

Bankers' hospital on the cards

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh Bank has taken an initiative to set up a modern hospital, Combined Bankers' Hospital (CBH), following the model of the Combined Military Hospital (CMH).

The decision was taken in a meeting of chief executives of all the state-run and private banks with the central bank governor Atiur Rahman in the chair yesterday.

Atiur told The Daily Star that the banks would provide funds for building the hospital, and it would be run as a non-profit organisation.

In the meeting, a committee was formed with BB Deputy Governor SK Sur Chowdhury as its head.

The committee was asked to submit a report to the BB governor within a month after a feasibility study to find the land for the hospital and also determine which banks will provide how much funds.

All staff of the banks would get treatment at a minimal charge at the proposed hospital. Besides, the commoners would be able to undergo treatment there, Atiur informed the meeting participants.

He also said many banks have land which could be used for setting up the CBH.

The hospital would procure state-of-the-art lab facilities for carrying out checkups on complex diseases as well as the normal ones.

Owner Delwar, 12 others indicted

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Five of them -- Dulal, Razzak, Monju, Rana and Shamim -- are still at large.

At least 112 workers, mostly women, were killed and scores wounded in the fire at Tazreen Fashions in Ashulia on the outskirts of the capital.

The factory used to stitch apparels for different international brands, including US giant Walmart.

A day after the incident, Ashulia police filed a case in this connection.

On May 19, 2013, the High Court issued a rule asking the government to explain why it should not be directed to prosecute Tazreen owner Delwar for his alleged negligence in protecting the workers from the fire.

Next month, a probe body formed by the home ministry submitted a report to the HC, saying there was "unpardonable neglect" on the part of the owner.

On December 22 that year, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) submitted charge sheet against the 13 people in the case filed by Ashulia police.

Delwar and his wife were charged with constructing the building on a faulty plan with the help of engineer Morshed, and illegally using the ground-floor walkway as a warehouse.

There was no fire exit in the factory in violation of the labour law, the



A man trying to douse the fire at Tazreen Fashions in November, 2012. The blaze claimed the lives of 112 workers and injured many others. PHOTO: FILE

charge sheet said.

Moreover, the factory was built a mile away from the main road making it very difficult for fire service vehicles to reach the factory during a fire, Investigation Officer AKM Mohsinuzzaman Khan, also an inspector of the CID, said in the charge sheet.

The managers and the security guards were charged with pressing the workers to get back to work though smoke was billowing from the ground

floor where the fire started.

Fire alarms rang as soon as the blaze broke out. Panicked workers tried to leave the factory before the fire spread. But managers and security guards told them it was nothing serious, said Khan.

Another case was filed by the brother of a fire victim in May 2013 against the Tazreen owners and 29 factory staff over the incident. The CID is investigating the case.

Democracy is the choice

FROM PAGE 1

The survey results are bleak for politics with the majority of people disapproving of the current jobs done by the political parties, police and parliament.

Only 21 percent people approve of the parliament's job while a whopping 67 percent disapprove.

The job of police is approved by 43 percent while it is disapproved by 53 percent. The job of the political parties is approved and disapproved by an equal 46 percent people.

In matters of voting, a total of 88 percent -- 67 percent strongly and 21 percent somewhat -- agree that election gives them a chance to influence decision-making in the country. However, it was 94 percent in the last survey in September 2014.

About an election time caretaker government system, 67 percent think it should be restored before holding the next parliamentary election.

According to the survey, 43 percent respondents like to see the next general election to be held as soon as possible while 40 percent think the current parliament should complete its tenure.

Corruption has been identified as the most persistent problem by respondents in the survey.

With the decline of electoral violence and strikes, corruption has been cited by 24 percent as the biggest problem facing the country, political instability by 16 percent as the second biggest and security by 15 percent as the third biggest problem.

The IRI in a release also says the survey has found that despite a partisan divide on electoral issues, the ruling Awami League has gained support among the respondents over the last year. The poll results also indicate a positive public feeling about the country's economic futures.

