

Obama wins

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amounts to a government takeover of the health care industry "that increases costs, adds to our skyrocketing debt" and "destroys jobs with tax hikes and new mandates."

If, as expected, the House and Senate pass rival versions of health care legislation, they will need to thrash out a compromise version and approve it in order to send it to Obama to sign into law, a frequently tough process.

Obama and Democratic House leaders had invested heavy political capital in what they knew would be a close contest sure to shape his legacy and the fate of his ambitious plan to remake US health care if the bill went down to defeat.

The president telephoned wavering members on Friday and paid a rare visit to Congress on Saturday, butressed with a speech from the White House Rose Garden, but still 39 Democrats joined 176 Republicans to oppose the plan.

One Republican -- Joseph Cao of Louisiana -- broke ranks, nominally fulfilling, in the barest terms, Obama's vow to secure bipartisan support.

The chamber's Democrats erupted in loud cheers and applause the moment the bill had the 218 votes needed for passage, about 11:07 pm (0407 GMT).

Final House passage came after a flurry of votes, including a 240-194 vote to sharply tighten restrictions on government funds for abortions, vital to cementing support from a platoon of anti-abortion Democrats.

The House then voted 176-258 to defeat the Republican alternative to the overall plan -

- with one lone Republican, Representative Timothy Johnson of Illinois, joining the Democrats in opposition.

Republicans appealed to swing-vote Democrats from battleground districts to reject what they warned would end up being a costly government takeover of health care, stoking traditionally American suspicions of the public sector.

"This bill bulldozes individual liberty and puts the government just where it doesn't belong," said Republican Representative Sam Johnson.

The United States is the only industrialized democracy that does not ensure that all of its citizens have health care coverage, with an estimated 36 million Americans uninsured.

Washington spends vastly more on health care -- both per person and as a share of national income as measured by Gross Domestic Product -- than other industrialized democracies, but with no meaningful edge in quality of care, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The bill would create a government-backed insurance plan, popularly known as a "public option," to compete with private firms and would end denial of coverage based on preexisting medical problems.

Under the White House-backed bill, Americans would have to buy insurance and most employers would have to offer coverage to their workers -- though some small businesses would be exempt and the government would offer subsidies.

War crime

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He said the existing Administrative Tribunal will be shifted to the Janata Tower Building at Karwan Bazar from Abdul Gani Road.

State Minister for Public Works and Housing Abdul Mannan Khan accompanied Quamrul when he visited the two buildings.

Quamrul also said parliament has already taken resolution for the war crime trial and the government allocated Tk10 crore in the budget for it.

"Steps are being taken to form an internationally accepted tribunal to hold the trial of war crimes," he said.

LeT men

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Bangladesh two months back to execute the attack plan with the help of Harkatul Jihad al Islami members.

The LeT men also had plans to attack embassy officials or explode bombs in front of the diplomatic missions, said DB officials.

DB Assistant Commissioner Sanwar Hossain told The Daily Star, "We are trying our best to arrest the militants involved in the plot to attack the foreign missions."

Bashundhara

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NBR in its 20th board meeting held yesterday with its chairman Dr Nasiruddin Ahmed in the chair stopped short of entertaining the company's plea.

The NBR sources said the meeting ended inconclusively without a decision regarding the Bashundhara issue, which was on top of the meeting agenda.

"We discussed the matter. It is too early to say anything about it. We have to scrutinise the matter further," the NBR chairman told UNB after the meeting.

A member of the NBR, who preferred not to be quoted by name, said that in the present situation the Board has nothing to do in this matter.

"A court already has given its verdict; we cannot do anything at the moment."

He noted that after the judgment there are three ways open for the convicted persons, including the company chief.

One is go to the higher court for appeal, accept the imprisonment or conviction given by the court or seek President's mercy under article 49 of the Constitution.

"There is no other way but these three," he said.

Regarding their decision to seek explanation of the section 170 of the Income Tax Ordinance 1984 from law ministry over the conundrum, he said that they were not sure about the explanation of this section of the tax law.

The section 170 says an NBR commissioner may, either before or after institution of any proceedings or prosecution for an offence punishable under this Chapter, compound such offences.

"We want to know the actual meaning of the word proceedings," he said.

