

6pc of GDP

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Minister Motihar Hossain, Secretary in-charge Badrul Alam Tarafdar, Education Minister of the Maldives Mustafa Lutfi, State Minister for Education of Nepal Govinda Chaudhury Thara spoke at the press conference.

Afsarul Amin said they focused on decentralisation and all the countries have agreed to spend six percent of the GDP in the sector.

Badrul Alam Tarafdar said it is true that most of the governments will not spend four percent of the GDP in the last six years but they are now adamant and would persuade the governments to allocate the money.

Asked whether the target will be materialised within the timeframe, he said the finance minister of Bangladesh has assured that the government would allocate the money.

"Our prime minister has already announced -- it was also in the ruling party election manifesto -- that the government will ensure cent percent enrolment by 2011. However, we need a lot of money to achieve the goal," Badrul Alam said.

Describing government's various plans and programmes, including school feeding programme, he said, "Keeping the government's promise to eradicate illiteracy from the country by 2014 in mind we have chalked out a big programme involving a huge amount of money."

"We have chalked out another programme involving Tk 1,200 crore with the help of

the World Food Programme," he said.

Education Minister of the Maldives Mustafa Lutfi said, "We, all the participating countries, have agreed on six percent target as we believe in the importance of education."

Mentioning that the Maldives is close to allocate seven percent of the GDP, he said all the countries might not be able to achieve this meeting's target within the 2011 deadline but that does not mean that there should not be a target.

Nepalese State Minister Govinda Chaudhury Thara said his country spends about four percent of the GDP in education sector.

It was told in the conference that all the countries except Maldives have allocated below three percent of GDP for this sector.

State Minister Motahar Hossain said, "We will bring all the students to schools by 2011 and are committed to free the country from illiteracy by 2014. We have the experience and money is no obstacle. We will manage the fund."

Afsarul Amin announced that India has agreed to consider organising the third ministerial meeting in 2011. The theme of the third meeting will remain unchanged, he added.

Delegates from Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, the Maldives, Bhutan and Afghanistan, and a good number of education experts, Unesco representatives, EFA coordinators and NGO activists attended the meeting.

AUG 21 CASE

Court rejects Arif's bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected a bail petition of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) ward councillor Ariful Islam Arif in connection with the August 21 grenade attack case.

Judge (vacation) Abdul Majid of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the order after Ariful's lawyer filed a criminal appeal against the rejection order of the lower court.

Earlier, the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court rejected Ariful's bail petition on October 20.

Ariful's lawyer told the court that his client was implicated in the case as part of a conspiracy to harass him. Moreover, his name was not included in the first information report. So, he prayed for granting bail to his client.

But the prosecution said that Ariful was shown arrested in the case on November 5 following information extracted from detained former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar, Harkat-ul-Jihad al Islami (Huji) founder Moulana Sheikh Abdur Salam and Huji chief Mufti Abdul Hannan.

Later, Ariful was remanded for nine days for interrogation in two phases where he admitted his involvement in the carnage killing 23 people and injuring over 300 others at Bangabandhu Avenue in 2004. So, the bail petition should be rejected, the prosecution said.

Earlier on September 15, CID arrested Arif from his Moghbazar residence in connection with the blast at a CPB rally.

RAB DRIVE

Man jumps from hotel, dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man jumped from the third floor of a residential hotel and died on the spot during a Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) drive early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Anwar Hossain, 28, an alleged sex-workers' agent in the hotel, Lodge Inn, at Kakoli in Gulshan.

Officer-in-charge (OC) Kamal Uddin of Gulshan Police Station said Anwar jumped to the rail lines behind the hotel and died on the spot while a team of Rab-1 was conducting drives at the hotel and another one, Dhaka Inn, adjacent to it around 1:00am.

The Rab team, on a tip off, raided the hotels and arrested 12 men and nine women allegedly involved in unsocial activities there.

The OC said on information they recovered Anwar's body from the rail lines and sent it to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Hasina off

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day's Joint High-Level Segment of COP and CMP, luncheon for heads of delegation and ministers hosted by UNFCCC executive secretary.

