

Mashiur to be dropped from 2 more committees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mashiur Rahman, the prime minister's economic affairs adviser, is going to be dropped from two government committees, an official of the cabinet division said.

Mashiur Rahman is the convener of the committees on identifying the unutilised lands of the state-owned enterprises and on scrutinising the draft of the financial reporting act.

A cabinet meeting held on October 22 decided that the cabinet division and finance ministry would issue an order in this regard in a couple of days, said the official.

According to the meeting decision, SA Samad, executive chairman of the Board of Investment, would replace Mashiur in the two bodies.

Earlier, the adviser was also dropped from the cabinet committee on purchase and the cabinet committee on economic affairs.

In September, Mashiur was sent on leave to fulfil the condition of the World Bank for reviving its funding for the Padma bridge project. He will remain on leave until October 30.

However, an official concerned said the leave might be extended until the Anti-Corruption Commission probe into the corruption allegations in the Padma bridge project ends.

Sudan a 'terrorist state': Israel

AFP, Jerusalem

Sudan is a "dangerous terrorist state," a top Israeli defence official yesterday said after the Sudanese government accused Israel of carrying out a deadly missile strike on a military factory in Khartoum.

Sudanese officials say the attack on the Yarmouk facility south of Khartoum, which took place at around midnight on Tuesday and killed two people, was carried out by four radar-evading aircraft.

Israel, which has long accused Khartoum of serving as a base of support for militants from the Islamist Hamas movement which rules Gaza, has refused all comment on the claim.

"Sudan is a dangerous terrorist state. To know exactly what happened (there), it will take some time to understand," Amos Gilad told Israel's army radio.

Tk 1,100cr

FROM PAGE 1
They had transferred the money to their personal accounts, he added.

According to the confessional statement, Hossain has built a house at his ancestral place in Brahmanbaria using Tk 1.2 crore of the embezzled money. Hossain said they were ready to return the fund if given six months' time.

Rafiqul Amin gave a similar statement yesterday in connection with the embezzlement, said the court official.

The statements of Rafiqul and Hossain were recorded at the courts of Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Saifur Rahman and Metropolitan Magistrate Harun-ur-Rashid respectively.

On July 31, the ACC filed two cases with Kalabagan Police Station against 22 top Destiny officials for laundering Tk 3,285.26 crore of investors' money.

Destiny Group started its journey in 2000 through its multi-level marketing wing Destiny 2000 with only Tk 12 lakh.

The group set up the Destiny Tree Plantation Ltd in 2009 with a slogan that it operated under Shariah (Islamic laws). It started selling different packages, such as 30 trees at Tk 10,000, which would be worth Tk 60,000 in 12 years. The minimum price for the package was Tk 7,500.

The top officials lured people into the project, saying that they had bought huge tracts of land throughout the country, especially in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Hasina allays

FROM PAGE 1

Ashraful Islam told reporters after a meeting of the ruling party presidium.

Business leaders protested a controversial move to alter the Companies Act 1994 to discipline rogue companies with administrators, bypassing the court system. They feared the change in the law would let the government exert undue influence over the private sector.

Hasina will ask Law Minister Shafique Ahmed to dispel the businessmen's concerns, said Ashraf, also the LGRD and cooperatives minister. "She [Hasina] has informed the meeting about it," he said.

"There will be a detailed discussion with the businessmen over the law and there will be no provisions in it, to which the businessmen have any objection," Ashraf said.

The government will hold an elaborate discussion on the proposed amendment at the next cabinet meeting and in parliament, it was told at the meeting at Gono Bhaban, the prime minister's official residence.

The presidium, the highest policymaking body of the ruling party, observed that the proposed amendment has been misinterpreted by some businessmen in the media.

Earlier in the day, Commerce Secretary Ghulam Hussain said the amendment to the Companies Act would not be required as the existing law itself allows the government to appoint administrators to private companies.

However, the final decision on whether to proceed with the move to change the law will come after a meeting with businesspeople, legal experts and other stakeholders on October 30, he told The Daily Star after a meeting with legal experts at his office in the capital.

Fridge most selling

FROM PAGE 1

Although sales of clothes, food items and gifts have been low this Eid, it is prime time for local fridge manufacturers and importers as people throng the electronics' shops to buy the key household appliance.

