

No plan to propose

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government system. They had been asking the opposition to return to the Sangsad and place their ideas on how the next general elections could be held.

"We have been eagerly waiting for the moment when the opposition will turn up in the House and submit an alternative proposal regarding the next parliamentary polls," ruling Awami League General Secretary Syed Ashraf Islam said yesterday after placing wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu in Dhanmondi to mark the leader's 92nd birth anniversary.

However, BNP leader Moudud Ahmed said, "We are not going to place any formula or proposal in parliament on an interim government. Rather, we will raise our voice to press home the demand for a restoration of the caretaker government system, which was scrapped unilaterally by the government."

The Supreme Court in May last year delivered a verdict to the effect that the caretaker government system was illegal but it did say that two more general elections could be held under the system for the sake of

public safety. The parliament, devoid of opposition members, abolished the system a month later by amending the constitution.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Moudud, a member of the BNP national standing committee, also said the opposition would not accept any alternative to this demand. He was hinting at some government policymakers recently making statements regarding the formation of an interim government headed by the incumbent prime minister.

Before the BNP's grand rally on March 12, it was widely assumed that the BNP chief would unveil a model for a non-partisan caretaker government at the rally. But the opposition leader did not do so. She rather served a 90-day ultimatum on the government for a restoration of the caretaker government system.

Moudud said Khaleda today or in the next few days would speak in the House explaining the party's stance on the caretaker government issue and the government's "failure" to keep its electoral promises.

On their return to the

House, the opposition MPs will also speak on some issues, particularly price hike of essentials, law and order, stock market crash, border killings and the Tipaimukh dam.

"We are ready to join the House [today] and speak on various important issues," Andaleeb Rahman Partha, chief of Bangladesh Jatiya Party, a component of the BNP-led four party alliance, told The Daily Star.

The opposition MPs could have stayed away from parliamentary proceedings until the current session ended as they are yet to face the risk of losing their membership. It is certain that the Sangsad's current session would not have 22 more sittings to put their membership in jeopardy.

But the situation is different for Khaleda Zia. She has been absent from House proceedings for 83 consecutive sittings and the current session may have seven more sittings which could put her membership at stake.

LGRD Minister Syed Ashraf Islam yesterday alleged that the opposition MPs were returning to the House to keep their remunerations and allowances

flowing in. The opposition MPs have been enjoying their remunerations and other facilities without attending parliament sessions. If they do not join parliament now, they will not receive their remunerations, he said.

Moudud Ahmed said the opposition would return to the House to protest the "government's misrule" and speak for the people. "We have been speaking in the people's interest on the streets. Now we will speak for them in the House," he claimed.

The BNP parliamentary party is scheduled to sit at 4:00pm today to discuss the opposition's return to the House, which resumes its sitting an hour later.

The BNP high command has already asked party deputies to prepare to launch a blistering attack on the government in parliament over what it called the government's failure to run the country.

"We are prepared to raise our voice to protest the government's poor performance in running the country in the last three years," BNP MP Nazrul Islam Manju told The Daily Star yesterday.

Foul play alleged in tender

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of these clarifications should have been considered under the rejection clause, well-placed PDB sources said..

At the same time, the tender committee gave no such scope to any other co-bidders and disqualified their bids under the rejection clause. These bidders' proposals lacked authenticated certificates just like Marubeni's, the sources said.

The PDB board approved late last month the committee's recommendation to award the job to Marubeni and the power ministry okayed the board's decision.

Last week, the PDB opened the price offer of Marubeni that proposed to bring finances from Japan Bank of International Cooperation (JBIC).

Admitting that Marubeni's bid papers lacked authenticated certificate, PDB Chairman Alamgir Kabir told The Daily Star that the tender evaluation committee enjoys the power to take subjective decisions independently, and the board can only question the rationality of such decisions.

He went on, "The committee members said they have cross-checked the certificate (that lacked authentication) from Marubeni's website. They convinced the board about their decision and we forwarded it to the power ministry."

The committee should have cross-checked the certificates of the Chinese bidders from their websites, Alamgir said.

An official noted that by choosing just one Japanese bidder, the PDB is left with just one option -- to consider Marubeni's financial proposal that includes the financier's terms for interest and loan repayment period.

Defending the PDB evaluation, another source said Marubeni's offer was \$ 342 million with per kilowatt power generation cost being \$856. Compared to any other recent tender prices received by the PDB, this was very low. All other power tenders sought the lowest per kilowatt price of over \$900.

"Marubeni has brought in finances from the JBIC, which charges the lowest interest rate since it is a non-

commercial state bank. But the Chinese companies have brought in finances from commercial banks," he added.

Another source however said two Chinese companies had proposed lending from two state banks -- State Bank of China and China Development Bank -- which also charge interest rates as low as that by JBIC. A source close to a Chinese bidder said its price offer was less than \$300 million.

