

JS to sue BNP trio

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On completion of a discussion of over two hours, the House unanimously passed the proposals. Workers Party lawmaker Rashed Khan Menon placed the proposals including the one for scrapping Sircar's parliament membership.

Lawmakers of the main opposition BNP were however not present in the House during the discussion, as they are still boycotting the parliament since June.

Participating in the discussion on a report of the all-party parliamentary probe committee, ruling alliance lawmakers blasted the trio, and recommended stern actions against them for their alleged involvement in corruption, and misuse of power.

During the discussion, Speaker Abdul Hamid, who was presiding over the session, disclosed that an audit of the parliament secretariat expenditures since 1972 is almost completed.

The audit being carried out by the Office of Comptroller and Auditor General, revealed some anomalies in previous expenditures.

"The audit team found that I took 5,423 taka extra as salaries. I will return the money," Hamid, who was deputy speaker and speaker in the last parliament, and a lawmaker in the previous ones, said.

He said others who withdrew excess money, will also have to return those amounts.

In response to a tidal demand for an enquiry into the alleged corruption that had occurred in the Jatiya Sangsad secretariat during the last parliament, Speaker Abdul Hamid on March 9 formed the all-party parliamentary probe committee.

Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abidin Faroque was made a member of the committee, but he did not attend any of its meetings. Sircar, Hamid Siddiqui, and Delwar did not appear before the committee despite being summoned by it.

The probe body on July 9 placed its report in the parliament asking the House to strip Sircar of his parliament membership.

Expressway

FROM PAGE 1
tickets over the Internet and mobile phones.

He said the whole of \$460-million pledged by the World Bank for development of the road sector will be spent in construction of Padma Bridge.

The Ecne-approved proposal on Padma Bridge estimates the construction will cost around Tk 10,161.75 crore.

But the final scheme design submitted by the consultant organisation puts the price tag at \$2.4 billion, he added.

He said the government will issue bonds to collect money from the capital market for construction of the bridge, which may take around three years to be complete.

About the proposed Asian Highway, he said national security will be the top priority in implementation of the project.

MPs urged

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opposition leader Khaleida Zia will share the stage as the chief guest and the special guest," the speaker said.

Campaigns will be organised across the country to mark the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, he added.

Earlier the House could not hold discussion on the amended Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) on Sunday due to wholesale absence of ministers and senior lawmakers.

The House decided to hold the discussion anytime after it resumes its sitting on October 28 as the speaker adjourned the sitting till 5:30pm of October 28.

But participation of main opposition lawmakers remains uncertain, as they have been boycotting the parliament since the budget session of June.

No step was taken so far to ensure their participation in parliament proceedings.

Planning Minister Air Vice Marshal (ret'd) AK Khandker yesterday placed the draft of the amended 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 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.

bership, and to recover around Tk 2.50 crore from the trio.

It also recommended legal actions against Sircar, Hamid, and Delwar who is also the secretary general of BNP.

The report says the three undermined the dignity of the House, indulged in widespread corruption and misuse of power.

Sircar illegally approved and drew a medical bill of Tk 27.86 lakh for himself, and approved bills of Tk 1.21 lakh for Akhtar Hamid, and Tk 6 lakh for Delwar, the report added.

In addition to his entitlement, the former speaker used three other vehicles, and took Tk 37.80 lakh as additional fuel allowance.

His deputy Akhtar Hamid used two additional vehicles and took Tk 58.86 lakh, while former chief whip Delwar used one additional vehicle and took about Tk 36 lakh as fuel allowance beyond their entitlements.

The probe body also revealed anomalies in their purchase of furniture and gift items, and in entertainment bills during the last parliament.

The House finally held a discussion on the probe body findings and passed the resolution. Ruling AL lawmaker Fazle Rabbi Mia, who led the 11-member probe body, kicked off the discussion in which 13 other lawmakers participated.

Participating in the discussion, the lawmakers said stern actions must be taken against the trio, for tarnishing the image of the House.

They said the actions should be taken, so that none dares to commit such corruption in future while holding such important posts in the parliament.

