

Speaker

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legislature and the judiciary surfaced after a High Court bench and some Awami League-led ruling alliance lawmakers traded remarks against one another on June 5.

The bench led by Justice A H M Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik on the day said the speaker had provoked people against the apex court by making comments on its directive on a piece of Supreme Court land, and that "the act amounted to sedition".

The same day, several lawmakers, including Suranjit Sengupta, Tofail Ahmed, Sheikh Fazul Karim Selim and Rashed Khan Menon, said in parliament that Justice Manik had violated the constitution by making "derogatory remarks" about the speaker.

They also demanded that the president ask the chief justice to constitute a Supreme Judicial Council for removing Manik from office.

After the inauguration of a workshop on "Children Act: Reforms of Children Justice System" at BRAC Centre Inn, the law minister yesterday said the executive, the legislature and the judiciary - the three supreme constitutional organs of the state - would discharge their functions "within their jurisdictions" and with "mutual respect".

Asked about a lawyer's request to the president to remove Justice Manik through the formation of Supreme Judicial Council on different allegations, Shafique said such a request

'Expert fix'

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administration ministry and the prime minister's public administration affairs adviser will discuss with all concerned in the bureaucracy and put the proposed law on official website to elicit public opinion on it.

After reviewing public opinion, the proposed law will be sent to a secretary-level committee, and then to the prime minister for approval. If the premier gives the go-ahead, it will be placed before the cabinet, and finally in parliament to make it a law.

When enacted, the new law would facilitate use of expertise of local experts in different ministries and divisions, infusing dynamism in the civil administration.

Meanwhile, the move appears to have created dissatisfaction among senior officials in the administration. It would greatly limit their scope of going to top positions, they fear.

Talking to The Daily Star on condition of anonymity, some of the officials also said this move would encourage politicisation of the bureaucracy since the "experts" to be appointed in top positions would be picked up on political consideration.

Contacted, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, who is considered a top policymaker of the government, said the move to appoint experts was based on the needs of time. Many countries engage their experts in government work

but this practice has been absent in Bangladesh, she added.

Replying to a question, the minister ruled out politicisation of the appointment of experts in bureaucracy, saying those who want to help the government with their expertise would be considered for appointment, and not those who would sabotage the government step.

Matia said, "There will be more discussions on the proposed law and then a final decision will be taken."

The government now has to appoint a number of consultants from home and abroad in many sectors at a huge cost, she said. "If we appoint our local experts, we can gradually reduce dependence on consultancy. But to do so, we need to give the experts authority, and for this the government is planning to appoint them as secretary."

Referring to oil and gas sectors, the minister said there are many local experts in these sectors, who give suggestions to the government. But their suggestions are overlooked many a time since they do not have any authority to implement those.

She went on, "If we can give them [experts] responsibilities, why can't we give them authority?"

Asked about dissatisfaction among senior bureaucrats, Matia said, they would also understand the needs for which the government wanted to appoint experts.

BNP mulls

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top leaders.

The leaders including party's acting secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir are now behind bars in an arson case.

Khaleda from March 12 rally in Dhaka had issued a 90-day ultimatum to the government to restore the caretaker government system in the constitution.

The ultimatum expires today.

The BNP-led 18-party alliance is scheduled to announce its next course of agitation programme from tomorrow's rally as the government has not responded to the ultimatum.

Earlier in the day, the main opposition BNP declared that it would hold tomorrow's rally in front of its Nayapaltan central office if the government does not permit BNP to organise the programme in any of the three proposed venues.

The BNP has mentioned Manik Mia Avenue, Paltan Maidan, and the road in front of its Nayapaltan office as the probable venues for the rally.

"We are yet to obtain permission for the venue. A BNP delegation today [Saturday] went to see the Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner in this regard, but he kept the leaders waiting for around two hours and finally did not meet them saying that he was busy," BNP standing committee member Tariqul Islam told at a press briefing at the Nayapaltan office.

The BNP delegation was led by Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abidin Farroque.

Tariqul termed "insolent" the government's attitude regarding issuance of permission for the rally.

