

People

FROM PAGE 1 steering committee, reports UNB.

The AL has been able to retain popularity despite remaining in power for two consecutive terms, the PM said, terming it a rare instance. She said the party did not lose public confidence and trust as it is working for development of the countrymen and its benefit reached villages and grassroots.

Sources said the meeting decided to form election conducting committees for upazilas and also polling stations. The possible number of voting centres will be around 40,000 for the upcoming national election and there are a total of 492 upazilas in the country. The district unit of the party will monitor the formation and function of the committees.

If the district unit president contests the national polls, the senior vice-president will monitor the committees. Earlier, the ruling party had formed 137-member national election steering committee for the 11th national polls with AL chief Hasina as its chairman, party's advisory council member HT Imam as co-chairman and general secretary Obaidul Quader as member secretary.

The national election steering committee is comprised of members of the AL Central Working Committee and Advisory Council and presidents and general secretaries of the party's seven front organisations.

Apparently pointing at any possible extra-constitutional intervention, AL chief Hasina, in her introductory speech at the meeting, held at the Gono Bhaban, said there is no benefit in waiting with that hope as no such tendency is there anymore. She said there was frantic effort to foil the 2014 national election, but people re-elected the AL by casting votes and resisting BNP-Jamaat.

The PM further noted that the BNP resorted to falsehood over its secretary general's visit to the US as it claimed the UN secretary general invited him. It was learnt that Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir met the UN secretary general, though the latter was in Ghana to attend the funeral of Kofi Anan, mentioned Hasina.

She said an assistant secretary general of the United Nations confirmed that the UN chief did not invite Fakhrul, rather the BNP leaders sought his appointment.

Do not cook

FROM PAGE 1 Alam and Monirul's friend Abul Hayat were picked up by plainclothes men on Wednesday.

The three young men had gone to the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to receive Ramisa and her husband, who just returned from hajj, around 8:00pm.

The plainclothes men, who took Shafuil, 30, Monirul, 28, and Abul, 28, away showed identity cards and claimed to be detectives.

"My tears have dried, as I have no trace of my sons, who were abducted in front of my eyes four days ago," said Ramisa, 62, while describing the incident at a press conference at the Crime Reporters' Association.

The "detectives" took the three from the airport to Shafuil's mess in Jatrabari. From there, they picked up two more people -- Shafiuallah, 22, a Dhaka College student, and Mosharraf Hossain Mayaz, 15, a ninth grader of a local madrasa.

The five have remained missing since then. Police have denied picking them up.

At the press conference, family members of all the five demanded that the authorities either release them or, if they have committed any crime, produce them before a court.

"Do not cook up any story or stage a drama involving our sons. Return them to us," lamented Ramisa who cannot walk properly because of her knee problem.

"I don't understand how three people were picked up from in front of a secure airport and how they remain missing for days," said a relative of another boy preferring anonymity.

When asked about the political identities of the five, their family members claimed they did not know if they had any. However, sources in Shafuil's family mentioned that he was a city unit leader of Bangladesh Islami Chhatra Shibir.

Contacted, Masudur Rahman, deputy commissioner (media) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, claimed they did not arrest the boys.

Earlier on September 9, families of 12 students held a press conference at the same venue and alleged that detectives kept their sons confined for five days since September 5.

After initially keeping their detention undisclosed, the next day police admitted that the boys had been arrested by detectives on charges of spreading rumours and attacking police officials during the recent student protests.

Mob 'snatches'

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caught him in Kaliakoir of Gazipur and handed him over to police. He was later handed over to Kaliganj Police Station in Satkhira.

Police official claimed that after interrogating Jalil, Kaliganj police took him to Krishnanagar but locals snatched him right after he got down from the police van.

JS committee recommends

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committee will place its report before parliament within two or three days, and the proposed act is likely to be passed in this session of Jatiya Sangsad, ending on September 20.

On Thursday, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader placed the proposed law in parliament, which then sent it to the parliamentary standing committee for scrutiny. The House body has been asked to submit its report within a week.

With Akabbar Hossain, chief of the JS body, in the chair, the meeting was attended by Obaidul Quader, five lawmakers who are members of the committee.

Besides, road safety campaigner Ilias Kanchan, columnist Syed Abul Maksud, Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association Secretary General Khondaker Enayet Ullah and senior vice president of Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation, also took part the meeting on special invitation.