The reason is clear: storing the meat of cattle to be sacrificed over the next three days from tomorrow -- Eid-day.

Abdur Rahim, a salesman at the brand shop Hayes and Haiyer in the capital's Farmgate, said the demand for deep freezers was higher than for refrigerators. He sold 10 deep freezers and four refrigerators alone on yesterday afternoon.

"During this Eid, we always focus on the deep freezers and refrigerators segment because it's peak time," he said.

Farhana Rahman, assistant sales manager at a Butterfly Marketing Company outlet only two shops away, which sells deep freezers and refrigerators of Butterfly and LG brands, echoed Rahim and said sales were up by at least three times ahead of the Eid.

Over the last couple of months, sales of refrigerators and deep freezers at the shop were about Tk 2 lakh a day. But in the last one week, it rose to over 6 lakh.

According to the industry people, about 2 lakh fridges are sold during the Eid-ul-

Ancient temple discovered in Bali

AFP, Denpasar

Construction workers in Bali have discovered what is thought to be the biggest ancient Hindu temple ever found on the Indonesian island, archaeologists said.

The workers were digging a drain in the island's capital Denpasar at a Hindu study centre when they came across the remains of the stone temple.

They reported the discovery to the Bali archaeology office, which then unearthed substantial foundations of a structure that the excavation team believes dates from around the 13th to 15th centuries.

"It is possible under the existing law to appoint an administrator [by the government] to any company that cheats people or engages in illegal financial activity," he said.

Tension arose in the private sector when the commerce ministry moved to bring changes to the law to appoint administrators to the controversial Destiny Group as its top bosses had been sent to jail for their alleged involvement in illegal financial transactions.

With the businesspeople and legal experts reacting sharply to this, the ministry is now seeking opinions from stakeholders.

On appointing administrators to Destiny Group accused of illegal banking, the commerce secretary said the government in line with the opinions of legal experts would apply section 233 of the law and move to appoint administrators to the companies which had done illegal financial transactions and cheated people.

The existing law has a provision that allows the ministry to go to court for special permission to appoint administrators to those companies.

The government in future would apply the proposed multi-level marketing (MLM) law for the companies like Destiny, the official said.

A three-member panel headed by a senior legal expert will identify the companies that need to be governed by administrators, he said.

The members might be a senior jurist, chief of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the commerce secretary, he said.

"It's just a proposal." The administrators to Destiny Group will certainly not be government officials, Hussain emphasised.

Hurricane kills 2 in Caribbean

CNN ONLINE

Hurricane Sandy churned over eastern Cuba early yesterday as a Category 2 storm with winds of 105 mph, slipping a bit in strength since making landfall, the National Hurricane Center in Miami said.

Along the U.S. East Coast, residents were told to be wary headed into the weekend.

Sandy claimed a pair of lives before reaching Cuba.

A woman in western Haiti's Camp-Perrin died Wednesday when she tried to cross a flooding river in the Ravine du Sud, according to Haitian news agency AHP.

And CNN affiliate TV J reported a man in Jamaica was killed when he was hit by a boulder sent tumbling downhill by the storm's rain.

Dreamers

FROM PAGE 1

setting up a school for these kids."

The one-room school -- Sromojibi O Shishu Shikkhaloy -- set up at Sher-e-Bangla Town Hall building offers informal education and does not follow any specific curriculum. Classes are held in two shifts -- from 6:00am to 8:30am and from 4:00pm to 6:00pm, six days a week. To discourage dropouts, the children are given tiffin twice a week.

Since its opening, the total cost of the school stands at Tk 50,000. Of the amount, Tk 40,000 was spent on purchasing education materials and furniture and Tk 10,000 on buying tiffin for the children, said Aminul.

All the money came from the trio's income from private tuition save for Tk 2,500 which was donated by Enamul Haque, chairman of Big Energy, a local NGO. Another NGO, Friends and Society, gave a board and two tables.

"We decided to do it with our own money," says Aminul.

On hearing of the idea, Abdul Mannan, an assistant imam at a local mosque, lent a helping hand. He is a part-time teacher there and offers his service when any of his three friends is sick or cannot come to the school for any other reason.

