

Door not yet

FROM PAGE 1 meeting on the power of attorney act at Bidyut Bhawan in the capital.

Participating in the House discussion on the proposed budget for the next fiscal year, Water Resources Minister Ramesh Chandra Sen said the ruling and opposition parties can take a decision on the caretaker government issue through discussions.

"Although the cabinet has approved proposals for scrapping the caretaker government system, there is no problem," he said.

Meanwhile, AL lawmaker Suranjit Sengupta said even if all the opportunities for discussion on the caretaker issue were over, there would still be scope to form an interim government (to hold the next general elections). But for that to happen, the government and the opposition will have to reach a consensus.

Suranjit, also a member of the AL advisory council, was speaking at a press conference at the Jatiya Sangsad Media Centre.

Replying to a query, Suranjit said the opposition lawmakers can express their views against the constitution amendment bill when it is placed in parliament; they can even place new proposals.

"There is precedence that the total frame of a bill was changed after it was sent to the parliamentary standing committee concerned," Suranjit said.

Taking part in the budget discussion, a number of AL legislators also said the door has not been closed for discussions, and urged BNP to return to the House.

Sheikh Shahid

FROM PAGE 20 of two prosecution witnesses, including complainant of the case.

Both Sheikh Shahidul Islam and Amjad Khan Chowdhury were present in the court and expressed their satisfaction over the verdict.

The witnesses did not appear before the court on several dates, in spite of receiving summons from the court Special Public Prosecutor Shaheen Ahmed Khan told The Daily Star.

Sazzad Hossain, an official of now-defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption, filed the case against them with Ramna Police Station on February 11, 1991.

Sazzad alleged that during his tenure at the public works ministry Shahidul Islam illegally allotted 3.16 bighas of state property situated at Shantinagar to Amjad Khan, also chairman of Properties Development.

Amjad Khan's name initially did not appear in the first information report (FIR), but was included in the charge sheet later as he was believed to be linked to the corruption during the investigation of the case.

On April 9, 1992 the investigation officer of the case pressed charges against them.

First all-female

FROM PAGE 20 committed by female criminals and street violence by female political activists.

The commanding officer of the unit, 371 women strong, will be a female superintendent of police.

Inspector General of Police Hassan Mahmood Khandaker said two years ago women police were only 1.72 percent of the force. Now it is 3.78 percent in a department of 1.40 lakh personnel.

Hassan said around three decades ago there were only seven female inspectors and seven constables in the department. Now more than 5,000 female police are working.

The home secretary said the percentage of female police personnel should be raised to 20 from the current 3.78.

Speakers at the programme said there was a concept that women are fit for serving only in health and education sectors but now the society witnesses increasing association of women in various sectors like defence, aviation and business.

Among others State Minister for Home Shamsul Haque Tuku and State Minister of Women and Children Affairs Shirin Shamim attended the function.

Peaceful Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 1 confidence in people. We believe that actual development of a country can not be achieved without uninterrupted democracy," the premier was quoted as saying by her Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad.

Hasina made the remark when a nine-member delegation led by Dirk Niebel, German federal minister for economic cooperation and development, and Andris Piebalgs, commissioner for development cooperation of the EU, called on her at her office in the morning.

The premier said Bangladesh could not attain its desired development after over 40 years of the country's independence as democracy was interrupted by the military rulers on various occasions in the past.

She told the delegation that her government was working relentlessly for the betterment of the country's millions of down-trodden people.

"We are committed to establish Bangladesh a peaceful country through alleviating poverty," she added.

Describing the European Union as a trusted friend, the Awami League president recalled the contribution of the EU to restore democracy in the country by extending their support to hold a free, fair and credible election on December 29, 2008.

The German minister and commissioner of the EU highly acclaimed the premier for her role in different international issues especially on the climate change consequences.

BNP rejects talks

FROM PAGE 1 about to expire. Therefore, the controversial Election Commission should not take steps for electoral reforms for the next parliamentary elections. It should leave it to the upcoming election commissioner," the BNP said in the letter.

The present EC was constituted in February 2007 and its five-year tenure will expire in February next year.

The Daily Star has obtained a copy of the letter signed by BNP's acting Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir.

The EC opened the electoral reform talks with political parties on June 7 and invited the main opposition to the talks on June 13. As the BNP did not attend the talks that day, the EC said the main opposition could attend the talks any day till June 22.

In defence of boycotting the electoral talks, the BNP said the present EC has lost the people's confidence due to its "weak and biased" role in

School premises

FROM PAGE 20 council member Amir Hossain Amu inaugurated the fair a week before it officially opened to public on June 10. It is scheduled to continue until July 10.