On September 30, 2007, a special court sentenced Bashundhara Industrial Complex Ltd chairman Shah Alam and his family in absentia in the tax-evasion case for committing offences under sections 165 and 166 of the Income Tax Ordinance 1984.

Aug 21 attack

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CID officials who would only speak in return for anonymity also said they are on a country-wide hunt for the two--Monir and Idris.

Meanwhile, CID investigators yesterday quizzed former assistant superintendent of police Munshi Atiqur Rahman, who was investigation officer of the grenade attack case during the BNP-led four-party alliance rule.

Special Superintendent Meer Shahidul Islam of CID told The Daily Star that Munshi Atiqur, who faces charges of misleading the investigation, came to their Malibagh headquarters in the afternoon and was interrogated for over an hour and a half.

Shahidul however would not say anything on the line of questioning.

Contacted, ASP Abdul Kahar Akand, IO of the grenade attack case, too declined to make any comment on the matter.

Sources close to the investigation said Munshi Atiqur Rahman was grilled mainly over his role during the attack and later in attempts to divert the course of the probe in the August 21 carnage that left 24 Awami League leaders and workers dead and scores injured on Bangabandhu Avenue in 2004.

On Thursday, former ASP Abdur Rashid and former senior ASP Ruhul Amin were questioned face to face with detained former BNP state minister for home Lufuzzaman Babar.

The sources said Babar in interrogation claimed the Joj Miah story was the brainchild of Munshi Atiqur Rahman.

The former state minister also said he was used by the then government to help CID mislead the investigation to save the brother of former BNP deputy education minister Abdus Salam Pintu.

He maintained he did not know anything about the August 21 plot. As soon as he learned about involvement of Pintu's brother and Lashkar-e-Taiba leader Moulana Tajuddin, Huji leader Mufi Abdul Hannan and some others, he shared the information with the then former prime minister.

On Friday, CID sent Babar to the Taskforce for Interrogation cell for quizzing and brought him back to its Malibagh office the following day.

Earlier, CID interrogated Shamsul Islam, former deputy inspector general of the Special Branch, and Mostofa Kamal, SP of the Armed Police Battalion.

Former IGP Shahudul Huq, former DMP commissioner Ashraf Huda and former additional IGP Farrukh Ahmed too have been summoned for interrogation in the case.

Delwar blasts

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attitude of the government may disrupt the normal politics in the country.

"Government will be solely responsible for any circumstances if it does not refrain from such negative activities," he said in a statement issued yesterday.

Delwar condemned the "government's ill attempt" at using former state minister Lufuzzaman Babar against Tarique Rahman and other important ministers of BNP-led four party alliance government in the name of interrogation in Task Force Interrogation cell.

"Government is propagating fictitious stories in the name of interrogation of former state minister of home affairs ignoring all laws and ethics," he said.

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Spot orders slip

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this year's apparel and textile exposition at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka from November 5-7.

At the 19th Batexpo, 117 international buyers and 3,347 representatives visited the exhibition.

The special feature of this year's fair was that buyers from some new export destinations such as Japan, Russia, Ireland and Brazil visited the fair.

Also, buyers came in from the US, UK, Canada, Turkey, Sweden, Denmark, Italy, France, Hong Kong, India, Greece, Thailand, Taiwan, Singapore, New Zealand and Nepal.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the BGMEA fair, where 62 companies from home and abroad showcased their products at 86 stalls.

Low bridge

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complaint to LGED on the length and height of the bridge as it would "impede" the river traffic during rainy season and stop implementation of Dhaka's circular waterway project.

"The bridge will be a permanent obstacle to the river traffic. Even country boats and sand carrying low-height cargo boats won't be able to operate on the river on completion of the bridge," comments an executive engineer of BIWTA.

The bailey bridge should be at least 100 feet in length and 25 feet in height for smooth movement of vessels, but LGED is making it only four feet high from the highest water level and 80 feet in length, the engineer adds asking not to be named.

Khorshed Hasan, executive engineer of Dhaka Division LGED, said, "They should not have any objection against a bailey bridge as it is transferable anytime. The plan was to make an RCC (rod, cement, concrete) bridge, but now we're making a bailey bridge there."

"They could have objected if we were making an RCC bridge," he said, claiming BIWTA "allowed" them to construct the bailey bridge.

