

Hasina's final warning to rebel AL candidates

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina has sent letters cautioning for the last time the dissident AL candidates not to remain in the electoral race as independent candidates, ignoring the party parliamentary board's decision.

In the letters sent to around 30 rebels, she said Awami League must win this crucial election to save the people and the nation from the conspiracy of BNP-Jamaat axis, protect their right to vote and food and carry on AL's development programmes.

"But continuation of candidature, violation of party decision and work against the party-nominated candidates would tantamount to helping BNP-Jamaat come to power. It is also against the party constitution and discipline," she warned, barely a week before the polls.

The party chief gave final directive to them to stand aside from the contest and work for the party.

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One burnt alive, property worth Tk 25 lakh gutted in Sitakunda

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

One person was burnt alive and property worth Tk 25 lakh gutted in a fire at Bhatiary under Sitakunda thana in the early hours of yesterday.

The victim was identified as Mansoor Ahmed, an employee of Eastern Trading, a furniture factory.

Mansoor died on the spot as he was asleep at a tin-shed godown of the factory during the incident, police and fire service sources said.

The fire originated at the godown from an electric short circuit and soon engulfed the other shops.

3 Feni BCL activists held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Feni

Police yesterday arrested three BCL activists from Bendu Hazari Gymnasium at Masterpara in the town.

The arrested Jamal Uddin, Mahiuddin Palash and Nizamuddin are accused in several cases, police said.

Meanwhile, BCL leader Zahirul Alam, who was arrested on Saturday, was placed on a five-day remand yesterday.

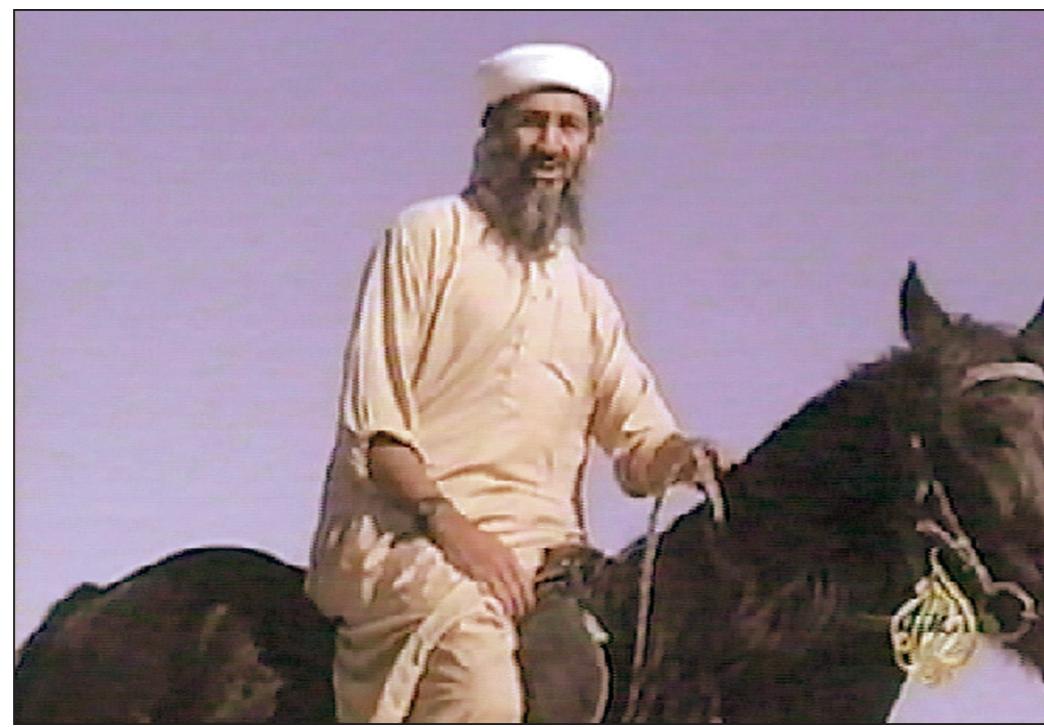
3 Indians held in Bandarban

BSS, Bandarban

Police arrested three Indian citizens from Alikadam bus stand on Friday.

The arrested persons were identified as Jhon, Simol and Ashu. They told police that they were members of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN).

A case was filed with Alikadam police station in this connection.



A TV grab from the Qatari al-Jazeera channel shows Osama bin Laden, the prime suspect in Sept 11 terrorist attacks in US, riding a horse in Afghanistan in 1998.

Taliban say Laden gone missing but US 'won't be deterred'

REUTERS, Islamabad

Afghanistan's ruling Taliban said yesterday their "guest," Osama bin Laden, had gone missing and they could not deliver an edict asking him to leave the country.

"We have still not been able to deliver the clerics' message to him because we could not find him," Taliban spokesman Abul Haji Mutmaen told Reuters by telephone from the southern Afghan city of Kandahar.

Asked if the world's most wanted man was still in Afghanistan, he replied: "I cannot say."

Mutmaen said the Taliban's

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Khaleda would have been jailed if corruption cases were tried: Hasina

UNB, Natore

Former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said if corruption cases against BNP leaders Khaleda Zia, Saifur Rahman and others had been tried, they would have been jailed just like Ershad.