Amu said he was not informed of the education ministry's circular against holding such fairs on the premises of educational institutions.

"Jhalakathi has a long tradition of weaving and textile production, and so I inaugurated the fair to familiarise the local producers with the current trend of business," said Amu.

Ashok Kumar Biswas, deputy commissioner of Jhalakathi, said he too had no idea about the restrictions. The fair is not affecting academic atmosphere of the school. Instead, it will benefit the school in its development work, he said.

The DC, who is president of the school managing committee, said he had permitted the fair after consulting the committee members as the town offers no other suitable and safe venue.

Mahbuba Hossain, district

Mentioning excellent bilateral relations among Bangladesh, Germany and the EU, the delegation expressed hope that the relations would be further cemented in the days to come.

Expressing her firm conviction to prevent terrorism and militancy in the country, Hasina said that her government would not allow terrorists to use a single inch of land in the country.

In this context, she said terrorists and militants were patronised in the country after 2001 election when she was attacked by the terrorists.

"I am not afraid of such attack. I will continue to work for the welfare of the people of the country," she added.

The premier also mentioned various development programmes being implemented by her government for the development of Chittagong Hill Tracts. She sought German and EU cooperation to implement the programmes.

German Ambassador to Dhaka Michael Holger, Ambassador at-large M Ziauddin, among others, were present on the occasion.

Meanwhile, a 40-member delegation led by Dirk Niebel and Andris Piebalgs called on State Minister for Environment and Forests Hasan Mahmud at his Secretariat office in the morning.

During the meeting, the minister urged the EU to extend their cooperation to repair and build embankments in coastal belt with a view to protecting the coastal people from natural calamities, reports UNB.

BCL threat

FROM PAGE 20 Azhar Ali and former president Aminul Islam drove away all except one bidder Banesa Begum from the complex premises.

The party activists then started negotiation with Banesa, who happened to be a local Awami League leader and the upazila vice-chairman, over tender submission.

As Banesa refused to comply with their request, the BCL men kept her confined in a room of the health complex for an hour, locals said.

On information, a police team from Durgapur Police Station rushed to the spot and rescued the vice-chairman.

Yesterday was the last date for dropping tenders to procure medicine and stationery supply for the health complex.

Banesa Begum told this correspondent that BCL cadres confined her and attacked her supporters in presence of law enforcers.

Contacted, BCL upazila unit president Azhar Ali denied the allegations and also declined to talk about the issue.

Anisur Rahman, upazila health officer, told newsmen that they suspended the tender process following the incident.

Ohidul Islam, officer-in-charge of the police station, told The Daily Star they brought the situation under control soon after reaching the spot but could not arrest anyone.

Prof Zaker

FROM PAGE 20 University, died of cardiac arrest at his Lalmatia residence in the city yesterday. He was 81.

He left behind his wife, two sons, two daughters, relatives and a host of well-wishers.

His namaz-e-janaza was offered in front of the DU Central Mosque after Maghrib prayers.

He was buried at the Banani Graveyard at night.

Born in 1931 in Nangalkot, Comilla, Prof Zaker Husain served as a teacher of DU zoology department since 1953.

Author of three books including Birds of Bangladesh, he was the Head of the Department of Zoology, dean of the Faculty of Biological Science and DU treasurer.

The wildlife expert also worked as editor of several journals and published more than 70 research papers.

He played a vital role in persuading the government to promulgate the Wildlife Preservation Act, 1973.

A mentor of many zoologists, birdwatchers, wildlife experts in the country, Zaker Husain paved the way for the wildlife protection and preservation activism in the country.

For his contribution, he was listed at the Global 500 Roll of Honour Laureate of the UNEP in 1990. He also received numerous national and international awards including the Independence Day Award, 1992.

DU Vice-chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique expressed shock at the death of Prof Zaker Husain and conveyed his heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved family members.

Padma Bridge

FROM PAGE 20 priority, but local and international quarters are conspiring to defer the construction.

He said confusion and uncertainty rose centring the bridge construction due to the procedural delay of WB.

"In this situation, we feel the necessity of your conversation with the World Bank," said the communications minister wrote in the letter.

The government has already signed deals of \$1.2 billion with WB, \$615 million with Asian Development Bank, \$400 million with Japan International Cooperation Agency and \$140 million with Islamic Development Bank to arrange fund for the \$2.9 billion Padma Multiple Bridge project.

The country's longest 6.15 kilometre bridge, including 3.68km land-based approach viaducts on both sides of the river, will connect 19 south-western districts with the capital.

The government has targeted to complete the work by 2015.