PROPOSED CHANGES

Section 54 deals with formation of a trustee broad to manage the fund for the injured or family members of those killed in road accidents.

The committee recommended incorporating a representative from civil society in the trustee broad, Ilias Kanchan, told this correspondent.

Section 43 (4) says the government or a government-appointed body can impose "fine at gradual increase rate" for overloading.

Instead of "fine at gradual increase rate", the committee recommended using the term "fine at specific rate", he said.

Section 25 (2) says if any government employee issues fitness certificate to an unfit vehicle, departmental step can be taken against the official.

The committee recommended clarifying it as similar things were mentioned in another section, another participant said.

Ilias Kanchan added that he has given a written proposal for changes in the proposed act, including renaming the law as "Road Transport and Security Act".

He proposed incorporating a provision barring leader of transport owners or workers from holding important posts in the government, but it was not

discussed.

Ilias Kanchan said he also recommended introducing a dress code for drivers, which was opposed by the transport leaders present at the meeting.

Eayet Ullah said they have proposed dropping the provision of having mandatory licence to be a conductor of a vehicle. "We are struggling to get drivers, and if the provision remains, we will not get any staff. The committee, however, did not respond to it," he told The Daily Star last night.

He said as per the existing law, a minibus is a passenger vehicle having seats bellow 31, but most of the imported luxurious buses have 26 to 28 seats. "This is causing a problem, so we asked the committee to specify it."

In March last year, the cabinet approved in principle the proposed legislation but it remained shelved at the law ministry for more than a year for vetting amid opposition by transport owners and workers to some of the provisions.

Later, the government decided to place the draft act before the cabinet following the student agitation for road safety which came on the heels of the death of two college students in the capital on July 29.

Campaigners have long been demanding that the government increase the punishment to at least 10 years for reckless driving resulting in death. As per the existing law, three years' jail is the maximum punishment for this offence.

The draft law retains the punishment of five years' imprisonment for causing death of a person by reckless driving, a sentence which road safety campaigners believe is insufficient.

Campaigners also said the proposed law was rather soft on transport owners, as it held the drivers solely responsible for casualties in road crashes.

At a meeting on September 4, Obaidul Quader, however, said the proposed act was not yet finalised and there was still scope for revision. The parliamentary standing committee might seek experts' opinion on it.

The government has worked for over a year regarding the proposed law and, therefore, lengthy discussion is not required in this meeting, a participant quoted Quader as saying.

Guts deliver Tigers glory

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bouncer that pinged his left wrist in the second over -- and did not need to play another as Mushfiquer pummelled 32 runs off the next 15 balls, farming the strike and unfurling shots of pure genius that resulted in three fours and three sixes that took his tally to 11 and four respectively for the innings. He fell with three balls still left, but by then the tide had irrevocably turned.

Sri Lanka's demoralisation and perhaps the burgeoning rivalry with the Tigers that rendered statement-making more important than rationality showed in opener Upul Tharanga's batting. He hit the second ball from skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza for six and faced all the first 16 deliveries, scoring 27 runs. But Mustafizur Rahman had Kusal Mendis adjudged leg-before off the first delivery he faced, a decision that was upheld upon review.

The dam had burst and Bangladesh were on their way to a near flawless display on the field. Mashrafe, as always, was immense as he got Tharanga to chop on from around the wicket in the third over and then caught Dhananjaya plumb in front in his next over. Off-spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz got into the act soon by dismissing Kusal Perera to have Sri Lanka on 38 for four in the 10th over.

The only bit of resistance from Sri Lanka was a 22-run fifth-wicket stand between captain Angelo Mathews and Dasun Shanaka that ended when Shanaka was run out in the 17th over. Mathews followed three runs later, trapped in front by Rubel Hossain in his first over. When Bangladesh cricket's bogeyman Thisara Perera was caught off Mehedi to leave Sri Lanka on 69 for six, it was all over bar the singing. Dilruwan Perera and Lakmal scored 29 and 20 respectively, but the former was stumped off Mosaddek Hossain and the latter bowled by Mustafizur Rahman. Shakib Al Hasan then ensured that all the bowlers used got a wicket by getting Amila Aponso caught to tie the knot on an utterly dominant performance.

