

Dhaka proposes

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issues of the 21st century and urged the movement to remain focused on the issues that affected the vast majority of Nam citizens -- poverty and economic deprivation.

Reinvigorating the Non-Aligned Movement was the core theme of the interactive session. Khan suggested that Nam must replenish its commitment for an action-oriented approach.

He stressed that the proposed three expert groups would contribute to improving the movement's collective capacity to assess current events, develop an early warning system and prevent a crisis.

Khan called upon the member states to work together to resist the political conditions attached with some development assistance programmes. He called for a collective stand to make foreign aid more 'development friendly'.

The foreign minister also proposed that Nam experts should develop and recommend a transparent set of criteria for accepting assistance from their development partners.

Khan assisted the foreign minister in the high-level meeting.

The foreign minister also held bilateral meetings with his counterparts from different countries. He called on Francisco Soberon, a Cuban Minister who is also president of the Central Bank of Cuba and one of the senior most aides to President Fidel Castro.

During their meeting, Khan recalled with appreciation Cuba's support during Bangladesh's war of liberation. He requested the Cuban minister to convey the good wishes of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to President Fidel Castro for his early recovery.

The Cuban minister praised Bangladesh for maintaining a steady growth of over 6 per cent when many developing countries were struggling due to pressures of globalisation. He also appreciated Bangladesh's achievements in education and agriculture sectors.

Khan mentioned that the people of Bangladesh have a great deal of goodwill for the people of Cuba and he looked forward to strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries.

Foreign Minister Morshed Khan also called on Nicolas Maduro Moros, the foreign minister of Venezuela, at the latter's request. The two ministers discussed bilateral issues and matters of mutual interest.

Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin, Bangladesh Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury and Bangladesh High Commissioner to Canada, who is also concurrently accredited to Cuba, Rafiq Ahmed

Blames Proshika

FROM PAGE 1
to take part in the 14-party opposition combine's September 12 Prime Minister's Office siege programme and an opposition grand rally scheduled for September 18.

Refuting the allegation of Proshika staff's participation in opposition programmes, Mahubub said, "Proshika is not an institution to hire manpower for any political party."

Proshika has a political ideology but it is not partisan, he said.

He said Proshika works for poor people and to establish human rights, women's rights, good governance, democracy and the spirit of the Liberation War and so it has been the target time and again.

During the last five years, the ruling coalition created obstacles to Proshika's receiving around Tk 350 crore foreign donations. Proshika officials said in the press conference.

crackdown as many branch offices are now under lock and key while the staff have remained absent fearing arrest and harassment.

Proshika top officials Qazi Khazae Alam, Abdur Rab, Ali Ahmed Tutul and Giasuddin Pathan also addressed the press conference.

They demanded immediate and unconditional release of the arrested Proshika staff and an end to attack on the organisation.

Bangladesh Manobadhikar Samonny Parishid in a statement demanded that the government explain publicly the reason of arresting and harassing Proshika staff.

Our Manikganj correspondent adds: Forty-two lawyers in a joint statement demanded release of the arrested Proshika staff.

76kg bomb

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In the forwarding report placed before the court, CID Inspector Abu Hena Mohammad Yusuf, also investigation officer (IO) of the case, said Mamun might be involved in the blasts and he needs to be intensively interrogated to find out clues about the blasts and whereabouts of the perpetrators.

After the hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate Shamsul Alam granted the petition for showing Hannan arrested in the case and placed him on a seven-day remand.

Mamun was earlier arrested in connection with a case filed with Kotalipara Police Station for plotting to kill Hasina and was facing trial in the case.

The police have so far arrested 12 people in connection with the Ramna Batamul blasts but all of them were granted bail from the High Court.

Of them, Moulana Akbar Hussain gave a confessional statement to a metropolitan magistrate on June 14, 2001 disclosing names of Mufti Hannan and others involved in the blasts.

