

AL warns party

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Awami League and its associated bodies including Chhatra League and Jubo League.

At the meeting that started around 6:00pm, a number of district leaders drew Hasina's attention to the fact that many lawmakers have indulged themselves in unlawful activities. Hasina chaired the meeting.

They said lawmakers are too busy distributing wheat of Test Relief and Government Relief rather than dealing with issues of the grassroots face at their constituencies. They do not even keep in touch with organisational district leaders or give time for party activities in their constituencies, the district leaders claimed.

Party General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam at the meeting said nomination would not be given to those legislators who indulge in corruption and irregularities and who stay busy with only distributing wheat.

"Stay away from wheat and change your mindset," said Ashraf, adding that he is making a list of MPs who have strayed from the righteous path.

He also asked the lawmakers and district leaders to unite and strengthen the party at the district level.

The district leaders talked about incidents of intra-party feud in many places and said the feuds were taking place since councils of grassroots Awami League committees were long due.

The next working committee meeting would decide on those councils.

A few leaders spoke about the unruly Chhatra League, Jubo League and party men and urged the premier to take tough action.

Hasina responded by saying the members of Islami Chhatra Shibir and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal have intruded into Chhatra League and they are responsible for the recent incidents of violence across the country.

She said she has been preparing a list of those intruders. "There is proof that Shibir has infiltrated Chhatra League. Those, whoever they are, are creating chaos in the name of Chhatra League. They will be contained with strict hands,"

Bangladeshis

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Among those killed were Bangladeshi hotel workers and a Briton, an American, a Canadian, a Japanese, a Pole, an Ecuadorian and an Australian, a police source said.

The source said some worked for Asiatic, an Iraqi mobile phone operator in which Qatar Telecommunications Co (Qtel) has a 30 percent stake.

Another police official said a Chinese citizen also was among the dead.

"This is not a terrorist act," Qader Hama-Jan, the head of local security operations, said of the fire.

Women and children were among the casualties.

"Most of the people who were killed were choked because of the smoke. They could not get out," said Dr. Reqot Hama-Rasheed, head of the health department.

"According to the information that we have, it was a gas leak. Otherwise it could not have spread this quickly," police Colonel Aras Baker told local television.

At least three of the victims died jumping from the third floor to escape the flames, an official said.

Businessman

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arrested Sabed's brother Delwar Hossain and his nephew James, said the family.

The following day they produced the two before a court, seeking a four-day remand. But the court rejected the remand prayer and sent the arrestees to jail.

Speaking in return for anonymity, an accused in the case said, "When police failed to take Delwar and James on remand, they threatened to arrest the other accused and have them on remand by any means."

He said Sabed fell trying to escape arrest.

AHM Qamruzzaman, additional deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (Lalbagh), told The Daily Star that they were looking into the allegations against police.

He however refuted the claim that the raid was made in a false case.

Police did not enter Sabed's flat on the first floor as his family members told them he was not home, Qamruzzaman said.

He added that they came to know about the death yesterday noon.

Abdul Hai, who lives in a flat next to Sabed's, said,

Hasina was quoted as saying in the meeting.

"Many Chhatra League workers have been arrested and if necessary more will be arrested. None will be spared," she said.

The district leaders said the government development activities at union parishad levels are being hampered due to non-holding of elections to local government bodies.

In response, the Awami League central urged the district leaders to finalise a single candidate for the elections to avert intra-party feuds.

Talking to The Daily Star Awami League Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif said an initiative would be taken to reduce the gap between the government and the party.

All-party

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Hasina, also president of the ruling Awami League, was addressing an AL Central Working Committee meeting at Gono Bhavan.

She said her government is pursuing changes to the republic's charter in order to uphold the High Court's verdict on the fifth amendment.

"Changes are essential to strengthen the democracy as the military dictators have distorted the constitution after 1975 and we will do that in the light of the apex court's verdict."

The Supreme Court On February 2 this year dismissed two petitions contesting the High Court verdict that declared the constitution's fifth amendment illegal.