But while the bowling was the picture of teamwork, earlier after Bangladesh won the toss, the batting was mainly about three players. After Malinga rolled back the years by taking the first two of his four wickets -- Liton Das and Shakib -- in the first over and Tamim was sent off by Lakmal, Mushfiquer and youngster Mohammad Mithun strung together a 131-run fourth-wicket stand that started very slowly -- the first boundary did not come till the end of the eighth over -- and picked up pace after the 10th over when first Mithun opened up during a 68-ball 63. Both batsmen benefitted from extra lives -- Mithun was dropped off Malinga when on one and Mushfiquer was dropped off Thisara on 10 -- but they capitalised on their opportunities. Mithun hit two sixes and a four in the 15th over from Kusal

Perera.

A typical bit of brain fade from the junior batsman resulted in the partnership being broken when Mithun slogged Malinga straight up to be caught inside the circle. That resulted in a flurry of wickets as Bangladesh fell from 132 for two to 175 for six with all the specialist batsmen except Mushfiquer gone and news filtering through that Tamim would not bat.

Mushfiquer marshalled the tail to take the score to 229 before Mustafizur was run out. Then Tamim played the fourth and last ball of an unbeaten innings, which helped lift Mushfiquer's innings from a very good one to an unarguably great ODI innings.

'Hashtag' drawing

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100,000 years old, including shell beads and stone tools. Excavations began at the cave in 1991 and are ongoing.

Details of the flake and its design were published Wednesday in the journal Nature. The researchers ran microscopic and chemical analyses of the flake and its design.

The red color of the drawing is actually ocher. Engraved, cross-hatched pieces of ocher have also been found in the cave. The flake itself is smooth and was probably part of a grindstone before it was used for this purpose.

Though it resembles a hashtag, the researchers say the abrupt halt of the lines on the flake's edge suggest that the pattern was part of something on a larger surface. The original drawing may have been more complex, as well.

It was discovered in 2011. Researchers carefully washed the flake with water when it was found and didn't realize the design on it until afterward.

The researchers later attempted to re-create the drawing in various ways and determined that an other crayon bearing a 1- to 3-millimeter pointed tip was used. Some of the lines were made with a single stroke of the crayon, while other, more defined lines are due to multiple strokes. Some lines even suggest that the object was turned while the drawing was being done.

Although there are older findings of art, they mainly include engravings on shell, bone, ocher, eggshells and bedrock, as well as ocher markings in caves. But examples of drawing techniques, especially abstract and figurative drawing, are much younger.

Drawings suggest insight into the culture, behavior and cognition of early humans. This drawing shows that early Homo sapiens in southern Africa were able to create designs using different techniques on varied surfaces, according to the study. It also suggests that there may be more drawings and paintings from this time period to be found.

Nothing known

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have any feud with anybody and they demanded an investigation and proper trial of the killers.

Of the three dead -- Nur Hossain Babu, 30, and his brother-in-law Shimul Azad, 25, traded garment factories' leftover fabrics in Mugda area of the capital.

Visiting Mohakhali Dakhkhinpara in Banani, this correspondent met locals who said deceased Sohag was a local cable TV operator.

Banani police officials said two of the dead -- Shimul and Sohag -- lived in Banani and were accused in several cases, including over drug peddling.

Sohag's relatives confirmed that he was accused in a murder case as a police source was killed in front of his house. However, he later received bail.

Police recovered the bodies around 8:00am from a culvert in Purbachal area, Maniruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Rupganj Police Station, said.

He said officers also found 65 yaba pills in Shimul's pocket.

Bullet wounds were seen in the head and chest of each of the bodies, he said.

When the families failed to contact the three men, they went to the DB office in the capital's Minto Road where officers said they didn't know anything about the matter.

Police later contacted the family members who identified the bodies at Narayanganj General Hospital morgue.

Monirul Islam, additional superintendent of police (admin) in Narayanganj, said there was no DB operation in Narayanganj at the time of the incident.

"We just recovered the bodies. If the family members lodge a complaint, we would record a case," he said.

Family members received the bodies after autopsy.

Our Narayanganj correspondent contributed to this report.

Gas price

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The increase in price of gas came to the fore as LNG is costing the country about Tk 30 per cubic metre.

The average retail price of gas supplied by Petrobangla from domestic sources is Tk 7.39 per cubic metre. But when LNG is mixed with local gas, the price might be set at about Tk 13.

