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State offices used for BNP activities

SHAKHAWAT LITON

In addition to using the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and Prodhannontri Bhaban, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is now using the prime minister's evening office Jamuna at 30 Hare Road for her party activities ahead of the parliamentary election.

Keeping BNP's central office unused, the BNP chairperson has been holding a series of meetings with the party's grassroots level leaders at Jamuna since last month using government facilities. Legal experts termed the practice as 'political corruption', but BNP leaders see nothing wrong with it.

The high profile offices --- PMO and Prodhannontri Bhaban --- have been used frequently over the last four years to hold different types of meetings of BNP, like resolving conflicts within the four-party alliance and nominating party candidates to contest in by-elections to parliamentary seats.

In addition to using the high profile government offices, the prime minister has also been using government facilities in different areas of the country for holding public rallies seeking votes for her party-led alliance, all in the name of inaugurating different development works in the areas.

The prime minister is using helicopters to visit different areas

in the country. She goes there and holds party rallies. The existing law does not allow such practices. But it is going on proving that there is no accountability, former adviser to a caretaker government M Hafizuddin Khan told The Daily Star.

To prevent such misuse of government offices and facilities for the purpose of a political party, the Election Commission (EC) apparently has nothing to do at this stage due to legal limitations.

The election law bans use of any type of government offices and

public transportation for the purpose of a party in its election campaign after the election schedule is declared.

Experts who held constitutional posts however said government offices cannot be used for purposes of political parties.

"In broad terms, political corruption is the misuse of a public office for private gain. Now the ruling BNP is using public offices for the party's gain. It's of course a corruption," Hafizuddin, also former comptroller and auditor general, said.

"It is also wastage of public money if the government carries out a party's activities using public offices. A case should be filed against such misuse of public money" he added.

Agriculture Minister MK Anwar however defended the use of government offices by ruling BNP's chairperson for carrying out her party activities.

"There is nothing wrong with it and it is not an issue to discuss. It has been going on for a long time, the last Awami League government also used government offices to hold party meetings," Anwar, also vice president of the ruling BNP, told The Daily Star adding, "It's not possible to accurately separate the activities of the government and the ruling party. There is a lot of overlapping between the functions of the two."

Talking to The Daily Star former chief election commissioner (CEC) Abu Hena also came out against using government offices for purposes of political parties.

"Government offices should not be used for purposes of political parties. Many people think that the government and the ruling party are the same, which is wrong," he said.

Anwar also a former cabinet secretary, however, said security measures are necessary if the BNP

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PHOTO: PFD

Prime Minister and BNP chief Khaleda Zia speaks to her party's grassroots level leaders from Comilla at the Hare Road office of PM yesterday.

Intelligence may quiz 4 arrestees to find out motive

Security upped at Bangabandhu Museum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Task Force Intelligence (TFI) might interrogate the four people arrested at Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in Dhaka Monday for 'attempting to foil' yesterday's programme on the 31st death anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

"We've requested the higher authorities to take measures to interrogate the four at the TFI to find out about their motives and links," said Investigation Officer (IO) of the case Sub-Inspector Manjurul Haque Akand.

The arrestees --- Nurunnabi alias Tara Mian, his assistant Abdur Rahim alias Darbesh, and Rahim's parents Salahuddin and Amina Khatun --- were placed on a three-day remand each yesterday.

Police sources said as the Dhanmondi police could not obtain any leads from the arrestees, they have communicated with the higher authorities for the four to be

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Nation mourns for Bangabandhu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thousands of mourners thronged the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum premises on Road No. 32 of Dhanmondi in the capital yesterday to pay tributes to slain Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on his 31st death anniversary.

Soon after the half-day hartal enforced by Awami League (AL) and its 14-party allies, people from all walks of life went to the Bangabandhu Bhaban in Dhanmondi where the great leader was assassinated along with most of his family members on this day in 1975 by some misguided members of the armed forces.

The mourners carrying banners and wearing black badges stood in long queues to place floral wreaths and bouquets at Bangabandhu's portrait. Many chanted slogans demanding execution of the verdict in the Bangabandhu murder case.

The Bangabandhu Museum premises were decorated with photographs of Bangabandhu and his family members, posters and

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AL man killed at feast for the destitute

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unknown assailants killed an Awami League (AL) activist as he was supervising a feast for the destitute people on the 31st death anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the city's Mirpur area yesterday. A bystander rickshaw-puller was also injured in the incident.

The criminals in a surprise

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6-hr hartal passes off peacefully

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The six-hour nationwide hartal enforced by the AL-led 14-party opposition combine demanding execution of the Bangabandhu murder case verdict and reinstatement of the public holiday on August 15 as the National Mourning Day passed off peacefully yesterday.

After taking power in 2001, the

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Condition of Poet Shamsur Rahman further deteriorates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The condition of poet Shamsur Rahman's health deteriorated further yesterday as heavy fluctuation in his blood pressure continued.

Doctors prescribed additional medicine for controlling the poet's high blood pressure that also caused lower functioning of his kidneys, according to a press release of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital (BSMMUH).

The poet's level of consciousness and liver condition also

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11 rescued from traffickers on Bhomra border

UNB, Satkhira

Police yesterday rescued 11 people, including five women, from the clutches of traffickers near Bhomra border.