"In the 18 months following Bangladesh's parliamentary elections on January 5, 2014, support for the ruling government and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reached 66 and 67 percent respectively," said IRI release.

"Bangladeshis were increasingly optimistic about the prospects for the country, with 62 percent of respondents indicating they believed the country was headed in the right direction (up from 56 percent in the September 2014 IRI survey)," said IRI.

According to the survey findings, the AL enjoys more popularity than the other parties with 60 percent respondents liking and 29 percent disliking it.

Forty two percent like the BNP while 46 percent dislike it.

The Ershad-led Jatiya Party and Jamaat-Islami both had 25 percent liking and 60 percent disliking them.

In a leadership comparison between the two archrivals, the AL fared much better than the BNP.

The respondents gave the AL more points than the BNP on issues like strong leadership to youth leaders, support to women, good policies, democratic reforms, fight against corruption and pro-poor policies. In some cases, the AL got twice as much support as the BNP.

Similarly, the respondents prefer the AL to BNP for improving education, infrastructure, healthcare, security, economy, ending ethnic conflict and maintaining political stability.

AL-BNP REACTIONS

Contacted, AL Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif lauded the survey findings about the comparison between the AL and the BNP.

About the choice between democracy and prosperity, he said that only democracy without prosperity has no meaning.

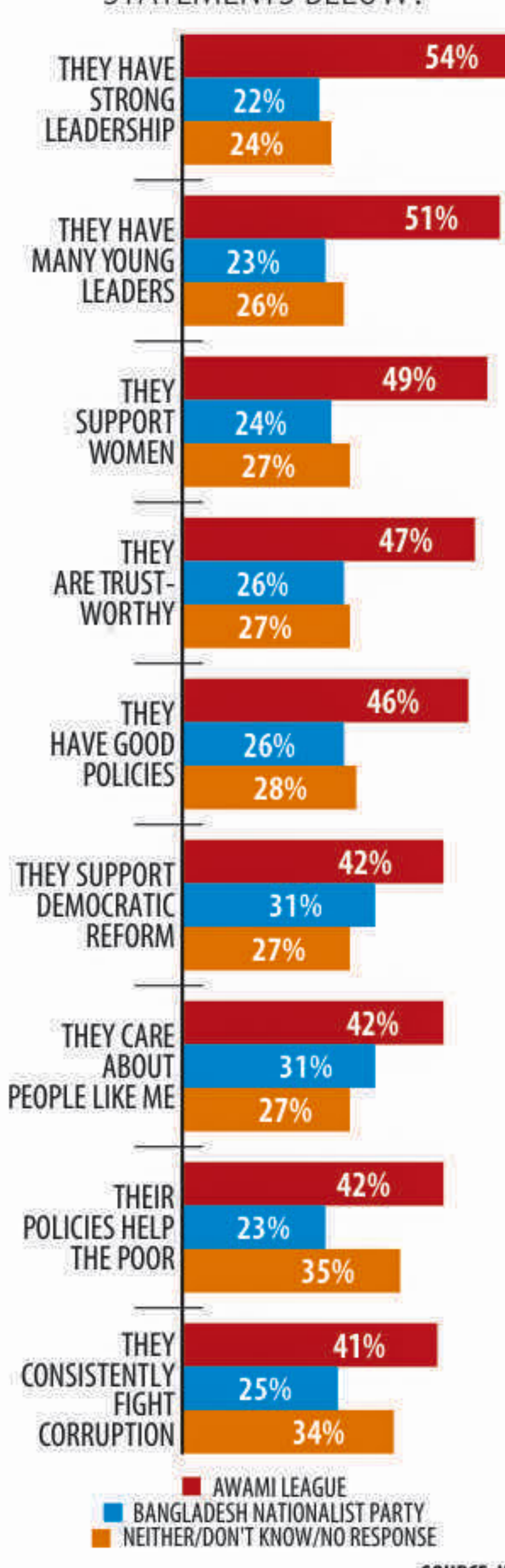
"We don't want that sort of democracy if it means freedom of carrying out violence and vandalism as was done by the BNP and Jamaat. Democracy means prosperity and that is what the present government is doing for the welfare of the people," he added.

