

Hasina warns

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Hanif, also a special assistant to the PM, said police and Rapid Action Battalion have been given strict directives to take tough actions against those who are causing violence in the name of BCL or student politics.

"They have also been asked not to consider recommendations of any minister, state minister, lawmaker and party leader in favour of Chhatra League wrongdoers," he said.

Recently Barisal Polytechnic Institute, Dhaka University, Jagannath University, Jahangirnagar University, Chittagong University, Rajshahi University, Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology, Khulna University of Engineering and Technology, Dhaka College, Edward College in Pabna, Kushtia Govt College and many other educational institutions across the country have witnessed unruly activities by BCL workers.

The three AL organising secretaries--Jahangir Kabir Nanak, BM Mojammel Haque and Ahmed Hossain--designated by the PM to look after BCL activities have apparently failed to bring the BCL back to track.

Mojammel claimed many goons and non-students have infiltrated BCL and been involved in unruly activities. "They should be identified and punished. It is not right to blame Chhatra League as a whole," he said.

AL policymaker Obaidul Quader also demanded identifying and punishing the party leaders who are patronising BCL in resorting to tender manipulation and other unlawful activities across the country.

The patronisation begins with the formation of different BCL units, including those at universities and colleges, under influence of local lawmakers.

The president and general secretary of the newly formed committee of Pabna district unit of the BCL were picked as per the choice of a lawmaker and a state minister, a few central BCL leaders said.

In fact, half of the 22 new

10 seamen

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at foreign ministry in Dhaka.

They will first fly to Nigeria from Benin and arrive in Dhaka via Dubai by a flight of Emirates airline, he said.

The development in repatriation of the seamen came after Bangladesh's chargé d'affaires in Morocco, Lutfar Rahman, held talks with Benin authorities, the official said.

Around 60 crewmembers went to Benin to work in ships in December last year and January. Their employer did not pay them salaries.

Earlier, Golden Shipping SA, a Greece-based shipping company, gave air tickets to 30 seamen for returning home. The rest remained stranded.

The Bangladesh government communicated with Benin authorities after receiving complaints from the relatives of the stranded seamen and the returnees.

The shipping ministry is paying the airfare for the ten seamen while the expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry is bearing the expenses of their stay and meals in the hotel in Benin.

The foreign ministry is arranging tickets for the rest 18 seamen, said the official.

Nat'l ID cards

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If found guilty of carrying two identity cards by the same name, a person could face one year's imprisonment and a penalty of Tk 20,000.

National ID card was introduced during the tenure of the last caretaker government. The Election Commission at the same time prepared voter list with photographs ahead of the parliamentary election in 2008. Over eight crore ID cards were prepared and distributed.

Nur Mohammad, owner of Grameen Mobile Centre, said Kamal from Keraniganj used to supply them with fake national ID cards and photographs.

He said he used to pay Tk 40 for a hundred fake national ID cards and sell them for Tk 50 to SIM card traders across the country.

Nur said he had been involved in the illegal trade for about two years.

The arrestees said Kamal supplied them with fake national ID cards but did not know where they were produced.

BCL committees in Narsingdi, Habiganj, Jhenidah, Rangpur, Panchagarh, Lalmonirhat, Bandarban, Rajshahi and other districts were formed with leaders chosen by influential AL leaders and lawmakers, said the BCL leaders.

Efforts failed to contact at least 10 ministers, state ministers and MPs of these districts, who are allegedly patronising BCL units in their areas.

On the committee of Pabna BCL, State Minister for Home Shamsul Huq Tuku told The Daily Star that it was formed as per the choice of the central Chhatra League, not his.

"But the drive will continue against criminals assuming the identity of Chhatra League or Jubo League activists," he said.

On the Habiganj district committee, local lawmaker Mohammad Abu Zahir, who is also the general secretary of the district AL, said, "I can assure that Chhatra League will not engage in misdeeds in my district."

A top leader of central BCL preferring not to be named told The Daily Star, "As many Chhatra League leaders have strong backing from some ministers, lawmakers and Awami League leaders, they do not care us and are neither accountable to us nor are in our control."