"This will not bring good results as far as the democracy is concerned and the government will have to take the responsibility if any untoward incident occurs [centring on the rally]," warned the BNP leader.

He said preparations for the rally were almost complete and about 30 percent of their leaders and activists have already arrived in the capital.

JS discussion

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placed the budget for the next FY and the revised budget for the current financial year.

All the prevailing signs suggest parliament will pass three supplementary budgets in a row since 2009 in the absence of BNP-led opposition. They are also likely to boycott the discussion on proposed national budget.

The House may set a new record of passing four national budgets in a row without participation of main opposition MPs.

Asked whether it would set a bad precedent in the parliamentary history, Chief Whip Abdus Shahid said it is not mandatory for the opposition lawmakers to join the process of passing the budget.

He however said he would communicate with Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abidin Farroque urging them to return to parliament.

Libya tribe clashes with armed forces in south

AFP, Tripoli

New fighting broke out yesterday in southern Libya between members of the Toubou minority and government forces, the two sides said, with unconfirmed reports that at least five people were killed.

Tribal chief Issa Abdelmajid said the Toubou quarter of the town of Kufra came under shelling at 3:00am by the Libya Shield Brigade, former rebels under government control sent to quell previous ethnic fighting.

Abdelmajid said at least five of his people were killed and 10 wounded, and that a number of houses in the quarter had been burned.

Govt down in debt

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should be more careful to keep the country out of this vicious circle, said the former adviser.

The Centre for Policy Dialogue in its budget analysis found that more than 43 percent of total incremental revenue will be spent on interest payments.

"It [interest payments] is the outcome of the government's bank-based borrowing," said CPD distinguished fellow Debapriya Bhattacharya.

Allocation for interest payments is estimated to rise by 17.7 percent to Tk 23,302 crore in the coming fiscal year from Tk 19,796 crore in the outgoing year. And the interests on borrowing from domestic market will be Tk 21,604 crore in the coming year.

'V' is for women

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ministry and fellow Everest conquerors Nishat Majumder and MA Mohit greeted her at the airport.

She launched her Everest expedition on March 26 under the campaign "Bangladesh on Seven Summits."

She scaled the mountain on May 26 to become only the second Bangladeshi woman to achieve the accomplishment.

From the airport, she went to Rayerbazar killing field to pay tributes to the martyred intellectuals.

"People outside the country don't know about the progress our women have made over the last 41 years. Through my expedition, I want to spread the message of success of Bangladeshi women," she asserted.

Wasfia observed that although the Bangladeshi women had made significant contribution to liberate the country in 1971, they are not properly recognised. She demanded proper recognition for them.

"What can be of more

pride than the conquest of Everest by two Bangladeshi women in a span of a week?" she questioned.

She told about the hazards en route to the summit. "On my way down Everest, I faced the most dreadful moments when I slipped on a large iceberg. More such dangers followed and I was very close to death many a times.... Though I sometimes felt I might die, I never thought to give up."

"When I reached the summit, the sun was rising. The natural beauty of that moment cannot be depicted in words and photographs," she noted.

Asked about her future plan, the mountaineer said she will provide training to women on outdoor sports under Bangladesh on Seven Summits foundation. "I think the 21st century will be the century for women and peace."

Regarding the role of young generation to build a prosperous country, she said the youth should draw inspiration from the success and work hard with maximum devotion in their respective fields.

Expressing his feelings to The Daily Star, Wasfia's father Nazmee J Chowdhury said, "I am relieved to see my daughter after a long time. I am proud of her and I wish she will complete her seven summit mission successfully."

Wasfia in July last year had started her expedition to climb the highest peaks of the seven continents under the "Bangladesh on Seven Summits" campaign.

On October 2 last year, she reached the highest peak of Africa, Uhuru peak of Mt Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. She scaled the peak of Mount Aconcagua in Argentina on December 16 last year.

On May 19, Nishat Majumder became the first Bangladeshi woman to reach the summit of Everest. Fellow climber MA Mohit has scaled the mountain twice.

