

JS goes into session on Nov 12

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Sangsad will go into its 18th session on November 12 after a 59-day recess.

President Abdul Hamid convened the session exercising the power bestowed upon him by article 72 (1) of the Constitution, said a release of parliament secretariat yesterday.

The House will go into session at 4:00pm on the day.

Prior to the start of the session, the Business Advisory Committee of parliament will meet with Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury in the chair to fix the duration and businesses of the 18th session.

Earlier, the 17th session of the current Parliament was prorogued on September 14 after five working days.

The upcoming session may also continue for a brief period of time, sources at the parliament secretariat told The Daily Star.

Seven parts of college girl's body recovered in Barguna

UNB, Barguna

Police recovered seven body parts of a teenage girl from a house in Amtali municipality of Barguna yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Mala Akthar, 17, daughter of M Mannan Khan, a resident of Gudighata village of Barguna Sadar upazila.

Police have already arrested Alamgir Hossain Palash, who hails from Bashinda village in Mirjaganj upazila of Patuakhali district, from his house in this connection.

During primary interrogation, Palash claimed he had been in a four-year long relationship with Mala, a student of class XI.

On Sunday afternoon, he took Mala to the house of his relative, advocate Mainul Ahsan Biplab, at Amtali.

According to police, on Tuesday noon, Mala pressurised Palash to get married and subsequently the duo locked in an altercation over the matter.

At one stage, Palash hacked Mala with a sharp weapon, dismembering her body into seven pieces.

Being informed by Biplab, police recovered the body and arrested Palash, said Md Shahid Ullah, officer-in-charge of Amtali Police Station.

Thumri queen

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queen", Girija Devi popularised the genre of semi-classical Indian music. She was conferred with all three Padma awards, and was honoured with the Padma Vibhushan in 2016.

Tributes from stalwarts in the Indian music industry began pouring in soon after news of the singer's demise broke.

"Deeply saddened by the passing away of the legendary Girija Devi. This truly marks the end of an era," tweeted Ustad Amjad Ali Khan.

"Girija Devi was not only a great classical singer but a national treasure. We are poorer without her," said lyricist Javed Akhtar in a tweet.

Disruption

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through a motorbike ride sharing app on his phone, he could not pay the driver as his phone had no internet for a few minutes.

"I also had trouble attaching a file to an email I wanted to send to my boss," he said.

After the cable under the Bay of Bengal was taken out of service for the first time in its 12 years of operation, Bangladesh Submarine Cable Company Ltd (BSCCL) started managing the load by re-routing internet traffic.

The country's first undersea cable, SEA-ME-WE-4, was shut down at 12:30am yesterday and it would be out of service for the next two days as well.

"We are facing challenges of bandwidth shortage but we are trying our best to manage the crunch," said Md Mashhur Rahman, managing director of BSCCL.

Usually state-run BSCCL supplies over 250Gbps of bandwidth to the country but yesterday the supply came down to 150Gbps, which the company got from SEA-ME-WE-5, the second undersea cable connecting the country to the internet.

Bangladesh uses about 450Gbps of bandwidth, about 250Gbps from BSCCL and 200Gbps imported from India.

However, President MA Hakim of Internet Service Provider Association, said ISPs suffered less interruption than they had feared.

For only a few minutes around noon there were some transmission issues and for a few minutes there was no internet from BSCCL. Apart from these, it was just like a regular day yesterday, he said.

Hakim said end users saw their regular work going slow but overall the situation was not bad.

BSCCL MD Mashhur said they have about 50Gbps of bandwidth of the second submarine cable left unutilised and that they could not use it due to lack of interconnection capacity.

No new gas field

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Also, the "new gas field" is in fact only one and a half kilometers away, and not 3km as claimed by the government, from the Shahbazpur well, sources at the Bapex confirmed.

Gazprom, the Russian contractor of Bapex, began the exploratory drilling in August and confirmed, through preliminary tests days back, the existence of gas at almost the same depth and with nearly similar gas pressure like Shahbazpur's.

These are the crucial geological indications that the "new gas field" actually belongs to the old gas field, Prof Humayun argued.

Another senior geologist, Maksud Kamal, also failed to understand why the discovery was disclosed in such a hurried manner.

"Needless to say, it is a very important discovery. But certain geological tests must be done first to be able to say for sure if it is a new gas field or to ascertain the reserve volume," said Maksud, who is chairman of the Department of Disaster Science and Management at DU.

