

Quit cantt house to solve army housing problem

Hasina urges Khaleda

UNB, Dhaka
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged opposition leader Khaleda Zia to leave the disputed Dhaka Cantonment house and reside in her another allotted house in Gulshan as army officers currently facing acute accommodation crisis.

Addressing the inaugural session of extended meeting of Awami Swechhasebak League at Gono Bhaban, she said Khaleda Zia should not keep a vast piece of land occupied inside an area like cantonment.

"When our army officers are facing acute accommodation crisis, she is enjoying a vast land of 180 kathas inside the cantonment. Though she has been allotted a big house in Gulshan," Hasina said.

The PM said Khaleda Zia was given only one house by the cabinet at that time and that is in Gulshan on a 35 kathas of

land. "How many houses does she need to live in?" the premier questioned.

Strongly criticising the opposition for an "issueless" hartal on June 27, the premier said in fact, Khaleda Zia's party is announcing agitations like hartal just to keep possessed the cantonment house and to protect the illegal money and property that she has amassed through corruption.

About the BNP's claim that Khaleda's cantonment house was given to her by the then president, the PM wondered as to how a president could allot a land of army in favour of a political person?

Hasina alleged that apart from the Gulshan house, Khaleda Zia has many other houses by her own name or undisclosed names.

Meanwhile, reacting to the premier's request to her arch political rival Khaleda Zia to leave the Dhaka cantonment house, BNP lawmaker Barrister Moudud

Ahmed said the matter is pending for disposal in the High Court.

"We've to wait till the court gives its verdict," he told UNB when asked to comment on PM Sheikh Hasina's remark.

Controversy over Khaleda Zia's staying in the cantonment house rose when the PM on April 1 last year in parliament asked Begum Zia to leave the house, making way for building apartments for the families of army officers killed in the Peelkhana carnage.

Later, a cabinet meeting on April 8 last year cancelled the lease of Khaleda's cantonment house.

According to the government leasing rules, two houses cannot be allotted in favour of one person.

Now the dispute over Khaleda's cantonment house is pending before the High Court after Khaleda Zia challenged the validity of an official letter asking her to vacate the house.



A roundtable on 'Children's right to information in Bangladesh in the light of Right to Information Act 2009' was held at BIAM auditorium in the city yesterday. Save the Children Sweden-Denmark and The Daily Star organised the discussion.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina calls on President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.

Process on to disilise Panchagarh

BSS, Rangpur
In line with the present government's vision to build Digital Bangladesh, Panchagarh district administration has set up a glaring example of providing necessary information to the people by setting up digitalised union information centres (UICs) in all its 43 unions.

People of the district are now getting all information and services for their development.

The administration has brought all people under information and communication technology (ICT) facilities through utilising only the local resources and without spending any public money.

Now a huge number of people are getting offline and online facilities such as different government forms and information about agriculture, health, education, legal aid, human rights and employment.

Services like composing, printing, photo, scanning, email, internet browsing and multimedia projector are being provided to the rural people at a nominal price.

Local people from all strata are now hoping that Panchagarh will soon attain the total successes in achieving all planned and envisioned indexes to make the Vision-2021, Charter of Changes and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) successful.

Opinion leaders of the district highly lauded the initiative and suggested replicating the successes as model in other 63 districts of Bangladesh.

Talking to the news agency, deputy commissioner (DC) Banomali Bhowmik said that

the process of bringing all government, NGO and private offices, educational institutions and schools and other institutions under the ICT facilities has been continuing faster in Panchagarh.

"We have more plans in the second phase of the programmes and the Panchagarh people will soon attain all set goals in making the Digital Bangladesh, Charter of Changes, Vision-2021 and MDG programmes successful," he said with full confidences.

The DC involved all officials and employees, NGOs, union parishad chairmen and members, upazila chairmen and vice-chairmen, journalists, teachers, socio-cultural activists, religious leaders and elite in the process of bringing a change in the mindsets first of all.