AL Presidium member Obaidul Quader suggested five measures for bringing the BCL back to track: stern legal action against wrongdoers, corrective measures, reconstituting all BCL committees with students, holding elections to the student unions of educational institutions, and providing jobs to those who are no more students but have been engaged in politics for long.

He said BCL activists involved in criminal activities should be brought under speedy trial act and kept in jail for a few months.

Fresh drive

FROM PAGE 1
We have knocked down the structures," he added.

Hossain said the section of the riverbed there is heavily filled with construction materials. It would take them at least a month to remove these from the 1,000 feet long and 60 feet wide riverbed.

BIWTA has hired two excavators to remove the earth from filling. Its tugboat Agrani and some 75 labourers were employed to pull down the illegal structures.

Executive Magistrate Md Quamruzzaman led the drive. BIWTA and Dhaka district administration jointly launched a three-day eviction drive June 18 last year to free the Turag near Gabtoli-Amin Bazar Bridge from encroachers. The drive, however, stalled after a couple of days.

At least a 2-kilometre stretch of the river has been earth-filled and grabbed by sand traders over the time.

War crimes trial

FROM PAGE 1
"During the liberation war, they had killed some 30 lakh of people, humiliated 2 lakh of mothers and daughters and compelled one crore people to leave the country," the president said.

There is no history of killing such a large number of people in liberation war of any country of the world, he added.

He warned the tribunal to remain careful so that no single innocent person is punished during the trial.

He mentioned that the free and fair trial of those criminals is the demand of the countrymen. "If any innocent person is punished mistakenly, there would be no confidence and respect of common people to the tribunal."

Justice Nizamul Haque informed the president that under the International Crimes Tribunal Act-1973, the tribunal has been given power of framing the necessary rules and the tribunal has already framed the concerned rules under the Act.

He explained various aspects of the acts before the president and also described the component and features of the "Crimes Against the Humanity".

Various issues including the trials of Nuremberg war criminals who committed crimes during the Second World War and different war crimes, process of trials, verdicts and other related issues came up for discussion.

The chairman informed that the tribunal is fully committed to hold the trial without delay and accomplish the responsibility expeditiously.

Secretaries to the President's Office were present at the meeting.

ROADS THAT NEVER END

PROJECT	START TIME	POSSIBLE COMPLETION	TOTAL ALLOCATION	AVG YEARLY ALLOCATION
Bridge on Dhaleshwari River	5 yrs ago	490 more yrs	Tk 108cr	Tk 22 lakh
31 new projects in current ADP	This year	50 to 300 more yrs	Tk 50cr to Tk 300cr each	Tk 30 lakh to Tk 1cr each
Upazila Rd Dev	5 yrs ago	17 more yrs	Tk 515cr	Tk 27.4cr
Sanandabari Bridge	12 yrs ago	9 more yrs	Tk 14.72cr	Tk 70 lakh
Barisal-Bhola-Laxmipur Road	16 yrs ago	3 more yrs	Tk 72.64cr	Tk 3.81cr

Power, gas crises

FROM PAGE 1
projects but the 4-party alliance government did not implement those projects "perhaps due to insufficient commission."

Hasina said this while she was speaking at a rally at the Circuit House Maidan here after inaugurating a pilot project of the National Service.

About the 1/11 changeover, she said that the previous BNP-led 4-party government was responsible for this. "The 1/11 came because of corruption, looting and the mindset of stealing the vote." She said the present government has been working for overall welfare of the people. She assured that steps would be taken to ensure electricity for each district in the southern region and establishment of mills and factories.

Hasina, who made her first visit to the southern district as the PM, said she is taking the responsibility of the entire region in her own hands.

She assured that Barguna Hospital will be upgraded to 250 beds from the present 100-bed and water treatment plant will be set up to ensure pure drinking water.

The premier said whenever the opposition leader assumes power "she gets busy in looting by striking the poor below the belt."

She has questioned the source of huge money and property of Khaleda who was left with "broken suitcase and torn vest" of her husband, slain president Ziaur Rahman.

