

'122 political murders in October'

UNB, Dhaka

A total of 122 people were killed and 2,430 injured in incidents of human rights violation related with politics in the month of October.

Besides, 12 people were killed, 24 injured and 13 abducted in such incidents in border areas, according to a survey of ADHIKAR, a human rights organisation.

It said 14 people were killed, two injured and five abducted in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region during the period.

The survey also shows that a journalist was killed while 12 others were injured in attacks in last one month.

Moreover, 505 people were arrested across the country in the incidents related with politics, 12 in border areas and three in the CHT. Four people were killed in police custody.

The survey further said 27 women became victims of acid attacks and 61 were violated. Nine housewives were killed while two injured for dowry.

Police rescue abducted man

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Laxmipur

Police yesterday rescued an abducted man after gunfights with the kidnapers at two villages in Laxmipur Sadar upzila.

The man named Mohammadullah, a quack, was earlier kidnapped from Radhapur village by a gang led by one Gani and taken to nearby sonapur village. The abductors demanded a ransom of Tk one lakh for his release, police and local people said.

Acting on a tip off, police raided Sonapur village on Tuesday night to rescue the victim. Sensing the presence of police, the abductors opened fire at them and police responded with gunshots. The gang then fled to Mokordhas village, taking the victim with them.

Police raided Mokordhas village yesterday morning and another

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Saifur asks officials to cut unnecessary projects off ADP

UNB, Dhaka

Finance and Planning Minister Saifur Rahman yesterday asked officials to take expeditious steps to cut unnecessary projects off the Annual Development Programme (ADP) for saving scarce resources of the country.

He also directed them to submit immediately a proposal on cost cutting or cancellation of the newly approved projects whose works have not started in light of their actual status.

"If necessary, reallocation can be given at appropriate time on the basis of real progress of the projects," he told the officials in a meeting held for a review of the ADP 2001-2002, adopted by the past Awami League government.

The meeting took stock of ADP allocation for different projects, physical progress and expenditure made so far.

Presiding over the meeting, the minister directed proper identification of the superfluous and slow-paced projects to drop from the ADP in consultation with the line ministries.

He, however, advised continuing implementation of the necessary projects.

The economic pointsman of the BNP government instructed all not to waste scarce resources of the country in view of the prevailing economic situation and to save money from the unnecessary sectors.

State Ministers for Finance and Planning Anwarul Kabir Talukdar and Shah Mohammad Abul Hossain were present in the review meeting on the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

AL names 15 teams for countrywide organisational tour

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League will launch a vigorous organisational tour programme across the country from November 5 through 11.

The programme, first of its kind after AL's debacle in the October 1 election, is aimed at creating public opinion against killings, repression, rape, extortion and communal disturbances unleashed by "BNP-Jamaat alliance", and mustering opinion in favour of AL's demand for scrapping the October 1 election.

AL President Sheikh Hasina from a city rally on October 28 announced the weeklong anti-terrorism programme.

Central Awami League leaders and most of the newly elected party lawmakers, split into 15 teams, would embark upon the country-wide tours to hold public meetings, workers' rallies as well as mass contact programmes at district and upazila levels.

The 15 teams are comprised of all of the party's presidium members and some 39 out of 58 AL lawmakers. However, party chief Sheikh Hasina will not participate in the tour programme although it was previously planned that she herself would tour some of the severely affected areas where minorities were subjected to repression.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

CCC ward commissioner sent to jail

UNB, Ctg

A ward commissioner and seven others were sent to jail yesterday for harassing a businessman implicating him in a false arms case.

Additional Sessions Judge M Shamsul Haq sent Haji Nurul Haq, commissioner of Bakshiganj ward of Chittagong City Corporation, and others to jail when they appeared before the court.

Some hoodlums abducted businessman Motiur Rahman on May 19 in 1996 allegedly at the instruction of Haji Haq and handed him over to Kotwali police putting a firearm in his hands. Then they filed an arms case against Motiur Rahman.

Motiur Rahman was detained for about three months. He later filed a case of abduction and killing attempt against Haji Nurul Haq.

The seven others who were sent to jail are Monu Mia, Khorshed Alam, Mohammad Ali, Abdur Rab, Zagir Ahmed, M Yasin, and M Farid.

World Maritime Day today.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Maritime Day today.

The day will be observed in the country as elsewhere in the world with due festivity and fervour. Bangladesh will observe the day with pride as a maritime nation.