She will also join a dinner hosted by the Queen of Denmark and the Prince Consort for the Heads of State and Government at Royal Palace on December 17.

Hasina will attend the opening session of the Copenhagen summit on climate change where the Danish prime minister and the UN secretary general will make statements on December 18. The opening session will be followed by informal thematic discussion.

Later, the PM will attend the plenary meeting at Bella Centre to adopt the agreed outcome on the same day. She will join a luncheon to be hosted by Danish premier on December 18.

Apart from joining of different events of the conference that will pave the way to find out ways and means to tackle the grim challenges of climate change, the Bangladesh premier will hold bilateral talks with world leaders on the sidelines of the conference.

Hasina will leave Copenhagen on December 20 and return home on December 21.

The PM's delegation includes Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, Health Minister AFM Ruhul Haque, State Minister for Environment and Forest Hasan Mahmud, Ambassador-at-Large M Ziauddin, PM's Principal Secretary MA Karim and Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad.

HC very concerned

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organisation, saying the number of victims systematically rose from 64 in 2004 to 111 in 2005 and 192 in 2006. However, the number of such victims fell to 94 in 2007, 68 in 2008 and 39 till November 2009.

These two organisations earlier became party in the suo moto rule.

As the hearing started, the HC observed that it is very unfortunate 11 people were killed in the so-called crossfire, encounter or gun-fight after the court issued a suo moto rule.

The HC bench of Justice AFM Abdur Rahman and Justice Md Emdadul Haque Azad said the extrajudicial killings should stop for establishing rule of law in the country.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina herself has categorically said in parliament that her government will not allow any kind of extrajudicial killings. But still now some "black sheep" in the elite force are committing such incidents, the bench commented.

Not only the court, the entire nation is anxious with repeated incidents of such killings and these incidents are tarnishing the image of the country, it observed.

It added the court is not against the government, it wants to assist the government to establish rule of law, and to see that the incidents of extrajudicial killing are stopped.

If the court takes action against a few of the involved Rab officials, who are responsible for such unfettered incidents, the entire force will be careful and will not dare to commit such incidents further, the court added.

It went on to say that the Attorney General's Office should cooperate with the court in holding hearing of the rule so that it can pass necessary orders to stop

these incidents.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam told the court this is a very important matter and its hearing should be held for a long time.

He prayed to the court to adjourn the hearing and fix a date of further hearing on reopening of the court after the winter vacation.

The court will go on winter vacation on December 18 and will reopen on January 3.

The court said it would hold hearing on the matter after one week of reopening of the court.

Following newspaper reports on killings of Khairul and Lutfur, the HC on November 17 issued the suo moto rule upon Rab officials Lt Hasan, Maj Kazi Wahiduzzaman, the DG and the home secretary.

The court asked them to explain in 48 hours why appropriate action should not be taken against Maj Wahiduzzaman and Lt Hasan and their companions for liability of the killings.

It also directed the Rab DG to give an explanation in this regard, as heinous activities of extrajudicial killings are carried out in his battalion.

Replying to the rule, the home secretary and two other Rab officials told the court no-one by the name Maj Kazi Wahiduzzaman was found in the Madaripur unit of Rab.

Advocate Ruhul Quddus Babu appeared for BLAST and Barrister Saifur Rashid stood for ASK.

JS session

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standing committee on Sunday.

"We shall hold meeting to decide whether the party will return to the fourth session of the House or not," he said.

The House will hold an extensive discussion on the president's address and will pass a resolution to thank the president for his address.

Dhaka-Ctg highway

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necessary for the project will come to an end," Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain told The Daily Star.

The signing ceremony will take place in the last week of December, he said.

In November, the government announced names of the companies for the Tk 1654.24 crore project. The companies are Chinese Sino Hydro Corporation Ltd and local firms, Reza Constructions, and Taher Brothers and Alamin Constructions Ltd.