Hafiz
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Water resources ministry officials said the ministers will visit the places through which the common rivers flow including the areas adjacent to Ichhamoti and Kalindi rivers. They will also visit river embankments, irrigation sites and a water treatment project along the Indo-Bangla border.

On September 18, the two sides will visit the border points in Khagrachhari and Feni through which the shared rivers flow into Bangladesh. They will later meet in Dhaka on September 19 and 20.

Opposition plans

FROM PAGE 20
Avenue with AL presidium member Abdur Razzak in the chair.

The Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina is expected to deliver her speech at the grand rally announcing the final agitation programme to compel BNP-Lamaat alliance government accept reforms in the caretaker government system and in the Election Commission (EC).

"The agitation programme which will be declared at the grand rally will be our final agitation to force the ruling alliance accept electoral reforms," 14-party Coordinator Abdul Jalil said adding that they would do everything they can to force the government accept their reforms proposal.

Jalil, also general secretary of AL, said they have no alternative but to win a victory in the last fight. "It is our fight for our existence, either we win or become extinct," Jalil told the meeting adding that they would direct the grassroots level leaders tomorrow so that they can prepare for it.

Saying they have been beaten up repeatedly, Abdur Razzak directed grassroots leaders to prepare to retaliate if attacked again. Razzak instructed them to mobilise village people so that they could take to the streets of Dhaka with sticks in their hands. He said a mass upsurge would force the government accept their demand for electoral reforms.

Tofail Ahmed said the prime minister is determined to hold the general elections with Justice KM Hasan as chief of the caretaker

government and Justice MA Aziz as the chief election commissioner (CEC). "We are also determined to resist any elections in the country under their jurisdiction," Tofail, an AL presidium member, said.

He said indefinite hartal would be declared on the day the caretaker government assumes power if KM Hasan is made chief of caretaker government.

Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon said the grand rally will not be an ordinary one, the final round of agitation programme would be declared at the grand rally and the programme would take effect from the next day. He alleged the government has already begun arresting wholesale opposition workers.

Grassroots level leaders suggested that programmes should be declared to bring downtown Dhaka to a standstill for several days. They also demanded publishing advertisements with the photographs and names of those police personnel who tortured opposition leaders and activists during the EC Secretariat and Prime Ministers' Office siege programmes.

Senior leaders including Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Suranjit Sengupta, Mortia Chowdhury, Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Advocate Abdul Hamid, Obaidul Quader, Hasanul Haque Inu, Mozaffar Hossain Chowdhury, Maya, Bimal Biswas, Pankaj Bhattacharya, MA Gani spoke at the meeting.

Presidents and general secretaries of different districts also spoke at the meeting.

Deal for offshore

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He also expressed the hope that the Thai-Bangla joint group might work together not only on the Bay of Bengal or the Gulf of Thailand, but also in the energy exploration in other countries in future.

Mahmudur Rahman said the joint working group should start their study immediately and complete it during the tenure of the caretaker government as the final exploration could take place in the beginning of the next government.

Earlier, the Thai company had offered Bangladesh 30 per cent of the total share of the three blocks where they intended to go for joint hydrocarbon survey. Energy Division sources said.

The recent discovery of huge gas reserves by India and Myanmar in the Bay near Bangladesh's economic zone encouraged international energy companies to come up with proposals to initiate hydrocarbon explorations in offshore areas.

The Bangladesh government now prepares for a third bidding for hydrocarbon explorations in the offshore areas.

India

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northern state of Uttar Pradesh with the epicentre of the outbreak in Moradabad district, near the Indian capital New Delhi.

An official associated with India's anti-polio campaign said Thursday the "export" of polio from India was probably because the country suffered from a strain of the virus that spreads particularly quickly.

"India had virus types one, two and three but type two was eradicated in 1999," said the official, who wished to remain unnamed. "Today we have only five cases of type three -- whose transmission is slow -- and the rest are all type one which spreads the fastest of the lot."