A PDB official mentioned that by putting their bid shortcomings under the rejection clause, no Chinese company was given the scope to clarify those, but Marubeni was given the scope to clarify issues that fell under the same clause.

For instance, in its bid proposal Marubeni stated that it wanted to discuss liquidated damage option of the PDB. But this is a non-negotiable issue. It also mentioned the power plant's partial heat rate as a reference. But the bid rules demanded Marubeni "guarantees" the heat rate. The heat rate directly influences the project's actual cost.

In another issue, Marubeni proposed to provide gas booster and compressor "equivalent" to that manufactured by Atlas Copco of US or German origin or Man Turbo of German origin. The tender specially required these brands.

Marubeni also proposed to develop this plant by using its newly developed but unproven power generator of MHI 701F4. But it provided the certificate for MHI 701F, which is a proven model of the same series. The tender terms demand a proven model.

This tender controversy is similar to last year's tender for a 450 MW power project in Haripur, floated by the Electricity Generation Company of Bangladesh (EGCB). The EGCB had similarly disqualified a Japanese bidder and qualified only Marubeni that proposed to use its unproven 701F4 generator.

Contacted by The Daily Star back then, the EGCB vaguely defended its selection by saying it would not accept anything unproven. But in reality, it had accepted the same technology.

Press Council

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council served notice on the Daily Sun editor and publisher on March 12 and asked him to appear before the judicial committee of the council on April 11 around 11:00am.

The press council in its notice also directed the authorities of the English daily not to run any news items on the argued matters until the case is disposed of.

On January 12, Daily Sun on its last page ran a report under the headline "Vested quarters active once again" and on January 16, it published another item on its

front page headlined "Whereabouts of cartoonist Arif: Prothom Alo didn't stand by me".

According to the case statement, the Daily Sun in those two news items published various false and derogatory information, including blasphemy, minus-two formula, 1/11, grenade attack and militancy, against Prothom Alo and its editor.

Plaintiff Matiur Rahman alleged that the opponent is using the newspaper as a tool for instigating criminal activities and religious

extremism and that the complainant had been made a victim of "nasty information-terrorism" through imaginary and derogatory allegations.

It has also been mentioned in the case that the opponent with ill-motive and to materialise "disgraceful interests" was trying to implicate the complainant in false cases.

Matiur Rahman further mentioned that the Daily Sun, Bangla dailies Kaler Kantha and Bangladesh Protidin and online news portal banglanews24.com --

all owned by East West Media Group -- are involved in yellow journalism and it has become their habit to publish false and fabricated reports against the complainant and Prothom Alo without any reason.

The plaintiff sought exemplary punishment to the accused for publishing false and slanderous news violating the ethics of journalism.

Lawyers Khairul Islam, Prashanta Kumar Karmakar and Aftab Uddin Siddique placed the case in the press council on behalf of the Prothom Alo editor.

Expressway hamstrung

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Social Impact Assessment, ready a construction yard and arrange funds for the project while the government was to make space for the expressway, relocate the utility service networks and the affected people.

Prof Shamsul Hoque, a member of Dhaka Elevated Expressway's expert team, said the project lost momentum and both parties were lagging behind schedule.

Ital-Thai intended to seek concessionary loan from International Finance Corporation of the World Bank, which requires the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment report as loan precondition. Ital-Thai failed to get the assessment done in time.

It attempted to get the job done by an organisation which turned out to be controversial. Ital-Thai had to look for a new firm, wasting precious time.

In last June, it finally

employed Halcrow and a team of Buet for the assessment and the rehabilitation action plan. Prof Mujibur Rahman, leader of the Buet team, said they would need two more months to file the report.

Interested financial institutions too would require around six months to assess the study report and release the fund. This indicates that Ital-Thai would not be able to start work before July this year, when the extended time expires.

It has not been able to find a construction yard yet either, said Prof Shamsul.

The first attempt to employ an independent engineer firm to help finalise the detailed design failed and in a second bid Mott McDonald was appointed as the independent engineer firm around two months ago.

Even though Bangladesh Bridge Authority officials said they have signed a

contract with the railway for its land, they were yet to finish acquisition of privately-owned land so that one-third of the land for the first segment of the project (from the airport to Tejgaon) could be handed over to Ital-Thai.

Jasimuddin, land acquisition officer of Dhaka district administration, said they require two months to finish distribution of compensation to the affected people.

The government still needs to acquire 16 acres of private land out of total 96 acres in the nine-kilometre first segment. Of the remaining land, 10 acres belong to the Cantonment Board, four to Roads and Highways Department and the rest to Bangladesh Railway, the handover of which requires separate arrangements.

Land price would be calculated on the basis of the average of all recorded land prices in the locality

during 2011. The affected land owners would also get an additional 50 percent of the estimated price and cost of structures on their land.

The authorities have to remove a total of 258 structures including one-storey to seven-storey buildings, under-construction buildings, semi-concrete and tin-roofed structures on the 96 acres of land. There were 16 five-story and eight six-story buildings there.

