

Khaleda's absence

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frustrated the whole nation. UNB adds: Speaker Abdul Hamid said, "This rally has been organised on behalf of the Jatiya Sangsad. This is neither a political rally nor any group's gathering. Here both head of the government and leader of the opposition have been invited as guests. Hence, the absence of the honourable leader of the opposition has hurt me."

His remarks came while addressing the 'Anti-poverty Rally throughout the Country', marking the 'International Day for the Eradication of Poverty' at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

He said he wants to make it clear that he had been conducting the House as per the constitution as well as the Rules of Business. "There was no influence (of others) at all in conducting the House," he said.

Hamid said the rally would have been more meaningful had she (Khaleda Zia) joined it. "Still, I hope both the government and the opposition will join hands in the future to work on all national issues, including poverty alleviation."

"As a matter of fact, I have had all preparations to hold such a historic rally after getting her due consent. The issues she has raised as reasons for not attending the event could have been mentioned even at this gathering. And the reaction of the government would have come up at the same time."

The speaker stressed the need for building a consensus to make Bangladesh free from hunger and poverty.

Hamid urged all political parties to be sensible in their behaviour for flourishing the parliamentary democracy.

BSS adds: Syed Ashraful Islam said, "Begum Zia, even being a responsible leader, has intentionally uttered many untrue remarks to justify her absence from the rally."

He said this while briefing reporters after a meeting of the secretariat body of AL at party's Dhanmondi office yesterday.

He said Awami League will begin member collection campaign in the second week of November and the extended meeting of the party will be held in the third week.

In the two-hour long meeting the secretariat body of the AL discussed the ways for implementation of the decisions taken in the party's first sitting of the newly constituted working committee and reposed duties on the organisational secretaries in this regard.

The meeting decided to take stern action against persons violating the party discipline and to be found guilty for corruption and criminal activities.

Terming Khaleda Zia's statement in Friday's press conference as a 'travesty of truth', Syed Ashraful Islam said the nation hoped that the prime minister and the leader of the opposition would take an oath for making the country free from poverty, which was the cherished goal of our Independence.

He said BNP appointed a judge in the High Court who even had no LLB degree. So,

30pc posts

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of freedom fighters were being deprived of the jobs of assistant judges, as there was no quota for them in the recruitment rules of the Judicial Service Commission, sources added.

Sources also said some 394 assistant judges had already been appointed and the recruitments of 211 more had been finalised through the commission without taking into consideration the quota for the children of freedom fighters.

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed on October 17 told The Daily Star that his office was working out a plan to introduce a quota in the recruitment rules so that the children of freedom fighters could have access to the jobs of assistant judges.

When asked whether the government has to take permission from the Supreme Court (SC) to introduce the quota system he said the government has the jurisdiction to include anything in the recruitment rules.

The minister also said he is hopeful that the government will complete the inclusion of quota system in the rules and also the recruitment of 211 assistant judges to their offices within this month.

A commission official, requesting anonymity, said that there is only 20 percent quota for the woman candidates in the existing recruitment rules of the commission framed by the military-backed caretaker government.

The rules were framed so that the candidates could be appointed on the basis of merit, he said.

The Judicial Service Commission is already carrying out the medical tests of 211 selected candidates and it will submit its recommendations to the government after completing police verifications, sources said.

Sources said only the entry level judicial officials are appointed to the post of assistant judges while the others are filled through promotion and added that about 400 posts of the lower court judges have remained vacant for more than seven years affecting people seeking justice.

The executive magistrates earlier discharging judicial functions were absorbed in the administrative posts after separation of the magistracy through the separation of judiciary from the executive in November 2007.

Besides, some of the judges either left the jobs or have been transferred to other services on deputation creating vacancies in the judiciary.

Confined

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another agency in the same area.

While he was discharging his duty, men of his former employers picked him up in front of Sony Cinema Hall at Mirpur, took him to the agency office and confined him there.

Abdul Motaleb said he got a cellphone call around 1:00pm from a man who asked him to get his brother released by paying Tk 2000.

He found his brother hanging from a grill with a cloth after they had reached the agency office with the money at around 2:30pm, Motaleb said.

Officer-in-Charge Zakir Hossain Mollah of Mirpur Police Station told The Daily Star that Motaleb took his brother to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

They visited the spot but found the agency office was locked and nobody was there, he added.

Contacted by The Daily Star yesterday, Subhash, a Chapainawabganj-based businessman, first said he had lent the money to the OCA.

He found the agency office was locked and nobody was there, he added.

Some traders in Karwan Bazar said one Badu Mia, whose brother is a local Awami League leader, has driven away at least 20 agents of different mineral water firms who used to supply water in this area. He compelled tea stall and food shop owners to sell water supplied by him.

Asked about it, Badu Mia said shop owners in the area wanted him to supply water.

He claimed he is an agent of Pipasha Drinking Water. He supplies water at Tk 25-30 a jar.

But BSTI officials said a jar of mineral water should cost Tk 60-70.

A jar contains around 60-65 glasses of water.

Traders at Rayerbagh in Kadamtali, seeking anonymity, said Alamgir, Dania unit AL secretary, has driven away agents of different mineral water firms and grabbed water trade in the area.

His men forced traders to take water and cooling machines from them.

Many people in Jhalrapur and adjacent areas of Jhalrapur said Haji Azad of AL forced food shops and hotel owners to buy water from his men.

Replies to a query, Meraj said, "Why should I need to borrow money? People willingly gave me around Tk 40 lakh before the election."

His men forced traders to take water and cooling machines from them.

Many people in Jhalrapur and adjacent areas of Jhalrapur said Haji Azad of AL forced food shops and hotel owners to buy water from his men.

He joined AL recently.

St Martin's Island

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proposal to the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Prime Minister's Office, the navy and air force headquarters and the director general of Coastguards.

The proposal says Myanmar military often crosses the zero line at the Bandarban frontier and carry out operations to combat various separatist organisations. Apart from erecting barbed-wire fences and mobilising army unilaterally, the Myanmar authorities are forcing their nationals to enter Bangladesh territory.

The BDR has suggested designating responsibilities and areas of jurisdiction of the Coastguards and BDR and making intelligence activities of various agencies faster and stronger.

A senior home ministry official yesterday said the Prime Minister's Office is including the quota system in the rules and also the recruitment of 211 assistant judges to their offices within this month.

A commission official, requesting anonymity, said that there is only 20 percent quota for the woman candidates in the existing recruitment rules of the commission framed by the military-backed caretaker government.

The rules were framed so that the candidates could be appointed on the basis of merit, he said.

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Sources said only the entry level judicial officials are appointed to the post of assistant judges while the others are filled through promotion and added that about 400 posts of the lower court judges have remained vacant for more than seven years affecting people seeking justice.

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Besides, some of the judges either left the jobs or have been transferred to other services on deputation creating vacancies in the judiciary.

The goal is to understand just how warm ocean currents may be pulling the ice sheets seaward, melting their undersides. These ice sheets are rapidly collapsing--as fast as nine metres (27 feet) a year according to a study published in the journal Nature last month. If they disappear, far greater ice masses that lie on Antarctic bedrock could then melt into the sea, submerging coastal communities around the globe.

The DC-8 left Punta Arenas, Chile, on a mission to fly as low as 1,000 feet (300 metres) over Antarctica. Like the NASA satellite that has provided shocking data on how quickly Antarctic ice is disappearing, this plane will measure snow cover and ice thickness. But it also has equipment that will enable scientists to see under the ice shelves, measuring the water below.

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