The project is split into 10 segments. The Chinese firm has been given seven segments while Reza Constructions two segments and the rest one has been given to Taher Brothers and Alamin Constructions Ltd.

Construction of 192.3-kilometre four-lane highway from the capital to the port city will be completed in three

years with public funds.

Executive Engineer of Department of Roads and Highways Sabbir Hossain Khan said the companies would get an extra year to revamp their work, if necessary but in that case they would incur the expenses according to the tender.

The four-lane highway will run from Dhaka via Daudkandi, Kachua, Laksam, Langolkot, Feni Bypass, Mirersara, Sitakunda up to Chittagong.

The highway has become risky for vehicles to ply between the capital and the port city because of its narrowness and poor condition that contributed to the increasing number of accidents these days.

The communications minister said upgrading the highway would make traffic movements smoother as well as enhance economic activities.

More to get BNP

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chairperson's advisory council, to be announced soon, and most of the vice-presidents of the party will lose their posts in the new central committee.

Officials at BNP central office said the chairperson now has 18 advisers. They are: Maj Gen (ret'd) Ruhul Alam Chowdhury, Harun-Al-Rashid, Tahmina Khan Dolly, Mosharraf Hossain Shahjahan, Shahjahan Omar, Jamiruddin Sircar, M Morshed Khan, Brig Gen (ret'd) Hannan Shah, Maj Gen (ret'd) ZA Khan, Reaz Rahman, MA Hakim, Mushfiqur Rahman, Enam Ahmed Chowdhury, Maj Gen (ret'd) Mahmudul Hasan, Harun-or-Rashid Munnu, Moeen Khan, Mofazzal Karim, and Syed Hasan Ahmed.

Of them, Mosharraf Hossain Shahjahan, Maj Gen (ret'd) ZA Khan, MA Hakim, Enam Ahmed Chowdhury and Mofazzal Karim had sided with expelled BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan during the tenure of the last caretaker government and that is why they might be dropped from the advisory council.

Tahmina Khan Dolly and Syed Hasan Ahmed have not been active in party activities for a long time.

Jamiruddin Sircar, Hannan Shah and Moeen Khan were made members of the standing committee Sunday night.

CANTONMENT HOUSE Khaleda gets six months more to stay

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday extended for six months its earlier order for the second time that stayed the government notice asking BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia to leave her cantonment house.

The HC bench of Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed and Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury passed the extension order upon a prayer moved by her (Khaleda) lawyers.

The prayer was allowed, as the government did not submit its reply to the HC rule issued on May 27 asking the government to explain within three weeks why this notice should not be declared illegal.

Earlier on August 23, the court first extended its order for four months staying the government's third notice that asked Khaleda Zia to vacate her cantonment house by June 30.

The same bench, on May 27, stayed the notice till August 26 after Khaleda filed a writ petition challenging the legality of the government notices concerning her cantonment house allotment.

Advocate TH Khan and barrister Mahbub Uddin Khokon appeared for Khaleda Zia.

'Acidifying oceans' threaten food supply, warns UK

BBC ONLINE, Copenhagen

Acidification of the oceans is a major threat to marine life and humanity's food supply, Hilary Benn is to warn as the UN climate summit resumes.

The UK environment secretary will say that acidification provides a "powerful incentive" to cut carbon emissions.

Ocean chemistry is changing because water absorbs extra CO2 from the air.

Some believe this impact of rising CO2 levels could be as significant as climatic change, though it is rarely discussed at the UN climate convention.

The UN summit in Copenhagen, which started a week ago, is scheduled to conclude on Friday, when more than 100 world leaders will attend in an effort to agree a new global treaty on climate change.

Really important

The science has come to prominence only within the last five or six years, and most of the details were not available when the convention was signed in 1992.

"We know that the increasing concentration of CO2 (in the air) is making the oceans more acidic," Benn told BBC News.

"It affects marine life, it affects coral, and that in turn could affect the amount of fish in the sea - and a billion people in the world depend on fish for their principal source of protein."

"It doesn't get as much attention as the other problems; it is really important."