About four months behind the deadline, imported LNG supply started in Chittagong on August 18 as the connection to the national gridline could not be completed before that.

Initially, 100 million cubic feet (mmcf) of gas per day was supplied to the Chittagong region but later it was increased to 300 mmcf, said the energy adviser.

He was speaking at a seminar at the Jatiya Press Club. The Forum for Energy Reporters Bangladesh (FERB) and the Solar Module Manufacturers Association of Bangladesh (SMMAB) jointly organised the programme.

A project to supply the LNG from the Floating Storage and Regasification Unit moored in Moheshkhali to Fauzderhat is under construction.

A 91-km pipeline from Moheshkhali to Anwara has already been established.

But the work for the 30km line from Anwara to Fauzderhat is yet to be completed. A part of the pipeline will go under the river Karnaphuli and this has created complexities.

The energy adviser said because of the technical fault, the pipeline had to be replaced a number of times.

When the problem is sorted out, about 500mmcf gas could be added to the national grid network.

Bangladesh is looking outside to alleviate its energy shortage largely caused by depleting domestic reserves and rising demand. Gas supply stands at about 2,700mmcf against the demand for 3,300mmcf.

Section 57

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offence. "To reduce digital crimes, we need to create public awareness."

The target of the proposed digital security bill was not to control social media, but to control digital crimes, he said adding that digital security should be ensured by using technology.

Jabbar said those who spread rumors during the recent road safety movement were brought to justice with the help of technology.

Hope of 'light' against cancer

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Explaining the technology, she said that nonlinear optics was the study of how intense light interacted with matter.

"We witnessed a significant difference between nonlinear parameters of blood samples from cancer patients and healthy people," she said.

A team of 25 physicists, led by Yasmeen, came up with the findings recently.

It revealed that the method could detect even minor changes and could theoretically open up new possibilities in cancer detection at early stages.

"We are the first to claim [that] we got optical biomarkers [not chemical biomarkers] of cancer."

The team has applied for patents for "Method and system based nonlinear optical characteristic of body fluid for diagnosis on neoplasia". Preceding that was an extensive research.

The patent applications were accepted both in Bangladesh and the USA on July 9, Yasmeen added.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

The path to discovery began when the team started studying fundamental properties of light-matter interaction back in 2013.

During that time, RA Mashelkar, president of Global Research Alliance, paid a visit to the university.

"He was very happy to see our lab and the experiments we were doing .... He then said, 'why don't you see if there are applications of this?'"

That prompted her students to see if there were nonlinear changes that could lead to cancer detection.

Back then, glucose and cholesterol concentrations were being measured by nonlinear optical method but no one had yet used it for cancer diagnosis.

They submitted a proposal in October 2015 to Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP) under the University Grants Commission and it was accepted.

Yasmeen fondly recalled how proud she was of her students who put in a lot of hard work -- from setting up the lab to conducting the research.

The experiments were very arduous. "Our lab [that they set up] is the most sophisticated lab in the country. The whole experimental procedure is automated now and they did it all by themselves."

Referring to innovative ideas that the team had come up with in different steps of the research, Yasmeen said they even developed quartz sample holders for Tk 500 each and normal glass holders for Tk 20 each.

Such a holder used to be imported spending Tk 27,000 and once it was stained with blood and subjected to laser beams, it became useless and had to be discarded.

The team received financial support from the education ministry and the World Bank under a university-industry collaboration, the first of its kind in the country.

In this project, the industry partner is Invent Technologies Ltd, which helped process blood samples and provided the team with the serum to conduct the test.

TIP OF THE ICEBERG

The team is now working to make a

prototype device of the lab-size equipment used for conducting the experiments and hopes to get reliable results.

It is expected to be ready in a year and will help conduct the tests within a very short time for less than Tk 500. Then industries may come in if they want market the product, Yasmeen said.

Two companies -- one local and another foreign -- have already shown interest in investing in the upcoming phases of the research.

Asked if this method would diagnose cancer with more accuracy than other existing ones, Yasmeen said it was too early to say but "the method we are using is very sensitive".

"At this moment all we are trying to say is that we are going to try to identify optical biomarkers -- some markers saying this blood is different from normal, healthy blood.

"Since we have seen some signs that we didn't expect to see so early, maybe we can see some signature that will tell us whether this [a sample] is cancerous ... at an earlier stage."

