

Adviser's antics

FROM PAGE 1
The AL policymaker also observed that recruitment only on political considerations would hamper the government's development activities.

Speaking in return for anonymity, a veteran parliamentarian who is also a legal expert told The Daily Star the government is bound to give information to the people as per the RTI act. "If the adviser gives any statement contradicting that law, it would go against the government," he observed.

Chief Information Commissioner Muhammad Zamir said, "Right to information is a fundamental right and we all should defend it."

He noted that the right to information is meant to facilitate free flow of information, a must for good governance. At the same time, no controversy should be raised by publishing "information inconsistent with facts".

About the adviser's statement, Zamir, a former ambassador and secretary, said, "If the health ministry feels the process of imparting necessary information should be facilitated, it should appoint a designated officer for that. The officer should be responsible for providing information in

writing, if necessary. This will help avoid controversy."

Information Commissioner Sadeka Halim said the adviser's statements conflict with the RTI act. She said such statements are not expected from anyone. About Modasser's recruitment remarks, she said this cannot be a healthy practice for a political party.

Meanwhile, Muradul Islam, Bangla national daily Amader Shomoy's Gopalganj correspondent whose request for information started it all, said he told the adviser they were not getting information on "corruption and irregularities at the Sadar hospital including the latest procurement of medical equipment worth Tk 16 lakh".

Talking to The Daily Star over the phone yesterday, he said, "I told him [Modasser] we were not getting information about tenders at the civil surgeon's office. He replied the government would investigate corruption, but the journalists won't be given any information in this regard."

Sadeka Halim said it is not mandatory for the administration to give information on a tender especially the number of bidders and amount of money before the bidding ends.

Jamaat leaders

FROM PAGE 16
required for effective and proper investigation into allegations under Article-3 (2) of International Crimes Tribunal Act, 1973. This section deals with offences like war crimes, genocide, murder, abduction, confinement, torture and rape.

The court observed that there are no proceedings other than the petitions pending with the tribunal against them and there is no need to issue any stay order.

It said the suspects would get all certified copies when the tribunal delivers judgments after formal charges are submitted.

The court also rejected two petitions, which sought direction to the authorities to provide them letter of authority (power to move cases) and to send records of two cases back to Chief Metropolitan Court in Dhaka, considering that the two petitions were submitted for hearing. The court also said the tribunal has not received any record of the two cases.

The counsels for the Jamaat leaders also prayed to the court to allow them to withdraw the two petitions. Two cases were filed against them at Keraniganj Police Station on December 17, 2007, and Pallabi Police Station on February 26, 2008, in Dhaka in connection with committing crimes against humanity during the Liberation War.

The three-judge tribunal is headed by its chairman Justice Nizamul Haq. The two other judges of the tribunal are Justice ATM Fazle Kabir and Justice AKM Zaheer Ahmed. Ghulam Arief Tippoo, Syed Haider Ali and Zead Al Malum placed arguments for the prosecution while Tajul Islam, Gola M o h a m m a d Chowdhury Alam, Fakhru Islam and Masud Ahmed Sayeed appeared for the Jamaat leaders.

SAYEED'S ARREST PETITION
The tribunal yesterday also adjourned the hearing till this morning on a petition submitted by the prosecution for issuing arrest warrant against detained Jamaat Nayeb-e-Ameer Delwar Hossain Sayeed in connection with crimes against humanity and peace in 1971.

The court fixed today for hearing on two petitions, one filed for issuing warrant of arrest against Sayeed and the other for directing the authorities to provide letter of authority to Sayeed. The tribunal also asked prison authorities to produce Sayeed before it this morning during the hearing.

However, Sayeed will not be produced before the tribunal today due to his illness, sources in Dhaka Central Jail told The Daily Star yesterday. The jail doctors yesterday certified that Sayeed is not physically fit to be produced before the tribunal today.

The authorities produced Sayeed before the tribunal yesterday morning in connection with prosecution's allegations of offences committed under International Crimes Tribunal Act, 1973.

They brought him to the tribunal amid tight security around 9:00am and kept him detained in its prison until the tribunal started its day's proceedings around 10:30am.

A team from the investigation agency yesterday continued probing the allegations of war crimes against Sayeed in Pirojpur for the second time. During hearing yesterday, the tribunal reprimanded the prosecution since they could not properly prepare the petition against Sayeed.

The prosecution did not mention in the petition the grounds on which the tribunal could issue order of detention against Sayeed. The tribunal told prosecutor Syed Haider Ali that he is a senior lawyer of the Supreme Court but his petition could not satisfy the tribunal.