Polio has been largely eliminated in most of the world but still exists in countries including Nigeria, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. There were a total of 1,900 cases reported last year, according to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative spearheaded by the WHO.

"People from areas of active circulation of the virus -- in this case from Moradabad -- carry them to previously polio-free areas," a senior Indian health ministry official said, explaining the spread of the virus.

India accounted for 83 per cent of the world's new polio cases in 2002 with 1,600 cases that year. But in 2005, that figure was reduced to just 66 cases, according to WHO figures.

RMG wage

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he said, "We definitely want to increase the wages of the workers but we do not want to bow down before the political gain," he added, rejecting the proposed pay structure.

Annisul Haq, BGMEA representative on the wage board, said around Tk 1,300 salary hike was proposed for grades that did not have any debate. The proposed wage was signed without any discussion.

No factory owner will prefer shutting down the factory, he noted.

BGMEA President SM Fazlul Haq said some fear that 50-70 per cent garment factories may face shutdown if the proposed wage is implemented.

He urged the government to revise the proposal so that the growth in the sector can continue.

The garment leaders said when price index went down by 15-20 per cent in the last five years, government subsidy declined to 5 per cent from 25 per cent.

Moreover, rising fuel oil price, interest and other bank charges as well as transportation cost have weakened the ability of exporters to face the exorbitant wage hike, they said, adding that severe load-shedding, congestion at Chittagong Port, political instability and other adverse issues have added more risks.

BKMEA President Fazlul Haque said the garment owners are continuing their efforts to fix an amount very close to Tk 1,604 as the minimum wage but further discussion can take place with the government and the workers as several hundred factories may face closure.

"We totally disagree with implementing the proposed pay structure in phases over three years and the pay structure of all other grades," he said, urging the government to ensure assistance like other competing countries.

He demanded an increase of cash incentive to 10 per cent from five per cent as export subsidy from the day the new wages are implemented. Bank interest rate should be within seven per cent and uninterupted electricity and hassle-free port should be ensured, he said.

Maj Mannan

FROM PAGE 20
convoy of 25 vehicles with sticks and stones at Dattarhat at around 2:00pm.

Mannan, on way to Binodpur and Nalpur in the sadar upazila as part of his election campaign, was in front of the convoy during the attack.

The attackers, allegedly led by ruling BNP goons, vandalised three vehicles and wounded the drivers.

The injured were sent to different clinics and hospitals for treatment.

Mannan's motorcade came under BNP attack before at Majdee in Noakhali during his election campaign.

Saying that foreign direct invest-

Coalmine made nation's liability

FROM PAGE 1
been representing directly and indirectly all the Chinese companies that had badly implemented the coal mine project, coal power project and the projects' consultant firms. He also bribed heavily any officials and employees related to the project, who might cause any problems. As a result, the government had never been advised properly on the matter, sources pointed out.

"It is therefore no wonder that the BNP-led alliance government wanted Indian giant Tata to go for an open-pit mining project in Barapukuria," quips an official who was involved in the negotiation with Tata. "The idea was that Tata could start open-cast mining there in 2011 by paying off for the investments made in the current project. Why, if the current project is good, would the government want that?" one source asked.

The original project designer firmly says, "The only remedy for this disastrous project is to shut it down. We still have time. We should abandon this scheme and punish the businessman responsible for spearheading this deal from behind the scenes."

The Geological Survey of Bangladesh (GSB) discovered Barapukuria Coal reserve in 1985. But mysteriously, till date the government never formally announced the discovery.

According to the GSB, the mine has a reserve of 303 million tonnes of coal in place, of which 200 million tonnes are recoverable from an average depth of 191 metres. The present mining project will be hardly able to tap 10 per cent of this reserve.

The discovery drew the interest of several mining companies, including Australian coal giant BHP, that suggested open-pit mining there. BHP was however offered Phulbari as a prospective coalzone.

