

For God's sake

FROM PAGE 1
coming of power of Awami League in 1996, over 21 years a relentless and state supported effort was made to eliminate the country's founder's name from our history. That attempt totally failed. Why? Because political decisions cannot take away the place history grants a leader. History has a way of stamping its own judgments in the long run, that political machinations of the day try to change in the short run. And then, did we vote to change all that? Didn't our PM promise "Din Badaler Rajniti"?

Haven't we learnt that this "name game" is ephemeral and lasts only as long as the regime? With every change of government the names are replaced just as quickly as they were given in the first place. Haven't we also learnt that this is no way of showing respect to our departed leaders but only reducing them to playthings of present day politics? Haven't we learnt that such behaviour only makes us a laughing stock of the world and brings insult to the very leaders we are trying to honour?

Along with the "name game" we now have "is-there-a-body-in-the-grave" game. How can this be in any way a priority for the people of Bangladesh today? How does it, any way, improve our governance, fight the rising corruption and calm the campuses that are becoming increasingly violent? Then again why is this question being raised in the first place? Have any facts been uncovered that lead to such questions? If so, what are those facts? Share them with the public so that we can see some reason, however remote, as to why no less a person than the PM felt the need to raise this question on the floor of no less a place than the parliament.

Pending that we are forced to conclude that it was totally unbefitting, fundamentally unbecoming and basically wrong of the Prime Minister to question whether Ziaur Rahman's grave actually contains his body.

This paper's historic position has been to oppose any boycott of parliament by the opposition. In this spirit we wrote numerous editorials, urging the present opposition to shun their destructive path of boycotting parliament and rejoin the House and raise all relevant national issues there.

After having wasted almost a year Khaleda Zia and her MPs along with her allies are finally back. Not that they are doing the nation any favour (they should have been there all along), yet we think that it is a welcome move and everything should be done to keep them there.

However, instead of showing the maturity, magnanimity and sagacity of an alliance that controls four-fifths membership of parliament and of a party that by itself has two-thirds majority, the ruling AL is showing a destructive streak that is making parliament more a place of abuse rather than a place of debate. Our opposition is far from being a saint. Their demand for more front row seats, withdrawal of cases against Khaleda Zia and her sons, assurances that nothing will be done about her cantonment residence, etc cannot be accepted as their preconditions for participating in parliament. That they should do simply because they pledged to represent their constituencies when they sought people's votes.

Having said all that we are constrained to comment that the treasury bench seems to be

Tornado kills

FROM PAGE 16
Maize on 300 bighas of land was completely damaged and over a thousand trees were uprooted during the tornado in Bashbaria Union, said Union Parishad Chairman Ali Hossain.

Kazirbar UP Chairman Golam Kader said crops on over a thousand bighas of land of his union have been damaged.

Deputy Commissioner Roma Rani Roy of the district said she visited the tornado-hit areas and her administration has been distributing cash money and six tonnes of rice among the homeless people.

At least 150 people took first aid, the DC added.

Moheshpur Upazila Nirbahi Officer Oziur Rahman said the damage caused by the tornado might be worth around Tk 1.5 crore.

The affected villages are Bashbaria, Pakrail, Gopalpur, Kula, Samanta, Jibonnapur, Nischintapur, Gobindapur, Kutipara, Gopalpurhat para, Bhagabotpur, Mathabhangapara, Kulanpur, Islampur and Dipti Nagar of Bashbaria union and Mokordas, Chunnirite, Ruly, Bholia, Sundarpur and Darbeshnagar of Kazirbar union.

deliberately provoking the opposition to desist from attending the House and are creating unnecessary and irrelevant controversies so that our quick-on-the-foot opposition goes for a boycott.

We would like to point out to the Prime Minister that to build her "Digital Bangladesh" she needs political peace. Pushing the opposition towards mass agitation, however futile and ineffective it may appear to her analysts, cannot be good for her government. If we analyse the opposition politics from 1991 onwards, it becomes clear that a small number of committed agitators can cause enough disturbance to disrupt the smooth functioning of any government. Huge demonstration of mass outpouring is not necessary to create an image of the government's weakening position. Disruption at a select number of city points over a period of time has been seen in the past to be enough to create unfavourable public opinion against the government of the day. BNP and Jamaat together have that many committed agitators.

It is our view that a sense of over-confidence appears to be permeating the thinking of the ruling party leaders. It is such over-confidence that has led them to open too many political and legal fronts without effectively resolving any. It is such over-confidence that makes them feel nonchalant while student league members openly indulge in gunfights causing death to innocent students, and participate in corrupt activities disregarding the PM's repeated warnings. It is again such over-confidence that has led them to be so reckless, verging on being disdainful, in handling the elected members of the local bodies who have been made to sit idle for the last one year though they have all been duly elected in their local constituencies.