The tribunal ordered the prosecution to place a corrected petition before it this morning. There are no cases filed against Sayeed in connection with crimes against humanity but the prosecution has brought several allegations against him.

Mentioning the word "Chhobok" used by daily Amader Shomoy, Suranjit said the paper used the word in a news item concerning the High Court, it would have faced contempt of court charges.

"The parliament is sovereign," he said, adding that this parliament has to protect its dignity. He said contempt of parliament is tantamount to contempt of the speaker, and democracy cannot be protected with contemptuous attitude toward parliament.

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2 factories
FROM PAGE 16
Chowdhury, director of enforcement and monitoring unit led the unannounced drive during the 'Operation Prevent Environment Crime'.

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Speaker, Ashraf

FROM PAGE 16
submit proposals to the government for construction of bridge, culvert etc," the speakers said.

On block allocation, the LGRD minister said MPs' proposals for development works with the allocated money are being scrutinised and works will begin soon.

He also assured the MPs of increasing the amount of block allocation if the finance minister agrees in the next budget. Taking the floor, Whip Sagufa Yasmin Emily said "a section of civil society leaders" and people, who take part in the TV talk shows, criticise MPs' role in local development activities.

"Lawmakers in many countries are actively engaged in development works in their constituencies," the whip said. AL lawmaker Kabirul Haq urged the government to make it clear that the block allocation of Tk15 crore was not given to MPs.

Many civil society personalities and local government experts have long been demanding that MPs' interference in local development works should be stopped and local government bodies should be empowered to carry out all development activities. She referred to the more extreme estimations that a 1-metre rise in the sea level would submerge a quarter of Bangladesh, displacing 30 million people and making it difficult to sustain a poverty-free era beyond 2015.

"One in every seven persons in Bangladesh would become a climate migrant due to excessive greenhouse gas emissions by industrialised countries," she warned. She urged the global community to be sensitive to this emerging challenge and find innovative ways for their rehabilitation.

Hasina reiterated Bangladesh's resolve and commitment towards achieving a set of development goals, which included self-sufficiency in food by 2021, 100 percent net enrolment at primary level by 2015, eliminating gender disparity in education by 2015, and enhancing economic participation of women to 40 percent by 2021.

She also said her government plans to reduce maternal mortality even further, to 15 percent, and infant mortality to 15 deaths per 1000 live births by 2021; increase life expectancy to 70 years by 2021; provide safe drinking water for all by 2011, and hygienic sanitation by 2013; and last but not least, "achieve a Digital Bangladesh for global connectivity by implementing our national ICT Policy by 2021."

Finance Minister AMA Muhiut, Planning Minister AK Khandaker, Health Minister AFM Ruhul Haq, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, among others, were present. MK Alamgir
FROM PAGE 16
Muhammad Sohul Hussein told newsmen at his office yesterday.

There is now no bar to declare the seat vacant and hold fresh election within next 90 days, added the commissioner.

Alamgir, presidium member of AL, was elected MP from the Chandpur-1 constituency in December 29 parliamentary election.

During the scrutiny of the nomination papers, the returning officer disqualified him for contesting the poll as a special court convicted him in a corruption case.

He then moved to the High Court (HC) in December 2009, but the court rejected his petition upholding the returning officer's decision. Alamgir however contested the election on an order of the Chamber Judge of the Supreme Court (SC).

Later he filed a prayer with the Appellate Division seeking to file appeal against the HC verdict. But the court last July turned down his prayer.

HC in its verdict in the corruption case quashed his conviction and scrapped the 13-year jail term awarded to him by the special court. Later the SC upheld the HC verdict. AL submits financial report to EC

A delegation of ruling AL submitted the party's financial transaction report for the year 2009 to the EC.

A registered audit firm prepared the report by auditing its income and expenditure. Submitting the report, Deputy Publicity Secretary of AL, Miral Kanti Das, however, declined to disclose the amount of the party's annual income and expenditure to the newsmen.

The deadline for filing the report was July 31 this year. The party applied to the EC for extending the time by two months. The EC extended the timeframe to September 30 for all the parties who failed to come up with their report.

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DU students clash with DMCH staff, hawkers

5 hurt
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least five people were injured in a clash between students of Shahidullah Hall of Dhaka University and employees of Dhaka Medical College Hospital and hawkers in front of the DMCH last night.

The students set fire to around 25 shops and vandalised a number of makeshift shops on the footpath in front of the DMCH at around 10:30pm, police said.

The incident occurred over a clash between the children of employees of Shahidullah Hall and those of DMCH in the afternoon, officer-in-charge of Shahhab Police Station Rezaul Karim told The Daily Star.