IRR MANIPULATION

According to one of the architects of this project, when the proposal for it was sent to the National Economic Council (NEC) in the early nineties, it came to notice that the profit aspect of such an enormous scheme was very weak.

The then energy secretary instructed the persons concerned with the scheme to make it profitable by adding investment components.

He said, "The IRR was increased to 39 per cent from 13 per cent by including participation of Bangladesh Railway, Water Development Board (Wapda) and Power Development Board (PDB) in the project. Such a huge project should show 40 per cent IRR to make it profitable. Anyway, with 39 per cent IRR, the project looked viable and the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecneec) approved it.

Neither the railway nor the PDB actually invested anything in it, therefore the IRR calculations fall flat."

In fact, the PDB, railway and Wapda withdrew from the project in 1999, after the mine became flooded due to water flow from internal aquifers. The subterranean mine then became risky as its upper layer became very weak. CMC, the mine developer, then argued that it has technology to continue mining there but it ultimately redesigned a fresh shaft, thus reducing the coal production capacity by 50 per cent.

As per the original plan, the mine should have generated enough coal to make export a viable option and the minimum shipment of coal should have been 30,000 tonnes at a time. But Mongla port, which is supposed to handle

THE BENEFICIARY OF THE PROJECT

Being close to the rulers, the brother of a BNP lawmaker, who runs an industrial group that produces among other things electrical accessories, acted as the main driving force for this project and made hundreds of crores of taka from it.

Side by side, a senior BNP policymaker was reportedly bribed Tk 30 crore in the early nineties for the deal.

In 1998, the Awami League (AL) government had stopped repayment of the Supplier's Credit and the Barapukuria mining work stumbled. But the representative of the Chinese companies then struck partnership with an AL lawmaker, who was also a junior minister for a couple of years. The AL junior minister lost his portfolio due to suspicious activities.

Political situation

FROM PAGE 1
the damaging impasse over the upcoming election."

The US envoy was addressing the launch of a new business forum styled International Business Forum of Bangladesh (IBFB) at Sheraton Hotel.

As a non-partisan and independent forum, the IBFB will work as a complementary organisation to provide the businessmen with appropriate business solutions.

Presided over by IBFB President Mahmudul Islam Chowdhury, the function was addressed among others by noted economist Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud, head of European Union (EU) delegation Dr Stefan Frowein, and IBFB Vice-president ATM Saïdul Alam.

Samina Afrin, manager of AC Nielsen, presented a keynote paper on business development survey.

The US ambassador said the business community should be considered as part of the civil society to strengthen democracy in the country.

"Their participation is quite important in creating a strong relationship between the citizens and the elected government."

"I don't see IBFB as a rival to the existing chambers or trade bodies. I rather see it as a partner of the existing ones," she said calling on the chambers to come forward with support for the new business forum.

She said she hopes the IBFB would set an achievable short-term goal to improve the business climate by addressing the issues of concerns.

Dr Stefan Frowein said continued progress towards ensuring compliance with social responsibility and core labour standards in export industries are among the vital challenges that Bangladesh's business face.

Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud said it is very difficult to work as a non-political organisation in Bangladesh. He suggested that the IBFB members should be objective and analytical while lobbying the government for policy changes.

He said, "There remains a lack of analytical ability at the government level. As a result, we are facing problems continuously and it is bad for a country seeking foreign investments."

Saying that foreign direct invest-

ment (FDI) has both its pros and cons, he urged the foreign experts not to blame only Bangladesh for inefficiency in handling the FDI.

He noted that countries like China and Vietnam have improved a lot by attracting FDI, which on the other hand did not do any good to Nigeria.

Citing the Indian government's refusal to accept Enron's proposal for setting up a power station in Maharashtra, he said many countries refuse FDI proposals, weighing the prospective adverse effects.

"We should consider the FDI proposals in the light of our own interests, not inspired by the foreign experts," he observed.