About the survey result on holding election, he said welfare of the people should be the aim of holding any election.

BNP standing committee member Lt Gen (ret'd) Mahbubur Rahman said the survey has reflected in general the opinion of the people.

But in many cases, Mahbub said the findings on the BNP have not been

CAN YOU TELL ME WHICH PARTY BEST REFLECTS EACH OF THE STATEMENTS BELOW?



SOURCE: IRI

rightly and fully reflected.

About the survey findings on the caretaker government system, former caretaker government adviser Hafizuddin Khan said election in our country cannot be free and fair without the caretaker system.

As for decreasing support for the caretaker government system, he said the government's aggressive propaganda was responsible for this.

About the poor performance of BNP in terms of different social and development indications, he said both the AL and the BNP are more or less the opposite sides of the same coin.

METHODOLOGY

Data was collected using a multi-stage, stratified probability sample and through in-person, in-home interviews. The sample was stratified by the seven administrative divisions, by district and by urban and rural locations, the IRI website said.

Conducted in cooperation with international research firm Global Strategic Partners, the nationally representative sample was drawn from all 64 districts in the seven divisions of Bangladesh.

The margin of error for the aggregate sample does not exceed plus or minus two percent at the midrange with a confidence level of 95 percent, said the IRI.

IRI has conducted surveys in Bangladesh since 2008 to inform elections and civil society stakeholders on key electoral issues, it added.

Publish white paper on 'health corruption'

Demands Badal in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal lawmaker Mayeen Uddin Khan Badal yesterday demanded that the government publish a white paper on "widespread corruption and irregularities" in the health sector.

"People don't have the slightest confidence in the country's healthcare system, as they see the president, ministers, MPs and VIPs fly abroad for treatment," he said, taking the floor in parliament after the Magrib prayers.

Dreams died with them

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Trying to make that simple but treacherous dream a reality, Aylan, his brother and mother drowned.

Abdullah, the only Kurdi family member to survive the trip, says he has nothing left to live for.

"I don't want anything else from this world," he told CNN yesterday. "Everything I was dreaming of is gone. I want to bury my children and sit beside them until I die."

Abdullah says he boarded a small fibreglass boat in Turkey with 12 people on board. The vessel was manned by two smugglers, a Turk and a Syrian, he said. It was very crowded.

"I told him, 'Should we empty the boat? Should I get off with my wife and child?'"

One of the smugglers replied, "No, no, it is good," Abdullah recounted.

Large waves began crashing against the boat soon after the refugees set out.

He again raised his concern but the smuggler insisted, "It is guaranteed. Guaranteed."

Shortly afterwards, the smuggler

jumped overboard and swam toward shore as the waves pounded harder and higher.

Abdullah tried to take control of the boat but it capsized in the rough waters.

"I tried to reach for my wife and children," he said. "I was in the water for 20 minutes. One after another was dying."

Originally from Syria's capital, Damascus, Abdullah said he was trying to get to Sweden by way of Greece.

"I don't want anything from anyone anymore," he said. "I will sit by my wife and children and read them Quran until I die, God willing."

TRYING TO GET TO CANADA

Canadian Member of Parliament Fin Donnelly told CNN partner CTV that Abdullah's sister Tima Kurdi, who lives in Vancouver, had filed refugee paperwork to obtain permission for the family to live in Canada, but the application had been rejected in June.

But Tima Kurdi, in an interview later on Thursday with CTV, said she had actually filed paperwork for her other brother, Mohammed, and that was

rejected.

She said she was hoping to personally put up the money to sponsor Mohammed and his four children to come to Canada. They are now in Germany.

Meanwhile, she had been sending money to Abdullah. She presumes that Abdullah used those funds to try to get his family to Canada.