Some of the participants also criticised the past caretaker government for not carrying out its anti-corruption drive properly.

AL lawmaker Suranjit Sengupta, Khan Tipu Sultan, Atiur Rahman Atik, BM Mozammel Haque, Nurul Islam Suhan, Israfil Alam, KM Khalid, Tarana Halim, Ziaul Haque Mridha, Jatiya Samaitantrik Dal MP Hasanul Haque Inu, Jatiya Party lawmaker HM Golam Reza, and independent lawmaker Fazlul Azim also participated in the discussion.

Vandalism

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College and Commerce College clashed at Mirpur section-2 at around 6:30pm following a previous dispute. At least 10 people were injured and five vehicles were damaged in the clash.

A group of JNU students got into arguments with staff of Provat and Banasri Paribahan at Kakoli and clashed with them at around 3:30pm.

Later, the students tried to escape the scene by a BRTC double-decker. But Khilkhet police intercepted the bus at Kuril and arrested the students after being informed by Gulshan police.

Police said some students of South East University also joined the JNU students in the clash with transport workers.

Sub-Inspector Ashraf Hossain of Khilkhet Police Station said the arrestees were kept in custody and the process of filing a case with Gulshan Police Station was underway.

Meantime, about 200 students of Titumir College took to the streets at about 12:30pm after a brawl between some college students and a supervisor of Bengal Paribahan over bus fare, witnesses said.

Kamal Uddin, officer-in-charge of Gulshan Police Station, said the students set fire to a bus of Bengal Paribahan and went on the rampage. Later, police brought the situation under control.

Some college students claimed workers of Bengal Paribahan pushed them out of a running bus after they got into an argument with them.

The workers however claimed the students did not pay them bus fares.

Students of Mirpur University College and Mirpur Commerce College clashed at Mirpur section-2 and vandalised several vehicles disrupting vehicular movement on the road for about an hour.

Witnesses said the clash broke out after some students of Mirpur College beat up several students of Commerce College intercepting the bus that was carrying the Commerce College students.

Aug 21 cases

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Md Rais Uddin came up with the order upon a petition filed by Pintu's brother Shamsur Rahman Toha on behalf of him.

It was stated in the petition that Pintu was tortured in the name of interrogation while on remand, and he would be taken on further remand.

A Dhaka court on Sunday placed Pintu, accused in two criminal cases in the August 21 grenade attack, on a three-day fresh remand to trace suppliers of Cargas grenades used in the carnage that left 23 people dead.

Contacted, Additional Attorney General AKM Zahurul Hoque said Pintu was not tortured while on remand, and the government provides him treatment if he is ill.

Pintu was arrested on January 17 last year in the grenade attack case.

Advocate Khandaker Mahbub Hossain appeared for Pintu.

Rajuk move

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Magistrate Rokon-Ud-Dowla said had the illegal occupants been put behind the bar even for a single day car parking spaces could have been recovered very easily.

"But a mobile court dealing with the building construction act cannot punish errant building owners with imprisonment, as the law is not included within the purview of the mobile court ordinance," he said.

We are demolishing only those errant buildings listed by Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) to recover car parking spaces and will go after other buildings later.

The team razed Swiss Pharma, Life care pharmacy and a couple of other shops on the ground floor of Brothers Mansion and knocked down a partition wall at the back of Dhanmondi Plaza.

It also manually pulled down a partition wall at the back of Fatema Arcade. The ground floor of Lake View Super Market in Kalabagan was on the demolition list but it was spared as the owner produced an HC order.

Soon after the Rajuk authorities issued notices on October 3, many of the listed owners thronged the HC and managed to get prompt stay orders upon the demolition move.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police has recently carried out a survey and identified 198 buildings in the city that have constructed unauthorised structures on the designated car parking spaces for commercial purposes forcing the vehicles to be parked on the streets.

Rajuk on Sunday launched the demolition drive against those buildings.

BCL factions

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panic among resident students.

Such an incident had occurred on the university campus after quite a long time, they added.

DU Proctor Dr KM Saiful Islam told The Daily Star that they have taken the matter very seriously.