In Bangladesh, a patient is diagnosed with cancer usually when it reaches the third or fourth stage.

The team is yet to determine the accuracy and experimental measurement error that may occur during the test. It conducted the optical experiments on blood samples from 10 healthy people and 40 cancer patients.

Experiments on a larger scale would help find the accuracy rate, Yasmeen said. However, the test does not require any reagent which means there are no external parameters to look into, said the lead researcher.

Regarding the financial aspect, the SUST professor said it was the lack of funds for research that drove talented Bangladeshi students to countries like the USA.

If the government or industries come forward to fund scientific research, the country will be able to keep its talents, gain new knowledge and turn it into wealth, Yasmeen said.

"The best outcome of our research is a strong non-linear optical research team with exciting work ahead. This is just the tip of the iceberg. The research has to continue for years and years to come."

Jubo League

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secretary of Jubo League central committee and show me! Journalists! I can produce journalists at every moment! Every moment, I can produce journalists! Whether I become MP or not, I will give eight workers eight dandas (TV reporters' handheld microphone) within the next three months," he shouted.

Pavel made the comments during his visit to Ashulia Press Club in Savar, on the outskirts of the capital, on Friday, witnesses said.

According to locals, over the past few days, the Jubo League leader has been campaigning for ticket from Awami League to contest in the upcoming parliamentary election from Dhaka-19 (Savar) constituency.

His visit to the Ashulia press club was part of the campaign, they added.

When contacted over the phone by The Daily Star yesterday, Pavel refused to make any comment over the issue.

When teachers are grabbers!

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takes an initiative to free it of unauthorised occupation," he said.

Last October, the mayor had officially asked the association executives to stop the construction which began in August.

In January this year, the court of Tangail additional district magistrate imposed a status quo on the land and asked the police to maintain peace until a case pending with the court was disposed-off. The association, however, ignored the court's order.

The court had also asked the relevant assistant commissioner for land to report on the status and possession of the land.

The upazila land officer (AC Land) in his report in late January, said that according to the State Acquisition (SA) and Tenancy records, the land was documented in the name of the votaries (Shebayer) of the temple and that various Hindu religious festivals and rituals had taken place there for a long time.

The temple and Debottor estate management committee pays the land tax for the property in question, it said. The report cites a court verdict from the early sixties that declared the land as permanently Debottor property belonging to Madan Gopal temple.

Furthermore, records show that the then East Pakistan government had also attempted to acquire the property but they lost the legal battle that ensued.

Contacted, Additional District Magistrate Md Mosharaf Hossain Khan said that it was the duty of the officer-in-charge (OC) of local police to enforce the court order and take action.

However, further order may be issued involving the superintendent of police if the incident of violation of the order and inaction of local police was brought to the court's knowledge.

When queried about what action the police could take for the violation of a court injunction, Officer-in-Charge of Modhupur Police Station, Md Shariful Islam said, "How long can we stop a teachers' association?"

Pointed out that the court injunc-

tion was still in effect and the case was pending, he said, "As you raised it, we will check it."

Ramendra Nath Biswas, upazila nirbahi officer, also the in-charge of AC Land, said the association did not own the land where they were building the commercial structure and according to official documents, the 205 decimal of the land in question belonged to the temple.

There are 114 illegal occupations of different kinds, including by the teachers' association and mostly makeshift vendors on the temple's property, he said, adding that they have sent a proposal to the district headquarters for eviction of all those.

"I have informed police several times of the violation of court order but to no avail," he said.

Meanwhile, Modhupur Upazila Parishad Chairman Sarwar Alam Khan Abu, who is an adviser of the association, said, "The teacher's association owns the land there and they are constructing the commercial building on an understanding with the temple management committee.

"There are others who have occupied the temple property too."

Md Mofiz Uddin, general secretary of the teachers' association, said, "We are building the structure on 6.31 decimal of land that we own and we have building approval too."

Asked time and again for evidence in support of his claim, Mofiz finally said he was not "sure whether the association would agree to share the documents".

A member of the temple and Debottor estate management committee, requesting anonymity, said, "We have no right to make an understanding with anybody over possession of deity property."

Jibon Kumar Chowdhury, member-secretary of the committee, said, "We can leave the country and go to India if we wish but we cannot sever our age-old bond with our ancestral home-lands here."

He declined to make any further comments.