Several committees were formed at all levels involving people of all levels for monitoring the activities by arranging monthly meetings of these committees.

Farmers of the district are now getting all information regarding agricultural activities including farming periods of crops, cropping patterns and latest technologies, seeds, fertilisers, fertiliser dealers, pesticides etc from the UICs everywhere there.

A total of 86 computer operators have also been appointed and provided necessary trainings with two for each of these 43 UICs and more 71 such ICT centres have been set up so far in the secondary schools under the first phase of the programme.

UNDP-funded Access to Information (A2I) Programme has been providing all possible technical assistance to this end.

PM calls on president

UNB, Dhaka
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called on President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban yesterday evening and enquired about his health who recently had medical checkup in London.

Zillur returned home from the UK on June 29 after undergoing medical checkup at Bupa Cromwell Hospital in London.

After his medical checkup, specialist physicians at the hospital said that the present health condition of the president is alright.

During the meeting, the prime minister apprised the president of the various measures taken by the present government recently.

President expressed satisfaction about the overall activities of the present government.

Concerned secretaries to the president and the prime minister were present at the meeting.

'Withdraw suspension order of 47 BSMMU doctors, staff'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
A total of 1,111 doctors yesterday in a statement demanded withdrawal of suspension order sent to 47 teachers and administrative officials of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

Prof Abdul Bayes Bhuiyan, gynecologist and former syndicate member of BSMMU, signed the documents on behalf of the doctors.

The doctors also sought immediate removal of vice-chancellor of the university to restore academic atmosphere.

They termed the probe committee report by Prof Nazrul Islam politically motivated, fabricated and incomplete. The report identified recruitment and promotion irregularities in BSMMU during 2001-2008.

The doctors also requested the president to form a judicial probe committee to investigate the corruption and irregularities within BSMMU administration since its inception.

Eight killed in Rangpur incidents in 48 hours

BSS, Rangpur
Eight people, including housewives, were killed in separate incidents at different places in Rangpur during the past 48 hours till Friday night, police said.

Electrician Ashraf Islam, 24, son of Abul Qasem of village Deuti in Pirgachha upazila was electrocuted while repairing electric cables at night.

One Ibrahim Ali, 35, son of Abdur Rahman of village Dakshin Mominpur in Sadar upazila was critically injured in a road accident and admitted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH) where he died Friday.

Minor boy Soikat Rahman, 14, son of Farhad Hossain of village Muradpur in Sadar upazila of Dinajpur took poison following quarrel with his parents and rushed to the RMCH and died in the hospital.

Youth Shainur Rahman, 23, son of Azibuddin of village Jagdishpur in Taraganj upazila in Rangpur allegedly hanged him-

self at home after failing to bear long-term unbearable pains in his belly due to illness.

Shahnaz Parveen, 20, wife of Nazrul Islam of village Chond Parveer, in Pirganj upazila in Rangpur allegedly committed suicide by taking poison following long-term family sequel with her husband.

Youth Shujan, 19, son of Iman Ali of village Salandar in Sadar upazila in Thakurgaon was seriously injured in a road accident and admitted to RMCH where he later succumbed to his injuries.

Elderly housewife of village Naama Begum, 60, wife of Jahir Ali of village Betgari Balapara in Gangachara upazila was critically injured in a road accident and later died at RMCH.

One Kalim Uddin, 40, son of Selim Uddin of Syedpur upazila town in Nilphamari district was injured in a road accident and later admitted to the RMCH where he died.

Separate unnatural death cases were filed with the concerned police stations.

Children's rights to information ignored in RTI Act

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Issues of child rights and children's rights to information have been completely ignored in the Rights to Information Act 2009, speakers said at a roundtable discussion yesterday.

They urged to revise the law in the perspectives of the children's right envisaged in the various international conventions or charters that our government has signed from time to time.