The project is to be completed within 42 months, according to the contract. Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, head of the project's technical committee, said it seemed to him that it was a low-priority project in the present situation.

The Daily Star contacted Ital-Thai for its comments and the company said it would come up with an explanation. The company did not contact the paper later on.

Brain wanes with eyesight

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published in the journal Neurology, linked damage to the retina with declining brain function.

They believe issues with the blood supply may be damaging both the eye and the brain.

Alzheimer's Research UK said the study showed the importance of a healthy heart.

The eye condition the researchers were looking at was retinopathy, which is common in patients with Type 2 diabetes or high blood pressure. Damage to the retina can eventually lead to blindness.

Scientists followed 511 women, who were 65 or older, for a decade. Some 39 were diagnosed with retinopathy.

Those with the eye condition tended to have lower scores in tests of brain function, including memory and abstract reasoning exams.

Brain scans also showed up more areas of damaged brain tissue, ischemic lesions, in those with retinopathy.

Dr Mary Haan, from the University of California, San Francisco, said, "Problems with the tiny blood vessels in the eye may be a sign that there are also problems with the blood vessels in the brain

that can lead to cognitive problems.

"This could be very useful if simple eye screening could give us an early indication that people might be at risk of problems with their brain health and functioning."

There were only a small number of patients with retinopathy in the study. Much larger studies would be needed to see if the findings could be used as a clinical test for declining brain function.

While there was no suggestion of dementia in the patients, brain decline can be an early sign of the disease.

Dr Simon Ridley, head of

research at Alzheimer's Research UK, said, "Accurate early detection of the cognitive decline that can be associated with dementia could unlock our ability to treat it."

"This small study offers clues for another possible route doctors could consider when monitoring for the signs of cognitive decline."

"The study adds to mounting evidence linking vascular health to cognitive decline, and underlines the importance of looking after our hearts. It will be useful to see whether the people in this study went on to develop dementia."



Vacancy Announcement

The Hygiene Sanitation and Water Supply (HYSAWA) is an autonomous financial institution under the Companies Act, 1994. It has been financing eligible and applying Local Government Institutions to implement Hygiene, Sanitation and Water Supply projects. The HYSAWA announces vacancies for the following positions:

1. Director Programme
2. Audit and Compliance Adviser
3. Procurement Specialist
4. Finance Officer
5. Accounts Officer
6. Programme Officer
7. Monitoring Officer
8. Hydro-geologist
9. Sociologist
10. Administrative Assistant
11. Consultant (Training Specialist)
12. Consultant (M&E Specialist)
13. Consultant (Finance Monitoring)
14. Consultant (Programmer, PHP-MySQL)
15. Consultant (Diploma Engineer)

Serial numbers 1 to 10 are regular positions renewable on an annual basis subject to satisfactory performance and availability of fund. Consultant positions will be for six to twelve months.

For details of the job descriptions and instructions to apply, please visit our website: <http://www.hysawa.org/jobs>. Application should reach us no later than **01 April 2012**.

Qualified female candidates are encouraged to apply.
Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.

INVITATION of TENDERS FOR

Design & Construction of Jetty on Turn-key basis

Sealed Tenders are hereby invited from reputed contractors for design & construction of jetty in the premises of Omera Petroleum Limited(OPL) located in Mongla,Bagerhat, under the following terms and conditions:

01. Invitation for Tender Ref. & Date	:	OPL-LPG-12/01-JETTY, 18/03/2012
02. Description of Works	:	Design & Construction of Jetty on turn-key basis in the existing site of Omera Petroleum Limited, Mongla,Bagerhat.
03. Budget and Source of Funds	:	Own source of the company.
04. Eligibility of Tenderer	:	The reputed contractor should possess experience of minimum ten (10) years in the relevant field. The prospective tenderer shall submit Completion Certificates of at least one (1) similar type of contract completed during the last ten (10) years with any Government sector, Autonomous Body, Corporation or Private Sector Organization. Prospective Tenderer must have Trade Licence, VAT Registration, and TIN etc.
05. Tender Security	:	TK. 10,00,000 (Taka Ten Lakh Only) in form of Bank Guarantee/Pay Order.
06. Price of Tender Document	:	TK. 2,000 (Taka Two Thousand Only) per set by pay order only payable to MJL Bangladesh Limited (non-refundable)
07. Availability of Tender Document	:	From 18/03/2012 to 18/04/2012 during office hours.
08. Location of Tender Selling & Submission	:	Mobil House, CWS (C) 9, Gulshan 1, Dhaka 1212.
09. Closing Time & Date of Tender	:	11:00 AM on 18/04/2012.
10. Special Instruction	:	OPL reserves the right to accept or reject in part or whole of any or all Tenders.

Note: Receiving of tender for any unavoidable reason or circumstance cannot be held on stipulated date, the same shall be held in the next working day at the same time.

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