The verdict meant the governments between August 15, 1975, and April 9, 1979, were in power without lawful authority.

Hasina lamented that Bangladesh could not achieve its desired development, as democracy was shunned by the military rulers.

She asked her party leaders and workers to give their best efforts to strengthen the foundation of democracy in the country.

The prime minister said the trial of the BDR mutiny would be held in a fair and transparent manner.

AL's district unit presidents and general secretaries were present at the meeting along with the central leaders.

Housewife

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Police Station.

Sonia's brother-in-law Abul Hashem told The Daily Star that Samed Bepari, Sonia's father, gave Shipon Tk 2.50 lakh in different installments since their marriage seven months ago as Shipon was forcing her wife to take money from her family.

But recently Sonia's father denied giving money any further, and as a consequence Sonia had to lose her life.

Police said Samed Bepari filed a murder case with the police station accusing Shipon.

Meanwhile, Hazaribagh police recovered Poran's body with several injury marks near Bangladesh College of Leather Technology at around 2:00pm.

Poran's father Abdul Khaleq filed a case accusing some unknown people with Hazaribagh Police Station, said Officer-in-Charge Enamul Huq.

Poran went missing Thursday night and he was a drug addict, said Khaleq.

BCL man held for killing at MC College

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Police yesterday picked up Abdur Rahim Ripon, president of the MC College hostel unit (now dissolved) of Bangladesh Chhatra League, from the college hostel in connection with the killing of BCL activist Udayendu Singha Polish.

Ripon was sent to jail through the magistrate court yesterday afternoon. "We are going to pray for remand of Ripon for quizzing him in Polish murder case," said the Acting Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Kotwali Police Station Narayan Dutta.

Police sources said Ripon and his group are blamed for vandalizing the office of MC College hostel superintendent and attacking him for asking some BCL men to vacate their rooms as their studentships were over.

Fellow BCL activists stabbed Udayendu Singha Polish to death in the city's Shaplag area Monday afternoon.

BCL central committee dissolved Sylhet district, city, MC College and Sylhet Government College units Tuesday last while six members of the college units and 12 of the district and city units were expelled for their alleged involvement in undesirable activities.

Ripon is among those expelled.

Kabir

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surrendered to police when they came.

SI Abu Bakar said Kabir in his statement before the court admitted that he killed Menoka consciously as he had planned earlier to avenge Menoka's refusal to continue their relationship.

"We did not seek remand as Kabir had willingly described how and why he killed Menoka and as he surrendered to police immediately after the killing," the SI said.

Menoka's grief-stricken family members yesterday demanded Kabir's exemplary punishment.

"We cannot believe that our daughter can develop an affair with a boy like Kabir. He spread the propaganda of emotional attachment with Menoka," said Nazneen Begum, an aunt of the victim.

Meanwhile, the body of the deceased was buried at the Mirpur Intellectuals' Graveyard yesterday afternoon after her namaj-e-jaanaza at the local mosque.

JMB raid

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The top DB official said, Saidur disclosed that Anwar Alam alias Bhagne Shahid had been coordinating the operations according to Jamaat's plan. Shahid escaped the arrest in Kadamtoli on June 24 exploding a grenade and injuring several policemen. He was caught from Bogra on July 12.

BSMMU

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and Higher Education (DSHE) to postpone its written test for selecting government school-teachers.

"The examination has been cancelled not for question leak but due to allegations of irregularities and mismanagement inside the examination hall," claimed Prof Pran Gopal Dutta.

He said students complained that some examinees appeared to have been putting down answers to the multiple-choice questions as if they knew what to put before reading the questions.

And the invigilators complained of irregularities and mismanagement inside the examination hall and they were suspicious about the way some students answered the multiple-choice questions, the VC said.

A total of 628 candidates took the one and a half hour exams held from 10:00am.

Soon after the exam was over, many candidates came out of the hall in tears complaining that the question paper was leaked, BSMMU doctors said.

Several candidates complained that they saw at least four invigilators supplying small pieces of paper to a number of candidates, which apparently had the answers to the multiple-choice questions.

