



A FINAL FAREWELL

Clockwise from top right, long queues formed at the gates of the Army Stadium yesterday, as thousands gathered to pay tributes to Sir Fazle Hasan Abed. A host of luminaries and eminent personalities from various fields join the congregation; US Ambassador Earl R Miller, Nobel laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus, and top leaders of Awami League pay their respects to the icon.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Announcement of full AL committee likely tomorrow: Quader

Hints on possible reshuffle in cabinet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League's full central working committee is expected to be announced tomorrow, newly re-elected AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader said yesterday.

The road transport and bridges minister also hinted on a possible reshuffle in the cabinet next year.

He was talking to reporters at the ministry office.

The ruling party's triennial council on Saturday elected 42 office-bearers in the 81-member committee and names of the others would be announced later by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, as councillors vested the responsibility in her.

Asked when the full-fledged committee would be declared, Quader said AL presidium members will meet on Tuesday and discuss about it. "Full committee is expected to be declared on that day," he said.

Replying to another question on whether cabinet may witness changes as an effort to separate the party from the government, he said reshuffle in cabinet is a routine matter.

"Some changes may happen [in the cabinet] in the new year," he said.

Seven ministers do not feature in the partially announced committee while five have retained their posts.

Asked whether the third generation of "Sheikh Mujib Family" -- Sajeeb Wazed Joy, Saima Wazed Hossain and Radwan Mujib Siddiq -- could be included in the new committee, Quader said "They have not agreed to that."

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'Riddled with untruths about Bangladesh and BNP'

Amit Shah's speech in Indian parliament criticised by Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday criticised Indian Home Minister Amit Shah for "unwarranted labelling" of BNP as repressive while passing the much-discussed Citizenship Amendment Act in the country's parliament.

While addressing the Indian parliament, Amit Shah referred to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia -- blaming her for repression of minorities when she was in power, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said at a press conference at the party chairperson's Gulshan office in Dhaka.

Giving a "lame excuse", Amit Shah claimed the trend of oppressing minorities in Bangladesh is still ongoing and thus India was forced to pass the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), Fakhrul said.

"A speech riddled with untruths about Bangladesh and BNP was delivered in the Indian parliament. We expect that the Indian government would withdraw the statement for the greater interest of both nations, and this should not be repeated for the sake of cooperation," Fakhrul said.

He further said the Indian home minister compared Bangladesh to Pakistan and Afghanistan randomly in the course of supporting the citizenship act and claimed that religious minorities in Bangladesh are being repressed as Islam is its state religion.

Through his comments, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party President Amit Shah has deliberately attempted to brand BNP as repressive to support the controversial act, the BNP leader alleged.

"Diplomatically, Bangladesh-India relation is now going through a golden chapter. However, Amit Shah blamed a friendly neighbour for repression of Hindus, Buddhists and Christians," Fakhrul said.

The political atmosphere in the region is being pushed towards a conflict in a bid to establish a Hindu state, balancing the gun on the shoulders of Bangladesh and BNP, Fakhrul said.

"BNP strongly believes that Indian Home Minister Amit Shah's and official spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs Raveesh Kumar's statements in this regard are untrue, unprofessional,

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NEWS ON BASIC BANK HC rule sought on graft in recruitment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An application was filed with the High Court yesterday seeking its suo moto (voluntary) order on the government, to conduct an inquiry into alleged corruption in appointments of 1,173 employees in BASIC Bank during the chairmanship of chairman Sheikh Abdul Hye Bacchu.

Advocate Titus Hillo Rema submitted the application, requesting the HC to ask for the audit report of the auditor and comptroller general's office, that has revealed huge irregularities and nepotism in the appointments of officials and employees of BASIC Bank between 2012 and 2014.

He also prayed to the HC to summon Sheikh Abdul Hye Bacchu, the then chairman of BASIC Bank, to appear before it

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'INSTIGATING STUDENTS' Court to decide on arrest warrant against Fakhrul on Jan 22

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court will decide on January 22 whether to issue arrest warrants against BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and two others in a case over "instigating students to wage an anti-government movement" last year.

The other two accused are: BNP standing committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury and Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi Ahmed.

After receiving probe report from police, Metropolitan Magistrate Md Habibur Rahman Chowdhury yesterday set the date for passing the order on the issue.

On February 6, Inspector Mohammad Sentu Miah of Tejgaon Police Station submitted a probe report that mentioned the three BNP leaders' involvement with the incident.

AB Siddique, president of Jananetri Parishad -- a pro-Awami League organisation -- on August 6 last year filed the case with the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate AHM Tuah.

Taking cognisance of the charges, the magistrate directed the officer-in-charge of Tejgaon Police Station to investigate the matter and submit a report.

On July 29 last year, two students of Shaheed Ramiz Uddin Cantonment College -- Abdul Karim Rajib and Dia Khanam Mim -- were run over and killed while nine were injured when two buses of Jabal-e-Noor Paribahan were recklessly racing each other. The incident ignited

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Abdur Razzaq's 8th death anniversary

CITY DESK

Today marks the eighth death anniversary of veteran Awami League leader



Abdur Razzaq, one of the organisers of the Liberation War and a close associate of Bangabandhu.

To mark the day, Awami League leaders, led by the party's General Secretary and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, will pay homage to the veteran leader by placing a wreath at his grave at Banani graveyard.

On the occasion, Abdur Razzaq Foundation and Abdur Razzaq Smriti Sangsad will organise a discussion at TSC.

President of Abdur Razzaq Smriti Sangsad Prof Dr Abdul Mannan Chowdhury will preside over the meeting.

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Address corruption before hiking price

Energy experts say about proposal on electricity tariff

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Energy experts at a press conference yesterday urged the government not to increase the price of electricity, as it will severely impact the cost of living and further escalate the ongoing price hike of essentials.

Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) organised the press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity to share its opinion over the government's proposal on raising electricity price.

Authorities have recently made a proposal to increase electricity price, citing growing power generation costs and revenue deficit as reasons, but their logic has been proven invalid and unfair, speakers said.

Power generation costs and losses that the government has been facing can be reduced significantly if corruption in the sector is addressed properly, they added.

Presenting a written statement at the event, noted energy expert Prof M Shamsul Alam said some weak policies of the government, inefficiency of some employees and corruption are the major reasons for which the revenue deficit is occurring and production cost is rising.

"Bangladesh Power Development Board, at a recent public hearing, showed a production cost hike and an income deficit of Tk 8,786 crore, but those were proven wrong during the hearing," he said.

There are several indicators, like service quality and electricity flow, which need to be considered to increase the price, but only a few of them were prioritised in the recent

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PHOTO OF THE DAY

AMRAN HOSSAIN



Though the month of Poush is generally celebrated in the city, it brings immense misery for some. A man sleeps on a plank with a loose nail dangerously close to his face at Dhaka's Hatirjheel early yesterday morning, with only a thin blanket to keep out the biting cold. Meanwhile, a jogger, dressed appropriately for the weather, runs past him.