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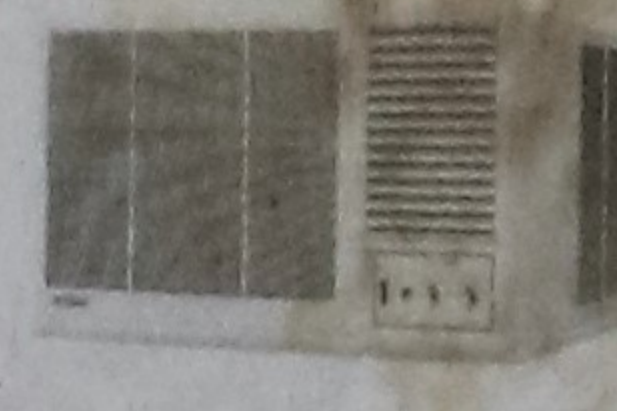
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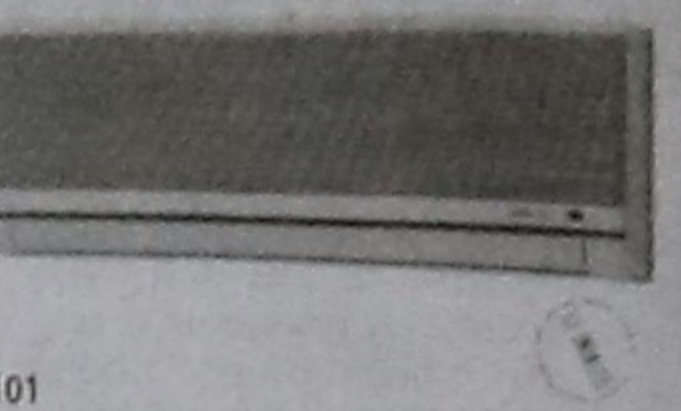
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Opposition now resorting to politics of killing, expatriates told

From Rafiq Hasan

WASHINGTON, Oct 17: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Monday said the opposition alliance resorted to politics of killing and terrorism in the country after failing to build a strong movement against the government.

Addressing a gathering of expatriate Bangladeshis in Washington in the evening she alleged that at least 74 Awami League leaders and workers in Feni and 24 in Laxmipur were killed by the opposition activists recently.

She alleged that cadres of Jamaat-e-Islami also started planned killing and terrorism in the country for creating chaos and dislodging the government.

The prime minister hoped that

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Indo-Pak N-tests threat to security in South Asia

PM tells US Council on Foreign Relations

WASHINGTON, Oct 17: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today cautioned that danger of a nuclear conflict between India and Pakistan poses threat to security and stability of South Asia and urged world community to help reduce the tension, reports UNB.

She called for using the region's limited resources for economic development of the peoples instead of nuclearisation.

"For Bangladesh, the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan in May 1998 were highly disturbing... I am deeply concerned at the prevailing tension in the subcontinent which is detrimental to progress and prosperity of more than one billion people of the region."

The Prime Minister made the remarks on the region's scenario while addressing a breakfast meeting hosted by the US Council on Foreign Relations.

Director of South Asia Programme of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies Ms Teresita C Scheffer presided over the meeting. Kerl Inderfurth of the State Department and two former US ambassadors John C Holzman and Howard B Schafer attended the

meeting.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, CHT Affairs Minister Kalpa Ranjan Chakma, PM's Food and Agriculture Adviser AM Anisuzzaman, and MPs were present.

Referring to her anti-nuclear peace mission to New Delhi and Islamabad, Hasina said she had urged both the governments of India and Pakistan to engage in peaceful dialogue to defuse prevailing tensions.

"I am afraid that all our policies and programmes for the betterment of our people would go in vain unless the leaders of the region decide to actively and reduce tensions."

The Prime Minister said she would work relentlessly in quest of peace and stability in the region.

Hasina categorically said: "For us the choice is clear. We must make every possible effort to live in peace nationally, regionally and globally."

She stressed the need for revival of SAARC.

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Abducted BNP leader slain in Mirersarai

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Oct 17: A Mirer Sarai BNP leader was slaughtered after abduction at Baro Dargah under Mirer Sarai thana in the district last.

