

JMB LEADERS
Victims of blast,
grenade attack
cases for UN-led
interrogation

Writers, journalists, educationists and political leaders and activists implicated in different bomb and grenade attack cases and charged with treason yesterday at a press conference demanded interrogation of the arrested militants by a UN-led inquiry team.

In a written statement, they criticised the prime minister for blaming the Awami League (AL) and India on several occasions for the bomb attacks during the last seven years for which the Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) chief and other top militants have admitted responsibility.

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2 muggers lynched in Ctg

Angry mob beat two muggers to death yesterday in the port city's Bakalia area.

Police said three muggers intercepted Partha Prathim Shil, a loan

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Prayer Timing		
March 17		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-00	5-35
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-14	6-18
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation

EDEN COLLEGE CHAOS
JCD leaders sell a hall seat for Tk 10,000

HASAN JAHID TUSHER and KAMRUL HASAN KHAN

Leaders of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) Eden University College unit, divided in several groups, are allegedly involved in a shady business of arranging allotment of about 1,000 seats to students in the four hostels of the college.

Students seeking seats in any of the hostels have to pay around Tk 10,000 each to leaders of the JCD, student wing of the ruling BNP, many of the sufferers said.

The malpractice continues for years as during the previous Awami

League rule, its student wing Bangladesh Chhatra League was also allegedly involved in similar foul play.

At least 2,500 students reside at the hostels with 1,200 seats, JCD sources, hostel staff and students said.

The college authorities however said there are about 1,600 students at the hostels.

Principal of the college Feroza Begum had earlier denied any illegal practices in seat allotment and said they would look into the allegations when the college reopens.

A number of students alleged the college authorities are actually in the dark about how many students reside at the hostels as they go for on-the-spot checking. The JCD leaders virtually control hostel affairs, including television channels in the TV rooms.

A resident student of Hasna Begum Hostel said she had to give Tk 8,000 to a JCD leader at the hostel to get a seat last year.

Requesting anonymity, she said those who fail to pay money hardly get any seats. Many of the students who come from rural areas usually

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14-party bid to besiege Wasa office foiled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League-led 14-party opposition alliance could not carry out its planned siege of the Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) office in the capital yesterday due to heavy police obstruction and barricades at several points.

The 14-party combine programme announced earlier aimed at protesting poor water supply in the capital.

Hundreds of opposition workers began to gather in front of a community centre at Eskaton Road near Bangla Motor intersection around 10:30am. They brought out a procession with colourful banners, placards and festoons around 11:00am and marched towards the Wasa office.

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Bird flu dogs Asia

REUTERS, Mumbai

Four Asian nations confirmed the presence of the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu yesterday while China said it faced a long struggle to contain the disease before the arrival of flu-carrying migratory birds in spring.

Afghanistan, India and Myanmar said tests had now confirmed H5N1 caused recent outbreaks in birds, while Malaysia reported two new cases in a wild bird and dead chickens.

In India, veterinary worker began throttling more than 70,000 birds to try to control the latest outbreak there. Hundreds of people were also tested for fever.

"There is no time for niceties. The birds have to be killed as fast as possible," said Bijay Kumar, animal husbandry commissioner of the state of Maharashtra, where bird flu resurfaced this week in backyard poultry.

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A woman with an empty pitcher chants slogans demanding regular supply of water during the 14-party's Wasa Bhaban siege programme yesterday. The photo was taken from Bangla Motor intersection.

Opposition doesn't want army in polls

Says PM, terms reform illogical

UNB, Sujanagar, Pabna

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday blasted the opposition for opposing elections under the existing caretaker-government system and in presence of army, saying that they want to capture

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Man dies from Rab torture

Alleges family

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A man died in Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMCH) yesterday allegedly from torture by Rapid Action Battalion (Rab).

Rab handed over the victim Obaidul Huque Sardar, 37, to the police on March 5 after arresting him on a motorcycle snatching

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BAPPI KILLING
HC commutes death term of 3 convicts

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court (HC) yesterday delivered its judgement in the sensational Bappi murder case, confirming the death sentence of two out of five and commuting three others' death sentence to life imprisonment.

On November 30, 2002, the

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Accept in principle proposed reforms

Hasina asks govt, flies off to US

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the government to accept in principle the opposition-proposed reforms in the caretaker government system and the Election Commission (EC) before any dialogue on them takes place.

The government has to accept the reform proposals in principle and then make a specific proposal in writing for a dialogue mentioning the terms of reference (ToR) of the committee to be formed to discuss reforms, she said.

Hasina, also president of the Awami League (AL), was talking to reporters at Zia International Airport yesterday morning prior to her departure for the US for treatment of her ear.

She suffered injuries to her hearing due to the loud grenade blasts at a party rally in the city on August 21, 2004 and she is under treatment since then.

The AL chief talked on various issues including militancy, price hike of essentials, power and fuel crises and Rab (Rapid Action Battalion) operations. The former

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CRIME-BUSTING PLAN
Mobile operators asked to dismantle network bases along borders

ABU SAEED KHAN

The government as part of a 'crime-busting plan' has set a deadline for cellphone operators to dismantle their network infrastructures within eight kilometres of the Indian borders, sources said.

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) at a meeting yesterday gave two to three weeks' time to the operators to implement the plan. The telecoms watchdog claims the move would reduce smuggling and

other crimes along the border.

The plan, once implemented, will deprive the people of one divisional and nine district headquarters of cellphone services.

The BTRC in a letter sent to all mobile operators on Tuesday pinned the blame for law and order slide along the borders on their network coverage.

It observed that GrameenPhone has set up 100 base stations within 50 metres to seven kilometres of the Indo-Bangladesh demarcation line.

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