The IBFB president said the new trade body will promote greater business advocacy for better business policies. It will act as a clearing house for those policies, contribute to policymaking and work out an agenda based on the needs and priorities of the business.

With this AL lawmaker supporting him, the representative succeeded in getting approval for the coal-fired power project in 2001. This was being delayed by the government for three years due to various reasons. The re-payment and down payment for the power project did not however start before the BNP-led alliance came to power. He also helped the Chinese companies make Bangladesh swallow all delays, project design flaws and physical catastrophes at the site in which several workers had died.

He also played an active role in making the government approve project cost escalation to \$250 million from the original \$192 million. The additional costs were incurred for consultants, Chinese manpower and extension of contract.

When the mine was flooded in 1998, the cost escalated and the government did not punish the contractor for the faulty design nor the British-consultant IMCL for allowing the faulty design.

After this negotiation, the then Petrobangla chairman took a team to China to sign the deal.

While the Supplier's Credit system is widely criticised for its built-in system helping corruption, this particular deal apparently was designed to drain out Bangladeshi money.

After Bangladesh signed the \$192 million deal, it made a down payment of \$19 million to China and strangely started 'repayment' after two years.

"This means, China brought in some mining equipment, project designs and manpower but it is actually Bangladesh that started paying for the construction directly from the beginning. This obviously raises questions like what kind of loan did China give us for this scheme?" says an official involved in the project for a decade.

According to him, there had been almost no monitoring of the project. Those who were responsible for monitoring were involved in siphoning off money.

"There had been no proper pre-inspection or inspection of the mining equipment and work progress," he added.

"Undoubtedly China is experienced in mining. But as per the British Standard of mining, China lacks 50 per cent in safety level," he pointed out.

Other peaceful demonstrations, extra-judicial killings and human rights violations among other issues.

"We told the delegation that the ruling alliance has long been trying to have such a person as the chief of the caretaker government who was once the international affairs secretary of BNP. He will be used politically in the upcoming parliamentary election," Jalil said adding that no free, fair and neutral elections would be possible under Justice KM Hasan.

He said CEC MA Aziz proved his ill political motive by preparing a fake voter list. Terming the CEC "dishonest" and accusing him of including more than one crore fake voters in the voter list, Jalil told the delegation that he is acting as a partisan after taking over the position of chief election commissioner.

"AL does not want to participate in the election before implementation of the electoral reforms. Without implementing the reform proposals, free, fair and neutral elections cannot be held and the national election will be meaningless, as it will not reflect the public mandate. For a free, fair and neutral election, the reform proposals must be implemented," Jalil said.

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina's only son Sajib Wajed joy told newsmen, "We have told the delegation that without carrying out electoral reforms the next election will not be free, fair and neutral. There are one crore and 40 lakh fake voters in the updated voter list and with them casting their votes the election will not be free and fair."

AL leaders Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Mortia Chowdhury, Dr Dipu Moni, former ambassador Ziauddin, Faruque Chowdhury, TH Emam and Dr Moshirur Rahman were present at the meeting.

UN watchdog

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build weapons, it said.

The letter said the congressional report contained "an outrageous and dishonest suggestion" that the inspector was dumped for having not adhered to an alleged IAEA policy barring its "officials from telling the whole truth" about Iran.

Diplomats say the inspector remains IAEA Iran section head.

The IAEA has been inspecting Iran's nuclear program since 2003. Although it has found no hard evidence that Iran is working on atomic weapons, it has uncovered many previously concealed activities linked to uranium enrichment, a process of purifying fuel for nuclear power plants or weapons.

IAEA spokeswoman Melissa Fleming said: "We felt obliged to put the record straight with regard to the facts on what we have reported on Iran. It's a matter of the integrity of the IAEA."

Diplomats say Washington, spearheading efforts to isolate Iran with sanctions over its nuclear work, has long perceived ElBaradei to be "soft" on Tehran.