All she wants is punishment

FROM PAGE 1 After initial treatment at LabAid, she was taken to Sankara Nethralaya, an eye hospital in Chennai in India, on June 14. Later she was shifted to Arvind Eye Centre in Pondicherry.

Ophthalmologists there confirmed that her left eye has gone blind permanently while the retina of the other one is not responding to her brain.

"Only some miracles can bring back the vision of my daughter," her father Manzur Hossain said quoting Indian doctors.

Recalling the torture by her husband, Rumana broke down into tears.

"He assaulted me before my five-year-old daughter and left the room leaving me in a pool of blood.

"My daughter was crying. I could not see anything at that moment. My head was hit against some furniture when I tried to get out of the room with my daughter," she said.

Also a postgraduate student at the University of British Columbia in Canada, she said Sumon started torturing her within days after their marriage. But she forgave him time and again

thinking of their only daughter, Anusheh.

"Please, press for his punishment."

Asked about the allegation of a romantic relation with an Iranian man during her stay in Canada, she said: "Please don't believe such fabricated allegation. Ask those I stayed with in Dhaka and Canada. Nobody can make such allegation."

Earlier, her friends at the university in Canada and the Bangladeshi community there said the accusation of infidelity is "nonsense," and is an attempt to damage her reputation.

Rumana's lawyer Elina Khan, who was present at the press briefing, fears that one of Sumon's lawyer uncles might influence the case against Sumon.

Police arrested him on June 15.

A Dhaka court yesterday placed him on a two-day fresh remand in a case filed for an attempt to murder Rumana. He was earlier remanded for three days in two phases.

Bahauddin Faruki, sub-inspector of Detective Branch, in his remand prayer said Sumon needs to be quizzed before Rumana.

Discuss best ways

FROM PAGE 1 Environment and Forest Hasan Mahmud.

The delegates also met representatives of the civil society at the hotel.

They will hold talks with Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia on June 23 and address another press conference.

None of them gave any direct answer when asked about the current political controversy over the Caretaker government system, but said it is better for the politicians to work together for the people.

On current political situation, the German minister said "Despite problems, Bangladesh is a stable country in the region comparing with Pakistan and Afghanistan and the country has all chances to achieve the Millennium Development Goals [MDGs] by 2015 and emerge as a middle income economy by 2021."

"You can't stay at home and say no," said Niebel in an oblique reference to the main opposition, which is now boycotting parliament session.

On another question, the he said corruption is a major obstacle to development, fighting against poverty and overseas investment.

They praised the role of the civil society for development of a country and said in democracy there should be a space for expressing different views. A country could develop using the experience of the members of the civil society.

The German minister said the civil society in Bangladesh had expected more from the new government but it failed to deliver.

Niebel said "Bangladesh is internationally renowned for its vibrant NGO scene. In our meeting with civil society we discussed progress and challenges in the development of

Also yesterday, 45 academics, writers, lawyers, human rights activists and media personalities in a statement expressed concern that Rumana is being subjected to character assassination by a section of the media and some individuals on social media.

They condemned any attempt to justify the cruel attack on Rumana.

Meanwhile, DU teachers of international relations department in a press release demanded shifting of the case against Sumon to a Speedy Trial Tribunal.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid and State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Shirin Shamim Chowdhury visited Rumana at LabAid.

Nahid ensured the family members that her assaulter will be brought to justice.

CID seeks

FROM PAGE 20 the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka will hear the petition filed on the murder case today. Judge Begum Chaman Chowdhury of the Second Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court will hear the other petition today as well.

The work on the memo of evidence, chart of evidence and all other documents related to the cases are now going on in full swing, the IO said.

He said several accused are first-class officials of the government and prior approval is needed for submitting charge sheets against them.

During further investigation, 12 people including former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar and Jamaat leader Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid were arrested.

BNP leader SQ Chowdhury was also interrogated at the jail gate in this connection.

Contempt rule

FROM PAGE 20 Asim and his family members to leave the country.

The four officials are Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Hasan Mahmud Khondker, Director General of Directorate of Passport M A Mabud and Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Immigration Md Hayatun Nabi.

Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam and Justice M Moazzam Husain comprised the bench and asked the OC of immigration to appear before it on July 10 to explain his reasons behind barring Asim from going abroad.

Earlier on June 20, Asim, human rights affairs secretary of BNP chairperson filed the contempt of court petition against the government officials after he was barred at Shahjalal International Airport from leaving the country on June 19.

Advocate Khandker Mahub Hossain appeared for the petitioner.

Barrister Asim is one of the accused in a case filed for Molotov cocktail explosions on the residential compound of the chief justice on November 18 last year.

BNP takes

FROM PAGE 1 opposition on a vital issue like caretaker government and on the other, it is implementing a blueprint for amending the constitution unilaterally," said a party statement issued after the meeting.