Army man held

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of Police (SP) Mosharruf Hossain said a case was filed with Jamuna Bridge west police station against Maj Reza and Milton.

Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of police in Rajshahi Md Mukhlesur Rahman told The Daily Star that police arrested them while they were carrying the contraband items in the car.

The DIG said Reza was handed over to Bogra Cantonment early yesterday while his cousin was produced before the court that sent him to jail.

Steps would be taken as per the law and investigation requirements, the DIG added.

Our Sirajganj Correspondent adds: After the arrest of the army major, police informed Bangladesh Army and a team of army personnel took the major to Bogra Cantonment.

Sources said police challenged Maj Reza and Milton when they were crossing the Gol Chatter area of Bangabandhu Bridge by a private car at around 12:30am and recovered 780 bottles of phensidyl after searching the car.

The major and his associate were on the way to Dhaka from Patnola in Naogaon, added the sources.

Maj Reza resides in Azimpur and is posted in the Combined Medical Hospital (CMH) in Dhaka.

Police said Milton is the

owner of the drugs and Reza was escorting him for Tk 30,000.

During preliminary interrogation, Reza said earlier he had escorted four times in this manner.

In a press release, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said Sirajganj police detained an army officer on Friday night from Bangabandhu Bridge area after some bottles of phensidyl were found in his car.

The army authorities received the officer soon after police informed them, the press release said.

The ISPR said it was a stray incident and the investigation is underway. Legal steps would be taken to protect the image of the armed forces.

Bus torched

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Witnesses said the rickshaw puller died on the spot when the bus crushed the rickshaw. The woman was injured as she was tossed off the rickshaw and skidded on the tarmac in front of Sitara Convention Centre at Pallabi of Mirpur-11.

They said soon after the accident, the bus driver and his conductor ditched the bus and fled. A mob then set the bus ablaze and vandalised others.

Police rushed to the spot and had to assure the mob of catching the driver and conductor to calm the mob down.

Tough battle

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increase seats to meet the demand. But the fact is seats in many colleges remain vacant as most students are eager to make it to well-known educational institutions in Dhaka and other cities.

Many of the successful students will pursue higher education abroad while some will not be able to continue studies, academics said.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said admission to preferred and well-known universities would certainly be competitive and tough since they offer limited seats.

The situation is almost the same in other universities across the globe, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said meritorious students usually choose renowned universities for admission putting the institutions under pressure.

"We are trying to improve the quality of educational institutions to bring all students within the purview of standard education," he said.

It is not possible for public universities to raise the number of seats immediately as it involves many issues including recruitment of teachers and providing classrooms, libraries, dormitories and other facilities, said University Grants Commission (UGC) Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam.

The UGC gave approval to many public and private universities to open new departments, he said.

Prof Nazrul said four universities, launched last year, would enrol more students this year while the old ones would take a few more than

the usual number.

Of the 37,000 seats in public universities, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) has 885, Dhaka University nearly 4,500 and Jahangirnagar University about 1,350, education ministry statistics show.

Public and private dental colleges offer 910 seats, while nearly 1,76,005 seats are available in 199 colleges offering honours courses and 1,53,338 seats (pass course) in 1,474 colleges under the NU.

A uniform admission test will take place under the "cluster system" for the first time in three universities -- Khulna University of Engineering and Technology, Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology and Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology - for the current academic session.

Prof Pran Gopal Datta, president of University Council, a platform for the vice chancellors of public universities, told The Daily Star yesterday that they would hold admission tests under the new system in all engineering, agriculture, and science and technology universities next year.

The government decided to introduce the system to ease admission hassles.

Under the cluster system, similar universities will be taken under various clusters and a uniform admission test will be arranged for each cluster. All universities currently hold admission tests separately.

Power import

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In Bangladesh, the PGCB in April had floated tender to set up a 40km transmission line in Bheramara with a high voltage sub-station at a cost of 150 million US dollars funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The ADB is reviewing the tender evaluation result for the last two months. Once it is over, the PGCB would award the contract to the lowest responsive bidder so that the job can be completed within two years.

