

Hasina tells WB Vice-President Nishimizu AL was meted out defeat under a blueprint

UNB, Dhaka

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her party is willing to attend parliamentary standing committee meetings but there has not been any communication from the ruling party about formation of and opposition representation on those committees.

She made the remarks when World Bank Vice-President for South Asia Mieko Nishimizu called on her at her Dhanmondi house discussing Bangladesh's politico-economic situation and post-election stance of Awami League.

The ex-premier, along with her deputies, is boycotting the new parliament alleging that her party was meted out a stunning defeat under a blueprint.

"Yes, we want to send our deputies to parliamentary standing committees... but before that the government side must consult the opposition about the formation and representation of the opposition on those committees," she said to a query from Nishimizu.

The World Bank vice-president praised the former prime minister for strengthening the parliamentary committee system with an MP as chairman of each committee instead of a minister.

During the 90-minute talks, Hasina pointed out biased actions of the caretaker government, massive rigging and manipulation of results in favour of the BNP-led alliance as causes of her party's debacle in the October 1 election.

She also alleged pre-poll arrests and torture of her party leaders and workers, and threat and intimidation obstructing a large number of voters, many from minorities, from voting for Awami League.

"Despite all conspiracies," she told the donor agency executive, "Awami League got 41 per cent of votes proving its popular standing as the largest party in the country."

Hasina said, "Pre-election terrorism, torture, killing, rape and looting continued unabated across the country

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Upazila election BNP-CEC talks tomorrow, AL still undecided

NAZRUL ISLAM

The Election Commission (EC) has initiated a move to have a series of parleys with major political parties from tomorrow for holding Upazila election.

But the main opposition party Awami League is yet to decide whether it will participate in any election under Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Syed, party sources said. AL accused the CEC of not playing a neutral role in the October 1 parliamentary polls.

According to EC sources, a delegation of ruling BNP is scheduled to have talks with the CEC tomorrow.

Awami League has been invited for talks on the following day, Jamaat-e-Islami on November 29 and Jatiya Party (Ershad) on November 28. Several smaller

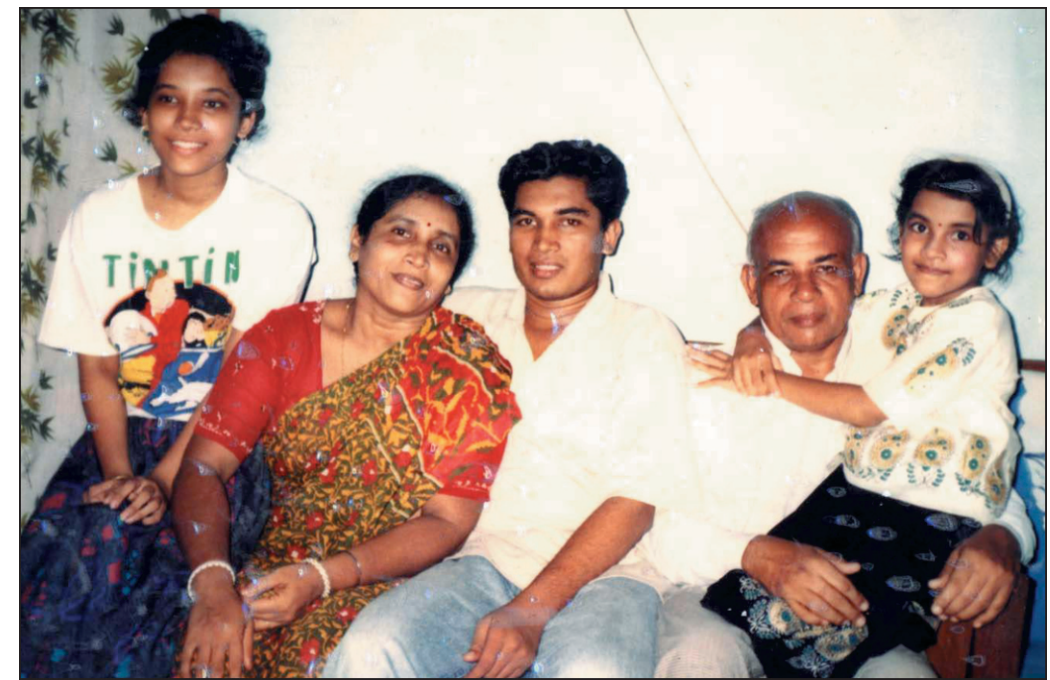
political parties represented in the earlier Jatiya Sangsad will also be invited, EC officials said.

AL sources said the party will decide within a day or two whether it will have talks with the CEC and participate in the local government election.

When contacted AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman gave a negative note about participating in the local body election and said party leaders will sit soon to review the entire political situation and decide its course.

"The existing atmosphere does not permit us to participate in any election at this stage when terrorism, rape, looting and repression on opposition by ruling party men are frequent," he told The Daily Star last night.

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Principal of Nazirhat College Gopal Krishna Muhuri with wife Uma Muhuri, son and daughters days before his murder at his Jamal Khan residence.

'They killed my father on the plea of searching a terrorist'

NURUL ALAM, Chittagong

The family of slain principal Gopal Krishna Muhuri of Nazirhat College is still in a trauma seven days after his killing at his residence.

For them, Friday returned with the memory of the gruesome murder. "My widowed mother is wailing and has not taken anything since the morning", said her only son Saikat Muhuri when this correspondent visited the family at their residence at Jamal Khan in the city.