Why are we being led towards a political confrontation which appeared eminently avoidable just the other day? Whose interest will such confrontation serve? Not Sheikh Hasina's government's? That is for sure.

Meantime, Sheuly Rahman who was granted bail from the High Court was present in the court. On October 12 of 2009, Mizan surrendered to Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court following an HC directive and sought bail in the case. But he was sent to jail.

The Dhaka Drug Court issued the arrest warrants against the five after Directorate of Drug Administration Superintendent Shaiful Islam filed the case with the court on August 11.

As at least 28 children died of renal failure following intake of Rid's paracetamol syrup and suspension across the country from June to August last year, a total of four cases were filed outside Dhaka including one in Brahmanbaria in this connection.

Addressing the meeting, Khaleda, also leader of the opposition in parliament, urged the leaders and workers to be prepared for forging a movement as she thinks the government has no success so far apart from changing names of a few establishments.

Praising the role of Chhatra Dal, the BNP chief said she is

hopeful about BNP's future as the party would be more organised and stronger when the new Chhatra Dal leaders take responsibility.

She criticised the government for the deterioration of law and order, price hike of essentials, rising crime and killings in educational institutions, power, gas and water crises. She claimed that the government could not do anything for the people's welfare in the last one year.

Referring to the recent treaties and memorandums of understanding with India, Khaleda said the government signed them only to keep their promises made before the elections. All have to work together and forge a united movement so that the treaties cannot be implemented.

"They [the government] are now speaking for a controlled democracy. Courts are being politicised. They are now controlling courts," she said, adding that the BNP and its fronts would forge a movement completing the reconstitution process of BNP and its front and associate bodies.

"Good days for BNP will return if we are united," she said.

BJP leadership meet begins amid tight security

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Indore

The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) national executive met here yesterday amid tight security in the wake of the weekend Pune bombing that killed 11 people.

The party's top and second-rung leaders gathered in a tented accommodation called Kushabhau Thakre Nagar. The first to speak was outgoing president Rajnath Singh.

Attending the conclave are star leader and former deputy prime minister LK Advani, Chief Ministers Narendra Modi of Gujarat and Raman Singh of Gujarat and former presidents Murlidhar Manohar Joshi and M Venkaiah Naidu.

All of them are staying in specially designed eco-friendly tents. Some 1,300 tents and 25 VVIP tents have been put up. About 5,000 delegates from all over the country are at the BJP meet.

Bill on raising

FROM PAGE 16
yesterday reminded Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shafique Ahmed to place the bill in the parliament as soon as possible.

"My MPs might become unavailable in the parliament if you do not place the bill," said a smiling Hamid.

"The bill does not concern only the treasury or the opposition bench. It is the demand of all lawmakers," said the speaker amid loud thumping on desks by treasury and opposition MPs as a token of support.

The law minister assured the House that he would place the bill in this session, which may go on a 10-day break tomorrow.

In 2003, the parliament passed Members of Parliament (Remuneration and Allowances) (Amendment) Bill, 2003 raising the lawmakers' perk from 100 to 600 percent.

The law enabled each lawmaker to draw Tk 3.78 lakh in remuneration, allowances and phone bills a year, which was previously Tk 1.77 lakh.

Cop faces

FROM PAGE 1
petition said the court had earlier asked the OC to submit reports on execution of the arrest warrants against the three on seven consecutive dates.

As the OC did not pay heed to the court order delaying the trial of the case against the accused he prayed to the court, Jahangir said.

The three accused -- Rid's director Abdul Goni and two pharmacists Mahbulul Islam and Enamul Haque -- have been on the run since the case was filed against them on charge of manufacturing toxic paracetamol syrup that had caused death to at least 28 children.

In August last year the case was filed against five Rid Pharma officials including its managing director.

The other accused in the case are Mizanur Rahman and his wife Sheuly Rahman (director).

Meantime, Sheuly Rahman who was granted bail from the High Court was present in the court. On October 12 of 2009, Mizan surrendered to Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court following an HC directive and sought bail in the case. But he was sent to jail.

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Referring to the recent treaties and memorandums of understanding with India, Khaleda said the government signed them only to keep their promises made before the elections. All have to work together and forge a united movement so that the treaties cannot be implemented.

"They [the government] are now speaking for a controlled democracy. Courts are being politicised. They are now controlling courts," she said, adding that the BNP and its fronts would forge a movement completing the reconstitution process of BNP and its front and associate bodies.

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Grassroots want

FROM PAGE 1
In response, Khaleda asked Chhatra Dal leaders and workers to follow their leaders, not any BNP leader. She said when the organisation is reconstituted with regular students, it would truly be a students' organisation.

Leaders from 85 Chhatra Dal units, including districts, upazilas and university units, attended the extended meeting held at the Diploma Engineers' Institution auditorium with Chhatra Dal President Sultan Salauddin Tuku in the chair.

