

President gives assent to 13 bills

BSS, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman yesterday gave assent to 13 bills, including The Disaster Management Bill, 2012 to make them law.

All the 13 bills were passed in the recently prorogued 14th session of the 9th parliament, said a handout.

Other bills are Jagannath University (Amendment) Bill, 2012, Comilla University (Amendment) Bill, 2012, Jatiya Kobi Kazi Nazrul Islam University (Amendment) Bill, 2012, Power of Attorney Bill, 2012, Code of Civil Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2012, Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2012, Members of the Bangladesh Public Service Commission (Terms and Conditions of Service) (Amendment) Bill, 2012, Vested Property Return (Second Amendment) Bill, 2012, Hindu Marriage Registration Bill, 2012, Registration (Amendment) Bill, 2012, Grameen Bank (Amendment) Bill, 2012 and International Crimes (Tribunals) (Second Amendment) Bill, 2012.

Include Pritilata's life in textbooks

Binod Bihari urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Anti-colonial revolutionary Binod Bihari Chowdhury yesterday urged the government to include biography of Pritilata Waddadar and other revolutionaries in textbooks so that the next generation can learn the history of the nation's struggles.

He was addressing a memorial programme, in observance of Pritilata's 80th death anniversary yesterday, styled "Struggle of Pritilata in movement against British colonial rule and present perspective" at Studio Theatre in Chittagong.

Committee to Observe 80th Death Anniversary of Pritilata arranged the programme to commemorate Pritilata, the first woman who embraced martyrdom for the country's freedom from British colonial rule.

"Women are being neglected in our history as our society is patriarchal," said Binod Bihari. He called upon all progressive and conscious people to create a society free of discriminations and exploitations.

Hossain Kabir, dean of Chittagong University's social science faculty, Anwara Alam, principal of Agrabad Mohila College, among others, spoke at the programme.

To mark the day, discussions and exhibitions based on Pritilata's life were held at Dr Khastagir School, where she studied, and at Aparnachara Balika Uchcha Bidyalay, where Pritilata was the headmistress.

Chittagong University authorities also arranged a discussion in the auditorium of Pritilata Hall.

At the programme, hall provost Dr Mahbul Hoque announced that from this year they would give Pritilata award to two students based on their performance.

In another programme in the city, Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal observed the day by laying wreaths at the Pritilata monument at Pahartali.



The only road to the new container terminal of Chittagong seaport is filled with craters like this, causing frequent accidents, but the authorities seem to have no care at all.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

Religion-based societal abuse in decline

Claims DU scholar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Societal abuse based on religious affiliation has declined in the country in comparison to previous years, observed Prof Tapan C De Rozario of Dhaka University's Department of World Religion and Culture yesterday.

However, several scattered attacks on religious and ethnic minorities took place over the years although the government's attitude towards the religious minorities improved, he said.

Prof Tapan was addressing an international seminar, "Human Rights and Religious Freedom in South Asia", at DU Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Building.

DU Centre for Interrelations and Intercultural Dialogue and International Association for Religious Freedom, Bangladesh jointly organised the seminar.

Discussants at the seminar also protested a controversial US film which caused outrage in the Muslim world, saying that the film had harmed the world's religious harmony by emotionally hurting Muslims.

Prof Patrick Gaffney of Notre Dame University of the US and Prof Anbumani Aurmugam of Annamalai University of India also spoke at the programme.

Extrajudicial killings decline

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and who ordered to do so," he told a press briefing after his first visit to the Rapid Action Battalion headquarters in Uttara yesterday.

"We cannot term it an extrajudicial killing if militants or criminals are physically harmed in action by the law enforcers to catch them," he added.

Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, who replaced Shahara Khatun on September 15, also claimed incidents of extrajudicial killings came down during the present government's tenure, if compared with those of the previous government.

Asked to explain how, the minister said the govern-

ment was handling the law enforcers cautiously to reduce such killings to a great extent.

On missing BNP leader M Ilias Ali, he said, "It is yet to be ascertained if Ilias is a victim of secret killing or if he went into hiding. Besides, there were several allegations against Ilias of terrorism and killing."

Former BNP lawmaker Ilias Ali and his car driver Ansar Ali remain missing since April 18.

"Many people were killed during the Operation Clean Heart and we will also investigate the incidents of the killings in the name of Operation Clean Heart," the minister said.

Between 16 October

2002 and 9 January 2003, some 50 people were killed across the country in the army-led Operation Clean Heart.

The Rab in its first meeting with MK Alamgir demanded a permanent office on its own land, two more battalions and a helicopter, meeting sources said.

The home minister assured the elite force of fulfilling their demands, the sources added.

Inspector General of Police Hassan Mahmood Khandker, Director General of Rab Mokhlesur Rahman and Commanding Officers of different Rab units, among others, were present at the briefing.

Santos leaving

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As per its Production-Sharing Contract (PSC) with Petrobangla, the government may within the next 90 days either take over Sangu field along with \$500 million worth of equipment -- the offshore platform and onshore gas processing plant -- or may decide to shut down the operation completely.

Officials say Petrobangla does not have trained manpower or experience to run the Sangu platform, located 35 km offshore. It is usually operated by a specialist team through remote control and its operation is very costly. Santos operates it with a third party -- US company PSN.