Bangladesh, UK

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countries, it is one of the most threatened by the impacts of climate change.

The report compares this situation with the UK -- as one of the world's most developed nations, it emits a significant portion of emissions, yet also plays a leading role in shaping climate change policy.

Colin Challen MP said, "Why is it that countries with very low carbon dioxide footprints, such as Bangladesh, are prevented from benefiting from mechanisms like the Clean Development Mechanism?"

"Bangladesh has only seen two of these projects implemented in the CDM's entire history."

This is clearly inequitable. He added, "Countries like Bangladesh did not cause climate change, but they seem to be penalised for it."

The report also emphasises that climate change threatens fundamental human rights, such as the right to health and sanitation, to adequate housing, to livelihood and to the right to life itself.

Whilst addressing the session Saber Hossain Chowdhury MP said, "From a human rights perspective we must demonstrate a zero tolerance approach to climate change - just as we do to terrorism, or did to Nazism or slavery in the past."

Climate talks

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Blocs representing poor countries vulnerable to climate change have been adamant that rich nations must commit to emission cuts beyond 2012 under the Kyoto Protocol.

But the EU and the developed world in general have promoted the idea of an entirely new agreement, replacing the protocol.

Developing countries fear they would lose many of the gains they made when the Kyoto agreement was signed in 1997.

They point out that the Kyoto Protocol is the only international legally binding instrument that has curbed carbon emissions, and also that it contains functioning mechanisms for bringing development benefits to poor countries such as money for investment in clean energy projects.

Previously during this meeting--formally called the Conference of the Parties (COP) 15--developing countries have accused the Danish chairs of ignoring their concerns.

G77-China chief negotiator Lumumba Di-Aping explained why the bloc had taken the decision to withdraw its co-operation.

"It has become clear that the Danish presidency--in the most undemocratic fashion--is advancing the interests of the developed countries at the expense of the balance of obligations between developed and developing countries," he told BBC Radio 4's The World at One programme.

"The mistake they are doing now has reached levels that cannot be acceptable from a president who is supposed to be acting and shepherding the process on behalf of all parties."

Last week, the Pacific island nation of Tuvalu forced a suspension after insisting that proposals to amend the UN climate convention and Kyoto Protocol be debated in full.

TWINTRACK

At a news conference earlier in the day, UK Climate Secretary Ed Miliband said for the developed world to commit to further cuts under the Kyoto Protocol would be "irresponsible for the climate."

He said it would leave some of the world's biggest emitters such as the US, China and India without targets for cutting emissions, which was why the EU favoured an entirely new agreement covering all countries.

Many developing countries have been arguing for a "twin track" approach, whereby countries with existing targets under the Kyoto Protocol (all developed nations except the US) stay under that umbrella, with the US and major developing economies making their carbon pledges under a new protocol.

Kim Carstensen, director of the global climate initiative with environment group WWF, said that much more movement was needed on the Kyoto Protocol negotiations here.

Berlusconi In hospital

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attack that left him with a broken nose and two teeth knocked out, reports said.

The assailant threw a replica of Milan's gothic cathedral into the face of the 73-year-old billionaire after a rally in the northern city, in an attack that Italian newspapers said highlighted political tensions in the country.

Doctors said Berlusconi would spend up to two days in the San Raffaele Hospital, where a banner at the gates said: "Prime Minister Berlusconi get well soon. Real Italians are always with you," ANSA news agency reported.

A health bulletin was to be released on Monday.

Berlusconi's alleged assailant, 42-year-old Massimo Tartaglia, was in an isolation cell in police custody. Police, who had to protect Tartaglia from an angry crowd as they detained him, say the suspect has a history of mental illness.

Tartaglia was also carrying a crucifix and tear gas, ANSA reported. His father, "upset" over the attack, tried to telephone Berlusconi in hospital but could not get through, ANSA said.

Berlusconi's bloodied face dominated Italian newspapers on Monday, with even media that oppose the conservative prime minister condemning the incident and the political atmosphere in Italy.

