control of its nuclear arsenal.

She said the militants' brazen bid to storm the Pakistani military headquarters in Rawalpindi on Saturday highlighted the scale of the threat faced by Islamabad.

"Yesterday was another reminder that extremists... are increasingly threatening the authority of the state," she said.

"But we see no evidence that they (the militants) are going to take over the state," she said at a press conference with British Foreign Secretary David Miliband.

Military spokesman Major General Athar Abbas said troops went in at about 6:00 am (0000 GMT) and met with resistance from five militants armed with suicide vests and barricaded in the building in the city-adjoint Islamabad.

"Thirty-nine hostages were rescued and three were killed," Abbas told AFP adding that the captives were shot dead by the militants.

"The militants had suicide jackets, improvised explosive devices, grenades... they wanted to blow up all the hostages and cause maximum damage."

He said that two soldiers and four of the insurgents were killed in the hours-long rescue operation. The apparent leader of the militant team escaped and detonated a number of explosives, before being injured and arrested.

"The operation is over. It was highly successful," Abbas added.

He said that intelligence officials were investigating