"Nowadays you speak about corruption...but how you have amassed such huge property from broken suitcase and torn vest?" she asked.

Hasina alleged that Khaleda and her two sons had whitened black money in the past. "Without corruption how could you get this huge money?" she questioned.

Earlier, the premier inaugurated the pilot project of the National Service to generate employment for unemployed youths as per the Awami League's selection pledge.

Under the project, nearly 13,734 youths of five upazilas of Barguna district will be provided basic training in different sectors and on completion of training they will be given jobs in different departments for two years.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Abul Ali Sarkar presided over the meeting.

First Bangalee

FROM PAGE 1
to vote. Voting in the election was to take place in 649 constituencies, with nearly 4,150 candidates standing for election across the country.

The campaign to elect a Bangalee member for UK parliament started with MP Peter Shore, known as a friend of Bangladesh. In 1997, he resigned and unfortunately at the time, the Bangalee community failed to secure a nomination from the Labour Party.

In 2005 George Galloway seized that seat from the Labour Party with his newly formed Respect Party. He then promised that he would not stand from the same seat in the next election and would nominate a Bangalee from Respect Party, which he did.

Following that all the major parties started nominating Bangalee candidates.

Rushanara Ali is contesting with Labour Party ticket while Zakir Khan from Conservatives. Green Party nominated Farid Bakht and Liberal Democrat chose Ajmal Masroor. Abjol Miah is contesting from Respect-Unity Coalition.

Rushanara Ali has a strong chance of winning from Bangla Town as a Labour MP. Some of the major Bangalees' organisations and the press have pledged their support for her.

A British paper has described Rushanara Ali, 35, as a politically rated, eloquent, beautiful and a very crucial figure for Bangla Town as this area is vastly populated by Bangladeshis.

The Labour candidate appeals to the diverse communities in the constituency to bring her the expected victory. "I see myself as a British Bangladeshi of Muslim faith but also as an East ender" and trying "bringing disparate communities together and trying to unite people in a community that has been divided."

BDR mutiny

FROM PAGE 16
to rectify his unit so that none can betray in future.

The prosecutor told the court the mutineers took up arms breaking into the arsenals by the time former DG Maj Gen Shakil Ahmed was crossing 24 Rifles Battalion on his way to attend the Darbar.

A pale gloom descended on the courtroom as Lt Col Atiquazzaman started describing how his unit's former commanding officer Lt Col Inshad Ibne Amin and two officers Maj Shahnewaj and Maj Abu Syed Gazzali Dastagir were brutally killed.

He said some mutineers tied Maj Shahnewaj to a tree near the Canteen of Sadar Rifles Battalion and severely tortured him. "He repeatedly begged for life, but Nayek Jahangir, sepoy Hasib and some others did not spare him," he said.

Citing a poem by Maj Dastagir, he said Dastagir took up pen to tell the jawans not to be afraid of death on the frontier. But unfortunately, he was killed at the hands of the jawans.

"When Dastagir's name was uttered, his three-year-old boy Anirban gave a blank look. We cannot give him his father back, but the court can ensure consolation for him by punishing the killers," the prosecutor said.

Seventy-four people including 57 army officials were killed during the February 25-26 mutiny.

The prosecutor also said the RSU jawans distributed leaflets containing provocation among the mutineers which helped spread the mutiny.

Following his submission, the court showed the accused arrested in the case and asked the prosecutor to produce them

again on May 8. The court also adjourned the proceedings of the case till 12:15pm Saturday.

Of the accused, 57 have already been detained in connection with the case filed with New Market police earlier, while the rest 56 are still serving in the unit.

Earlier in the day, the same court ordered to show 187 accused of the BDR signal sector and produce them before it at 10:00am Saturday.

Nayek Subedar Niamot Ullah Khondoker filed the case against 187 accused mutineers of the sector with the court minutes after it started functioning.

Of the accused, 107 have already been arrested and confined to Dhaka Central Jail in a case filed with New Market police, while the remaining 80 are still serving in the sector.

The complainant of the case placed charges against the accused before the court when prosecutor of the case Lt Col Nazrul Islam Sarkar made a brief submission.