"Petrobangla may employ PSN for the job. Otherwise, the whole high tech set up will be kept shut and it would eventually go out of order," an official of Santos said.

In January this year, Santos proposed to tap the small offshore Kutubdia field, located 36 km off Kutubdia island, to make its business viable in Bangladesh. Although this field is located in Block-15, it was kept "ring fenced" or reserved for other options.

But in June, the government denied this, saying the field would be available for bidders in the next offshore block bidding for oil and gas exploration.

Discovered in the mid-seventies by a foreign oil com-

pany, Kutubdia field was never tapped because it only had a gas reserve of around 50 billion cubic feet (bcf). To bring this gas to the national grid, a 46-km pipeline needs to be installed in the sea bed and other infrastructure built, which are a costly and unattractive venture. This is why it never attracted investors.

"But, for Santos it had some business prospects," said an official. "It could install a 46-km pipeline to connect the field with the Sangu offshore platform, drill a well and start producing gas from the field. It needed no additional infrastructure," he added.

Kutubdia field was ring-fenced, but for many years the government kept the option open for oil companies to develop it by paying \$15 million, which was the cost of drilling that led to the discovery of gas in the seventies. This year, the government, however, dropped the payment issue. Instead, it sought a five percent extra share of gas produced from this field under a new model PSC.

Santos proposed to give Petrobangla this extra five percent share, on top of a production-sharing formula.

Petrobangla recommended the proposal to the energy ministry. But the ministry said Kutubdia field would be open for bidders in the upcoming block bidding,

and it cannot be given to Santos.

Petrobangla sources said putting this field in the next block bidding, which might take place next month, did not guarantee its development or an early development.

This decline came as a disappointment for Santos as it had spent a few million dollars since January as a preparation for early drilling of the field and laying of the pipeline. As the government has declined it, Santos sees no future in running the Sangu field for long.

Sangu field has been producing gas from newly drilled Well-11 from June and supplying it to the Power Development Board for power generation. But its production rate would gradually decline throughout next year. The field also has 10 other wells that remain shut. Of these, three can produce a small amount of gas but these are kept shut to facilitate maximum production from Well-11.

"For Santos, the business has become too small and it will become unprofitable from March-April next when Sangu's production reduces further. Therefore, the company has decided to withdraw," said an official of the company.

Sangu is the country's first producing offshore gas field, discovered in 1996.

Rangamati calm

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who always instigate the disturbances to undermine social harmony.

"But we, the common people, want peace." These instigators must be identified to prevent a recurrence of such violence, Rebaty added.

Last evening, the district administration lifted Section 144 that had been imposed following the clashes, which broke out between indigenous people and Bangalee settlers on Rangamati Government College campus on Saturday morning.

The injured included a union parishad chairman and a police officer.

Despite the imposition of Section 144 that bans all kinds of gatherings, running battles took place between

the settlers and indigenous people in some areas on Sunday night.

To avoid further trouble, additional police have been deployed in different areas, Superintendent of Police Masood-ul-Hasan said yesterday.

"The situation is now under control," he claimed. Rangamati Deputy Commissioner Mostafa Kamal told this correspondent that a special review meeting on law and order would be held at his office, followed by a peace procession today. All political and civil society leaders will be present there.

Also yesterday, the Rangamati Hill District Council and the administration handed over Tk 50,000 to each of the injured for treatment.

Do or die for Tigers

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men qualify for the Super Eights by beating top favourites Pakistan by the requisite margin in the do-or-die match, but the reality remains that it is a tough ask.

New Zealand have already qualified to the Super Eights despite their 13-run loss to Pakistan in the second match of Group D; their huge 59-run victory over Bangladesh in the first Group D game means that their progress is confirmed.

Bangladesh not only need to win the match but in order to qualify they have to beat the favourites by 36 or more runs if they bat first, while they have to wait for the completion of the first innings to know the equation if they bat second. According to rough calculations, they will have to win the match within 15 to 17 overs if they bat second in the day-night encounter.

Pakistan is always a tough opponent for Bangladesh -- they are yet to beat them in any format since their victory in the 1999 World Cup in England -- but they can draw inspiration from their last meeting in the Asia Cup final where the Tigers lost the match by only two runs.

The two teams have so far played five T20Is and on all occasions Bangladesh lost badly, so they have to conquer new ground if they want to win today's crucial match.

Strength-wise, there is a huge difference between the teams; Pakistan's variety in spin bowling may prove particularly dangerous for the Tigers. The third game of Group D is going to be played on a new surface and it seems that Bangladesh are not much bothered about the behaviour of the pitch as Pakistan have

all the weapons in their bowling attack to exploit any conditions.

So Bangladesh's only hope is that they come out with their best possible performance when they take the field today. What may make things harder for them is that two key players may be unavailable today -- fast bowler Mashrafe Bin Mortaza injured his shin during practice while star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan was feeling under the weather yesterday. The news from the camp however was that Shakib should be fit to play while a decision will be taken on Mashrafe before the match.

Among the things that they can control is an improvement in their fielding performance, which was terrible in the first match against New Zealand.

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