The power transmission line of the two countries will have the capacity to deal with 500MW power.

Regarding the MoU for the joint venture agreement for building the coal fired plant, India has expressed reservations about some terms and conditions spelled out by Bangladesh last month.

"But we are expecting that these would be sorted out within this month and the MoU will be signed," said the PDB source.

In May, India had sent Bangladesh a draft agreement outlining that the NTPC would

manage and finance the two-unit coal-based plant in Khulna that would be jointly built with the PDB. Under this joint venture, the board of directors will be headed by Bangladesh. The number of NTPC representatives will be higher than those of Bangladesh by one.

In June, a high-powered committee headed by adviser to prime minister on economic affairs Dr Mashiur Rahman reviewed the Indian proposal and decided to suggest that the Bangladeshi share in this plant should increase gradually.

On January 3 this year, Bangladesh signed several MoUs with India. Those include one on power import and setting up the coal-based power plant under a government-to-government joint venture.

As part of cooperation between the two countries, the NTPC is already conducting a feasibility study for the coal-fired plant while the PDB has acquired land in Khulna and Chittagong to build a couple of large imported coal-based power projects.

Three docs

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Law enforcers during the drive picked up physicians Amjad Ali, Hasan Tareq and Shahid Ahmed.

Sub-Inspector Shihab Uddin of Mohammadpur Police Station told The Daily Star, "We arrested the doctors on charge of killing the patient providing him wrong treatment."

The arrested doctors, however, refuted the allegation. They rather claimed the victim died in an immediate cardiac arrest.

Anisur Rahman was admitted to Eastern Hospital and Medical Research Centre Thursday morning. The accused doctors conducted a minor surgery in the right hand of the victim around noon.

Anisur suffered the hand injuries in a motorbike accident.

Emerging from the operation theatre, Anisur talked with relatives and doctors for a while.

He lost consciousness immediately after the doctors gave him two injections in the afternoon, Fazlul Haque told The Daily Star.

The doctors took Anisur to the operation theatre again and pronounced him dead around 10:40pm.

Amjad Ali, who also runs a private chamber at Pallabi, referred Anisur to the hospital.

Victim's father filed a case with Mohammadpur Police Station against the physicians in this connection yesterday morning.

The body has been sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue.

Implement

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Biswas, joint secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BAPA).

They rebuked the arrogant developers for their offensive behaviour with the state minister for housing and public works, Abdul Mannan Khan along with members of the DAP review committee comprised of noted urban experts and environmentalists.

They also called for immediate renovation of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha to make it an efficient organisation which would help build the capital into a modern city with adequate public amenities.

"The government should overlook all unwarranted and unethical pressures from the land grabbers and implement DAP immediately for the greater interest of the city dwellers," said Tusher Rehman, secretary general of Citizens' Rights Movement.

Sheba Executive Director Dr Nuruddin presided over the rally.

Convener of Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources and Port Protection Committee Engineer Sheikh Muhammad Shahidullah and Ruhin Hossain Prince, secretary of Communist Party of Bangladesh also spoke at the rally.

Commuters

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25-metre long bridge, making it 40 metres, with the ring road of Hatirjheel development project.

Cost of the Tk 6.38-crore project has increased by Tk 1.80 crore, of which Hatirjheel project authority has agreed to provide Tk 1.30 crore, said Sharifuddin.

Md Raisuddin, project's site engineer, said, "We had to revise the design to do the piling [underground work] keeping the utility services in place as per DCC instructions and also to integrate the bridge with the Hatirjheel project."

There are utility service networks of Titas Gas, Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited (BTCL) and Dhaka Wasa at the project site.

Abdul Wased, executive engineer of Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa), said they have already relocated Wasa supply lines from the construction site.

DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka said he needed to look into documents to say why the project was initiated without relocation of the utilities.

The mayor in May told The Daily Star, "I will make arrangements for keeping the diversion level so that the vehicles can pass smoothly."