Musa Ibrahim was the first Bangladeshi to make successful ascent of Everest on May 23, 2010.

burden of interest payments by removing bottlenecks in getting foreign funds from development partners. Donors and multilateral lending agencies have already committed more than \$12 billion to Bangladesh, he said.

"We have the opportunity. So, we should try to use it."

Zahid said interest payment as percentage of Bangladesh's GDP remains low compared to many other countries, and it is yet to reach an alarming level.

The government must be prepared to face unexpected shocks without cutting expenditures in other sectors, particularly health, education, safety nets and other social sectors, said the economist.

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Communal riot

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AFP said, according to government officials, a second wave of violence swept through remote villages early yesterday, as more Rakhine homes were torched, forcing villagers to flee to temporary shelters in Maungdaw town.

Security forces flooded western Myanmar yesterday to prevent further outbreaks of sectarian violence between Buddhists and Muslims which have left at least seven dead, according to state media.

Two government officials said armed Rohingya had burned Rakhine villages in the early hours of yesterday.

"They came from the neighbouring country by boats," one of the officials told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity, hinting at Bangladesh.

Talking to The Daily Star, BGB chief Maj Gen Anwar Hossain rejected the allegation of the Myanmar official outright.

Myanmar, which considers the Rohingya as foreigners and not one of the nation's ethnic groups, has an estimated 750,000 Rohingya, living mainly in Rakhine.

No smoking

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view to preventing tobacco-related ailments.

"The decision takes effect in the capital today [Saturday]. In phases, we will implement it in the divisional and district headquarters," Kamar Uddin Ahmed, president of the owners' association, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We'll set our own punitive measures if anybody violates the decision," he added.

The association came up with the declaration at a seminar at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Faruk Khan, who attended the programme as chief guest, said a circular would be issued within a month designating all restaurants as public places and non-smoking areas.

Leaders of the association said there were around 55,000 restaurants in the country, of which, over 7,000 were in Dhaka.

The move comes as the government has delayed defining restaurants as smoke-free areas.

Enacted in 2005, the Tobacco Control Act bans smoking in public places. Surprisingly, it does not recognise restaurants as public places.

According to Dhaka Ahsania Mission, around 28 percent of people are affected by health hazards due to smoking in restaurants.

One and only

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BR, has been working in the BR's West Zone for 19 years.

Tuni shared her experiences with The Daily Star "Passengers often stare at me when I demand ticket from them, as they cannot believe a female is examining tickets in train compartments crowded with male passengers."

"Being the first and lone TTE, I feel proud working in the railway. I do my duties either in days or nights. Though I face little problems with passengers traveling without tickets, I did not face any big problem on duty," she said.

"Some passengers hit back at me when I demand ticket from them which or what ticket?" said Tuni.

"But I can handle those easily," she said.

She throws herself in the crowded compartments of trains to identify ticket-less travelers and slap fines on them.

"It seems that the people in the country are not used to women ticket examiners," said Tuni, who hails from Parbotipur village of Fulbari Upazila in Dinajur district.

Tuni, 52, also a mother of two sons, joined Bangladesh Railway as a ticket collector in 1983. However, she had to strive to become a TTE. Three years ago in 2009, she realized her dream by passing various departmental examinations.

After graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree from Parbotipur Degree College, she first joined Ishwardi Girls High School as an assistant teacher and worked there for about four years. Later she joined the BR at the Kamalapur Railway Station in Dhaka.

"I am motivated by the fact that people have realized that women in no way less than the male folks", she said, adding that the BR needs more women TTEs to maintain the balance as it becomes awkward for the male officers to handle women passengers.

Tuni, who has been an inspiration for many young girls, said, "There is nothing that a woman cannot do. One needs to step out to know the world and prove their existence."

Sultana Begum, a female passenger and a resident of Aditmari Upazila in the Lalmonirhat district, said, "If I get the opportunity to work in the railway, certainly I will take it. I get the inspiration from the TTE Tuni."

"The TTE has set a great example before us", she said.