"Stern actions will be taken against the students involved. None of them will be spared," he added.

Sources said the clash between followers of BCL Mohsin Hall unit President Mohammad Ali and its General Secretary Mohiuddin broke out after the latter's men beat up Mohibullah, a 2nd year student of sociology, loyal to the hall unit president.

Mohibullah, who had been involved with the activities of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, had been staying at room no-219 at the hall since Monday under shelter of Mohammad Ali, sources added.

The members of the two factions armed with sharp weapons got engaged in chase and counter chase in hall corridors for about half an hour.

Top BCL leaders of DU unit and the university authorities had to intervene to bring the situation under control.

Later, police raided the hall at around 2:30am and recovered four rounds of bullet and a few machetes.

BCL DU unit issued show cause notices to the Mohsin hall unit president and its general secretary. It also expelled five BCL activists -- Riyad, Amin, Faruk, Dipu and Rana -- for their involvement in the clash.

BCL has also formed a probe committee to identify the persons involved in the incident, said BCL DU unit President Sohel Rana Tipu.

Graft eating

FROM PAGE 1
probe committee formed in August this year to dig out facts about corruption in renovation works.

Rashid on October 3 submitted a letter to the parliamentary standing committee on civil aviation and tourism ministry, bringing corruption allegations against consultancy firm SEATEC.

In the letter, he said the board members at a meeting asked both SEATEC and Hotels International Ltd (HIL), the owning company of Sonargaon Hotel, to produce the designs of renovation works but they failed to show those.

The members also doubted whether SEATEC has taken permission from Bangladesh government to operate here, read the letter.

Moinuddin Khan Badal, member of the parliamentary body, told The Daily Star on Thursday, "We have received the allegations and shall look into it soon."

According to HIL, it incurred huge losses in 2007 because of corruption done in the hotel's renovation works.

HIL statistics show that the hotel's profit (before tax) was Tk 135 million in 2006, which came down to Tk 7 million in 2007 following the delay in renovation works.

A consortium led by SEATEC had been given the job of consultancy and supervising the project in 2005.

The other components of the consortium are Wimberly Allison Tong and Goo (WATG) of Singapore and Engineering Consultants and Associates Ltd, Engineers and Consultants Bangladesh Ltd, and Divine Associates Ltd of Bangladesh.

SEATEC was responsible for assigning contractors for renovation work. Orion Group's sister concern Accom Engineering Ltd was awarded the contract of the hotel's renovation work in October 2005.

Both board members and the contractors alleged that SEATEC gave flawed designs to the contractors after expiry of the deadline for submission.

Accom Engineering Ltd was supposed to finish the job by January 2007 but it failed to do so. Its contract with the HIL was cancelled at the end of 2007 following allegation of substandard work and delaying the project's implementation.

Later, the HIL management did some renovation

Drama over

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didn't have any copy of the design of the building.

He said his elder brother had taken the building's plan abroad and showed an open plot behind the plaza as car parking space. Rajuk officials seemed to be convinced.

Rajuk officials accepted the open plot as the car parking space despite a huge signboard for a multi-story building planted there that reads Multi Plan Shining Star, which is awaiting construction.

The team knocked down a portion of the boundary wall and almost wrapped up the demolition drive.

Belal and Rajuk Chief Inspector Nazrul Alam were seen frantically active to cover up illegal structures in presence of other officials.

At this stage, the matter was pointed out to Rajuk magistrate Rokon-Ud-Dowla. He got furious and ordered the Rajuk officials to bring the bulldozer back and put pressure on the building owner to produce the building plan.

As the Rajuk bulldozer started knocking down Helvetia fast food shop at the plaza, the building owner came out with a plan approved in February 2005, which showed that there is no provision for shops on the ground floor.

Following the strict order of the magistrate, Rajuk bulldozer flattened parts of at least ten shops.

Answering to why they were sparing the unauthorised shops, Nazrul Alam said, "Because the owner said he had no design of the building."

Suman said, "The building plan Martin produced was for the entire building to be built at the plot."

