

JP AS OPPOSITION

Ershad doubtful

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad has expressed doubts as to whether his party will be able to play an effective role as the main opposition in parliament.

"There is a question on everybody's mind regarding this. I do also have the same question on my mind," Ershad said while talking to reporters yesterday after inaugurating the annual sport at a school in the capital's Banani.

It would have been better had the Jatiya Party remained out of the Awami League-led cabinet and acted only as the opposition in parliament, he added.

Three JP lawmakers joined the cabinet -- one as minister and two others as state ministers -- to assist the Awami League-led government formed after the January 5 election while Ershad's wife and JP presidium member Raushan Ershad was recognised as the leader of the opposition in parliament.

Ershad's remarks came amid huge criticism against his party's dual role in

the House, which is an unprecedented example in the country.

The Jatiya Party chief, however, said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina believed that JP could play the role of the opposition though a section of it was working with the government.

"I think it is the party's prime duty to criticise government actions.... If JP can play its role as the opposition party, it will be good for the government and people of the country will like it," Ershad noted.

Ershad's Jatiya Party had joined the Sheikh Hasina-led polls-time government last year. Some of his party's MPs were in the cabinet formed before the 10th parliamentary election. But in early December, Ershad suddenly announced his decision to boycott the January 5 election and ordered his party MPs to quit the election-time



cabinet. But none of them resigned.

On December 12, Ershad was allegedly confined to the Combined Military Hospital in the name of treatment. His wife Raushan led the JP to contest the polls, in which it won 34 seats. Ershad was also elected an MP.

He took oath as an MP. He was subsequently made special envoy to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Around the time he was apparently released from the hospital.

When his attention was drawn to the intra-party conflicts, Ershad yesterday claimed the party members did not have any problem among them.

"Jatiya Party means Ershad, Jatiya Party means Langol [plough]. I will allocate the electoral symbol to the nominees in the next national election," he said, adding any attempt to create nuisance would not be successful.

Bhashani comes into the scene

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issue on January 27, 1952. Contact was made with the Awami Muslim League, the political party formed by Moulana Abdul Khan Bhashani and Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy in June 1949 as a protest move against the ruling Muslim League. It was a step that would have a far-reaching impact on Bangladeshi politics in Pakistan. What followed was an all-party meeting to study possible responses to the prime minister's provocative remarks on the language question. The meeting, held on January 31, was presided over by Moulana Bhashani, president of the Awami Muslim League, and attended by representatives of a large number of organisations, among which were the Youth League, All East Pakistan Students League, Dhaka University State Language Action Committee, Tamaddun Majlis, Islamic Brotherhood, East Pakistan Students Muslim League and East Pakistan Awami Muslim League.

A good number of political personalities, including Abul Hashim, Hamidul Haq Chowdhury, Shamsul Haq and Khaleque Nawaz Khan, chastised the prime minister and the government of Pakistan over their attitude to the Bangla language issue. The upshot of the meeting was the formation of a 40-member strong body to be known as the All Party State Language Committee of Action. Kazi Golam Mahbub, general secretary of the East Pakistan Students League, was named convenor of the committee. A good number of resolutions were adopted at the meeting. Total support was voiced for the strike scheduled for February 4. Attempts to have Bangla written in the Arabic script were strongly condemned and demands were made for the release of all political prisoners. Among the prisoners was a young, fast rising politician named Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

On the day of the strike, February 4, 1952, a huge number of students gath-

ered at Dhaka University. The meeting, presided over by Gazilul Haq, commenced at eleven in the morning. A good length of time was expended on the subject of whether a demonstration needed to be brought out in the city. At one point, Abdul Matin, convenor of the Dhaka University State Language Committee, asked the students if they were in favour of a demonstration. The response was a resounding "Yes", which was soon followed by a procession that passed by the official homes of the vice chancellor and the chief minister. The strike on February 4 was observed not only in educational institutions in Dhaka but also in those in such towns as Chittagong, Mymensingh, Comilla and Narayanganj. On the same day, a students' meeting at Dhaka University, clearly encouraged by the response to the strike, decided that a general strike would be observed throughout East Bengal on February 21, 1952.



PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

Members of a criminal gang who include a police officer are paraded before the media after their arrest in a Rab operation in Savar yesterday.

Dhaka likely to get \$50m

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Secretary Shahidul Haque today to the Second Steering Committee meeting of the global fund scheduled for February 20 in Washington DC, according to the officials.

In the meeting, the delegation will justify Bangladesh's eligibility for the grant and elaborate its plan on utilising the fund, if received, to eliminate violent extremism and curb the rise of terrorists groups.

The officials also said Bangladesh, in the past two meetings, proved its eligibility for the fund.