Another passenger, Morshed Ali, a resident of

Patgram Upazila, said, "The female TTE always behaves very politely during examining tickets of the passengers".

Sazzad Hossain, assistant superintendent for traffic at BR's Lalmonirhat division proudly declares, "Nargis Parvin Tuni is our honest and sincere officer."

"She collects more revenue than any of our male ticket examiners by slapping fines on the people who travel by train without tickets."

"Regular passengers know her well. She encourages the passengers for not traveling without tickets", he added.

Bush

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of Americans have a positive view of Bush's predecessor, former President Bill Clinton.

According to the poll, released Thursday morning, 43 percent of people questioned had a favorable opinion of Bush, with 54 percent saying they had an unfavorable view of the former president. Bush's 43 percent favorable rating is the same as it was in 2010 in CNN polling, but is up from his mid-30's favorable rating during 2009, his first year out of the White House.

Former President Jimmy Carter, the one-term Democratic president who was elected in 1976 and defeated in 1980, is viewed favorably by 54 percent of the public, with just three in ten seeing him in a negative light.

Bush's father, George HW Bush, gets a 59 percent rating, with 34 percent saying they have an unfavorable view of the first President Bush, who was elected to the White House in 1988.

Bush was defeated in his bid for a second term by Bill Clinton, who has a 66 percent favorable rating in the poll. Only 31 percent say they hold an unfavorable rating of Clinton. The former two-term Democratic president's favorable rating bottomed out in CNN polling at 51 percent in June of 2008, after Clinton took a very active role in advocating for his wife, then Sen Hillary Clinton of New York, in her historic battle with Sen Barack Obama for the Democratic presidential nomination.

The CNN poll was conducted by ORC International, with 1,009 adult Americans questioned by telephone from May 29-31. The survey's overall sampling error is plus or minus three percentage

One lawmaker

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knowing the fact," Chunnu told this correspondent over the phone yesterday.

Chunnu and two other lawmakers Fazlul Azim and Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim came down hard on Abdullah Abu Sayeed during a parliament session on June 3.

Citing a news report, they alleged Prof Sayeed had told a TIB programme on June 2 that lawmakers and ministers act like "thieves and robbers".

Ali Ashraf, an Awami League lawmaker who was presiding over the sitting, demanded that Sayeed offer an unconditional apology in the House.

The Daily Star has learned what the noted litterateur had actually said at the event of Transparency International Bangladesh.

It is not corruption when a thief steals, but when a man who has undertaken to follow ethics, rule and the law indulges in stealing then it becomes corruption, Prof Sayeed said.

As an example, he said

when a minister or a lawmaker who has taken oath to act in a fair and ethical manner fails to do so, it is corruption.

Abdullah Abu Syeed, founder of Bishwa Sahitya Kendra, is widely respected for the book reading programme he started in 1980 for students of class VI to XII.

Contacted yesterday, he said that he had no complaint or feeling of sorrow for what a section of MPs had said about him in parliament.

"But I felt very happy when the lawmaker phoned me and said he was sorry for his aggressive speech on me. It's very positive that at least he [the JP MP] could realise the fact and felt sorry for this."

Talking to this correspondent, Chunnu said they all had attacked Prof Sayeed on the basis of a newspaper report which was later found to be false and it was a mistake on their part.

"Prof Sayeed sent the House a recorded copy of his

speech delivered at the TIB programme and it's now clear that he did not say anything indecent."

However, neither independent lawmaker Fazlul Azim nor ALMP Sheikh Selim has expressed regret or anything like that so far.

Baby girl

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when the double murder took place.

Sadia's uncle Bachchu discovered the bodies around 3:30pm.

Aminul Islam, deputy commissioner (south) of Sylhet Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star that the motive behind the murders was not yet clear to them since the killer(s) had taken nothing from the house.

Officer-in-Charge Enamul Monwar of Shahporan Police Station said Momena's body bore some injury marks, but there were no such marks on Sadia's.