The entire ground floor of Alta plaza on the Mirpur road was designated for car parking space but the owner had set up a fast food shop and more than a dozen other shops there.

works to run the hotel.

Only 30 percent of the renovation works including that on the third and fourth floors, health club, and swimming pool were completed by December 2008.

Renovation works on the second and fifth to eighth floors, lobby and ballrooms remained unfinished, said HIL.

The officials at the hotel said some valuable items including touchstone statues were stolen during renovation.

In August 2009, the HIL board formed a probe committee to look into the allegations regarding renovation works.

SEATEC has already received Tk 7 crore of its fees of Tk 12 crore from HIL.

Meantime, Accom Engineering Ltd went to an arbitration court claiming compensations from HIL. The company alleged that the project was delayed, as SEATEC did not provide it with designs and specifications in time.

Salman Karim, managing director of Orion Group, said, "We received most designs about 10 to 14 months after the project was launched."

"We even received wrong specifications of many interior products," he said.

Solaiman Ahmed, managing director of HIL, said the matter is now under investigation and the facts will come out once the probe is completed.

However, new consultants should be appointed for the project, he said.

Talking to The Daily Star, SEATEC's local agent Abdul Matin claimed that the company provided the contractor with all required designs.

"But the contractor did not complete its job properly," said the SEATEC representative.

The official also claimed that SEATEC didn't need to take any permission to work as a consultancy firm for this project as per the tender requirements.

Asked how SEATEC remitted its earnings to its country of origin from Bangladesh, the official said he is not aware of the matter.

He said SEATEC has demanded compensation from the HIL for "the losses it incurred due to delay in the project's implementation."

HIL officials said they have paid Tk 10 crore to Accom Engineering Ltd so far but also seized materials worth Tk 42 crore from the company.

Hasnat

FROM PAGE 16
Local AL activists say preparations are underway to accord Abdullah a "befitting honour" by welcoming him with a caravan of motorcades.

City AL Office Secretary Laskar Nurul Huq told The Daily Star Abdullah would be accorded a reception on Fazlul Huq Avenue in the city this afternoon.

Asked about the funding of such huge arrangements, Barisal Mayor and convener of the reception committee Hiron said the arches have been erected by different organisations and associations from their own funds to avoid extortion or toll collection.

Asked about traffic congestions on roads and highways due to erection of so many arches, Hiron said the people did these "spontaneously" and "we cannot prevent them from expressing their feelings for their beloved leader who is returning after eight long years".

When reminded of AL General Secretary Syed Ashraf Islam's instruction of not wasting money by decorating streets with huge gates or arranging any motorcades, Hiron declined to comment.

Abdullah was accused in six cases of ill-gotten wealth, concealing facts in property statement, evading taxes, possessing illegal arms and ammunition, forgery, terrorism, corruption and other offences.

He was sentenced to 36 years imprisonment in four cases heard in Dhaka and Barisal courts.

He was later granted bail in all cases upon surrendering before the High Court and also got order for postponement of two other cases.

The Barisal administration also forwarded recommendation to the home ministry for withdrawal of four cases filed against him here.

Correction

In a report published in The Daily Star on Tuesday under the headline "Poor JS Attendance: PM embarrassed, Latif annoyed" we inadvertently mentioned former deputy speaker Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui as deputy speaker of parliament. Shawkat Ali is the deputy speaker of current parliament. In another news item headlined "Myanmar Tension: Army chief visits border" published on the same day, army chief General Abdul Mubin's rank was inadvertently mentioned as Lt General. We regret the mistakes.

2 cases against

FROM PAGE 1
Till yesterday, the government decided to withdraw a total of 875 cases, mostly against leaders, lawmakers and workers of ruling Awami League including 12 against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Briefing newsmen after the meeting, head of the committee and State Minister for Law, Justice and parliamentary affairs Quamrul Islam said 693 cases were placed at the meeting.

"Of them, withdrawal of 297 cases have been recommended. Of the cases, 270 were filed under the penal code and 27 by the Anti-Corruption Commission," he said.