Every year the day is observed under the auspices of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the world body for global maritime affairs.

The day is used to focus attention on the importance of shipping safety and the marine environment.

This year the slogan of the day is "IMO-Globalisation and the role of the seafarer".

In a message on the occasion of the World Maritime Day, IMO Secretary General William A.O'Neil emphasised on the necessity of maritime safety and the important role of shipping in the new global economy.

"Sea transport remains by far the most cost-effective way to move goods and raw materials in quantity around our planet and the vast majority of world trade is carried in ships," the IMO secretary General said in the message.

He said "Our goal is to make sure that the people manning the world's shipping today are alert, motivated, educated, trained and qualified to the proper standards and in fact possess the skills necessary to perform properly."

"We recognise that the challenge to achieve this is a complex and multi-faceted one, but it is one

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

BNP men ransack shops in Sirajganj; 7 arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

BNP and Jubo Dal activists ransacked and looted shops of Awami League supporters and religious minorities at Binodpur Bazar in Tarash upazila and Sirajganj town on Tuesday night. They also beat up the shop-owners, leaving 15 injured.

Police arrested seven BNP and Jubo Dal men from Binodpur Bazar and Sirajganj town the same night for their alleged involvement in the incidents.

The arrested were identified as Monjurul Ahasan Gutu, 30, a Jubo Dal leader of Sirajganj town and Momen, 32, Abdur Rouf, 28, Mohammad Sabuj, 30, Mohammad Babul, 23, Mohammad Golam Rabbani, 25, and Anwar Hossain, 26, of Binodpur Bazar under Tarash upazila.

They were arrested on charge of extortion, police said.

Police recovered looted goods worth Tk 1 lakh from their possession.

Meanwhile, three Awami League backed Jubo League leaders were arrested from Belkuchi upazila yesterday. They are accused in different cases, police said.

The arrested are Abdul Hamid alias Nannu Biswas, 35, Faridul Islam, 42, and Abdus Sabur, 35.



President Shahabuddin Ahmad shakes hands with a guest at the tea party he hosted for secretaries of different ministries and top army officers at the Banghabhan yesterday.

Activists of outlawed parties attack Hindu fishermen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Armed operatives of the two outlawed outfits attacked Hindu fishermen in Kathaltala village under Dumuria thana on Tuesday evening.

The outlawed organisations -- Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) and Biplabi Communist Party (BCP) -- are out there to take control of different unions of Dumuria, Khulna.

A PBCP armed gang of 30 raided over one hundred houses belonging to the fishermen, firing blank shots and exploding bombs indiscriminately.

The PBCP cadres looted many houses belonging to the fishermen and molested at least four young women.

Moreover, all images of Lakshmi, a Hindu goddess, and many houses were damaged during the criminal operation that continued for over an hour. At least 15 persons were injured in the attack, police said.

The PBCP and BCP cadres traded gunshots. Nearly two hundred people, including women and children, of Kathaltala village have taken shelter in a primary school fearing further attacks until yesterday.

More than five hundred others of Atlia, Maguraghona and Shovna unions were seen preparing to leave their homes for safer places.

On Monday midnight, the BCP armed cadres belonging to the Minal group attacked the houses of two leaders of PBCP in Chakundia village of Atlia union,

police said. They beat up two PBCP armed cadres -- Razzak and Shahidul. Jamila Khatun, 55, mother of PBCP armed cadre Ajmal, was also beaten at the same time.

The incident infuriated the PBCP cadres who later attacked the Hindu-dominated area in Kathaltala village on Tuesday evening, being tipped off that the BCP cadres took shelter there.

Over one hundred residents of Chakundia village have been rendered homeless, eyewitnesses said, after the cadres burnt at least 15 houses to ashes.

Later, the gang raided Kathaltala Bazaar firing blank shots, damaged twelve motorbikes

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Israel kills top Hamas men

Arafat hopes Blair will give 'historic promise' for state

AFP, Hebron

Israel assassinated two members of the hardline group Hamas Wednesday, including a top commander it said helped plan five deadly suicide attacks, and mortally wounded two other Palestinian militants who had shot at an Israeli car.

Israeli army tanks and troops, meanwhile, smashed further into Palestinian self-rule areas of the West Bank as they continued a campaign to hunt down militants following the assassination of a cabinet minister.

An Israeli helicopter gunship fired a missile and killed Jamal Jadhallah, a 30-year-old commander of the Islamist movement Hamas, in a house in the Alzawya district of Hebron, Palestinian security officials said.