However, BIWTA officials dismissed the claim.

BIWTA sources said they have sent the 14th letter to LGED on November 6, requesting them to stop the construction of the bridge. Earlier, the shipping ministry and BIWTA sent them six letters each and secretary of the planning ministry sent another letter requesting the same.

On a recent visit it was seen that the construction of the bridge is almost complete and even a country boat can merely pass under the bridge during this lean period.

"It would be impossible when the water will increase during the monsoon," said a local.

The BIWTA sources say LGED is ignoring their objections as the bureaucrats are influencing the LGED.

A protocol officer of former

prime minister Khaleda Zia is one of the members of the project who influenced the LGED and BIWTA offices to make the bridge as a government project, they add.

They say the admin officials close to the government are now using their influence to that end.

The Pratyasha Housing Project has around 400 members of the BCS (administration) cadres service.

"Though the prime minister has directed everyone concerned to save the rivers and keep those navigable, they are violating it," says the BIWTA engineer.

"Each time we file a fresh objection they stop the work and start again after a few days," he says, adding the water flow is not so strong in the Turag during lean period and this bridge will kill the river completely.

Most of the bridges LGED has built on the rivers and canals around the capital are lower than the standard and no river remains navigable during the rainy season when the water level goes high.

Even the Third Buriganga Bridge at Basila has been built at least two metres below its vertical clearance requirement.

On the navigability issue, Khorshed Hasan of LGED said the main problem of the Turag river is encroachment. "You go and see yourself how the river is grabbed. River grabbing has to be stopped first," he said.

During a recent visit to the spot, it was seen workers were busy constructing the Bailey bridge.

Locals say every afternoon several private vehicles are parked on the Tongi-Ashulia highway as different top- and mid-level government officials and their families come to visit their plots.

This bridge will help them cross the river and go to their housing project, locals say.

Pratyasha Housing Project is located in Mudfa village in Tongi, Gazipur, on the other side of the river. Members of the housing project now go there through Cherag Ali Bazar in Tongi.

Railway asked

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who will retire next week, abroad for receiving training.

Mohammad Shahabuddin, the additional chief engineer who had obtained clemency from the now defunct Truth Commission, went on a 15-day tour to Australia, Japan, China and Malaysia a week ago to receive training.

Interestingly, he will have gone into retirement by the time he returns.

At the meeting the parliamentary body recommended forming a separate ministry for railway to improve and expand the sector and properly monitor its activities.

On the standing committee's claim that he grabbed the railway land, Mirza Abbas told The Daily Star that the committee has portrayed him and his family members "vindictively" circulating false information and that it does not know how to measure land.

"My father and my uncle kept possession of two to three bighas of land when the railway authority acquired land. We later built houses on that piece of land," Abbas, the joint secretary general of BNP, said.

After the standing committee's meeting, its chairman Sheikh Muzibur Rahman told reporters that Abbas took back "huge area of land" near Kamalapur Railway Station "by exerting influence" during the rule of the last BNP government.

He said the railway authority had acquired around 4 acres of land from Abbas' father and uncle.

"We have asked the railway authority to submit a detailed report on the issue within three days... We want to know how Abbas grabbed the railway land and which officials were involved in the process," Muzibur said.

Gulam Maola Rony, a member of the standing committee, said Mirza Abbas and his family grabbed land worth about Tk100 crore.

He said the government has acquired land across the country at different times and if Abbas gets back the land acquired from his family, all concerned will demand their land properties to be returned.

On the foreign trip of additional chief engineer Shahabuddin, committee chief Muzibur said it is a waste of public money to

send abroad a government official, who will go into retirement within a week, for training.

"We asked the secretary of the communications ministry to submit a report on why the additional chief engineer was nominated for trainings in Australia, Japan, China and Malaysia," said Muzibur.

At its meeting the committee also discussed bringing the traffic control system under Bangladesh Road Transport Authority and the possibility of leasing out one or two roads and highways like the Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway to the private sector for a certain period.

Strike

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secretary at the ministry's conference room yesterday.

Shipping secretary held the meeting with the workers' leaders and BIWTA and BIWTC chairmen for several hours yesterday afternoon in efforts to resolve the crisis, but the meeting concluded without any concrete decisions.