On the recommendations for withdrawal of the case against Tarique, eldest son BNP Chairperson Khaleida Zia, Quamrul said, "After reviewing documents of the case, it seemed to us that the case was lodged for political harassment. So, we have decided to withdraw it."

He said the committee received Tarique's application on April 30 this year. This is the second case against any BNP leader that is going to be dropped. They had earlier recommended withdrawal of a case against Moudud Ahmed for keeping foreign alcohol.

The other cases to be dropped include one each against Chittagong City Corporation Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, AL lawmakers Abdul Latif Biswas, Eng'g Mosharrat Hossain, Abdus Sattar, Rafiqul Anwar and Ilias Mollah, AL leaders Haji Mohammad Selim, Sayeed Khokon, JP Secretary General Ruhul Amin Hawlader, and Proshika chief Kazi Faruk Ahmed.

2 lakh MT

FROM PAGE 16
committee meeting with Finance Minister AMA Muhiht in the chair.

A cabinet division official said import of the fertiliser would cost a total of around Tk 413 crore.

To meet the demand of fuel oil for next year the committee approved the proposal for import of 14 lakh metric tonnes of refined petroleum product. Of the amount, 10 lakh tonnes is diesel while the rest kerosene, octane and jet fuel.

The committee also approved the proposal for establishing six sub-power stations of 33 KV each in six districts at a cost of around Tk 830 crore.

The six districts are Rangpur, Gaibandha, Pabna, Sirajganj, Dinajpur and Thakurgaon.

Mamun denied

FROM PAGE 16
produced before the court.

The court also fixed November 15 for hearing on charge framing against the accused.

On August 26, Deputy Tax Commissioner Ayesha Siddiqui Shelly filed the case with the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court and stated in the complaint that Mamun, director of Intex Apparels Ltd, evaded Tk 14 crore in income tax from an income of Tk 54 crore from the company during 2000 to 2007.

According to the case, Mamun repeatedly provided false information about his real income and expenditure to the National Board of Revenue (NBR) and did not submit his return statement on income tax.

He also did not mention his position in the companies to conceal information about real income, the complainant alleged.

Mamun did not submit statement of the money earned from the company to the NBR for the fiscal years during the time, the complainant said.

Mamun, a close friend and business partner of former BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman, was arrested from his house at Banani DOHS on March 26, 2007.

"The government will provide family members of the Father of the Nation with lifelong security everywhere as stated for very important people in the Special Security Force Ordinance, 1986," a provision of the bill reads.

The government may give them other privileges as well if it deems fit, said the bill.

Security of Pakistani

FROM PAGE 16
scientists at the facilities and passing information to extremists.

"It's not thought likely that the Taliban are suddenly going to storm in and gain control of the nuclear facilities," said Gareth Price, head of the Asia programme at London think tank Chatham House. "There are enough command-and-control mechanisms in place to prevent that."

A US counterproliferation official in Washington said strong safeguards are in place and there is no reason to believe the nuclear arsenal is in imminent jeopardy of seizure by militants.

The official, who commented on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to speak on the matter publicly, said there is a major difference between attacking a nuclear site and actually seizing and using the nuclear material stored inside.

Security at Pakistan's isolated nuclear installations is believed to be significantly higher than at the army headquarters, which was relatively relaxed by the standards of other nations. Thousands of people and vehicles enter the headquarters compound in Rawalpindi daily, and the 10 attackers, while able to take dozens of hostages Saturday and kill 14 people before a commando raid ended the siege, never penetrated to the heart of the complex.

Pakistan is estimated to have between 70 and 90 warheads, according to Hans Kristensen, director of the Nuclear Information Project of the Federation of American Scientists.

Shaun Gregory, an expert on Pakistani security at the University of Bradford in Britain, said militants have struck near an air base in Sargodha, where nuclear missiles are believed to be stored, and the Wah cantonment, where missiles that could carry nuclear weapons are believed to be assembled. He added that the attacks did not appear to have targeted nuclear weapons.

Pakistan uses armed forces personnel to guard nuclear weapons facilities, and it physically separates warhead cores from their detonation components, Gregory wrote in the July issue of The Sentinel, the monthly journal of the Combating Terrorism Centre.

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