The explosion wounded two other people, they said.

The Israeli army said Jadhallah was a senior member of Hamas' armed wing, the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, and had helped launch the deadliest suicide attacks of the Palestinian uprising, including the Dolphinarium nightclub in Tel Aviv, the Sharon Mall in

Netanya and the Sbarro restaurant in Jerusalem.

More than 40 Israelis were killed in those attacks and hundreds injured.

The army also said Jadhallah had personally murdered two Jewish settlers, and that Yasser Arafat's

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

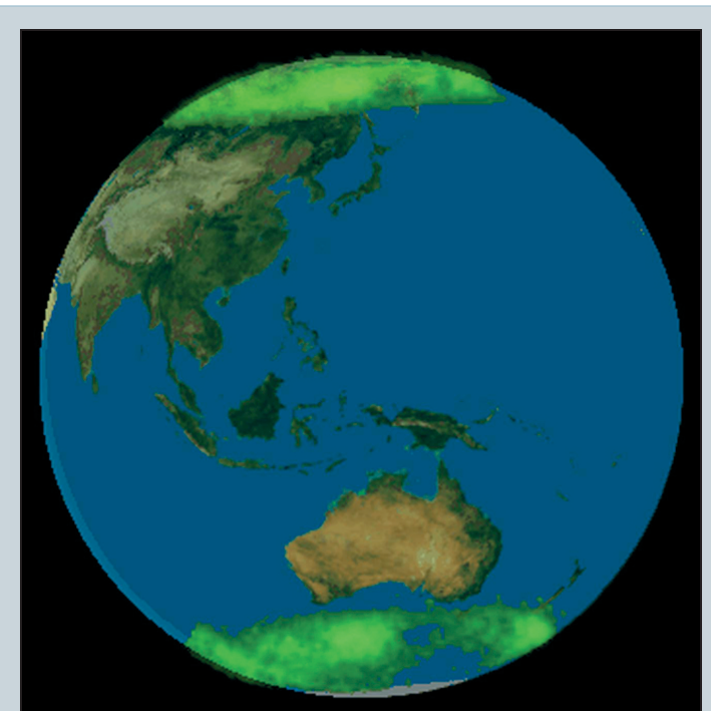


PHOTO: AFP

Awesome auroras

This image obtained October 30 from NASA captured by its Polar spacecraft shows auroras dancing simultaneously around both of Earth's polar regions. During a space weather storm October 22, Polar's Visible Imaging System observed the aurora borealis and aurora australis (northern and southern lights) expanding and brightening in parallel at opposite ends of the world. The images confirm the three-century old theory that auroras in the northern and southern hemispheres are nearly mirror images - conjugates - of each other.

DU BCL leader held in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Office Secretary of the Dhaka University unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League was arrested by Khulna thana police from his house early yesterday morning. Chowdhury Raihan Farid is wanted in five criminal cases filed against him with Khulna thana during last two years. He is accused in businessman Ayub Ali murder case.

He will be taken on remand for interrogation in connection with all the cases, police said.

Meanwhile, police arrested five BNP activists on Monday night from Natun Bazar and hospital ghat areas on charge of toll collection intimidating shrimp traders.

Division, not ministry, for expatriate Bangladeshis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is likely to set up a new Division for the welfare of the Bangladeshi expatriates under the Ministry of Labour and Employment instead of an earlier plan to establish a separate ministry in this regard.

A three-member cabinet committee at a meeting yesterday recommended institution of the Division in line with an electoral pledge of the BNP.

The BNP had pledged either a ministry or a Division for the cause of the Bangladeshi expatriates.

The cabinet recently approved in principle establishment of two new

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

PCP submits memo to PM

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

The Pahari Chhatra Parishad (PCP) backed by Jana Sanghati Samity yesterday submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister through the deputy commissioner of Khagrachhari, demanding an end to terrorist activities by a tribal group which opposed CHT peace accord.

PCP alleged that the group led by Proshit Bikash Khisha and Shanchoy Chakma has resorted to terrorist activities including murder, abduction and extortion in the hill tracts.

They also demanded rescue of abducted PCP leaders and workers and arrest of the terrorists immediately.

The terrorists belonging to United Democratic Front (UDF) increased their criminal activities

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

Meet power demand of rural people: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has directed the Rural Electrification Board (REB) to intensify its activities to meet the power demand of the rural people.