However, an uphill task lay ahead after the school was set up. As the parents of these children are extremely poor, they are more interested in sending their kids to work. So the three friends went from house to house to convince the parents and managed to get 28 students at the start. More students started to come from the second month.

"We thought that with education these children would be able to earn more and lead a better life," said Nazma, the female teacher.

She is a graduate student at Patuakhali Govt College, where Aminul and Razzak also study.

"We should do whatever we can to build a better Bangladesh. If we do, our society will be a better place," Nazma added.

Six-year-old Ibrahim, whose father is a rickshaw puller, said, "Previously, I was working at a furniture shop to support my family. But now I am studying here and also working at the shop."

Mannan, a day labourer, said he was delighted at the idea that his child can learn something at the school in the morning and work during the day.

Asked about their future plan, Aminul said he and his two friends were now able to offer free service and spare a portion of their income as they were still students.

"I'm really worried about the future of the initiative unless someone comes forward with help," he told this correspondent.

Contacted, Patuakhali Municipal Mayor Shafiqul Islam said it was "good initiative" to the benefit of many poor children in the area.

"I have already a plan and I will see if the school can get any help from the municipality," said the mayor, also a physician.

Khaleda goes to India

FROM PAGE 1

next-door neighbour.

Khaleda, who will lead a nine-member party delegation, is paying the visit at the invitation of the Indian government, and she will hold talks with top government and opposition leaders, high officials, civil society members and others concerned.

Sources in New Delhi said the government has completed all preparations for the visit of Bangladesh's former prime minister in an effort to reach out to diverse political groups in the neighbouring country.

Diplomatic circles in Dhaka see this as an opportunity for a breakthrough considering Khaleda Zia and her party's traditional anti-Indian posture. They believe the ensuing visit will have a positive impact in building mutual understanding and confidence.

Analysts say inviting the opposition leader to visit India and her acceptance of the invitation is a positive move, as both the sides realise the importance of deepening bilateral ties further.

The ruling Awami League is curious about the BNP chief's visit to India since it is being considered very significant ahead of the general election in Bangladesh late next year.

Talking to The Daily Star, BNP standing committee member Nazrul Islam Khan said yesterday his party has welcomed Indian President Pranab Mukherjee's recent remarks that his country

believes in building relationship with the people of Bangladesh, not with any individual or party.

"Even we don't want India to have relationship only with BNP... We cannot afford to quarrel as we cannot change our geography. We want relationship with India on the basis of mutual respect, sovereignty, equity and amity," he said.

During her visit, Khaleda Zia will raise issues of national interest such as sharing of waters of the common rivers, killing of innocent Bangladeshis on the border, Tipaimukh Dam, exchange of enclaves, border demarcation and border security, Nazrul said.

"We want India to recognise the concern of the people of Bangladesh over these issues and take steps to remove those permanently," he added.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh invited Khaleda to visit India during his Dhaka visit on September 6-7 last year. Later, the then Indian finance minister Pranab Mukherjee and External Affairs Minister SM Krishna met Khaleda and communicated the Indian government's invitation.

They told Khaleda that India wanted to build good relations with all political actors in Bangladesh, not with any specific party. "We want to reach out to all the people and all the political parties in Bangladesh," the Indian premier said, as quoted by a BNP leader.

As scheduled, sources

said, the BNP delegation will leave for New Delhi by a Jet Airlines flight on Sunday morning and will first call on President Pranab Mukherjee. Khaleda will then call on the prime minister, and Congress Party President and ruling UPA Chairman Sonia Gandhi.

Indian Leader of the Opposition and BJP lawmaker Sushma Swaraj, National Security Adviser Shiv Shankar Menon and other senior leaders and officials will call on Khaleda at Taj Palace where she will stay during the visit.

From New Delhi, Khaleda will go to Joypur and visit Hazrat Khwaja Moineddin Chishti's shrine at Ajmer. Indian government officials in Rajasthan as well as local politicians will meet her during the two-day visit to Ajmer.

The BNP delegation includes Tariqul Islam, Khaleda Rabbani, Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury, Reaz Rahman, Sabihuddin Ahmed and Mosaddak Ali (Falu). Besides, the BNP chairperson's Press Secretary Maruf Kamal Khan, Private Secretary Saleh Ahmed and personal photographer Nuruddin Nuru will accompany her.