At around 9:30pm, students and employees of Shahidullah Hall went to the hawkers in front of the emergency gate of DMCH, and soon engaged in a clash.

Within half an hour, more students and employees of the hall joined the clash and vandalised the shops and set fire to those in police presence, witnesses said.

Fire service was called to douse the fire, and additional police were deployed to calm the situation.

Provost of Shahidullah Hall, Professor Azizur Rahman, told reporters that the hawkers in front of the DMCH and employees of the hospital attacked the students. The students and employees of the hall only defended themselves, he added.

Van carrying 30 kids plunges into Pak river

AP, Muzaffarabad

A van carrying at least 30 schoolchildren plunged into a river in Pakistan-held Kashmir yesterday, and most of the passengers were confirmed or feared dead.

The driver lost control of the vehicle and it plunged 50 feet (15 meters) into the Jehlum River from an elevated road in the regional capital Muzaffarabad, said local police chief Ghulam Akber. Authorities managed to save the driver and four children, he said.

But school teacher Bashir Mughal said rescue workers took more than an hour to arrive and it was local villagers who plucked the four children from the water.

Fifteen bodies have been recovered from various parts of the river, but the other children are still missing, Akber said. Some bodies may have been collected by local residents before authorities arrived, he said.

Pabna admin

FROM PAGE 1
we've cancelled our strike," said AFM Monjur Kadir, deputy commissioner (DC) of Pabna.

Yesterday's meeting was convened to quell the growing anger among the officers and employees since more than 100 activists of Jubo League and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) attacked two examination centres on Friday during a recruitment examination of third-class government employees.

The attackers also assaulted senior officers and ransacked their vehicles to foil the examination.

"We informed the divisional commissioner that the police department in Pabna has sided with the attackers. We also told him that police could not find the attackers although they [the attackers] are moving freely in the city," a senior officer said after the meeting, seeking anonymity.

Sub-inspector Badruddoza said they are trying to arrest the attackers. "Our drives are on to nab them," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Superintendent of Police (SP) of Pabna Jamil Ahmed could not be reached for comments despite repeated attempts last night.

The attackers are followers of local Awami League lawmaker Gola Faruk Khandaker Prince, who has been allegedly pressing the district administration to recruit his men. Prince, however, denied the allegation.

Two separate cases were filed accusing more than 100 Jubo League and BCL activists in this connection.

Police so far arrested Jubo League cultural affairs secretary Tariqul Islam Raihan on Saturday.

Meanwhile, an examination to recruit employees of Statistic Bureau is scheduled to be held in Pabna. Many teachers and officials said the examinations cannot be held in this situation.

The government high-ups have assured us of taking stern actions against the culprits. We hope that all the attackers will soon be booked," the DC told The Daily Star.

Poles urged to probe CIA prison acts

AP, Warsaw

A human rights organization and lawyers for a Saudi man accused in the 2000 bombing of the USS Cole demanded yesterday that Polish prosecutors investigate the terror suspect's detention and treatment at a CIA prison once housed in Poland.

Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri is the first detainee subjected to the CIA's detention and interrogation program who has taken legal action in Poland, said Amrit Singh, a senior legal officer for the Open Society Justice Initiative.

Mikolaj Pietrzak, an attorney who represents al-Nashiri in Poland, told The Associated Press he filed the petition Tuesday with prosecutors in Warsaw.

The legal move in Poland could spawn similar efforts in Romania and Lithuania, which former U.S. intelligence officials and critics have identified as nations that hosted some of the CIA's so-called black sites.

Public outcry against the abandoned CIA program remains strong in Europe while lawyers for detainees and civil liberties activists have had limited success in US courts in shedding new light on the secret prisons.

"We hope that the prosecutor will heed this call for a serious investigation into al-Nashiri's ill-treatment on Polish soil," Singh said. "The quest for accountability for the CIA's illegal rendition program must continue in Europe, especially as US courts appear to be closing their doors to victims of this program."

Polish prosecutors have

UK detains

FROM PAGE 16
correct 'right to work checks', the release said.

The release quoted UK Immigration Minister Damian Green as saying "We are determined to make it harder than ever for illegal immigrants to work in the UK."

Illegal immigration puts pressure on public services, local communities and legitimate businesses at a time when the country cannot afford it, he stressed.

"That's why the UK Border Agency is working to cut illegal employment, sham marriages, bogus colleges and organised smugglers from being used by foreign nationals trying to stay in the UK illegally."