The prime minister, who is in charge of the Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry, gave the directive at a review meeting on rural electrification at her office yesterday.

State Minister for Power Iqbal Hasan Mahmud presented a 100-day work plan of the REB at the meeting. The secretary of the ministry and REB Chairman and members were present.

The 100-day work plan envisages new power connections to 167,700 clients through electrifica-

tion of 800 villages installing a 3,015-kilometre line.

Under the plan, REB wants the system loss to be reduced to 14.57 per cent within June 2002. The average system loss of REB is now 18.08 per cent and the rate of collection of bills over 96 per cent, the meeting was informed.

The REB requested the PM for an additional allocation of Tk 200 crore in the current fiscal year to accelerate the implementation of its programme.

The prime minister assured necessary support and cooperation to speed up the task.

Some 12,360 kilometres of power line would be installed in the current

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Confce on security co-operation in S Asia Nov 3-5

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka is hosting a conference on 'Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and Security Cooperation in South Asia, November 3-5.

The 3-day conference will focus on military aspects of security but also take into account stability which itself is linked to education, fight against poverty, health and people's participation in decision-making and good governance.

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) and the German Embassy in Dhaka will jointly organise the conference.

Germany Ambassador Dietrich Andreas yesterday briefed newsmen on the theme and objective of the conference. BIISS Director General Major General AM Mansur Ahmed was present.

The ambassador said the question of secure cooperation has become essential in the political dialogue between the nations in South Asia. The necessity to resolve the persisting conflicts by peaceful means is more crucial than ever.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

President hosts tea party for secretaries, military officers

UNB, Dhaka

President Shahabuddin Ahmad hosted a tea party for the secretaries of different ministries and major generals and officers of equivalent ranks of the armed forces at Banghabhan yesterday.

Cabinet Secretary Dr Akbar Ali Khan, Chief of Air Staff Air Vice Marshall M Rafiqul Islam, Acting Chief of Naval Staff Commodore AKM Azad, Chairman of BISS CM Shafi Sami, and Governor of Bangladesh Bank Dr M Farahuddin, among others, attended the party.

President Shahabuddin welcomed the guests and inquired about their welfare. He also exchanged pleasantries with them.

Palestinian and Afghan envoys meet Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Afghanistan Charge d'Affaires Ghulam Mohammad Sukhanyar and Palestine Ambassador Shahta Zarab met Awami League Secretary Sheikh Hasina separately at her Dhanmondi residence yesterday.

The Afghanistan CDA expressed grief at the plight of Afghan people following the US air strikes in his country.

Hasina also expressed her equal concern at the killing of innocent men, women and children and sought a quick solution of the problem in Afghanistan.

In the meeting with Shahta Zarab the issue of Palestine was discussed and the former prime minister said Bangladesh always stood for the cause of Palestinian brothers and their legitimate demands.

Former state minister for foreign affairs Abul Hossain Chowdhury and Sheikh Hasina's Press Secretary Jawadul Karim were present.

Clarification

Hyopshin Co. Limited, a garment manufacturer, contradicted the view expressed in a Daily Star news item published on October 26. The company has sent a rejoinder claiming that the allegation made against it under the caption "Tk 1 crore foreign fabric seized from Islampur" was false and baseless.

It further claimed that the customs intelligence officials seized the goods without looking into the whole story. They also wondered how those fabrics went to the local market.

The customs officials monitor every entry and exit of goods in the export processing zones where the company is located, the company continued. It mentioned that the allegation made by the customs officials that the fabrics were "brought" from Hyopshin is false and baseless.

In the factory in Dhaka Export Processing Zone (DEPZ), there is one gate for exit and entrance which is strictly monitored by armed security guards as well as customs intelligence team under the supervision of retired army personnel appointed by the Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (BEPZA).

Hyopshin further said a team of customs intelligence officials is always on the vigil beside the gate with the assistance of customs department of the DEPZ. The customs superintendent also checks for himself the goods coming against back-to-back L/C, it added.

Our reply

The Daily Star published the report on the basis of a statement made available from the Office of Customs Intelligence and Investigation.

The statement claimed that one of their teams seized the fabrics when those were being unloaded from the two covered vans.

The statement also claimed that following their primary investigation, they were confirmed that those were brought from Hyopshin Co Limited, a hundred per cent export-oriented factory at the DEPZ.

The custom officials suspected that the goods were brought there for selling in the local market though it was imported under duty-free facilities for making export items.