Around half a dozen countries, including Bangladesh, are likely to

receive funds initially for two years on experiment basis. The fund will be channelled through NGOs or social organisations having strong networks in the grassroots level.

As Bangladesh already has Anti-Terrorism Act, necessary laws and mechanisms to counter terrorism and violent extremism, it has a stronger claim on the fund than other developing countries.

Countries battling against radical forces previously had to rely on ad-hoc support from wealthier donor nations, many of which are not bureaucratically capable of sponsoring small intervention programmes necessary to

disrupt the radical activities.

These countries can now turn to Global Fund for Community Engagement and Resilience to sponsor programmes aimed at pulling out or holding back the youths from the extremist or terrorist groups.

Foreign ministry officials said the grants would be used to provide vocational training to the youths likely to be recruited by terrorist organisations, introduce new school curriculum to promote tolerance, and use websites and social networks to make the youths aware of the dangers of extremist ideologies.

200 trees cut illegally

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agreement with the Local Government Engineering Department. Awliapur Union Federation was given the job of planting the trees and their care.

As per the agreement, the trees cannot be sold without maintaining proper auction procedure.

Of the proceeds, the federation members who take care of the trees will get 60 percent and local union parishad 30 percent. The rest will go to the RDRS funds.

Dabirul Islam, chairman of Awliapur Union Federation, submitted an application to Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer Touhidul Islam on September 18, 2011 for selling 330 trees.

But the UNO did not approve the proposal.

Yet the federation leaders went ahead with their plan and sold 330 trees to the local timber traders who have already felled around 200 trees.

During a visit to the spot on Friday afternoon, this correspondent saw over a hundred trees felled and kept on both sides of the road.

Three timber traders -- Robiul, Bakkar and Sumon -- said they bought the trees from the federation.

Sumon, president of Awliapur Jubo League and a sawmill owner, said they bought the trees from the federation at Tk 1.5 lakh.

Despite several attempts, Dabirul or any other official of the federation could not be reached for comments.

Aminul Islam, programme manager of RDRS in Thakurgaon, said if the

UNO approved the proposal, it would go to the upazila development coordination committee.

The committee would then ask the upazila forest department to determine if the trees were matured enough to be cut down and also their value. After that, the proposal would go to the DC office for permission.

If the DC permitted, the trees would be put up for auction, Aminul said.

As per the agreement, federation leaders should also have obtained a no-objection certificate from the RDRS, the programme implementing organisation.

Contacted, Thakurgaon Sadar upazila UNO Golam Azam said he sent officials to investigate the incident. As per their report, he would take action.



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

A police tow truck taking away an illegal rickshaw on Rokeya Sarani in the capital's Mirpur area yesterday.

Third accused too found dead

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In Sirajganj, police on information recovered the bullet-hit body of Jahangir Alam from near Jhauli bridge of Kamarkhand upazila around 8:00am.

Hailing from Tetulia village in Sirajganj Sadar upazila, Jahangir was a supporter of BNP, reports our Pabna correspondent quoting party sources.

The victim was shot dead and his body was left on the spot, said Rezul Haque, officer-in-charge of Kamarkhand Police Station.

Earlier on February 6, Sirajganj police recovered the body of Zoban Ali from Konagati area of Sirajganj Sadar upazila, while Bablu was killed in a "gunfight" with Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in Sirajganj Sadar upazila on January 30. The two were accused of murdering Saiful Islam, youth and sports secretary of Sirajganj Sadar upazila AL. He was stabbed to death at Baotira village of the upazila on December 30.

Local BNP leaders blamed law enforcement agencies for successive murders of the accused, but the law enforcers denied the allegation.

"The three accused in Saiful murder case were arrested earlier. Law enforce-

ment agencies are responsible for the murder of the three," Harunur Rashid Hassan, office secretary of the Sirajganj BNP quoted Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku, president of Sirajganj BNP, as saying.

Refuting the allegation, SM Emran Hossain, superintendent of Sirajganj police, said the victims might have been killed by their enemies. Police were probing the murder incidents.

In Jessore, Mesbah-ur-Rahman, the prime accused in the murder case of AL leader Chaitanya Kumar Mondol, was killed in a "gunfight" with Rab in Abhaynagar upazila early on Friday.

On January 26, a group of miscreants led by Mesbah reportedly hacked and burnt Chaitanya to death inside the latter's drugstore in Magura bazar of Abhaynagar. Chaitanya was an AL leader of Prembagh union in Magura village.

Two days into the murder, Mesbah's accomplice Rabiul Islam was killed in a "gunfight" with the joint force at Ziadanga of Abhaynagar.

In Nilphamari, Golam Rabbani, prime accused in the case filed in connection with attacking the motorcade of Cultural Affairs Minister

Asaduzzaman Noor in December last year, was found dead at Arazi Itakhola village of Nilphamari Sadar upazila on January 18.