The High Court had stayed those cases of corruption against many BNP ministers and MPs, including Khaleda Zia and Saifur Rahman ... Had there been trial, they would have faced the fate of Ershad, jailed and declared disqualified for the election.

Hasina made the remarks addressing a about dozen scheduled and unscheduled election rallies in Natore and part of Rajshahi districts yesterday.

Terminating the rule of BNP as a symbol of corruption and terrorism, she said BNP chief Khaleda Zia got two qualities how to make fortune through corruption and harbour terrorism.

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People do not want to see AL misrule again: Khaleda

REZAUL KARIM, From Sylhet

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday said the people want peace and development, they do not want to see the country return to the Awami League (AL) misrule after the October 1 general election.

"The Awami League during its last five years rule had snatched away security of life and property of the people ... even it does not allow the people to sleep in peace," she said.

Addressing electoral meetings in different parts of Sylhet and Sunamganj districts, she said the patriotic people have decided to vote for sheaf of paddy because they realise that the BNP served the country much better than any other party did.

The BNP chief flew in here at 11:10am on a three-day electoral tour. She first addressed a massive gathering at Companiganj Upazila Parishad ground to campaign for four-party alliance candidate and former finance minister M Saifur Rahman who is running in the

Sylhet-1 constituency.

Khaleda returned to Dhaka late Saturday night on completion of her three-day tour of the northern region. She resumed electoral campaign after an eight-hour recess.

Tens of thousands of people from far and wide converged on the venue, while hundreds of others listened to Khaleda standing on rooftops of buildings and climbing trees close by as the meeting venue was jam packed.

She said while in office the AL was busy looting property and plundering the government exchequer in the name of development.

Moreover, it unleashed a reign of terror on the opposition and on the common people, and made Bangladesh the number one corrupt country in the world.

"Bangladesh is not a corrupt country and its people are not corrupt...Awami League is a corrupt and fascist party. We have to shrug

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US sanctions on India and Pakistan lifted

Move to freeze Taliban assets

REUTERS, Washington

Rewarding his allies and preparing to punish his foes, US President George W Bush waived US sanctions on Pakistan and India as more ships and warplanes headed into position for a potential strike on Afghanistan.

The lifting of sanctions, imposed on the two countries in 1998 for their nuclear tests, had been widely expected after Pakistan agreed to cooperate with the United States in its hunt for Osama bin Laden, prime suspect in last week's hijacked airliner assaults on America and believed sheltering in Afghanistan.

It was among several steps Bush took on Saturday night to confront the crisis unleashed by the Sept. 11 attacks that left more than 6,800 people dead or missing, pitched the world closer to economic recession and has triggered the US military's biggest mobilisation since the 1991 Gulf War.

US officials said Bush was also expected soon to issue an executive order designating specific groups and individuals as "terrorists" in a move designed to lock up their assets in the United States and starve them of

financial support.

Afghanistan's Taliban government, which calls bin Laden a "guest", insisted again yesterday it would hand over Saudi-born bin Laden only if evidence of his involvement in the attacks was provided. Bin Laden denies he had a hand in the plot.

"There is no change in our decision. American demands are not in favour of Muslims and Afghans and we are not ready to accept this," Taliban spokesman Abdul Haji Mutmaen said, according to the Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press agency.

The Taliban, a hard-line Islamic movement that controls most of Afghanistan, appeared increasingly isolated after the United Arab Emirates, one of just three states to have recognised their hold on power, severed diplomatic ties.

European Union finance ministers, meeting in Liege, Belgium, agreed to speed up ratification of an existing UN resolution calling for the freezing of the Taliban's assets.

Pakistan and Iran have sealed their borders with their

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AL activist shot dead in Jhenidah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

An Awami League activist was shot dead at village Hafizpur in Sylhet upazila early yesterday morning.

The dead was identified as Abdul Wahab, 41.

Police said a gang of unidentified assailants called Wahab out of his house and shot him point blank.

He was rushed to Sylhet police station in this connection. The body was sent to Jhenidah sadar hospital morgue for autopsy.



A DCC drive is on to eradicate Aedes mosquitoes amid the outbreak of dengue fever in the city. Sixteen people have died of dengue haemorrhagic fever (DHF) since early May this year.

Dengue: Another dies, 36 more hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One person died of dengue haemorrhagic fever (DHF), while 36 more patients have been hospitalised in the last 48 hours ending at 6:00pm yesterday.

Mohammad Selim, 48, who was admitted to Mitford General Hospital on Thursday, died at 10:25pm Saturday.

Sixteen people have died of DHF since the dengue outbreak in early May this year, and 987 have been hospitalised, with 99 patients being treated at present in different hospitals and private clinics in the city.

Of the total patients, 14 were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, three to Dhaka Shishu Hospital, two to Mitford General Hospital, four to BIRDEM and eight to Holy Family Hospital, according to the control room of the Health Directorate.

Central and Samarita hospitals also reported admission of three and two patients respectively.

Garments sector Simplified customs rules from Oct 1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

The customs authorities have decided to simplify customs formalities for the country's garments sector from October 1, official sources said.

Garments traders will now be required to collect 12 signatures instead of 51 so far from different officials and various places for their consignments in case of import and export.

The decision followed a demand from Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

Chairman of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) Shoaib Ahmed, addressing a meeting organised by BGMEA at a local hotel yesterday, said customs formalities for garments traders are being simplified to ensure better service to this sector.

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