"This (committee report) is defame of the pre-Iraq war period where the facts are being maligned and attempts are being made to ruin the integrity of IAEA inspectors," said a Western diplomat familiar with the agency and IAEA-US relations.

Gang runs

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"Three youths came at the Eskaton Plaza on a motorbike at around 8:45am and one of them asked me whether Engineer Khandaker Nurul Arefin of R&H was in the house," Wares Hawlader, security guard of the building, said.

When he said that he does not know any such person, one of them drew two pistols from his waist and pointed them at him. "The other two entered the car park and started firing indiscriminately with four firearms," Wares added.

Four, who had been waiting at the car park with some other drivers, got bullet-hit at this time. The windows of at least seven cars were shattered due to the firing.

During the whole time, the criminals had been scolding Arefin and shouting, "Where is he? Ask him to come down." After several minutes of mayhem the goons left the place in their motorbike.

Sources said, around one and a half months back one identifying himself as Jisan sent an SMS to Engineer Arefin and demanded Tk 3 crore. A few days back Arefin received another SMS from the same number, in which Tk 50 lakh was demanded.

Manager of Eskaton Plaza Noor Uddin Jahangir filed a case with Ramma Police Station yesterday, without mentioning any names.

Mahasthangarh

FROM PAGE 1
2500BC, is the oldest city in the country and an important heritage site.

However, locals have encroached upon a vast tract of land of the ancient city and hung signboards of a family graveyard and a mazar.

They have also built dwelling houses with bricks stolen from the structures of the ancient Buddhist monastery.

Archaeological Department officials alleged that consecutive governments have neglected the maintenance and preservation of Mahasthangarh while locals also pay less importance to its antiquities.

The occupants claimed that they inherited the land and have established their right on it through the existing land laws.

Excavation at Mahasthangarh was conducted during 1929-1930 and 1960-1961. The excavation work was resumed in 1999 with the assistance of the French government.

EC gloats about talk

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said, "It's really tough to identify the Rohingyas as they closely resemble the locals of Cox's Bazar in appearance."

The commission, however, will not compromise on the issue. It will look into the allegations and take proper action, he observed.

EU delegation members Ana Beatriz Martins, Pascaline Krone, Jenny Christensen, among others, were present at the meeting.

The six-member EU exploratory mission arrived in Dhaka on September 11.

The same day, a delegation of the Washington-based National Democratic Institute (NDI) while wrapping up their visit expressed dissatisfaction with the EC's activities. They said they were concerned over lack of public confidence in the EC, particularly the CEC.

AL-EU MEET

The visiting EU delegation yesterday held an hour-long meeting with leaders of the main opposition Awami League (AL).

"We have discussed the present political situation and pre-election environment with the opposition leaders," Andrew Bruce, head of the seven-member delegation told journalists after the meeting held at AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil's Gulshan residence.

Asked about the neutrality of Justice KM Hasan, the probable head of the caretaker government, Bruce refrained from making any comments.

However, meeting sources said the EU delegation emphasised the need to initiate dialogues between the government and the opposition parties on the proposed electoral reforms.

Briefing newsmen, Jalil said they have discussed the electoral reforms, current political situation, pre-election environment, police atrocities on opposition leaders and workers during hartal and

PRGF Loan

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boards with operational autonomy and bring them under the regulatory authority of the central bank," he added.

The government should privatise the rest three NCBs gradually, he suggested.

During the visit, the IMF mission met the finance minister, Bangladesh Bank governor, and chairmen of the Privatisation Commission and National Board of Revenue (NBR), among others.

Rumbaugh said the fiscal policy in Bangladesh remains prudent overall, but revenue collection continues to fall short of targets and the state-owned enterprises continue to accumulate sizeable losses.

"The IMF welcomes the intention to increase revenue as stipulated in the FY07 budget, but large shortfalls in revenue over the last three years suggest that tax policy measures are needed as well as stricter enforcement," he said.

"We are encouraged by the NBR's commitment to administrative reform including strengthening enforcement of a uniform taxpayer identification number," he added.