He said the bodies had been sent to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Starts a sad story

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Mohammadpur, said the baby had been admitted to the intensive care unit as he had been born premature. He said the baby died at 2:00am on Thursday.

He said the total bill for the treatment was Tk 42,000 but Tk 15,000 was paid in advance during admission. He said the baby's father never showed up after leaving the hospital on Thursday to get the rest of the money.

"Even though we contacted him over the phone several times he did not return. Later, we assured him that he wouldn't have to pay the bill. Even then he did not show up and we handed the body over to police," he added.

Police handed over the body to Anjuman Mufidul Islam on Saturday night. Amir Hossain, Sub-

Inspector of Mohammadpur Police Station, told The Daily Star, "We contacted Saiful [who hails from Digda of Kapashia upazila in Gazipur] and asked him to take the body. Since he did not turn up we handed over the body to Anjuman Mufidul Islam."

Rokeya told The Daily Star that she and her husband had paid for medicine worth Tk 10,000. "After the death of my baby, the hospital authorities demanded Tk 42,000. But we requested them to give us the baby without taking the money as we were not able to oblige them. But they didn't do so, which forced us to leave our baby at the hospital," she added.

"We failed to bring our baby's body just for money," she added.

"We did not go to the hospital to take the body

as we feared the hospital authorities would detain us for not paying the bill," Rokeya told The Daily Star.

She said she had given birth to two girls before and none of them had survived.

Gunmen kill 4 cops in Pakistan

AFP, Quetta

Gunmen yesterday killed four policemen in a drive-by shooting on the outskirts of Pakistan's troubled southwestern city of Quetta, police said.

The shooting comes two days after 15 people were killed by a bomb explosion outside the gates of the Sunni Muslim seminary in the city.

Libya to postpone June election

AFP, Tripoli

Elections in Libya for a constituent assembly, originally set to be held by June 19, are to be postponed for logistical reasons, electoral commission members said yesterday.

One commission member, on condition of anonymity, said the postponement until July or later had been decided mainly to allow time for appeals from candidates who had been ruled out of the contest.

"Several dates have been proposed, but most discussions are pointing to July 10," the official said.

The chairman of the electoral commission, questioned by AFP, would say only that "an announcement will be made tomorrow (Sunday) at a news conference."

Another member of the electoral commission said the postponement had been decided in consultation with UN officials working with the commission who had "proposed a date during the first week in July."

Rumours have abounded in the Libyan capital that the constituent assembly election will be put off, despite the authorities insisting it will go ahead on time, despite no actual polling day being announced.

More than 2.7 million Libyans, or about 80 percent of eligible voters, have registered to participate in what marks the first national poll after four decades of dictatorship under Moamer Kadhafi, toppled last year.

Iran publicly hangs five drug smugglers

AFP, Tehran

Iran has publicly hanged five men convicted of drug trafficking in the southern city of Shiraz, the governmental newspaper IRAN reported yesterday.

The report said the men sent to the gallows on Thursday were convicted of smuggling different amounts of narcotics and identified them as Abbas Z, Aref A, Abolqasem A, Farhang N, Ali Akbar M.

Iran is one of the world's main practitioners of capital punishment, along with China, Saudi Arabia and the United States.

London-based Amnesty International said in its annual review of death sentences and executions worldwide published in March that Iran executed at least 360 people in 2011, three-quarters of them for drugs offences, up from at least 252 in 2010.

Adultery, murder, rape, drug trafficking, apostasy and armed robbery are all punishable by death under the Iran's Islamic sharia law since the country's 1979 Islamic revolution.

Iran says the death penalty is essential to maintain law and order, and that it is applied only after exhaustive judicial proceedings.

Visit brief

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Officials said Prince Talal was scheduled to arrive at 11:00am. He would be received by State Minister for Power and Energy Brig (ret'd) Enamul Haq.

He will meet Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel, where the premier will confer on him "Bangladesh Friendship Medal" and host a lunch for him.

The prince will also call on President Zillur Rahman at the Bangabhaban.

A nephew of king Abdullah, prince Talal has amassed a fortune through investments in real estate and the stock market.