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Khaleda protests harassment of Feni BNP leaders, workers

Opposition leader Khaleda Zia yesterday protested the arrest and harassment of BNP leaders and workers in Feni jointly by police and "Awami terrorists" in the name of a combined operation, reports UNB.

In a statement she said police and armed terrorists of the ruling party have created a terrible situation in Feni forcing opposition activists to leave their homes.

She said on October 28, police and ruling party's armed cadres fired gunshots indiscriminately at Charchandia union of Sonagazi upazila, leaving BNP worker Ismail dead and 15 others injured. Police picked up eight BNP activists from there.

On October 22, she said, police and ruling party men in the name of a combined operation repeatedly swooped on the houses of BNP leaders and workers in Feni and arrested many of them and confined them in jail.

Khaleda said Awami terrorists have made entire Feni a safe haven for themselves by killing and harassing leaders and workers of BNP and its front organizations. They also looted houses and shops of BNP men and ousted them from their houses, she added.

End to reserved seats standoff not yet

JS body report on Amendment Bill on Nov 9

By Staff Correspondent

The fate of the much talked about Constitution Fourteenth Amendment Bill 2000 for retention of women's reserved seats in the Jatiya Sangsad is uncertain due to the Opposition's long absence from the House.

The ruling Awami League is however hopeful about retention of the 30 seats as 'there is scope for a favourable opinion on the issue' from the Supreme Court if referred to it, party sources said.

But some opposition lawmakers said there is no such scope. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs has finalised its report on the Bill seeking a 10-year extension of the provision for women's reserved seats.

The report would be placed before the Sangsad in its coming session beginning on November 9, official sources said.

"As scrutiny of the bill has been finalised, we would place the report in the parliament for its consideration. The House will

decide its fate," said Suranjit Sen Gupta, Chairman of the Standing Committee.

Passage of the bill would need support of two-thirds of the lawmakers but the ruling party does not have that strength. The Opposition is boycotting parliament session for long.

Barrister Aminul Haque, a BNP lawmaker and member of the standing committee, said the party has not yet decided to join parliament session. On the issue of reserved seats, he said "Our party will take a decision at the proper time".

Differing with Suranjit's opinion, Haque said there is no scope to refer the issue to the Supreme Court (SC).

In that case, Suranjit said, the Bill would be introduced again in the House. If the second move for passage of the Bill also fails, there is scope to get the Supreme Court's explanation on the Constitutional provision, he added.

In reply to a question, he said the SC can also exercise its 'advisory jurisdiction' on such constitutional issues if the parliament refers those to it.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru had placed the Bill in the House on June 17 this year.

Suranjit, who is also parliamentary affairs advisor to the Prime Minister, said "We performed our duty by introducing the bill. Now the Opposition has to come back to parliament and pave the way for passage of it."

Awami League is 'flexible' on the issue of raising the number of women's seats as demanded by different women's organisations, he said.

He mentioned that opposition members of the Standing Committee usually join its meetings but they did not attend the meeting held on Tuesday, which finalised the report on the Bill.

Various women's bodies have demanded 150 seats for women in a 450-member parliament and direct election to those seats.

Hartal disrupts normal life in Chittagong

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Nov 2: Normal life was disrupted in the port city during a dawn-to-dusk hartal today enforced by the Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ).

IOJ called the hartal demanding release of Mufti Ejharul Islam, president of Chittagong unit of Nezami Islam party.

All kinds of vehicles except rickshaws were off the roads and road communications between Chittagong and other parts of the country remained snapped during the hartal.

Railway sources said train service to and from Chittagong was as usual.

Most of the shops and markets were shut and attendance in government and private offices was thin.

Delivery of goods to and from Chittagong port was suspended during the hartal but loading and unloading work inside the port jetties took place as usual, port sources said.

Court order on petition to quash Airbus Purchase Case on Monday

By SC Correspondent

The High Court will issue an order on Monday on the acceptability of Airbus Purchase Case against BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia as hearing on her petition to quash the case ended yesterday.

A Division Bench comprising Justice Mohammad Montazuddin Ahmed and Justice Nurul Islam fixed the date after hearing on the petition from both sides -- petitioner and the state.

During the arguments, Deputy Attorney General Mohammad Farooq questioned the jurisdiction of the Bench, saying it was not authorised to hear on the petition for quashing the case.

Former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and nine others including the then civil aviation minister have been sued on charge of 'misappropriating' Tk 175 crore in purchasing two airbuses for Bangladesh Biman.

Sramik League leader murdered in Munshiganj

MUNSHIGANJ, Nov 2: A local Sramik League leader was hacked to death at West Shimpura in Srinagar upazila here Wednesday night, reports UNB.

Police said BNP cadre Kamal and his accomplices waylaid the motorbike of Rajob Shikder, 28, president of Srinagar unit of the ruling party's labour front, and stabbed him indiscriminately at about 9 pm.