The Indian government is expected to bear the entire cost of the tour, accommodation etc for Khaleda and five others, sources said.

A 28-member media team from Bangladesh will also accompany the BNP chairperson, but they are travelling privately.

2 cops held with 500 bullets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives arrested two police members along with 500 rounds of bullets at a rented flat in the city's Mirpur area early yesterday.

The arrestees are Jangal Chakma, 38, and Prem Chakma, 36, nayeks of Public Order Management - a reserved unit of the police stationed in Mirpur.

The bullets of AK-47 were kept in two bags, said a press release of Detective Branch (DB) of Police.

It said the arrestees were set to go to the Chittagong Hill Tracts to sell the bullets to members of Parbatya Chhattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) for Tk 4 lakh.

The two were being interrogated at the Minto Road's DB office to ascertain the source of the bullets.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) Abdul Latif of Kafful Police Station said no case was filed in this connection till yesterday evening.

7 ship-breaking yards fined in port city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Department of Environment (DoE) yesterday fined seven ship-breaking yards a total of Tk 34.80 lakh in Chittagong for not complying with the 56 conditions out of 62 mentioned in Environment Clearance Certificate.

Of the seven, Shima Steel was fined Tk 7 lakh; United Ship Recycling Ltd and Sayeed Steel Tk 6.50 lakh each; Al Safa Steel Mills Ltd Tk 3.50 lakh; Mahin Enterprise Tk 3.30 lakh and KSB Steel Tk 2.50 lakh.

Mamun Steel, besides being fined Tk 5.50 lakh, was also asked to halt scraping of ships until further order and remove two scrapped ships from Sitakunda ship-breaking yard, said Monowar Islam, director general (DG) of DoE.

All the companies are ordered to pay the fines by November 1.

The DG announced the fines at the DoE court's hearing where owners and representatives of the companies were present in response to DoE summons, said Monowar at a press conference held at Chittagong DoE office after the hearing.

Earlier on Tuesday, the DoE summoned the seven owners seeking explanations as to why they had not fulfilled the conditions mentioned in the Environment Clearance Certificate.

Kamal, B Chy

FROM PAGE 20

to invite another 1/11 political changeover in the country.

On January 11, 2007, popularly known as 1/11, state of emergency was declared and January 22 parliamentary polls were suspended, leading to a military-back caretaker regime's usurping to power.

"We have heard Kamal Hossain and B Chowdhury have made a move. Had the move been meant for the advancement of the country's democracy and political system, we would have welcomed it," AL General Secretary Syed Ashraful Islam told reporters after a meeting of the AL Presidium at Gono Bhaban.

"But it is very sad that the move that Kamal Hossain and B Chowdhury have made is a step to hamper democratic system of the country," he added.

At a city hotel on October 21, Gonoforum President Dr Kamal Hossain and Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh President A Q M B a d r u d d o z a Chowdhury have called for a "national unity" for a prosperous Bangladesh.

Syed Ashraf, also the LRGD minister, said, "If they [Dr Kamal and B Chowdhury] are making the move for creating an environment for another 1/11 in the country and another 1/11 like government, it will be very sad..." the Awami League will use its full strength against the move."

The meeting, chaired by AL President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, discussed the socio-political situation of the country as well as organisational issues.

Home rush at peak

FROM PAGE 1

They had to wait from two to four hours to get on buses as most buses were late in arriving for their turnaround.

The railway authorities managed the extra load of passengers successfully, thanks to all trains running on time.

Launch operators, however, were seen struggling to cope with the onrush of holidaymakers.

Vehicles on Dhaka-Mawa, Dhaka-Tangail and Dhaka-Chittagong highways travelled better yesterday than on the previous few days.

Holidaymakers for Eid left Dhaka in the last few days had met long tailbacks.

Vehicles remained stranded on Dhaka-Tangail and Dhaka-Mawa highways for hours causing untold sufferings to the holidaymakers but yesterday's picture was completely different.