Atiqur Rahman Atiq, another accused in the case, was found dead in Saidpur upazila of Nilphamari on January 20.

Five people were killed on December 14 as activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir attacked Noor's motorcade while he was returning to Nilphamari town after visiting Laxmichap, Sheeshatoli and Palash Bari villages of Nilphamari Sadar upazila.

Sultana Kamal, also the executive director of Ain O Salish Kendra, said culpability on the part of the accused (victims) depends on the verdict in their trial.

The accused might have been culprits, but they had the right to go through a trial process as per country's constitution, she mentioned.

Extra-judicial killings must be stopped immediately and every such incident should be probed as such killings have already created concern among the people, observed the rights activist.

Flying fine

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of the Aeronautical Engineering department of MIST, during a press briefing on the campus in Mirpur cantonment yesterday.

And the students of the department, which was established only five years ago, have good track record already.

The department, the first of its kind in Bangladesh, took part in two aircraft design competitions in the USA.

A MIST team in their first attempt secured 19th place last year with their "MIST Aero Thunder" UAV in the annual competition arranged by the Society of Automotive Engineering. There were 75 teams in the race.

And, in the design, build and fly competition arranged by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics in 2013, the "MIST Dreamer's Fin" was 40th among 91 teams from across the world.

They are preparing for contests this year as well.

The student-built prototype for a competition in the US in May could be launched from the hand. It is so small that it could be fitted inside a 24 square inch box and weighs just 308 grams.

Another UAV designed by Lt Asifur Rashid of Bangladesh Navy and Lt



A T-38 of NASA.

Adam Faqih, an army official from the Middle East, both students at the MIST, could be used for reconnaissance, surveillance, search and rescue missions as well as traffic monitoring purposes.

The 8kg aircraft is designed to carry a 4kg payload, which could be a camera, missile, or a sensor, explained Asifur, whose passion is designing aircraft even though he is a navy official.

Bangladesh appears to be reaching for the sky.

Department head Group Capt Md Abdus Salam hoped that these students would become assets when Bangladesh starts producing manned aircrafts by the year 2021.

"We are nurturing the human resource for tomorrow," he said.

Special milk for girls?

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babies, too -- about how to choose the donor milk that's used for hospitalized preemies, or whether we should explore gender-specific infant formula.

"There's been this myth that mother's milk is pretty standard," said Harvard University evolutionary biologist Katie Hinde, whose research suggests that's far from true -- in monkeys and cows, at least.

Instead, "the biological recipes for sons and daughters may be different," she told a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science on Friday.

Pediatricians have long stressed that breast milk is best when it comes to baby's first food. Breast-fed infants are healthier, suffering fewer illnesses such as diarrhoea, earaches or pneumonia during the first year of life and less likely to develop asthma or obesity later on.

But beyond general nutrition, there have been few studies of the content of human breast milk, and how it might vary from one birth to the next or even over the course of one baby's growth. That research is difficult to conduct in

people.

So Hinde studies the milk that rhesus monkey mothers make for their babies. The milk is richer in fat when monkeys have male babies, especially when it's mom's first birth, she found.

But they made a lot more milk when they had daughters, Hinde discovered. Do daughters nurse more, spurring production? Or does something signal mom prenatally to produce more?

To tell, Hinde paired with Kansas State University researchers to examine lactation records of nearly 1.5 million Holstein cows. Unlike monkey babies, calves are separated from their mothers early on, meaning any difference should be prenatal.

Sure enough, cows that bore daughters produced about 1.6 percent more milk. Since cows lactate for 305 days, that adds up. More interesting, cows often lactate while pregnant -- and those that bore a second daughter in a row produced almost 1,000 more pounds of milk over nearly two years than those that produced only sons, Hinde calculated.

Back to the monkeys -- where Hinde found still more differences in the

quality of the milk.

Milk produced for monkey daughters contains more calcium, she found. One explanation: Female monkeys' skeletons mature faster than males' do, suggesting they need a bigger infusion of this bone-strengthening mineral. Human girls' skeletons mature faster than boys, too, but there haven't been similar studies of calcium in human breast milk, Hinde said.

Mothers' milk even affects babies' behaviour, she said. Higher levels of the natural stress hormone cortisol in milk can make infants more nervous and less confident. But boys and girls appear sensitive to the hormone's effects at different ages, her latest monkey research suggests.

One previous study of human babies has linked higher cortisol levels in breast milk to cranky daughters, not sons, but Hinde cautioned that testing cortisol reactions at only one point in time could have missed an effect on younger or older boys.

What about boy and girl twins? Hinde can't answer; the monkeys she studies seldom have twins. Nor can she explain why the animals show these gender differences.