Ashiquel said a decision about withdrawal of the strike would only come after a tripartite meeting between the government, owners and workers.

"We will withdraw the strike if our demands are met," he added.

The secretary proposed setting up a committee to deal with the demands, but without the presence of transport owners at the meeting, discussions would not be successful, said the workers' leader.

Movement of water transport was suspended on all major river routes including in the coastal districts of Barisal, Bhola, Barguna and Patuakhali since the strike began, reports our Barisal correspondent.

Launches including MV and ML types have also not been operating excepting for a few trawlers and small boats.

Hundreds of passengers with luggage were seen waiting for launches at Sadarghat and other launch terminals of the country.

Mahbubul Alam, director (port) of BIWTA, told The Daily Star that no water vessel moved from Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chandpur and Chittagong.

Additional police have been deployed in the terminals to avoid any untoward situations.

Kids with 'tough love' upbringing 'do well in life'

ANI, London

Children who are raised with 'tough love' by their parents are likely to do well in life, a new report has found.

The report, by think tank Demos, suggested that experiencing a combination of warmth and discipline means youngsters are more likely to develop skills such as application, self-regulation and empathy than those with laissez-faire, authoritarian or disengaged parents.

These characteristics boost children's life chances, social mobility and opportunity and were profoundly shaped in pre-school years, according to the report.

The Building Character report, which analysed data from more than 9,000 households in the UK from the Millennium Cohort Study, showed that kids with "tough love" parents were twice as likely to develop good character capabilities by the age of five than children with "disengaged" parents.

The report also looked at factors such as family structure and income, reports the Daily Star.

It found that kids from the richest backgrounds were more than twice as likely to develop crucial characteristics than the poorest.

Children with married parents were twice as likely to show the traits than children from lone parent or step-parented families, the study found.

The researchers of the study said that when parental style and confidence were factored in, the difference in child character development between richer and poorer families disappeared; indicating parenting was the most important influence.

Mehnaz

FROM PAGE 16
Fazle Noor Taposh.

Second Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Habibur Rahman Siddique ordered to send her to jail when the investigation officer (IO) of the case produced her before the court.

Mehnaz has been grilled for 12 days in three spells of remand, police said.

Detective branch (DB) of police arrested seven persons for their suspected links to the bomb attack on Taposh. Five of them are family members of convicted killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

With Mehnaz, six of the arrestees are now in jail. The DB police is quizzing detained Ataul, nephew of Bangabandhu murder convict Bazul Huda, in the bomb attack case.

Lawmaker Taposh came under the bomb attack on October 21 night that left at least 13 people wounded while Taposh escaped unhurt.

Our Kushtia correspondent adds: Police on Saturday night picked up another nephew of Bangabandhu murder convict Bazul Huda from his residence at Kuthuli in Meherpur Sadar upazila for suspected links to recent bomb attacks, including on MP Taposh.

The youth is Ariful Azim Habib, 35, son of late Anwarul Azim.

Anwarul Azim, a retired teacher of Meherpur Government High School, was a cousin of Bazul Huda.

Ariful Azim was in Malaysia from 2001-2004 and on returning home he got involved in farming activities.

When contacted, police said they would produce Ariful before a Meherpur court seeking remand for interrogating him in connection with the recent bomb attacks, including on Taposh.

Earlier on Wednesday Ataul Huda, another nephew of Maj (ret) Bazul Huda, was arrested from Chuadanga in connection with the bomb attack on Taposh.

Outlaw killed

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On information, Detective Branch of police cordoned off a field at Defolbaria village where Sarajit and his associates were holding a meeting around 5:00am.

Sensing their presence, the outlaws opened fire on police prompting them to fire back that triggered a gunfight.

Sarajit was caught in the line of fire and died on the spot, police said.

Police constables Ruhul Amin and Swapan Kumar were also injured during the gun battle.

Sarajit was an accused in a number of cases including seven for murder, police said.

Police recovered a pipe gun, four rounds of bullet and three bombs from the spot.

US fire kills

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one and a half years ago. The names of the other killed and those injured could not be known immediately.

According to The New York Times, two of the men died at the scene, and the third, who was in cardiac arrest when rescue workers arrived, died at Elmhurst Hospital Centre.

