

Outraged by outage



PHOTO: STAR

FROM LEFT... A Rapid Action Battalion patrol vehicle torched by protesters at Keraniganj on the outskirts of the capital after the elite force's bid to control a mob demanding uninterrupted power supply; policemen fire teargas shells from an armoured riot car to disperse the protesters in the city's Mirpur area; agitated people use sewerage pipes to barricade a road in Mirpur; employees of Dhaka Electricity Supply Company (Desco) survey the damage of equipment after a mob attacked its sub-office at Mirpur-11 yesterday.

No Khaleda, no Hasina from Oct 10

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and the Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina will be out of the country from October 10.

Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil will be out of SEE PAGE 19 COL 6

Chair rejects talks in JS on power crisis

AL walks out in protest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) yesterday staged a walkout from parliament for two minutes as the deputy speaker rejected its request to hold a discussion on severe power crisis and people's movement for uninterrupted power supply across the country after adjourning the normal business.

The House unexpectedly saw the ministers or any lawmakers from the BNP-led ruling coalition refrain from making any comment or responding to the opposition on power crisis and the movement for an end to it in different areas of the

capital as well as several districts across the country.

Terming the opposition contention on people's movement for power supply an 'old matter', Deputy Speaker Akhter Hamid Siddique rejected the demand for holding a discussion on it after adjourning the scheduled business of the House.

AL lawmakers walked out the House protesting rejection of their demand but within two minutes party lawmaker Shahjahan Khan came back to raise the issue and his colleagues followed him to the House.

On a point of order, party SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

6 Hijbut Tawhid men held with books, leaflets

OUR CORRESPONDENT, KUSHITIA

Six activists of Hijbut Tawhid, an Islamist group, were arrested in Gangni upazila of the district yesterday while they had been preaching their dogma.

Police also seized 43 copies of Islamic books and 200 leaflets from the Hijbut men, who are the followers of Bayazid Khan Panni of Tangail.

On information, a team of Gangni police raided Harabhanga village in the morning when the six were distributing the books and leaflets among the villagers. They were also calling upon the people to attend their "Jihadi Kafela" and to establish "real Islam," police said.

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Reform proposals pretext for creating constitutional crisis

Says PM

UNB, Raipur, Laxmipur

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday termed the opposition's electoral reform proposals a new pretext for creating constitutional crisis and asked her opponents why they did not reform the caretaker system while in power for five years.

"It will be futile to raise the slogan for reforms... Elections must be held and none has the right to disrupt or stop it," she told a public meeting at Merchant Academy ground here.

Khaleda, also the chairperson of the ruling BNP, accused the opposition of trying to create constitutional crisis through chaos and indiscipline and push the country backward. "We have restored parliamentary democracy and it will continue," she said.

Referring to opposition leader Sheikh Hasina's call for people to come to Dhaka with sticks and oars in hands during caretaker government, Khaleda categorically said SEE PAGE 19 COL 7

Govt delaying reforms in fear of polls defeat

Says Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday alleged that the BNP-Jamaat four-party coalition government is making delay in carrying out the proposed electoral reforms fearing defeat in the upcoming polls.

The Awami League (AL) chief also accused the prime minister, her family and cabinet ministers, lawmakers and party leaders of plundering public money in thousands of crore taka during the present

regime, adding that they have been 'hatching a conspiracy' to come back to power at any cost.

"And for this the prime minister neither wants dialogue nor is interested in carrying out the reforms," Hasina said asserting that reforms must have to be implemented before holding any election in the country.

She was speaking at her 60th birthday programme held at her Sudha Sadan residence at Dhanmondi in the capital. SEE PAGE 19 COL 5

Sehri, Iftar timing

Ramadan	Sept	Sehri	Iftar
5	29		5-51
6	30	4-30	5-50
7	Oct 1	4-31	5-49

Prayer Timing

September 29		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-30	5-42
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	5-51	6-10
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

40 tortured bodies found in Baghdad

Twin blasts kill 5

AP, AFP, Baghdad

The bodies of 40 men who were shot and had their hands and feet bound have been found in the capital over the past 24 hours, police said yesterday.

All the victims showed signs of torture, police Lt Thayer Mahmoud said. They were dumped in several neighbourhoods in both eastern and western Baghdad, he said.

The top US military spokesman in Iraq, Maj Gen William B. Caldwell, on Wednesday said murders and executions are currently the main cause of civilian deaths in Baghdad.

Much of the violence has been attributed to death squads, many of which are thought to be offshoots of mainly Shia militias.

Also Thursday, a pair of bombs exploded, one timed to go off after the other to ensure maximum casualties, in central Baghdad killing five people and wounding 15, medical sources said.

The Ibn al-Nafis hospital received five dead, including two police officers, and 15 wounded from a car bomb on Saadun street that was followed up by a second explosive device to harm those gathering at the site.

Elsewhere in Baghdad a suicide car bomber attacked an army post

in the Shaab neighbourhood two soldiers and wounding 11 others, as well as one civilian, security officials said.

The suicide attack, which used a minibus packed with explosives, sent a plume of smoke visible across the city up into the air.

Another car bomb went off about half an hour later in the mixed Sunni-Shia Bayaa district in southwest Baghdad in a used-car lot, wounding two people.

A larger blast in the same neighbourhood on Wednesday killed five.

A National Police patrol was also targeted early on Thursday with a roadside bomb on the main city highway in east Baghdad which wounded three policemen.

The top US military spokesman in Iraq, Maj Gen William B Caldwell, says violence in the capital has spiked with the onset of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which officially began on Monday, and that suicide attacks were at their highest level ever.

"This has been a tough week," he said.

In other violence, a child was killed in the southern Baghdad neighbourhood of Dora when a mortar shell landed on a house, police said.

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