Earlier, a similar statement was released last month regarding the arrest of 20 Bangladeshi expatriates during July and mid-August this year.

Last month another Bangladeshi man was sentenced to six months in prison after applying to stay in the UK using a false identity. He will be deported shortly after he has served his sentence.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh said there is an estimated 5 lakh British Bangladeshis in the UK. Besides, around 40,000 Bangladeshi students are currently studying in Britain.

Bangladeshis

FROM PAGE 16
as Sajeda Begum, 30, wife of Kutub Uddin, their elder son Mizan Uddin, 16, and Sajeda's brother Nazimuddin Tawhid, 24. They were admitted to local hospitals.

They all hailed from Syedpur village in Boalkhal upazila of Chittagong.

Talking to The Daily Star, Mohammad Noimuddin, Kutub Uddin's brother-in-law, said the accident took place in Jilkholia area of Madinah as the driver lost control over his wheels around 10:00pm (Saudi local time).

The victims were returning to their residence in Madinah, after performing Umrah, from Makkah.

Ban likely

FROM PAGE 16
to stop small public vehicles like Nasimons and Karimons running on the highways.

It also took decision on turning the kitchen markets at New Market and Gulshan-1 and 2 in the capital into multi-storey structures with car parks, removing all construction materials piled up on roads and unwanted advertisements and posters from electric poles and reinstallation of traffic signals at different intersections.

The meeting has asked the authorities concerned to take necessary steps in this regard. Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan, secretaries of home and communications ministries, acting inspector general of police and his deputies, chairman of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority and transport workers attended the meeting.

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already been examining the country's involvement in a now-shuttered US system of secret prisons around the globe. Inside the black sites, terror detainees were exposed to harsh interrogation methods such as the simulated drowning technique of waterboarding -- a practice that critics have called torture.

Prosecutor Jerzy Mierzewski in Warsaw said Pietrzak's petition would likely be wrapped into his office's overall probe.

"It does not require the opening of a separate investigation," he said, adding that he still had to study the documents.

The prosecutors are investigating possible abuse of power by Polish public officials in connection with the closed CIA black site near the secluded Szymany airport in northeast Poland. Flight logs trace several landings of planes linked to the CIA there. Prosecutors have been looking into the site since 2008 but have not yet filed charges.

Polish media have reported that prosecutors are considering war crimes charges against former President Aleksander Kwasniewski and two other officials in connection with the CIA prison site. Kwasniewski, Poland's president from 1995-2005, has said he was unaware of the CIA prison.

Following the AP's report earlier this month on al-Nashiri's treatment, Leszek Miller, Poland's prime minister at the time, flatly denied the existence of any such facility, saying there were "no secret CIA prisons in Poland."

BNP meet

FROM PAGE 1
added the sources.

Addressing the meeting, which began at 8:45pm and ended at 11:30pm at her Gulshan office, Khaleda said Dhaka city unit committee would not be formed as long as Mirza Abbas is in jail.

Some standing committee members expressed resentment over party leader Nazmul Huda's recent proposal for a meeting between Khaleda Zia and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to resolve the crises facing the country.

They requested the chairperson warn him so that he refrains from making such statements.

The meeting sources added that Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, Jamiruddin Sircar and Lt Gen (ret'd) Mahbubur Rahman spoke in favour of joining parliament.

Though none of the participants opposed the three senior leaders' stance, the chairperson said there would be more discussion on the issue.

Khandaker Delwar at the briefing said the standing committee thinks the government has failed to create an atmosphere for the opposition lawmakers to join the House proceedings.

AL MPs

FROM PAGE 1
On Monday, a number of these legislators made a verbal attack on Afsarul Ameen during the break in parliament session. But they claimed yesterday media reports on the incident are not true.

Meanwhile, the results of examinations for recruitment of assistant teachers and headmasters for government primary schools were published on September 8. Around 30,712 were selected for the posts of assistant teacher and 1,852 for those of headmaster.

The selection list created resentment among many of the ruling party lawmakers as their preferred ones for such posts were not included in it. And they wanted to know from the minister why the lists given by them were ignored, said sources.

Lawmaker Shamshul Haque, who was among those who entered the minister's office yesterday, told journalists later that they did not misbehave with him. They just came to meet him following the media reports on Monday's 'incident'.

Asked about this, Afsarul Ameen declined to say anything.

Later, Motahar Hossain told journalists that they had ensured absolute transparency in the recruitment process.

"Lawmakers can send letters to us, and we can't dishonour them by throwing those away," he said. But there is no scope to proceed with the letters as everything has been done maintaining transparency, he added.