Rajob was rushed to Dhaka National Hospital and later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Nov 3		5.18 pm
Nov 4	6-06 am	

Prayer Timings November 3

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-00	5-35
Dhuhr	12-15	1-30
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-25	5-30
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Sinister seepage

Micro-organisms, toxic chemicals may trickle down to city's water-table

By Naimul Haq

Seepage from toxic waste dumps could seriously contaminate Dhaka's water-table and create a serious health hazard for the millions of people living in the capital city.

According to a Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) official, Matuail is the biggest of several open dumping sites scattered across the city.

On an average, more than 3,000 tonnes of garbage, including clinical, industrial and pharmaceutical waste, is dumped in the 70-acre site, which is very close to human habitat.

As researchers at home and abroad have found out, the mix of rainwater and garbage at landfill

sites produces a stinky liquid, which seeps through different layers of soil down to the water-table carrying deadly micro-organisms (virus and bacteria) and toxic chemicals.

"There are two basic ways advection and diffusion in which chemicals move from a landfill through soil," wrote Ralph Ryder, co-ordinator of Communities against Toxics, a coalition of community groups in the UK and Ireland, in reply to a query over e-mail. "Advection can be called the normal movement. The more pressure you apply to the fluid, the faster it travels through the

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Perilous proposition

A mother and her child collect rubbish from the city's biggest open waste dumping site in the low-lying area of Kazi, Matuail. Experts fear seepage from such toxic waste may seriously contaminate water-table and put lives of millions in the capital in jeopardy.

-- Star photo

Boral murder Accused Kala Kuddus placed on remand

BAGERHAT, Nov 2: Kuddus alias Kala Kuddus, who was arrested from Mirpur area in Dhaka in connection with advocate Kaldas Boral murder case, was taken on a five-day remand today, reports UNB.

He is one of the 17 accused charge-sheeted by the police for killing Boral, a local Awami League leader, on August 20.

Kuddus was a night guard of Sammiloni Secondary School.

Mufti Hannan, 6 others chargesheeted Bomb planting at Kotalipara

By Staff Correspondent

The CID yesterday submitted a charge sheet at Gopalganj district court accusing seven people including Mufti Abdul Hannan, the principal accused in the case of bomb planting at Kotalipara near the platform from where Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressed a rally on July 21, said a CID press release.

The other accused are: Mohibullah alias Mofiz -- brother of Mufti Hannan, four workers of a soap factory Hasan, Mahmud, Shanewas, Gazi Khan and owner of the factory building Hasmat Ali Kazi.

CID police charged that Mufti Hannan brought explosives in the guise of raw materials for the soap factory and made two powerful bombs with the help of the other accused.

According to the charge sheet, the accused on July 19 this year planted a bomb near the road leading to Sheikh Lutfur Rahman Government College ground from where Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was scheduled to address a rally on July 21. They planted another bomb near the helipad. The bomb near the platform was recovered on the morning of July 20 and the one near the helipad on July 23. Following the discovery of the bombs, Mufti Hannan, fearing a massive man-hunt, dumped some bomb-making equipment and a revolver in the house of Hasmat Kazi.

Police recovered the equipment and the revolver and filed a case on July 24 with Gopalganj thana. Assistant Superintendent of CID Munshi Atiqur Rahman took over the case on August 31 and submitted the charge sheet yesterday.

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Criminal cabbies

Taxicabs at Zia International Airport are often accused of non-payment of rental to the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh for parking on the airport premises. Besides, passengers often get robbed once they step out of arrival concourse.

-- Star photo

Delinquent diplomats?

Customs file GD on contraband haul against four attachés

By Staff Correspondent

The Customs Intelligence and Investigation has filed a General Diary (GD) with Motijheel police accusing four attachés of three embassies in connection with last month's recovery of illegally imported goods from containers addressed to them.

The attaches are Hasan AM Hamid and Basham KH Jasim of Iraqi embassy, Udoaro G Garsia of the Philippines embassy and

Tashi Wang Chunk of Bhutanese embassy.

The goods including Benson and Hedges cigarettes, wrist-watches, blades and other consumer items were recovered at the inland container depot at Kamapur in the city on October 18, 22 and 26.

The GD was filed by customs official AYM Zakaria Chowdhury on Wednesday.

The customs authorities earlier filed a departmental case in connection with the incidents.

The GD was filed following several newspaper reports which said that detectives could not make any headway in investigation as no case was filed with police.

As per a UN declaration, customs or any authorities can not

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Two depressions over Bay likely this month

Two more depressions are likely to form in the Bay this month, one of which may turn into cyclonic storm, forecast the Storm Warning Centre yesterday, reports UNB.

SWC also predicted that cool northern air from the Himalaya may start blowing by the end of the month.

The forecast was made following review of satellite pictures at a meeting of the weather experts that indicated normal rain during the period.

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