Shahnaj Sharmeen started her journey from Sayedabad bus terminal at 3:30pm. Her bus reached Mawa around 5:45pm. "Today, I found no gridlocks. I smoothly crossed the river on a launch. I didn't find any congestion at Kawrakandi," Sharmeen told The Daily Star in the evening as her bus was travelling towards Bagerhat.

There was hardly any vehicular queue at Mawa ferry terminal at 9:00am. But things changed around noon when about 250 vehicles lined up on the road leading to Mawa ferry terminal.

Around 100 vehicles were seen waiting to get on ferries at 6:00pm, reported our Munshiganj correspondent.

Meanwhile, a new ferry pontoon went into service in the evening, helping to shorten the queue of vehicles.

Our Tangail correspondent reported that no traffic congestion was seen on Dhaka-Tangail highway up to Bangabandhu Bridge yesterday.

The Dhaka-Chittagong highway was also jam free. At Gabtoli bus terminal yesterday afternoon passengers were seen waiting for buses for hours, as vehicles trying to get to Dhaka for their return trips were running late.

There was a mad rush for tickets after office hours in the evening. Many complained of bus operators charging extra.

Meanwhile, Communications Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday apologised to the holidaymakers who had suffered due to traffic congestion on highways.

"We can't deny the reality. We know people are suffering during their journey

home. I, on behalf of my ministry, express my profound unhappiness and apologise to the passengers," he told journalists at his Secretariat office.

The communications minister blamed the congestions partly on cattle-laden trucks.

A woman on a train heading for Sylhet told The Daily Star, "It was a nightmare travelling on a train before the last Eid. The story is completely different now. We got tickets easily and got on the train without any hassle."

Passengers expressed their happiness over train services. Some said the crowd was less than what it was ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr.

Senior railway officials, including its director general Abu Taher, were monitoring train services at the Kamalapur Railway Station in Dhaka.

People heading home streamed to the Sadarghat launch terminal yesterday.

Almost every launch yesterday set out from Sadarghat terminal carrying excess passengers. People were seen making temporary arrangements on their own on the roofs of launches.

AKM Arif Uddin, deputy secretary (Administration) of BIWTA, said they were trying to cope with the huge pressure of passengers.

Last tributes

FROM PAGE 20

the funeral pyre lit at Keoratala crematorium in South Kolkata, climaxing an over five-hour funeral procession that began from his South Kolkata residence at Gariahat.

Accompanied by his son and thousands of admirers and friends who included the who's-who of Kolkata's intellectual community, the glass-pannelled cortege carrying the body of 78-year-old Sunil, who died in the early hours of Tuesday of a massive heart attack, made its way from the writer's house to the office of leading Bangla newspaper Ananda Bazar Patrika with which he was associated for a long time and regularly contributed to its publications.

From there, the cortege reached Rabindra Sadan, one of Kolkata's cultural landmarks, where West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, her immediate predecessor Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, Congress leader Pradip Bhattacharya, veteran film

directors Mrinal Sen and Goutam Ghosh, poet Sankha Ghosh, poet Joy Goswami, novelists Sirshendu Mukherjee, Samaresh Majumdar, artist Jogen Chowdhury and Bangladeshi author Imdadul Haq Milon paid their last respect by placing wreaths on the body.

Thousands of men and women of different ages lined up on the streets on both sides of the streets to have a final glimpse of the listless body of the man whose writings -- poems, short stories, plays and novels -- have kept them spellbound for generations as the funeral procession passed through some of the busiest thoroughfares of Kolkata.

Sunil had acted as a bridge between Bangladesh and West Bengal.

Mamata was at the forefront of the funeral procession and accompanied the cortege walking all the way to the crematorium, a distance of about five kilometres. It was

a touching scene at the crematorium complex when the cortege reached there with mourners singing Tagore's "Aaguner Paroshmoni ChooanPraney".

3 companies

FROM PAGE 20

Zia for raising the Padma bridge issue with the Chinese government during her recent visit to Beijing.

According to the project profile of the bridge, interested construction firms will provide 70 percent of the \$2.9 billion required for the project without any interest, while the rest would be financed by the government in local currency.

In reply to a question, Quader said his ministry had implemented over 22 percent of the annual development programme, which was only 7 percent last year.

Communications Secretary MAN Siddique and Bridges Division Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam, among others, were present at the press briefing.