"The point is being made very loudly that African countries and the wider G77 bloc will not accept non-action on the Kyoto Protocol, and they're really afraid that a deal has been stitched up behind their backs," he told BBC News.

Some delegates suggested that the suspension and the underlying tensions bode very ill for the chances of any meaningful agreement here.

Responding to the day's events, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon warned that time was running out for nations to reach an agreement.

"I appeal to all world leaders... to redouble efforts to find room for compromise," he told reporters. "Time is running out. There is no time for posturing or blaming."

Heads of state and government will shortly arrive for the final segment of talks that are due to finish on Friday.

Special security for V-Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police are taking special security measures for Victory Day tomorrow by deploying around 10,000 police personnel at various strategic points in the capital.

Alongside the strong police presence, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) teams will provide extra security around the Bangabhaban area (Rab-10), the areas surrounding the Bangabandhu National Stadium (Rab-3) and in Savar (Rab-4), which boasts the National Monument for the Martyrs of the Liberation War of Bangladesh.

Victory Day pays homage to the three million martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the struggle for the nation's independence during the Liberation War of 1971.

Tomorrow marks the 38th anniversary of the day when the Pakistani Army surrendered to the Indo-Bangladeshi High Command in Dhaka.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner AKM Shahidul Haque said, "Although we have not received threats from any militant operatives or organisations, we are providing foolproof security in order to facilitate the enthusiastic celebrations of Victory Day."

From 6:00am a joint team comprising the police, Rab forces and dog squads will sweep in and around the Bangabandhu National Stadium, which is the main venue for the Victory Day celebrations.

Six teams from the Detective Branch (DB) of police will also monitor the area.

Some will be equipped with video cameras and others will operate in plain clothes.

The DMP's deputy commissioner will co-ordinate with other law enforcement agencies, including the SAF and PGR, to provide security for the very important persons attending the celebrations.

Law enforcers will install metal detectors and will conduct frequent searches of attendees.

Hawkers and flower-sellers will not be permitted inside the main venues.

Start war trial fast

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inscribed with slogans demanding a quick start of the trial.

To mark the day, President Zillur Rahman placed wreaths at the memorial around 7:00am. A few minutes later, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid tribute to the martyrs.

The premier also paid tribute to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman placing a wreath at his portrait in Dhanmondi.

Opposition Leader Khaleda Zia accompanied by BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain and standing committee members, paid tribute to the martyred intellectuals around 10:00am.

After placing wreaths Delwar told reporters that BNP too wants the trial of war criminals but the trial should not be politically driven.

"Those who have committed such crimes should be tried on the basis of proof and witness but the trial should not be politically motivated," he said.

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad also placed wreaths at the memorial.

People belonging to different political, socio-cultural organisations and students from various schools, colleges and universities thronged the memorial in the morning.

As the defeat loomed large, the Pakistani occupation forces and their local collaborators -- Razakar, Al-Badr and Al-Shams -- abducted frontline intellectuals and professionals of the nation aspiring for freedom on

December 14, 1971 and killed them, often after brutal torture, in an effort to cripple the emerging nation intellectually.

The killers dragged renowned academics, teachers, writers, doctors, engineers, journalists and other eminent personalities out of their homes blindfolded, taking them to the killing fields at Rayerbazar, Mirpur and other places in the capital. After the butchery, the bodies were left there to rot.

Awami League hoisted black flags and kept the national flag and party flag at half-mast at the party's headquarters and other offices across the country.

The ruling party leaders and activists laid wreaths at the Martyred Intellectuals' Memorial at Mirpur, Rayerbazar Killing Ground and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's portrait at Dhanmondi in the morning.

The Awami League also held a discussion at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre around 3:00pm on the occasion.

The Sector Commanders' Forum paid tributes at the Rayerbazar Killing Ground by forming a human chain in the city and demanded speedy trial of war criminals.

Dhaka University (DU) authorities observed the day by holding discussion and silent procession led by DU Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique. They placed wreaths at different memorials on the campus. The university teachers and students demanded immediate trial of war criminals.