Police and witnesses said, Md Nuruzzaman, 32, also businessman of a local market was abducted from near his business firm at around 9 last night. The beheaded body of Nuruzzaman was found beside Dhaka-Chittagong road adjoining the market at around 2 am.

Nuruzzaman who hails from a nearby village of Baro Dhala was joint secretary of Mirer Sarai thana BNP.

Adel granted ad-interim bail

By SC Correspondent

The High Court yesterday granted ad-interim bail to Jahangir Mohammad Adel, a Jatiya Party presidium member, in the treason case.

The court also issued a showcause notice upon the Deputy Commissioner, Dhaka to reply why Adel would not be granted bail.

A High Court Division Bench comprising Justice Md Nurul Islam and Md Momtaj Uddin Ahmed passed the order after hearing the counsels from both the sides.

As per the order, Adel will remain on bail till disposal of the showcause notice.

Khandaker Mahbub Hossain and Habibul Islam Bhuiyan appeared for the petitioner while Deputy Attorney General Barrister Iman Ali for the state.

Dengue : 37 more hospitalised

By Staff Correspondent

Forty-two more people with dengue haemorrhagic fever were admitted to different hospitals across the country yesterday.

Of them, five patients were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, one to Mitford Hospital, three to Dhaka Shishu Hospital, ten to Red Crescent Holy Family Hospital, one to Sina Hospital, eight to Chittagong Medical College Hospital, four to Bangladesh Medical College Hospital and the rest were admitted to Khulna Medical College Hospital.

Misceants attack villagers in Satkhira

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Oct 17: Armed misceants ransacked some 45 houses and looted valuables at village Krishnanagar in Kaliganj upazila today.

They also beat up the children, women and old men in presence of police, creating panic among the people.

Bangabandhu Murder Case

Defence seeks suspension of death sentences

The defence in Bangabandhu Murder Case yesterday sought suspension of death sentences of the 15-convicts on procedural grounds claiming that "proper procedures" were not followed in the trial process, reports BSS.

The defence claim came as the state-appointed lawyer for absconding convict sacked Lieutenant Col Shariful Haq Dalim began his submission on the 40th day of the appeals and death references hearings on the 1998 lower court judgement in the case.

Advocate Mohammad Zahidul Bari said according to the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) the magistrate at the initial stage of the trial process acted beyond his capacity while the required arrest warrant and order to confiscate property of absconding accused were not issued in time.

Earlier, state appointment lawyer for convicts sacked lieutenant colonels Khondoker Abdur Rashid and Noor Chowdhury ended submissions for their absconding clients out of 11 fugitive convicts.

The convicts facing the trial in person are former Lieutenant Colonel Syed Farooq Rahman (sacked) and Sultan Sharif Rashid Khan, Mahiuddin Ahmed (artillery) and Major (Retd) Bazul Huda.

The absconding convicts are: Sacked Lt Colonels Khondoker Abdur Rashid, Shariful Haque Dalim and AM Rashed Chowdhury, Lt Col (Retd) Mahiuddin Ahmed (Lancer), SHBM Noor Chowdhury, Abdul

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Sadly familiar... An aged man rafts along waist-high water in the flood-hit Chhoigharia, a small village of Bokari Union in Satkhira. Although overall situation has improved, floodwater is yet to recede in many places.

- Star photo

Fire at garments units in last 10 years

Families of one-third of victims deprived of compensation

By Auditya Falguni

Families of one-third of the total garment factory workers who died in fire incidents in the last decade did not receive any compensation from the employers.

According to statistics provided by the Bangladesh Garments Sramik Karmachari Federation (BGSKF), 126 garments workers were killed in 31 factory fire incidents between 1990 and 2000. The figure excludes the 12 victims at Globe-Dora Knitting Sweaters at Banani recently.

The total number of injured is 899 and none of them received

compensation whatsoever. Over 90 per cent of the dead and injured workers are women. For instance, ten out of the twelve workers who were killed in a fire at Banani are women," said Abul Hossain, a leader of the Garments Sramik Karmachari Federation.