"The Bapex [the explorer] has not done those tests yet. And it is highly unlikely that it is a new gas field," he added.

However, the discovery can be an indication that a small Shahbazpur gas field (only 10km long, 7km wide) is in fact much larger than it was thought when discovered back in 1993.

The Bapex is also preparing to conduct drilling 35km north of Bhola. And if the results turn out to be good, it would mean that almost entire Bhola is lying on a massive sub-surface structure of natural gas.

But however huge the reserve is, the rest of the country would not be able to use the new found gas because of Bhola's geographical isolation from the country's mainland. Like now, the gas would be used in power generation and in industries in the region. Pipelines through long rivers to the national gas grid are way too costly.

As the discovery was announced by the cabinet secretary following a cabinet meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair, the Bapex is not saying anything contrary to the announcement on record for obvious reasons.

Off the record, sources at the Bapex admitted that, almost certainly, it is the

same structure of Shahbazpur. And at least a couple of wells must be drilled to determine if it is an extension of the Shahbazpur well.

They also feel the disclosure should have been made after doing the DST (drilling steam test, a method to determine extractable reserve) and perforation test (a method to determine the flow pressure of the gas field).

"But if it is the same structure, the potential of the reserve will go up by many folds. As per our findings so far, the Bhola gas field has every potential to become the country's largest gas field," a competent Bapex source asserted.

Md Nowshad Islam, managing director of Bapex, meanwhile claimed they had carried out five logs and semi DST, meaning engineers have seen the structure in five different ways over an area of 3,500 square metres and all of the logs have shown the same result.

"We have lifted up the physical sample of the layers where the gas has been found. We have found the gas. It is proven. The pressures in the three layers at 5,000-plus PSI [pound-force per square inch] are the highest in Bangladesh."

But the Bapex went silent when asked about the reasons behind the hurried disclosure about the reserve.

But reliable sources said a certain secretary is to retire this month, and an early disclosure would ensure a job extension for him.

And that is probably why someone else, not Bapex, was in a hurry to make the announcement. Too bad, as they misled the prime minister in the process. There is another iron in the fire. There is a hefty bonus on offer for finding out new gas fields.

However, the secretary has not done anything new. Some years ago, a now former Petrobangla chairman had manufactured a discovery by declaring an old gas field as a new one for job extension.

Asked why the latest discovery was described as a new gas field, sources pointed fingers at the Gazprom. A "new gas field" tag would justify its mysterious involvement in a proven gas field zone.

"It's a success story for Bapex. Gazprom was thrust upon us early last year, for reasons best known to certain policymakers," quipped an insider.

Xi tightens grip

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tradition demands, analysts said.

Or he could carry on as party leader. Xi's time as national president must end in 2023 but there is no official restriction on how long a party chief can serve -- although Xi's two immediate predecessors, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, stepped down after two five-year terms.

Jiang and Hu had their concepts included in the constitution, but without their names and only when they retired.

"China has a tradition of combining emperor and teacher, which means that the emperor is also the thought leader. Xi achieved it at the end of his first term. That's rare in our history," Chinese political scholar Hu Xingdou told AFP.

Xi also managed to get at least two of his cherished programmes written into the constitution: an anti-corruption campaign that has brought down 1.5 million crooked officials since 2012 and the Belt and Road initiative, the massive global trade infrastructure project intended to increase China's influence abroad.

The congress declared the Communist Party China's "absolute leader", a clear sign that it intends to further tighten its grip on the country.

"Those who approve, raise your hands," Xi said during the vote as a flurry of arms shot up in unison. When he asked if anyone was not in favour,

shouts of "None!" echoed in the imposing Great Hall of the People.

"Now our country is unified, cohesive, and moving up in the world," northeast Jilin province delegate Li Hualiang told AFP.

'NEWERA'

The congress also elected a new 204-member Central Committee, which included just 10 women. It will elect the party's new ruling council, the Politburo Standing Committee, today.

Xi is certain to secure a second five-year term as general secretary and could also consolidate his power by filling the standing committee with allies, possibly without even presenting an obvious heir apparent.

Hasina

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yesterday.

In line with the election manifesto of the ruling Awami League, the government in 2011, without conducting any feasibility study, finalised Arial Beel as the location for the new airport and a satellite city.