The prosecutor said the accused were in charge of modern communications technology and were supposed to disseminate all information regarding the mutiny to all superior officers but did not carry out their duties.

Rather they shook hands with the mutineers, he added.

The three-member court led by BDR Director General Maj Gen Md Mainul Islam continued the proceedings of the case for nearly one hour starting from 9:30am.

The other members of the court are Lt Col Md Nurul Alam and Maj Ali Mustain Khan.

Agri research

FROM PAGE 16
put agriculture in Bangladesh and other Asian countries under serious threats.

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) organised the workshop at Brac Centre Inn in the city in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank.

"More budgetary allocation for agricultural research is imperative to adapt to the consequences of climate change," CPD Executive Director Mustafizur Rahman told reporters.

He said with different changes, the farmers are taking new strategies to grow crops. With proper documentation such mechanisms could support the framing of future adaptation policies and planning, he noted.

"Take advantage of grass-roots level skills and knowledge -- such as natural resources management and social networks -- in community-based adaptation," said MCS Bantilan of ICRISAT quoting the recommendations made at the two-day workshop.

At the concluding session, she said farmers' adaptation strategies have to be validated and then mainstreamed. Farmers' access to markets and inputs must be ensured for better productivity and profits.

The workshop also suggested rainwater harvesting in the rainy season for irrigation and groundwater recharging.

Addressing the session as the chief guest, Food and Disaster Management Minister Abdur Razzaque said the government's extensive programme to adapt climate change implications and a fund of \$100 million is a good initiative.

Strong and high embankments for the coastal zone and inventing crop varieties tolerant to drought, saline and flood are an urgent job, he said.

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JS body for forming nat'l reserve force

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary committee yesterday suggested the government form a 'national reserve force' (NRF) by giving training to general citizens of Bangladesh to build a disciplined nation.

The parliamentary standing committee on the planning ministry also asked the government to take measures for better co-ordination among the intelligence agencies under the armed forces and for increasing their efficiency.

"The time has come to build a national reserve force in our country. There are many countries in the world, which have such force. Giving proper trainings we can form such type of force," Col (ret'd) Oli Ahmed, chief of the committee, told The Daily Star after a meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

"National reserve force will help build our country as a disciplined nation," Oli Ahmed, also president of Liberal Democratic Party, said adding the NRF will also contribute to various activities like rescue operation after natural disasters.

The committee asked the authority concerned to work out to this end. Replying to a query, Oli said responsible organisation would figure out details about the NRF.

It asked the government to arrange joint training of armed forces and civil servants on election, natural disaster management so that armed forces can assist better 'in aid of civil power'.

The watchdog body also suggested purchasing modern arms and equipment instead of construction of infrastructure.

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Kasab to die

FROM PAGE 16
the death penalty after a year-long trial at a prison court in the city he attacked nearly 18 months ago.

The question now is when, or even if, India will actually send him to the gallows.

India has not carried out an execution since 2004 and has hanged only two people since 1998. The Supreme Court says the punishment is reserved for the 'rarest of rare' crimes.

The last available statistics show that 308 people were on death row at the end of 2007, although no breakdown was provided about the status of prisoners in the appeals process.

Those waiting to hear their fate include the killers of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, who was assassinated in 1991, and Mohammad Afzal, a Kashmiri separatist convicted over an attack on India's parliament in 2001.

Home Minister P Chidambaram said last year that pleas for clemency to the president would be considered carefully on a case-by-case basis but refused to specify a time-

frame for any decision. Meenakshi Ganguly, South Asia researcher at Human Rights Watch, said Kasab's case was likely to be caught up in the lengthy -- and potentially open-ended -- legal process.

"They have to go turn by turn, so there are others ahead in the queue," she told AFP.

A senior researcher at Amnesty International in London added: "If the government follows that principle, as they said they would, it's unlikely we will see Kasab's execution very soon."

Nevertheless, observers said Indian authorities could come under intense pressure to fast-track the case, amid lingering public outrage at the Islamist militant attacks, which killed 166 and wounded more than 300.

Muggers

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commissioner of Uttara division.