Acting on a tip-off, police raided the house of Abdur Rahim, the gang leader, and rescued the victims kept in the house for trafficking to India.

During the raid, the law enforcers arrested an alleged member of the gang named Sukdev while others, including the gang leader, managed to flee.

The rescued people are Mou, 16, Rozina Khatun, 18, and Fatema Khatun, 20, of Khulna; Shariful

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AUG 17 BOMBINGS Time yet to come to name patrons

Investigation on to identify them, says Babar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After a yearlong investigation into the August 17 near-simultaneous bomb blasts across the country, the government believes time is yet to come for disclosing the names of the militants' patrons as learnt from the probe.

State Minister for Home Affairs

Lutfozzaman Babar said yesterday they still continued the investigation to identify the militants' patrons.

He however declined to give the names surfaced in the investigation.

"Without adequate proof, we cannot go for action against the

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Laxmipur court awards death to 3 JMB men

UNB, Laxmipur

A court here yesterday awarded death sentence to three leaders of outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and life imprisonment to five others of the militant outfit for their involvement in August 17 blasts in the district town.

Those awarded death penalty are Aatur Rahman Sunny, Masudur Rahman and Amjad Ali. The lifers are Arifur Rahman, Azharul Islam, Maulana Emranul Atahar, Maulana Ershadullah and Nazrul Islam.

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CTG WASA PLANT Gross irregularities detected in low price quoting

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

A review panel formed under the public procurement regulations (PPR) has detected gross irregularities in the tender for a water treatment plant of Chittagong Wasa, which is set to award the work to a bidder quoting a suspiciously low price.

With a quote of Tk 64 crore, which is Tk 30 crore lower than the second and third lowest offers, the bidder, DCL & Associates, may in fact build the plant with substandard and inadequate materials,

said sources.

After scrutinising the tender process, the review panel has concluded that if this contract is awarded to the so-called lowest bidder, the purpose of the tender will not be properly served.

The recommendation of the technical evaluation committee (TEC) for accepting the bid of DCL & Associates as the lowest evaluated bid has violated the provisions of Public Procurement Regulations 2003 and lacks in transparency, the panel observed in its report submitted to the government last

week.

It recommended that the bid be rejected and the procuring entity (Project Director) re-evaluate the remaining responsive bids in line with the relevant PPR provisions.

Earlier, the Chittagong Wasa tried to get clearance for this tender from the cabinet purchase committee. But the committee became suspicious after a member of the tender's technical evaluation committee had registered a note of dissent.

Meanwhile, the second lowest

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Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina lays flower petals on the graves of her family members, murdered on August 15, 1975, at Banani graveyard in the capital yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

Unplanned urbanisation leads to stagnation of wastewater and hazardous living condition in DND (Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra) area.

WATERLOGGING Unplanned urbanisation threatens permanent stagnation in DND area

MORSHED ALI KHAN

With every canal, pond and low-lying area being filled up by uncollected rubbish generated by more than a million people living in Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra (DND) area, the severe consequences of unplanned urbanisation is beginning to show with permanent waste water logging and unhealthy living condition.

Officials of Narayanganj and Dhaka district administrations, Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and Narayanganj Municipality said it is not their responsibility to dispose of wastes from the DND area.

"In our record, the DND area had a 45-kilometre long canal network crisscrossing it and ensuring a healthy natural drainage system, but now nothing is left," said a drainage expert of Dhaka Wasa requesting anonymity.

Thousands of tons of industrial and household waste generated in the fast-growing 57 square kilometres of the DND area are dumped into ponds, canals and low-lying areas. Wasa and Water Development Board engineers

working in the area warned that the area would face a permanent problem of water logging as soon as all its plots are developed. Over 25 percent of the area has been developed without any proper plan whatsoever, according to Rajuk sources.

When five years ago Rajuk tried to introduce a plan as per its Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan (Master Plan), it was forced to back off before a stiff resistance from hundreds of thousands of private landowners, who had bought all sizes of plots in the area. The area has ever since grown without any parents', where hundreds of residential buildings and small workshops have been built for low income people. The mess related to land allocations in the DND area becomes clear with the addresses of the plots on which buildings have been built. For instance, near Shonir Akhra, this correspondent found a house with a number 12/1/2/A (Ka) and the next door number was 135/A (Ka).

Experts in city waste water drainage system said the area has

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SA GAMES SOCCER Bangladesh meet Afghans today

AL MUSABBIR SADI from Colombo

Bangladesh will look forward to stay on top of Group B by beating Afghanistan today in their second match of the 10th South Asian Games football competition.

The match at Sugathadasa Stadium will kick off at 4.30 pm Bangladesh time.

Both the previous Group B matches have ended in draws and Bangladesh share the lead with under-23 level, Bangladesh edged Afghanistan 2-1 when the latter made their SA Games debut in

mance in an upset goalless draw against three-time gold medalists India have injected more competition into the group for a place in the semifinals and although Bangladesh have never lost to Afghanistan, coach Diego Cruciani would be under pressure to maintain the record.

At national level, Bangladesh trounced Afghanistan 4-1 and drew 2-2 in the Asian Cup qualifiers in January 1979 in Dhaka and at under-23 level, Bangladesh edged Afghanistan 2-1 when the latter made their SA Games debut in

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