Reading out the statement, standing committee member Nazrul Islam Khan said, "BNP has logical objections to most of the proposals okayed by the cabinet. The proposal for talks is just a trick."

Meeting sources said the committee agreed to announce next week a hartal programme in protest against the cabinet approval of proposed amendments. Khaleda Zia will fix the date for hartal in consultation with the BNP-led alliance components.

She already held a meeting with leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami, BNP's key ally, last night.

The sources also said the party will first see the verdict of a money laundering case against Khaleda's younger son Arafat Rahman scheduled to be delivered tomorrow and then announce the hartal programme.

Asked how BNP will resist the move to amend the constitution, Nazrul Islam said they will soon decide it through discussion with party leaders.

Rab seizes

FROM PAGE 20 machinery from the spot.

A team of Rab-4 along with two assistant directors of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission found the VoIP setup at the rooftop of a three-storey building, said Mohammad Nurul Amin, a senior assistant director of the elite force unit.

The building is owned by one Martha Robles, Rab said adding, her son Sumon along with some of his friends ran the business.

The Rab men were interrogating the house dwellers, Nurul Amin said.

A Rab official quoted Martha as saying she had rented the rooftop to a friend of her son one year ago but she knows nothing about the illegal business.

Realtor fined

FROM PAGE 20 The company had recently cut the Moloy Tila (hill) causing serious damages to trees and local ecology, Munir Chowdhury told The Daily Star.

According to the release, the team realised half of the monetary penalty in cash and ordered Alamgir to fill up the ditch with the rest of the amount within next five days and plant 100 more trees.

It was the first incident of punishing an offender on charge of cutting hills in Sylhet region, added the release.

Reckless hill-cutting would bring about environmental disaster in the region unless it is stopped, Munir Chowdhury told the local people and land owners present there. He sought cooperation from all quarters in combating the crime.

He mentioned a temporary permission given earlier for dressing a hill at Bolder Hajir Tilla by the environment directorate would soon be cancelled as they cut hills abusing the permission.

The enforcement team later spotted massive hill-cutting incidents at places in Antgaon and Jonaki Baluchar areas and asked officials including the upazila nirbahi officer to identify the offenders and file a report by today.

Md Zillur Rahman, DoE deputy director, and Enamul Habib, Sadar upazila nirbahi officer were present during the drive.

5.1 aftershock rocks N Zealand's Christchurch

AFP, Wellington

A 5.1-magnitude aftershock rattled New Zealand's Christchurch yesterday, geologists said, forcing the evacuation of the city's airport and reportedly cutting power in some areas of the city.

The quake struck at 22:34 at a depth of 10 kilometres, seven kilometres south west of Christchurch, the US Geological Survey said.

Budget discussion

FROM PAGE 1 commented that it was very unfortunate that eighty percent of the total members of the cabinet were absent during yesterday's budget discussion after the Maghrib prayers.

Earlier on Monday, a number of ruling Awami League lawmakers also raised the issue and expressed resentment saying it was useless for them to take part in the budget discussion when the minister concerned was absent.

Taking floor on a point of order, AL senior lawmaker Suranjit Sengupta yesterday raised the issue.

"In spite of many important tasks, the prime minister remains in parliament hours after hours. But what the ministers are doing keeping them absent from the important session?" Suranjit said.

"I am very serious about it and shocked as well," added Suranjit amid thumping of

desks by other lawmakers.

"If they [ministers] think they will remain as ministers in the cabinet, please forgive us then," he went on saying.

Extending full support to Suranjit, Speaker Abdul Hamid said it was imperative that all ministers should be present in the House while it is in operation.

"Most of the time 40 to 60 percent ministers remain present in the House. But today [yesterday] I see that 80 percent of them are absent.

"I think it is very important for the ministers to be present in parliament, especially during the discussion on budget," Hamid added.

Defending the ministers' absence in the House proceedings, Chief Whip of the treasury bench Abdus Shahid and Whip ASM Firoz said the ministers concerned listened to the lawmakers' speech from their office in parliament.

However, both of them later said it is right that ministers should be present and listen to the lawmakers on budget discussion.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith who entered within 10 minutes of the discussion on the issue later said he always remains present in parliament and takes notes what the lawmakers say during the budget discussion.

"Sometimes I might be late to attend the proceedings but I myself along with officials of my ministry regularly listen to what the lawmakers speak on the proposed budget," Muhith said.

In reply, Abdul Hamid said presence of the ministers adds beauty to the House.

"Besides, lawmakers feel satisfied when they see ministers in the House during their discussion on budget," Hamid observed.