The roundtable on 'Children's right to information in Bangladesh in the light of Right to Information Act 2009' was jointly organised by Save the Children Sweden-Denmark and The Daily Star at BIAM auditorium in the capital.

They suggested introducing child-friendly version of all documents and 'special information unit' for children in district or upazilla level for children's easy access to it.

Shameem Reza, who conducted a study on the issue for Save the Children said, special mention of children's issues in the act would create access for children to receive information on health, education, shelter, legal protection and other issues about their protection, development and survival.

Quoting government sources, the paper presented at the roundtable said about 47 percent of the population in Bangladesh are under the age of 18.

Reza said information would help empower this vast population who are the most vulnerable group.

He stressed that children are also the worst victims of natural disasters. Accessing appropriate information by children is vital for disaster preparedness, emergency aid, treatment and rehabilitation, he added.

Referring to a study conducted in Sidra Referring by himself in 2008, Reza said there is a lack of specific and targeted information for children either on audio-visual media or any other communication channel in the pre- and post-disaster periods.

Mentioning the provision that exempts eight security and intelligence agencies from the RTI Act he said, non-military aspects should not be exempted as they may be related to issues such as trafficking or other forms of child abuse.

Information Commissioner Prof Sadaka Halim said there are inconsistencies in some Bangladeshi law about who would be identified as children. This needs to go first, she added.

She also said our society raises children in a manner that they do not understand anything or they do not feel the need for information that affects their lives.

Lawmaker Obaidul Quader, chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information, said the

committee is currently working on matters related to RTI Act.

Criticising the bureaucracy he said they are still not open to the idea of sharing information. There is a need to bring a change in the work style which is at once uncoordinated and slow. They are a barrier to implementing decisions.

He also said that most laws often remain unimplemented in Bangladesh for the thinking pattern of Bangladeshi politicians.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said the law should incorporate issues that are directly involved with the welfare of children.

He also said RTI Act can be a great weapon against corruption and misuse of power and can improve the level of governance.

Attended by around 20 national NGOs, Birgit Lundbak, country director of Save the Children Sweden-Denmark, Shamsul Alam, deputy country director, Brig Gen (Retd) Shahedul Anam Khan, editor, Defence and Strategic Affairs, The Daily Star, Prodig Acharjee, programme coordinator of Bangladesh Institute of Theatre Arts, Shamim Ahsan, communications and public relations officer, UNESCO, Ihsanul Karim, chief editor of BSS, Abul Khair, programme coordinator of Disha, Moslema Bari, executive director, Community Participation and Development of also spoke.



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia holds a meeting with a faction of Islami Oikya Jote at her Gulshan office in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

WEATHER

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka
Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Rajshahi and Dhaka divisions in next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy falls are also likely at places, Met Office said in a forecast.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:50pm today and rises at 5:16am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 34.7 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 25.0 degrees Celsius at Cox's Bazar and Srimongal.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	33.0	26.1	80	61
Chittagong	33.5	27.2	68	82
Rajshahi	34.0	26.5	80	70
Khulna	32.0	27.3	80	87
Barisal	32.0	27.5	92	88
Sylhet	34.7	25.2	76	63
Cox's Bazar	33.0	25.0	66	74

Elect competent representatives

Speaker urges people
BSS, Dhaka
(IPU) at Dakkhingao Tajuddin High School ground in the city.

Saber Chowdhury also spoke on the occasion with Kibria Majumder in the chair.

Speaker Hamid said members of the present Jatiya Sangsad have been playing important role in different international bodies, including IPU.

He urged the new generation to be equipped with modern education to build digital Bangladesh.

President, PM greet Obama

UNB, Dhaka
President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina felicitated US President Barack H Obama on the occasion of the Independence Day of the country that falls on today.

In a message to the US president, Zillur said the bonds of friendship that so happily exist between the two countries will continue to be widened and deepened in the coming days.

In a separate message to Obama, Hasina hoped that the bonds of friendship and cooperation that the two nations share will continue to grow in the days ahead.