The world learned of Aylan's death when a photo of the drowned boy was shared widely on social media, many using the hashtag #KiyiyaVuranInsanlık or "Flotsam of Humanity" in Turkish.

It shows the toddler on his stomach, face down on a beach in Turkey. He looks like he's sleeping the way so many children his age do, with their bottoms raised and heads gently to the side.

Nilufer Demir of Turkey's Dogan News Agency who shot the photo said, "There was nothing to do except taking his photograph. And that is exactly what I did. I thought this is the only way I can express the scream of his silent body."

Outcry all over

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"Tiny victim of a human catastrophe," said Britain's Daily Mail, while Italy's La Repubblica tweeted the words: "One photo to silence the world."

"If these extraordinarily powerful images of a dead Syrian child washed up on a beach don't change Europe's attitude to refugees, what will?" Britain's Independent said in remarks echoed in newspapers across the continent.

Some said they hoped the images of the boy lying on the beach and his limp body being scooped up by a rescue worker could be a turning point in the debate over how to handle the surge of people heading toward Europe.

Nadim Houry, Human Rights Watch Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa, described the pictures as "haunting".

"Biggest indictment of collective failure," he tweeted.

Meanwhile, there have been sharp disagreements among European leaders over how to deal with the crisis.

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has bluntly blamed EU states for the death of every single migrant who lost their lives making the perilous journey to Europe.

"European countries, which turned the Mediterranean Sea -- into a migrant cemetery are party to the crime that takes place when each refugee loses their life," he said in a speech.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban lashed out at Germany over its handling of the crisis as scenes of chaos erupted in his country.

The deep rifts in Europe were highlighted as Orban held urgent talks with the European Union's top officials in Brussels over worst crisis of its kind since World War II.

After seeing the "horrifying" images of the boy, Spain's prime minister urged the world to act to end the Syrian war, and his Italian counterpart said Europe cannot just be emotional about the deaths of people seeking refuge from war and persecution.

"Faced with these images which tear and move the hearts of every father, we must be aware that we need a global strategy and Europe cannot lose face," Italian premier Matteo Renzi said.

"The problem is not a European problem, the problem is a German problem," the Hungarian premier told a press conference with European Parliament President Martin Schulz.

Orban said German Chancellor Angela Merkel had insisted that no



Aylan, left, and Galip with their teddy at their home in Syria. The brothers died when their family tried to get to the Greek island of Kos on a boat that sank at sea. PHOTO: AFP

refugees could leave Hungary without being registered there first, in line with "clear-cut" EU rules that asylum seekers' claims must be dealt with by their initial country of entry.

"Nobody wants to stay in Hungary, neither in Slovakia, nor Poland, nor Estonia. All want to go to Germany. Our job is just to register them."

Hungary has faced criticism for erecting a fence on the border with Serbia, as well as for refusing to let migrants board trains to Germany, the main destination for many.

EU President Donald Tusk called on member states yesterday to share the resettlement of at least 100,000 refugees -- far above the current agreement on 32,000.

France and Germany yesterday agreed to propose a permanent and mandatory system to take in refugees and asylum seekers, especially Syrians, in the European Union, President Francois Hollande said.

The EU is riven by frictions between transit nations where the migrants arrive by sea or land -- mainly Greece, Italy and Hungary -- and those where they hope to seek asylum, mainly in northern and western Europe.

In Britain, where Prime Minister David Cameron's government has

accepted just 216 Syrian refugees, tens of thousands of people signed petitions demanding change.

Cameron yesterday said that Britain would stick to its present course on the issue of Syrian refugees, resisting calls to announce a sharp increase in the numbers to be given sanctuary in Britain.

Amid a public outpouring of emotion over the dead Syrian toddler's image, Cameron said he was "deeply moved" by the picture and that Britain would fulfil its moral responsibilities.

Europe is facing a huge influx on all sides, with more than 350,000 people crossing the Mediterranean in flimsy boats this year alone, the International Organisation for Migration says.