The government then had to back-track in the face of violent protests by locals. The clashes that ensued left a policeman dead and many locals and law enforcers injured.

Rupa's sister gets govt job

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Popy Khatun, younger sister of law student Rupa Khatun who was raped and killed on a moving bus in Tangail two months ago, got a job at the state-run Essential Drugs Company yesterday.

The appointment letter of an "office assistant" was handed over to her by the company's Managing Director Mohammad Ehsanul Kabir Jaglul at its headquarters in Tejgaon in the capital around 1:30pm.

According to the appointment letter, Popy will have to join the company's Bogra office on November 15.

Popy, the third daughter of late Jel haz Pramanik in Sirajganj's Tarash upazila, graduated in management from Nawab Siraj-ud-Doula College in Natore. She had earlier worked for a multinational company.

Talking to this correspondent, Popy yesterday said she along with her elder brother, Hafizur Pramanik, went to Dhaka on Monday after receiving a call from the health minister's personal secretary.

She expressed gratitude to Health Minister Mohammed Nasim for arranging the job for her.

"I am feeling very good as a government job was badly needed for me to support my poor family. However, I never thought I would get the job in exchange for my elder sister's life," an emotional Popy said.

Her elder brother Hafizur said his family members, including his ailing mother Hasna Hena, were very happy to hear the news of Popy's new job.

He demanded capital punishment for Rupa's killers.

Rupa was raped and killed on a moving bus by several staff of the vehicle on August 25. Police on the same day recovered her body from near Tangail-Mymensingh road in Tangail's Madhupur upazila.

Law enforcers on August 28 picked up five staff of the bus from Madhupur in connection with the Rupa murder case. Police said the arrestees during interrogation admitted their involvement in the crime.

MK Anwar

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janaza was held around 12noon at BNP's Nayapaltn headquarters. Several thousand party leaders and activists joined the janaza.

Later his third namaz-e-janaza was held around 1:30pm at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban. Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed, Chief Whip ASM Feroz and BNP leaders were present.

After the namaz-e-janaza, his body was kept at the mortuary of Birdem Hospital in Dhaka.

The former minister's body would be taken to his home district Comilla today and his fourth namaz-e-janaza would be held in Titas upazila after Zohr prayers. His last janaza would be held in Homna upazila after Asr prayers.

He will be buried in his family graveyard in Homna today.

Born on January 1, 1933 in Khulna, MK Anwar joined government service in 1953 as an officer of Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP). He served in different important posts during the regime of the then Pakistan and Bangladesh. He took retirement after serving as the top-most civil service post cabinet secretary on December 30, 1990.

He joined BNP in January 1991. He was elected lawmaker for five times and became minister twice.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir expressed deep condolence at the death of MK Anwar.

GM troops

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practical consequences may follow. One may imagine that a man can create a man not only theoretically but also practically.

"He can be a genius mathematician, a brilliant musician or a soldier, a man who can fight without fear, compassion, regret or pain.

"As you understand, humanity can enter, and most likely it will in the near future, a very difficult and very responsible period of its existence.

"What I have just described might be worse than a nuclear bomb."

His warning comes just a month after he revealed fears that AI robots will one day 'eat us.'

The Russian president was speaking to Arkady Volozh, chief of internet firm Yandex, during a tour of the company's Moscow headquarters.

Volozh was discussing the potential of AI when Putin caused surprise by asking when the technology will 'eat us'.

According to state-funded Russian broadcaster RT, the question baffled Volozh.

SP, wife have FDRs

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Subhash and his wife jointly opened 19 fixed deposit receipts (FDR) with three branches of One Bank Ltd and deposited Tk 7.97 crore between 2013 and 2017. The accumulated value of the FDRs, including interest, now stands at Tk 8,36,13,367.

The ACC began the inquiry in the middle of the year after an unidentified person filed a complaint against the SP accusing him of amassing huge amount of wealth illegally. The inquiry report was submitted to the Commission one and half months before filing of the case yesterday, sources said.

Last week, the SP was withdrawn from Faridpur and he was attached to the police headquarters in Dhaka.

Subhash opened an FDR with One Bank's Jessore branch on May 26, 2013 with Tk 32 lakh. On June 10 the same year, he deposited Tk 36 lakh in the same bank. Then, 17 days later, he deposited Tk 18 lakh in One Bank's Elephant Road branch in Dhaka.