Once again suggesting adjustment of fuel prices in terms of international market, the IMF official said Bangladesh is lagging behind most other countries in the issue while domestic prices of kerosene, diesel, electricity and natural gas are well below international levels.

He said there is no alternative to further price adjustments to reduce the large losses of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, and it is in the best interest of Bangladesh to follow the

Sangsad debate

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limit of judges to ensure Hasan becomes chief of the next caretaker government."

He alleged that the CEC has prepared a fake voter list violating the High Court directives and wasted at least Tk 62 crore from the public exchequer.

Abdul Quader Siddique, president of Krishak Samik Janata League, blasted the government for the police atrocities on opposition leaders and workers during the recent hartal and siege programmes.

Later triggering yet another unscheduled debate, AL lawmaker ASH Sadeque said the previous BNP government had signed an agreement for open pit coalmining in 1994 and in 1998. Phulbari coalmine was assigned to Asia Energy as per the previous agreement.

He asked the foreign energy minister Mosharraf Hossain to say sorry for his previous statement in parliament.

In reply, Mosharraf said the BNP government had signed agreement only for a pre-feasibility study while the AL government that had signed an agreement for exploration with the Asia Energy.

However, no government has signed any contract for mining, he noted.

Iraq reels

FROM PAGE 20
The blast created a large crater in the street in front of the office, destroyed at least three cars, scattered debris and knocked down the walls of a neighbouring house, according to AP Television News video.

Gunmen in Baqouba, 48km northeast of Baghdad, killed two police officers in a drive-by shooting. Another group of gunmen shot and killed three people in Ghazaniya, just north of Baqouba.

Police also found the body of a brigadier in the former Iraqi army two days after he was kidnapped by Mahmudiya, 29km south of Baghdad, said Cap. Udai Abdel-Rihda.

Earlier a Libyan who was a top aide of al-Qaeda in Iraq's leader, Abu Ayyub al-Masri, has been killed in an operation by Iraqi security forces, an interior ministry spokesman told AFP on Thursday.

Abu Jaafar al-Lybi was killed on Sunday, said Brigadier General Abdel Karim Khalaf.

He said Lybi was the head of "al-Qaeda's criminal operations" in Baghdad's Rusafa, Karrada districts and the restive province of Diyala, northeast of Baghdad.

Khalaf said two more associates of Lybi were arrested during the operation and are "under investigation." (AP/AFP)

Amini

FROM PAGE 1
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Amini at a meeting in Brahmanbaria on April 19, 2000 allegedly said Proshika chief Qazi Faruque and the employees of the NGO would be killed on that very night.

The report was first published in the daily Bhorer Kagof on April 20 and then in other newspapers. Amini did not contradict the reports.

Qazi Faruque filed a case with the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate against Amini on May 14, 2000. Following the hearing, the court summoned the accused but he failed to show up.

The court issued arrest warrant against Amini on July 2 of the same year. Amini appeared before the court and obtained bail the next day.

EC gloats about talk

automatic pricing formula to avoid future price misalignments.

Referring to the huge subsidy in fuel prices, he said, "We have found that higher income groups are getting most of the benefits from implicit fuel subsidies and consumers in neighbouring countries by way of smuggling."

The macro-economic performance of Bangladesh, Rumbaugh observed that the economy, guided by strong exports and remittances, has sustained its momentum.

But the overall budget deficit was contained at 3.3 per cent of the GDP as spending on the Annual Development Programme (ADP) continued to be much lower than budgeted, the IMF mission chief said.

Although the price pressure have eased somewhat in the last two months, at 6.75 per cent in July (year-on-year), the inflation remains higher than desirable, he added.

Sangsad debate

AL leaders Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Mortia Chowdhury, Dr Dipu Moni, former ambassador Ziauddin, Faruque Chowdhury, TH Emam and Dr Moshirur Rahman were present at the meeting.

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