More than 350,000 people have arrived in Europe so far this year, seeking sanctuary from war or persecution or poverty, or just seeking a better life.

In Hungary, migrants forced from a train scuffled with helmeted riot police and some clung to railway tracks yesterday. Hungarian authorities who refused to let migrants board trains for Germany for days finally allowed hundreds onto a train bound for the Austrian frontier - only to halt it at Bicske, a town outside Budapest with an immigration registration centre.

Sale of advance train tickets begins Sept 15

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railway will start selling advance train tickets on September 15 to ensure a hassle-free journey for Eid-ul-Azha holidaymakers.

The sale will continue till September 19 at Kamalapur in the capital and Chittagong railway stations, said Railways Minister Mazibul Hoque yesterday.

Train tickets for September 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24 would be available on September 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19 respectively, he said while addressing a press briefing at the Railway Bhavan.

Return tickets for September 27, 28, 29, 30 and October 1 will be sold on September 23, 24, 25, 26 and 27 respectively at Rajshahi, Khulna, Rangpur, Dinajpur and Lalmonirhat railway stations.

A person would be able to buy maximum four tickets, the minister added.

The railway authorities will operate seven pairs of special trains on September 22 to October 3 to cope with the passengers rush during the festival likely to be observed in the last week of this month.

Besides, 138 additional coaches would be added to the existing 886 coaches, and additional 25 locomotives to the existing 199 ones, the minister added.

Meanwhile, the state-run Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) will begin selling advance bus tickets on September 16.

The tickets would be sold at Kamalapur, Kallyanpur, Gabtoli, Joarshahara and Mirpur bus depots, the BRTC chairman told The Daily Star yesterday.

Hurting

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So, we want you to live in this country with your own rights and rights in your motherland."

The premier said people of all faiths in the country have been enjoying their religious rights equally and peacefully as her government believes in communal harmony.

The people of all religions under the leadership of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had liberated the country, she added.

"Bangabandhu had dreamt of establishing Bangladesh with a non-communal spirit. He ensured equal rights for all faiths by presenting the constitution after independence."

Secularism, said the PM, doesn't mean faithlessness. Rather, it means freedom of practicing religions for all faiths.

Expressing gratitude to people for voting the Awami League to power with a two-thirds majority, she said her government has been able to restore the spirit of Liberation War by amending the constitution.

The premier greeted the members of the Hindu community across the country on the occasion of Janmashtami.

Leaders of Janmashtami Udjapan Parishad, Bangladesh Puja Udjapan Parishad and Mohanagar Sarbajanin Puja Committee greeted the PM by presenting her with floral bouquets and a crest.

MP Bodi

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there was any evidence against the person.

The minister was replying to reporters' queries after a conference at the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) in the capital's Tejgaon.

His comments came amid a widespread allegation that Bodi had appeared to be an influential yaba trader in Cox's Bazar.

A DNC official, wishing not to be named, had said the MP from Cox's Bazar-4 constituency was on a list of suspected yaba smugglers prepared by the department last year.

Sources said the list, prepared following a home ministry directive, had 764 names of people allegedly involved in smuggling the contraband item into the country from Myanmar.

The DNC also recommended taking proper legal action against the culprits following investigation, setting up mobile courts and task forces to deal with the crime, added the sources.

Bodi is from Chowdhury Para of Teknaf municipality.

Our Cox's Bazar correspondent had reported that many in that area alleged the AL MP is involved in yaba smuggling.

His three brothers and brothers-in-law have also been mentioned as yaba peddlers on a home ministry list in the past, according to media reports.

On October 12 last year, Bodi landed in jail after a Dhaka court rejected his bail petition in a corruption case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission.

He had surrendered before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka on expiry of his four-week bail granted by the High Court in the case.

Speaking at yesterday's conference presided over by DNC Director General Khandakar Rakibur Rahman, home minister Kamal called upon the department officials to collect information "objectively".