So far, nothing has been done in this regard.

Contacted again, Khoka said they couldn't work to improve the condition of the diversion due to rain.

Shailla Hasan, a Gulshan resident, said the potholed diversion creates traffic jam during the peak hours, as the vehicles slow down while passing through.

Md Mufazzal, a chauffer employed in Gulshan, said, "The bumpy diversion causes damage to the suspension system and the wheels of vehicles which suffer bad jolts."

Malaria-proof

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PLoS Pathogens. They say that the ultimate goal is to introduce malaria-resistant mosquitoes into the environment.

"Before we do this, we have to somehow give the mosquitoes a competitive advantage over the disease-carrying insects," explained Professor Michael Riehle from the University of Arizona a principle investigator on the project.

In the study the researchers altered a gene that codes for a "signalling molecule".

This molecule, a protein, enables the mosquito's cells to communicate with each other, and is crucial for parasite development inside the mosquito.

This is a key step in a long genetic battle against a global killer. The ultimate aim is to tackle the root cause of malaria's spread by releasing the parasite-proof mosquitoes into the environment.

For that to be successful, the genetically modified insects would have to "take over" from the naturally occurring, disease-spreading mosquitoes.

This means giving the GM insects a competitive advantage--something that has not yet been achieved. Researchers are investigating a number of genetic "tricks" in pursuit of this.

One of these is to ensure that the gene that blocks the parasite's development is guaranteed to be passed down to the modified mosquitoes' offspring - thereby making sure that the gene eventually spreads throughout the population.

The other is to give the malaria-resistant mosquitoes an additional genetic boost, such as a gene that makes them resistance to toxins that could be used against unmodified mosquitoes.

But there are serious ethical concerns about releasing a genetically modified insect into the environment. Once the science is pinned down, the risks and benefits to the environment, and to human health, will have to be properly assessed.

The genetic tweak artificially increased its production, disrupting the whole process, and also shortened the insect's lifespan.

The team was able to add a fluorescent tag to the gene, to ensure that it had been

UAE lifts

FROM PAGE 16
MRPs and it would take some time to replace the manual passports.

Md Moniruzzaman said Bangladesh Ambassador to the UAE Nazmul Quaunine also held several meetings with the UAE Department of Naturalisation and Residency.

The issue of allowing manual passports is very important, as the UAE hired over 2.5 lakh Bangladeshi workers last year-- the largest recruitment by a country. Over 7 lakh Bangladeshis are now working there.

Besides, the issue of how to incorporate a legal guardian's name in the MRP is still unsettled.

The Middle Eastern countries want that the MRP bear the names of the worker's legal guardian but the MRPs issued by the Department of Immigration and Passports lack the information.

As the envoys of the manpower importing countries raised the issue during their meeting with the foreign minister, the government decided to incorporate the information in the MRP.

India puts the name of a legal guardian in the last page of the MRP.

On July 15, MRP Project Director Brig Gen Refayet Ullah told The Daily Star that they had seen MRPs of some other countries and now are waiting for feedback from the labour-importing countries before making the final decision.

"So far, we have opinions from two countries," added Refayet Ullah.

Ali Haider Chowdhury, secretary general of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira), said it appears that the problem is temporarily solved but it is imperative that the government issues MRPs for all overseas jobseekers.

He suggested opening exclusive desks for the purpose.

successfully "expressed" by the mosquito larvae.

Professor Riehle said: "This is the first time that we've been able to completely block the parasite from developing in the mosquito."

Gareth Lycett, a malaria researcher from Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine in the UK, said it was an important advance.

"They have tested it on the most harmful of the malaria parasites, Plasmodium falciparum," he told BBC News. "It is another step on the journey towards potentially assisting malaria control through GM mosquito release."

But Dr Lycett pointed out that the this work had not been carried out specifically on the Anopheles gambiae mosquito. "That is the major vector of malaria in Africa where the disease is most prevalent," he explained.

This study was a collaborative project with the University of California Davis and the University of Georgia funded by the National Institutes of Health.