Between January 2015 and December 2015, he deposited around Tk 1.16 crore in different branches of One Bank in Dhaka and Jessore. Two transactions with a combined value of Tk 51 lakh happened on the same day in One Bank's Elephant Road branch.

In the year, 2016, Between January 3 and October 10, he deposited around 2.2 core in different branches of One Bank. Again, two transactions, of TK 75 lakh and 71 lakh respectively, took place in a branch of One Bank in Jessore, on the same day.

In 2017, his total deposits exceeded Tk 2 crore. He also deposited 85 lakh in

the Bangshal branch of One Bank, his highest single transaction till date.

ACC examined Subhash's tax return file of 2016-17 fiscal year, where the accused concealed the information of the FDRs.

"That is, while serving in the police department, he earned TK 8,36,13,367 through various corruption and hid the source and ownership of the fund," reads the FIR.

Having known that Subhash amassed the wealth from illegal means, his wife Rina Chowdhury, a homemaker, opened joint FDRs and concealed the information to abet her husband, it says.

Upon the request of ACC, courts ordered One Bank's Bangshal and Jessore branches to freeze the account and provide necessary information to the commission.

Contacted over phone, Subhash said he was busy and asked to call back later. Afterwards, the correspondent tried several times but he did not pick up the call.

Asked whether he will be suspended, Nurul Islam, Joint Secretary at the home ministry, said they will take action against Subhash in accordance with the law.

Meanwhile, ACC arrested Shahidul Islam, a land assistant officer of Dulla Union Land Office and one Abul Kalam in connection with a case filed for selling government land of Bhaluka of Mymensingh by creating fake documents.

They were arrested from Mymensingh Town Hall intersection. The case was filed with Bhaluka Police Station yesterday.

EC alone not responsible

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"All political parties should participate in the next election under the present conditions and environment."

The EC organised the meeting to know election experts' opinions about its preparation for the next national polls, likely to be held in December next year.

Shamsul Huda said the electoral system was largely affected due to boycott of the January 5, 2014 polls by many political parties. "So, the parties will have to stay alert this time around and they all should join the next election," he said making an oblique reference to the BNP's boycott of the 2014 polls.

Out of the 26 invitees, 16 election experts, including former CECs and election commissioners, joined yesterday's meeting, with CEC KM Nurul Huda in the chair.

Five former CECs were invited to the meeting, but three of them didn't come.

EC Secretary Helaluddin Ahmed said ex-CECs Mohammad Abu Hena and MA Aziz were sick and immediate past CEC Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmed was abroad and that's why they could not join the talks.

Aziz had to resign on January 21, 2007 under pressure from the military-backed caretaker government while Rakibuddin was criticised for holding the 2014 polls amid boycott by many political parties.

POLLS-TIME GOVT

Asked about the political parties' proposal on an election-time government, Shamsul Huda said the matter was subject to constitutional amendment.

"There will be no more caretaker government as an amendment has been made to the constitution in this regard. But you can't bring another amendment [to the constitution] due to time constraint if you are to arrange the next national election within the

timeframe," he told journalists.

The ex-CEC said they suggested the EC earn public confidence and strengthen the commission, particularly by developing its infrastructure and human resources, so that it can be strengthened as an institution.

Shamsul Huda said they discussed deploying army during the polls with the EC. "The army should have to be deployed under the existing legal framework. As there are executive and judicial magistrates, question remains whether the army will be given magistracy power."

Former CEC Justice Md Abdur Rouf said government officials cannot hold a fair election as they are "politically biased".

The election experts also asked the EC to take steps so that it can conduct future elections by appointing returning officers from its own staff.

CEC KM Nurul Huda in his introductory speech said, "In the past few days, we have sat with many stakeholders and we have taken notes of their important observations. Today, we feel relaxed to have you with us."

"Your experience in conducting the previous elections is very valuable for us," he added.

With yesterday's talks, the EC's three-month dialogue with different stakeholders came to an end.

The commission held dialogues with civil society members, media personalities, 40 registered political parties, including the Awami League and the BNP, election observers and women leaders since July 31.

Students

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Mobile courts will be in operation to ensure the exams are held properly, it said, adding that stern actions would be taken against those involved in irregularities and question paper leak.

A control room to supervise overall activities of holding the exams will also be operational, it added.



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