Representatives of more than 50 Chhatra Dal units got the opportunity to have their opinions heard during the daylong meeting. It started at 10:00am and ended around 10:30pm.

BNP's Senior Joint Secretary General Mirza Fakhruddin Alamgir inaugurated the meeting, held after a six-year hiatus. According to the meeting decision, Chhatra Dal will complete its reconstitution process at all levels within the next six months.

Earlier, in a closed-door session, Chhatra Dal grassroots-level leaders delivered their speech and requested Khaleda to give incumbent Chhatra Dal leaders, who will hand over leadership to new leaders, vital posts in local BNP units and Jubo Dal units.

Kamaluddin, general secretary of Chhatra Dal Kushtia district unit, said they need to be alert so that no Shibir [Islamic Chhatra Shibir, pro-Jamaat student organisation] activists could be in Chhatra Dal committees.

Chhatra Dal Chuadanga unit General Secretary Sharifuzzaman Caesar said all committees of Chhatra Dal should be formed through the council and aged and non-students should not be in the committees.

Jaglu Haidar of Mymensingh said married people should not get leadership in Chhatra Dal.

Sarwar Uddin Selim of Chittagong (north) Chhatra Dal unit said aged and non-student leaders indulge in controversial activities like corruption.

Chhatra Dal Kurigram Secretary Hamiduzzaman Hamid said BNP should be careful so that controversial people do not get the chance to have influence on Chhatra Dal leaders during formation of new committees.

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They belong to the party's national executive and the national council.

With the Pune terror attack only four days old, tight security has been enforced at the site.

Besides the Madhya Pradesh Police, commands, the Anti-Terrorist Squad and sniffer dogs have been deployed.

Witnesses said around five hundred leaders and activists of Jamaat and Shibir brought out the procession around 2:30pm. When police intercepted the procession Jamaat-Shibir men attacked the police prompting them to charge baton.

Our Rajshahi correspondent reports: General Secretary Abul Kalam Azad of city unit Jamaat was arrested on charge of abetting Shibir cadres during the RU violence that left Chhatra League activist Faruk Hossain dead and several others injured, said Tarikul Islam, an assistant commissioner of the DB.

With Azad, police have so far arrested three top Jamaat leaders in Rajshahi in connection with the RU violence.

Meanwhile, Motihar police yesterday produced Assistant General Secretary of Rajshahi city unit Jamaat Siddik Hossain before a court seeking a 10-day remand. The court placed him on a five-day remand.

The seven detained Shibir men arrested yesterday at different places in the district include former Rajshahi Polytechnic Institute unit former president Tarique Saifullah.

Top police officials told The Daily Star that four city Jamaat leaders, an RU teacher and a RU syndicate member locally coordinated three Shibir groups during the RU violence after the mayhem was planned centrally in Dhaka.

In the capital, police arrested Jamaat-Shibir members Monir Hossain, Shamsul Alam and Ehtesham Billah when they brought out a procession demanding release of all the detained Jamaat-Shibir men and later clashed with police.

Our Satkhira correspondent reports: Police took 25 Shibir cadres on a five-day remand. They were arrested at different students' messes Sunday night.

Police said they arrested Habibur Rahman and Atiqur Rahman on charge of an attempt to deteriorate law and order.

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City BNP office

FROM PAGE 16
answer to a query of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal MP Shah Zikrul Ahmed.

He said Bhasani Memorial Sangsad is on the ground floor. BNP office on first and part of second floors and Bhasani Memorial Auditorium on second floor.

He said past BNP government declined twice Bhasani Memorial Trust's proposal for selling the house to it for a token price of Tk 100. The trust does not exist anymore, he added.

Examining the facts about the house, the state minister said it seems the house is now occupied illegally and legal action will be taken based on the investigation.

In response to a query of Awami League lawmaker Sadhana Halder, he said the government has moved to amend the Bangladesh National Building Code to make it time befitting.

"Risk of earthquake, environment and sustainable development will be considered in the amendment," he said.

Replying to a query of AL lawmaker Waresat Hossain Belal on building constructed without taking approval from Rajuk, Mannan said the number of such buildings could not be identified yet.

"However, Rajuk has already identified 5,000 buildings which are being constructed violating the designs approved by Rajuk," he said, adding the process is on to identify those for taking legal actions against the establishments.

SIX SATELLITE CITIES

In response to a query of AL lawmaker Shahiduzzaman Sarker, the state minister said the Rajuk has selected four locations -- Tongi, Savar, Gazipur, Dhamsona -- for construction of four satellite cities.

National Housing Authority will also build two more satellite cities at Sirajdikhan upazila in Munshiganj and Kaliganj in Gazipur, he added.

