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AL Council Stern action against feuding groups demanded

By Staff Correspondent

Councillors and delegates of ruling Awami League at its special council yesterday called for immediate action to resolve intra-party squabbles.

Several thousand AL representatives from across the country roared to show their support for a councillor from Khulna, Monjurul Imam, as he pointed at conflicts that he said is eating into the ruling party base.

"I am concerned at the squabbles, which is there in each and every districts of Khulna division. But it's not only in Khulna where feud has surfaced, it's everywhere in the country," Imam said, catching the party chief off guard.

Amid cheers and applause, the Khulna leader demanded that party chief resolve the crisis in the first place if the ruling party is to hold the opposition parties in check in the next general elections.

An apparently embarrassed and annoyed Hasina said,

See page 11 col 6

Inside Today

Article

AL's Four-year Rule: A Brief Assessment

Column: Currents and Crosscurrents
by M M Rezaul Karim
Page 4

Separation of judiciary & autonomy for radio, TV before polls: PM

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said her government will ensure autonomy of the state run electronic media and separation of the judiciary from the administration before next general elections.

The PM, who is also the president of ruling Awami League, gave the assurance while addressing a special council session of the party at Paltan Maidan in the city yesterday.

Claiming that her government has already fulfilled almost all the election pledges, the PM said, "We shall implement our election pledge of ensuring autonomy to the state run electronic media and independence of the judiciary before the next general elections". Some progress has already been made in this direction, she added.

The PM also announced that

her government would set up the office of Ombudsman and constitute a National Human Rights Commission soon.

Stressing on 'importance of winning the next general', Hasina asked the party workers to propagate seriously the achievements of her government to the people and not to indulge in any activities that tarnishes the image of the

See page 11 col 6



AL President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina conducting the Special Council session of her party at Paltan Maidan in the city yesterday. —Star photo

Chief Whip's son allegedly kidnapped boy for ransom

By Staff Correspondent

Ashik Abdullah, Chief Whip Abul Hasnat Abdullah's youngest son, is facing charges for kidnapping a schoolboy and demanding ransom. Dhanmudi police said quoting a general diary registered with the thana on June 17.

Mohammad Yasin, Principal of the Centre for Business Studies, filed a general diary accusing Ashik of holding Shams, his student, hostage and demanding "ransom" to set him free. In fact, he freed Shams only to demand Tk 15,000 afterwards.

The Deputy commissioner (south) of DMP confirmed last night that a general diary was lodged with the thana in this regard.

The DC, however, would not say why police accepted a general diary instead of an FIR regarding the charges, which come under the Public Safety Act.

Chief Whip Abul Hasnat Abdullah could not be reached for his comments yesterday. His wife, Begum Abdullah, told The Daily Star that her husband has been sick since his return from Rajshahi Wednesday evening. He also did not attend the special council of Awami League yesterday, she added.

Defending her 18-year old son, she said, "It is a case of political harassment." Ashik had his schooling in India and US before returning home nearly a year ago.

Ashik is now preparing for O' Level examinations, scheduled for a June 2001, she said. "Why report of a June 18 incident should be carried by only one newspaper so late, coinciding the Awami League's council today?" she wondered.

The victim's father Matin Rahman, a BTB official, however, said his son had returned

See page 12 col 5



Followers of Charmonai Peer clashed with police at Narayanganj yesterday. —Star photo

Followers of Charmonai peer, police clash at N'ganj : 100 injured

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, June 23: At least 100 people, including 25 policemen and a photojournalist were injured in a two-hour long clash between police and followers of Charmonai peer in the town this afternoon.

Three of the injured were sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital while others admitted to private clinics in Narayanganj and Dhaka.

The clash erupted at about 2:30 pm when the followers of Charmonai peer tried to hold a meeting at DIT Avenue defying a ban on gatherings in the area.

The followers of the peer assembled there to press home their five-point demand including arrest of rival Dewanbagh peer.

The district administration had earlier imposed the ban there apprehending clashes between the followers of Charmonai and Dewanbagh peers, police said.