A former freedom fighter, Gopal Chandra was known as an ideal teacher who kept his college free of student politics and maintained a congenial academic atmosphere. But he was shot dead on November 16 (Friday) by terrorists believed to be belonging to Jamaat-Shibir.

As this correspondent wanted to talk to his mother Uma Muhuri, Saikat said, "She is yet to overcome the shock and would not talk now".

The sofa on which he was killed was seen covered with flowers.

Saikat said they have been living in the rented house on the first floor of a two storied building -- Shaon Bhavan -- for the last 25 years. The building is located at densely populated Arrow Lane, several hundred yards from the busy Jamal Khan Road. Police were guarding the building.

Saikat is a mechanical engineer and works in a private factory at Kumira, 10 miles off the city.

Saikat said he was in the bathroom when the gunmen shot his father on the head and fled away.

"After hearing the shots I came out of the bathroom and saw my father leaning on the sofa with bullet wounds. I ran out and shouted to call neighbours. But the killers managed to escape" Saikat said.

The four assailants entered the house posing as

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Prime Minister Khaleda Zia seen offering Munajat at an iftar party hosted for political leaders and MPs at the Pradhanmantri Bhaban yesterday.

Businessman murdered in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Armed miscreants kidnapped a young businessman and shot him dead in the city's Bayezid Bostami area yesterday afternoon.

Sources said the victim, identified as Faridul Alam, 35, younger brother of the owner of Rexona Textile Mills, was allegedly kidnapped by some armed cadres of local Awami League at around 1pm as he refused to pay them tolls a few days back.

The miscreants took the victim, who is learnt to be a BNP supporter, to a nearby hill in Bangla Bazar area and shot him dead.

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Young man shot dead in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A young man was gunned and two others were injured when an unidentified gang opened fire on them at Mohakhali Wireless Gate in the city's Gulshan area in the early hours of yesterday.

The victim Shahjalal Montu, 24, son of Kalu Gain was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where he died at about 2:30 am. Two others, identified as Mohammad Jaman and Mohammad Shafiq, were also admitted to DMCH.

Police said a gang of four surrounded the three while they were

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Govt unlikely to cut 100 pc L/C margin imposed on 55 items

STAR REPORT

The government is unlikely to withdraw or reduce the 100 per cent L/C margin imposed recently on import of 55 luxury and less essential items to ease the pressure on foreign exchange reserve in view of falling exports as a fallout of the world economic recession.

"The margin will be withdrawn as soon as the foreign exchange reserve position improves but at the moment we do not have any plan to withdraw or reduce the margin on any of the items", a commerce ministry source said yesterday.

However, the 100 per cent L/C margin imposed on newsprint along with the 55 items was reduced to 30 per cent after three days of the enhancement.

The commerce ministry on November 6 decided to impose a 100 per cent L/C (letter of credit) margin on 56 'luxury and comparatively less essential items'.

Newsprint was included in the list. But for 'mysterious reasons', the file containing the order was held for a week before being sent to the central bank on November 13.

In the meantime, hundreds of L/Cs were opened for import of some of these items, benefiting

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Nov 24		5-11 pm
Nov 25	6-21 am	

Prayer Timings		
Nov 24		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-56	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-14	5-20
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

Scarcity of pre-paid cards hits GP users

STAR REPORT

Scarcity of 'pre-paid cards' due to bureaucratic tangle has thrown out of communication thousands of subscribers of GrameenPhone (GP), a leading cellular mobile phone company in the country.

About 2.5 lakh mobile users of GP are now unable to make or receive calls due to non-availability of pre-paid cards.

The situation arose as customs authorities at Zia International Airport (ZIA) expressed their inability to release a consignment of GP's pre-paid cards following an order from the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (MOPT) in the second week of this month.

Sources said the MOPT gave the order as Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) had earlier raised before it the net-2-phone card issue. Net-2-phone cards are used as a means of illegal voice communication, causing crores of taka in revenue loss to BTTB.

"The issues of net-2-phone cards and pre-paid cards got mixed

up," one source said.

Release of about four lakh pre-paid cards of GP were stopped following information from the ministry that these were being used for voice mail, depriving BTTB of revenue earning from ISD (International Subscriber Dialling) calls.

GP subscribers are suffering as cards worth Tk 300 and Tk 600 which are used by most of them are not available. There are also cards worth Tk 1,200 and Tk 2,400.

When contacted, a GP official said they had contacted ZIA authorities for release of the cards but the authorities referred the issue to the MOPT.

He further said when GP explained to the MOPT on Thursday that pre-paid cards are used only for inland communication, it sent a letter to the Commissioner of Customs at ZIA. But the customs authorities did not honour the letter 'as an official junior to the Customs Commissioner issued it' and asked for a fresh one, he added.

The GP official said they would

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Roadside iftar items are mostly unsafe

STAR REPORT

Use of adulterated cooking oil and unprocessed ingredients in preparing iftar items at thousands of makeshift iftar shops all over the city is leaving the public exposed and vulnerable to the hazards of food poisoning.

Most of these open shops are located in unhygienic areas by the roadside where foodstuff are out in the open for sale in total disregard for protection from dust and other impurities.

Both sides of the Green Road and the road from Mogbazar crossing to Malibagh are only a few of such city areas where the dust blown by passing motor vehicles and the soot discharged from their exhaust mix freely with the food, posing serious health hazard to the public.

Monitoring by authorities concerned to ensure food quality is almost non-existent. Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) said it had sent notices to

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