"Globe Knitting authorities violated the labour law twice first, by employing the women workers at night-shift and second, by locking the collapsible gate while the workers were on duty," he said, referring to the fire incidents in question.

The BGSKF statistics reveal

that out of 126 workers killed in incidents of fire, families of 41 workers did not receive any compensation. The amount of compensation ranges between Tk 25,000 and Tk 50,000, while the average amount of compensation is Tk 29,000.

No injured worker has been compensated although the Workmen's Compensation Act 1936 provides for Tk 30,000 to be paid to the injured workers, particularly in case of those who become disabled, compared to Tk 21,000 for the dead.

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Biman officials, consultants begin talks

By Special Correspondent

Bangladesh Biman officials began talks with consultants from the Citibank of New York here yesterday to finalise an Information Memorandum (IM) for off-loading 49 per cent shares of the national carrier.

"The talks are being held on a positive note. We hope to finalise the IM tomorrow (Wednesday)," a Biman official said. The talks are being held at Biman's head office.

The IM will contain all related information regarding the airline's restructuring and commercialisation.

Of the 49 per cent shares to be off-loaded, nine per cent will go to Biman employees and 40 per cent will be offered to a 'strategic partner', preferably a reputed airline, barring those from the South Asia.

After finalisation, the IM will be sent to Biman authorities for approval. It will be posted on Biman's website on the internet. It will form the basis for bidding documents.

The whole process is likely to be completed by the year end, Biman officials said.

Students, WASA employees clash

By Staff Correspondent

At least seven people were injured in a clash between students and employees of WASA near Government Bangla College in Mirpur in the city yesterday, hospital sources said.

A number of vehicles were also damaged during the clash that started at about 11-45 am, witnesses said.

The trouble began when some students of Bangla College went to the WASA office and asked the employees to send two water containers to the house of a BCL leader. As the WASA employees refused to supply containers, the students locked in altercation with the employees and at one stage, they swooped on the employees.

The employees drove the students out of the office. The students then returned to the campus and narrated the story to other students. After a short while more than 200 students went to WASA office and clashed with them. They ransacked office rooms on the ground and floors and damaged six motor bikes, a car, and two vehicles owned by WASA parked in front of the office.

Halim, Masum, Shabbuddin and Jalil, employee of WASA, were injured during the clash. They were admitted to Shuharwardi Hospital. The injured students, identified as Atiq, Shakil and Masudur, were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Mirpur police said that no case was filed till 9 pm last night.

Ershad Shikdar's accomplice Shamsu arrested

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Oct 17: Notorious smuggler and black-marketeer Shamsul Islam Shamsu was arrested at Skid Ghat on last night.

He is one of the accomplices of Ershad Shikdar. Most of the illegal arms and ammunition of Shikdar are still in the custody of Shamsu, police said.

Ring leader of an organised gang of smugglers, Shamsu was so long evading police arrest with the help of ruling party leaders in Khulna. Several attempts to arrest him were foiled during last one year due to intervention of top AL leaders of city and district committees, police said.

Favour of retired police super Ataul Gani Badsha gave this notorious smuggler of both Indian goods and arms wide scope to move at large continuing his illegal business at Rupsha upazilla, two kilometres from the Khulna city, police added.

Police arrested Shamsu from the river Bhairal where he jumped during chase.

Shamsu is wanted in several criminal and smuggling cases.



Gold haul... Customs officials at the Zia International Airport intercepted smuggled gold worth more than one crore taka yesterday.

- Star photo

Farmers lay siege to Natore DC's office

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, Oct 17: Several thousand farmers including cane growers laid a siege to the office of Deputy Commissioner this noon for realisation of their five-point demand.

The farmers from Natore, Rajshahi and Pabna also submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister through the DC. Md Suab, ADM, Natore received the memorandum on behalf of DC Sheikh Alif Ali as he was not available.

The farmers under the banners of Bangladesh Cane Growers' Union (BCU) and National Peasants' Samity (NPS), earlier brought out a procession and paraded the main streets in the town.

In the memorandum, they demanded of the government to fix cane price at Tk 60 per maund, cut in fertiliser seed, diesel, power and pesticides prices and stop repression on the aborigines and withdrawal of cases against the growers.