Police resorted to baton charge, hurled tear gas shells and opened fire on the mob that left at least 100 people injured.

Hundreds of madrassah stu-

See page 12 col 8

2 die, 11 missing as trawler sinks in Bay

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, June 23: Two people were drowned and 11 others missing as a fishing trawler sank in the Bay of Bengal, some 7 kilometres from Kuakata sea beach under Kalapara thana in Patuakhali district last night.

Sources at Kuakata said that a Kuakata bound trawler, FB Mannan, from Khulna sank in the Bay with goods yesterday afternoon. The crew of the trawler came to Kalapara and informed the owner of the trawler Abdul Mannan of the accident.

Abdul Mannan left Kalapara for the spot in a trawler with 13 people on board.

On the way, the trawler was caught in a storm and sank in

See page 11 col 6

Cheating, intimidation by porters frequent

Woes of passengers at Sadarghat Launch Terminal

By Morshed Ali Khan and Raziur Rahman

On an average 25,000 people leave the capital and another 25,000 arrive from different destinations everyday through the Sadarghat Launch Terminal.

The BIWTA charges Tk 2.50 from each departing passenger at the terminal gates.

But what the passengers get

in return is hassle, sometimes deception and often intimidation by the "red army" or kulis (porters) who are about 200 in number. The passengers virtually get no facility at the extremely congested and country's largest inland port.

Unauthorised vendors, kulis, transport workers, can-

vassers of different vessels along with beggars and vagabonds add to the sufferings of the passengers. Incidents of cheating, intimidation and robbery on the crowded terminal are frequent.

For a port that handles arrival of about 100 motor launches and departure of a

similar number everyday ferrying 50,000 passengers, there are only three toilets of which one is locked for VIPs. Half of the 1,000 feet long and 25 feet wide pontoon where berthing takes place occupied by about 100 illegal shops, each paying the 'authorities' up to Tk 50 a day

See page 11 col 7

CEPZ unrest: US co shifts export orders to its units in India, SL

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, June 23: Labour unrest has forced US company Qualitex Group at Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) to shift export orders worth about four lakh pounds to its sister units in India and Sri Lanka, company officials said.

Qualitex Group, a towel manufacturing company, had

received 85 per cent of those export orders from America and the rest from other European countries, the officials added.

Production is suspended at three factories of Qualitex Group as about four thousand workers there are abstaining from duties since June 11 demanding reinstatement of 15 terminated workers, company

sources said.

The workers also staged sit-in demonstrations on the factory premises and laid a siege to the CEPZ administrative building for some hours, CEPZ sources said.

The workers have been agitating for about two months demanding wages as per the

See page 12 col 7

Proposed port Mass hunger strike at Ctg today

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, June 23: Movement against the installation of proposed private container port at Patenga near Chittagong port by Stevedoring Services of America (SSA) has gained momentum.

Mayor of Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) A B M Mohiuddin Chowdhury will lead a 7-hour long mass hunger strike tomorrow organised by Chittagong Bandar Unnayan Forum (CBUF) on the premises of Chittagong Press Club to protest government's move for allowing installation of a private container port, CBUF sources said.

CBUF convenor Mahmudul Islam urged the people of the port city to join the mass hunger strike beginning at 10 am.

Mohiuddin Chowdhury who is also a local leader of ruling Awami League has already opposed the installation of proposed container port by America.

See page 12 col 6

Suspected Indian Tamil woman arrested in Cox's Bazar

COX'S BAZAR, June 23: Police arrested a woman from Moheshkhali para in Teknaf thana here Thursday night suspecting her an Indian citizen of Tamil origin, reports UNB.

The woman, identified herself as Mehedi Kumari, can speak Hindi, English, Urdu and Tamil.

After preliminary inquiry, police learned that the woman, 30, entered Bangladesh through Bongaon-Benapole border some 40 days ago. No passport was found with her.

She also said she hails from Satgachhi in India, but did not mention the district and province.

Police today sent the woman to the court.



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