Three critically injured men were taken to the burn unit of New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell hospital in Manhattan. A woman was treated at the scene.

Quoting a witness, News World from New York reported that Subir Barua, owner of the house, woke up hearing a huge blast around 2:30am and rushed to the basement. He found four Bangladeshis lying on the floor. Subir tried to rescue them but himself got burn injuries.

On information, fire officials rushed to the spot and admitted the victims to hospital. Officials suspected blast of the electric heater was the source of the fire. The incident was under investigation.

Noyan Barua, a friend of Subir, told The New York Times

that two of the dead men lived in the house and the third one was visiting.

Neighbours and relatives of the owners said the house operated as a cultural centre--and possibly a boarding house--for members of Bangladesh's Buddhist community.

A visitor at the hospital, Shaikat Barua, 26, said Subir, who is in his 50s, was in a critical condition with severe burns.

The second floor of the building was illegally divided into two units, and the basement was split into four bedrooms, officials said. On Saturday, the city's Department of Buildings issued violations for work performed without a permit, illegal occupancy and lack of a second exit.

Firefighters were delayed from reaching the victims by an obstructed basement door, and they had to cut through bars on the basement windows, a fire official said.

According to city property records, the two-storey wood-frame house, at 42-40 65th Street in Woodside, has been owned by Subir and Marina Barua since 1996.

Education policy

FROM PAGE 16
Muhiuddin Khan at a views-exchange meeting with the education minister on the draft education policy.

The committee demanded replacing the words "secular and gonomukhi (people-oriented)" with "religious values and employment-oriented (karmamukhi)" in the policy.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said the government would not keep anything in the education policy that go against Islam, madrasa education or religious values.

He said madrasa education, which has a long glorious past, would be modernised.

A 25-member delegation of the committee submitted to the minister a set of recommendations that include replacing the word "sense of secularism" with "piety and sense of morality" in the policy.

The committee leaders also suggested replacing "introduction to four main religions in Bangladesh" with "introduction to own religion" in chapter-7 of the policy.

They also proposed keeping primary education up to class five, inclusion of basic education on religions of all faiths from class one and providing salaries, allowances and other facilities to teachers at independent Ibte'dai madrasa and establishing

Islami Arabic University.

The committee leaders also proposed excluding Lalitkala from the policy, claiming it goes against the religious values of the majority of people.

They suggested replacing Lalitkala with "religion and moral education" in class one and two and, "health science" from class three to eight as additional subjects.

The recent speeches of the chief of education policy formulation committee has hurt the sentiment of the people, said Muhiuddin Khan, also vice chairman of Islami Oikya Jote.

"The people of this country are extremely annoyed at the remarks," he said.

The committee convenor however said they believe that a certain quarter is trying to portray the government's effort in a bad light.

Committee member AFM Khalid Hossain claimed madrasa education is a specialised form of learning. There would be problems if any attempt is made to modernise it, he added.

The minister said they will consider all opinions with due importance before finalising the policy by December.

Committee Member Secretary Maulana Muhammad Azizul Haque Murad also spoke.

Anti-Taliban mayor

FROM PAGE 16
Malik, mayor of Adizai suburb on Peshawar's outskirts, once had close links to the hardline Taliban movement, but switched sides in 2008 and had raised a local force to battle the Islamist extremists on the fringes of the city.

The mayor had in the past survived a number of attempts on his life by his former allies, who are battling Pakistan's government and want to impose a harsh brand of Islamic law across swathes of the north-west.

The attacker detonated his explosives-packed car close to both Malik's guesthouse and the cattle market, littering the road with the corpses of cows and twisted metal from ruined vehicles, police and witnesses said.

Mahabat Khan, a 50-year-old livestock dealer, said he had just sold a buffalo and was talking to the buyer outside the market when a huge blast suddenly knocked him to the ground.

"It was a huge blast near us and my foot was injured," Khan told AFP from his hospital bed. "I heard gunshots after the blast."

Earlier 20 Taliban insurgents have been killed as Pakistan's military tries to consolidate gains in its offensive against the militants in the northwest tribal district, the army said Sunday.

In the last 24 hours, 20 terrorists have been killed and eight soldiers including an officer were injured, the military said in its daily statement.</