Mannan said 1,000 acres of land in between Tulshikhali and Moricha Bridge under Sirajdikhan upazila has been primarily selected for the projects.

Unruly students

FROM PAGE 1
The DCs were also provided with prescribed forms to collect information about unruly students.

They were also asked to gather information about the political affiliation of those students, their portfolios in the organisations, the crimes they are involved in, cases against them and the present condition of those cases.

They have to collect information whether these students had been arrested earlier.

Shahidul Hoque told The Daily Star that after preparing the list of troublesome students, they would start tracking them.

He said, "The government high-ups ordered him to launch a crackdown on unruly students with zero tolerance even if they belong to ruling party's student wing."

In the letter the commissioner stated that recently many photos and video footages of some students with firearms and sharp weapons were published in newspapers and aired on the private television channels.

He, in the letter, said such photos badly tarnished the image of police.

DMP sources said against the backdrop of the recent clashes between rival student groups that left one Dhaka university student dead and several injured, the commissioner has initiated the move.

When contacted, several deputy commissioners said it is very tough to make the lists within the stipulated time but they are trying to do it impartially.

Remarkable

FROM PAGE 16
Many parents were unhappy with the prices of books. They said the books on cartoon characters including Superman, Tom and Jerry and Spiderman are more colourful than those on folktales, history and culture.

"I have bought six books for my son giving priority to his choice. But five of them are based on foreign stories and cartoons. My son chose those because of the attractive covers and pictures," said Mizanur Rahman, who came to the book fair with his nine-year-old son Himel.

Meanwhile, the fair witnessed arrival of 107 new titles yesterday. They include "Women Empowerment, Food Security and Climate Change" by Parvez Babul, "Bhagya Janar Upay" by Kawser Ahmed Chowdhury, "Putush Putusher Janmudra" by Selina Hossain, "Aj Rajar Mon Bhalo Nei" by Dhruvo Esh, "Swapner Sahar Rome Ebg Florence" by Rabeya Khatun.

Thai princess

FROM PAGE 16
thronged the bank of the Jamuna River at Balashi ghat to welcome the princess yesterday morning.

Princess Maha is visiting the river island on the invitation of Jivita Bangladesh, a local voluntary organisation.

She is also visiting Bangladesh as a member of the research team of Bloomberg School of Public Health of John Hopkins University, USA.

The princess and a 34-member entourage visited a number of projects implemented by Jivita Bangladesh, including maternal and children's health, vegetable gardening and nutrition.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni accompanied the Thai princess after meeting her at Jamuna Resort yesterday morning.

At 10:00am the princess visited the house of farmer Mokshed Mia in the Kamarpura village in Gaibandha Sadar upazila and observed traditional rice husking.

Later the princess visited the home of Rabulul Islam and Hamida Banu in the same village.

The princess also visited a fried rice shop belonging to Santi Kumar and watched the frying preparations.

Princess Maha then visited the historic house of the late Jaminder Pari Madhab in Kamarpura.

She later observed the night sky with a telescope provided

getting the go-ahead, we will cut them down."

He added, "We will repair damaged roads and public toilets on the upazila parishad campus with the money from tree selling."

But locals said, about a quarter-kilometre road on the upazila campus was repaired in last year.

"We have planned to plant 600 saplings on the campus in the coming rainy season. Mojibursaid.

Contacted, Mrinal Kanti, upazila nirbahi officer of Baufal, said, "I informed the DC about the matter in writing on Tuesday as I don't have any government directive in this regard yet."

"There is no clear explanation for the matter under section 41 of Upazila Act, 1998," he said.

And there is no earlier instance of creating fund for development project or work by selling properties, including tree, of an upazila parishad, Mrinal added.

Korean Caltex

FROM PAGE 16
of about \$ 21 million. They have begun developing the drilling site along with access roads, storage areas and other amenities from this month.

The companies would drill two more wells around the area if this drilling operation produces positive results.

Till early last year, British company Cairn held 45 percent stake of this block. Cairn later pulled out from the block by selling its stakes to Chevron.

Chevron (previously Unocal and Occidental) has been the most successful foreign oil company in Bangladesh that is producing around 900 million cubic feet of gas per day (mmcf) from three gas fields in Moulvibazar, Jalalabad and Bibiyana. This is almost half the country's total daily gas production. The Moulvibazar field is producing 52 mmcf while Jalalabad 173 mmcf and Bibiyana 650 mmcf.

The Bibiyana field is Chevron's biggest discovery in Bangladesh. It was initially

estimated to have 2.4 trillion cubic feet (TCF) recoverable gas. Following studies and reassessment, Petrobranga recently increased its recoverable reserve at 5.76 TCF with its proved and probable reserve estimated at 7.43 TCF.

In these three fields Chevron has invested around \$ 920 million, which has already been recovered from gas sales.</