The NPS vice president Fazel Hossain Badsha, BCU President Abdus Salam, NPS, Natore unit president Ansar Ali Dulal and general secretary Abdul Karim told a rally on the DC's office premises during the siege programme that they would announce tougher programmes, if their demands were not met immediately.

Health ministry issues order

DMCH director asked to hand over charge to his deputy

By Staff Correspondent

The health ministry yesterday ordered Dhaka Medical College Hospital Director Brig. Badrul Munir to hand over charge to his deputy, Dr. Syed Babar Hossain.

The order was issued on the basis of a letter from the establishment ministry regarding the appointment of Col Nazmul Huda as DMCH director on deputation from the Army. The Prime Minister holds the charge of the defence ministry.

The health ministry order said, "Brig Badrul Munir, on deputation from the Army, is released from his post of Director of DMCH. Brig Badrul Munir would hand over charge to Dr. Syed Babar Hossain, Director (Current Charge) on October 18".

When contacted, sources in Bangladesh Army also confirmed that Col. Nazmul Huda was sent on deputation to replace Brig. Badrul Munir and that it was approved by the defence ministry. Sources said a letter from the establishment ministry regarding posting of Col Nazmul Huda as DMCH director will reach the health ministry in two days.

But in the meantime, health ministry issued a letter to the incumbent director to hand over charge to Dr. Syed Babar Hossain, allegedly a controversial figure.

Some sources in the health ministry claimed that the health minister agreed to make Dr. Syed Babar Hossain DMCH director as he was aligned with the ruling party.

There are allegations that Dr

Babar runs a clinic opposite the DMCH emergency. The clinic was set up about a month ago. He allegedly distributed letterheads of his clinic in different departments of DMCH so that patients are sent to his clinic.

When contacted, Dr. Babar denied the allegations. "I do not need a clinic to make a living. I have a monthly income of more than Tk one lakh. Why should I go for such a business?" Dr. Babar said.

Meanwhile, at least ten professors of DMCH made telephone calls to The Daily Star office yesterday giving their opinion against Dr. Babar. They alleged that Dr. Babar made money through purchase of hospital beds and by building shops adjoining the hospital premises.

Is poetry precursor to politics?

From Pallab Bhattacharya

NEW DELHI, Oct 17: It was first in the air briefly about a year ago when the youth, barely in his twenties, was walking along the dusty roads of villages in Western Uttar Pradesh campaigning for her mother in parliamentary elections about a year ago. It is in the political grapevine once again today, a day after the youth launched his debut collection of poems.

Is Feroz Varun Gandhi, the youngest grandson of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty, readying himself to enter politics?

The question was publicly tossed around in Delhi's political circles when Varun had accompanied her mother Maneka Gandhi to her campaign to Pilibhit constituency in Uttar Pradesh state in elections to Lok Sabha, lower house of Indian parliament, in September last year. There was no answer as Varun had disappeared from public exposure since the election.

But when he turned up at the India International Centre, one of the hubs of the capital's intel

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25 hurt as students of Rajshahi BIT clash

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Oct 17: At least 25 people were injured, eight of them seriously, when students of Bangladesh Institute of Technology (BIT), Rajshahi clashed this afternoon.

The clash between inmates of Shahidul Islam Hall and Syed Hamid Hall was a sequel to a previous incident. The students of the two halls had heated an exchange of words while watching television the night before. Two students of Hamid Hall were beaten up.

A fresh clash erupted today when inmates of Hamid Hall attacked Shahidul Islam Hall at about 3 pm. The students of Shahidul Islam Hall also launched a counter-attack. Both groups used lethal weapons during the clash.

The seriously injured are Farooque, Ehtesham and Dulal of Civil Engineering Department, Shohag of Mechanical Engineering Department and Rupam and Shah Alam of Electrical and Electronics Department. Identity of two others could not be known.

They were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital while others took first aid. Police rushed to the spot, and resorted to lathicharge to disperse the clashing groups.

A tense situation is prevailing on the BIT campus. Many students were seen leaving their dormitories.

The BIT authorities were in an emergency meeting till filing of this story at 7:45 pm.