

Criminals being used as pvt force of govt: Hasina

UNB, London

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina charged the government with freeing some 15,000 criminals and planning to release 25,000 more arrested during her rule.

"After coming out of jails, these criminals are being used as private force of the alliance government for launching attacks on Awami Leaguers and unleashing reign of terror across the country," she said.

Hasina, who was addressing a meeting of Awami League, UK chapter, on Thursday, ridiculed the home minister's remarks after minor girl Nausheen was killed by a stray bullet of criminals. The home minister had said, "Almighty Allah has taken away His creature."

"It is true that Allah takes away His creature. But what's the duty of those who are in government to protect life and property of people? They have miserably failed," she said.

The Awami League chief said the current police operation for curbing crime is simply a "bluff." Some 450 of "their men" were arrested, but they were later released without filing any case, she said.

Hasina also criticised the Prime Minister for the commitment she

made at the UN special session for welfare of children. The Prime Minister cannot even give guarantee of normal death of a child in Bangladesh, Hasina said.

She alleged that the main reason behind the Chandpur launch disaster was that the launch was hit by another launch owned by the Prime Minister's son. It did not sink due to storms, Hasina said.

The former prime minister said cases were filed against Khaleda Zia and minister of 1991-96 government following massive allegations of corruption. Those are being withdrawn now, she said.

Hasina also alleged that the coalition government also waived Tk 60 crore bank loans taken by the Prime Minister's son and owner of Dandy Dying and Rahman Industry.

Road accidents

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As the news of the accident spread in the area, JCD leaders and workers rushed to the spot and ransacked 10 buses at the bus stand.

They also put up a barricade on the road, disrupting traffic.

Additional police have been deployed as tension gripped the area.

Rickshawpuller arrested with arms in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna thana police arrested rickshawpuller Babul Shaikh, 32 and recovered a revolver loaded with three bullets from his possession.

Acting on a tip-off, police rushed to Forest ghat area and caught Babul with the gun concealed in a school bag.

Babul Shaikh told police that he was hired to kill a student of Khulna Zilla School.

After searching the school bag police recovered some books and khatas belonging to a student of Khulna City College.

Police believed that the rickshawpuller was hired by a college student to kill a student of Zilla School.

Police did not disclose the names of the two students for the sake of investigation.

Teacher, fake examinee held in Comilla

BSS, Comilla

A teacher of A K Majumder Mahila College was arrested yesterday by local Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) when he was illegally entering Lalmai Sadar College HSC examination centre during English second paper examination.

Meanwhile, the UNO of Chandina Upazila arrested a fake examinee from Chandina Redwan Ahmed College. The fake examinee, identified as Mohammad Al Amin, was appearing in the examination for one Abul Khaiyer Munshi.

Comilla Education Board sources said the arrested teacher was identified as Alamgir Hossain Majumder alias Apu.

On the other hand, the UNO Nangolkot expelled an invigilator Shahidul Islam from the Nangolkot Hassan Memorial College centre as he was allegedly helping the student cheating in the examination.

Meanwhile, a total of 921 examinees were expelled from different examination centres during the English second paper examination from six districts under the board yesterday.

Of them, 237 from Comilla district, 63 from Chandpur, 69 from Brahmanbaria, 273 from Noakhali, 109 from Feni and 167 from Laxmipur.

Alamgir

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zled Tk 4,52,65,646 in purchasing equipment for the theatre from the second lowest bidder.

In the third case, filed with Tejaon thana, it has been alleged that Alamgir and 11 others were involved in inviting bids without estimating the cost of the theatre. They misappropriated Tk 52,28,210 by doing this.

The Bureau of Anti-corruption (BAC) filed the cases against Dr Alamgir and others with Tejaon thana on March 27.

CNG project

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25 applications for setting up CNG refuelling stations under private sector.

The government decided to ban import of two-stroke three-wheelers in a bid to save the city from deadly fume from motor vehicles. The existing two-stroke three wheelers are supposed to be phased out from Dhaka by September 2002.

The RPGCL has stopped its CNG conversion project from early March considering the rush at the CNG filling stations which are very few in number.

The present average monthly consumption of the CNG is only about 0.292 million cubic metre.

To arrest environmental pollution and reduce the hassle, the RPGCL has taken up a project to install five more CNG refuelling stations in Dhaka city and its premises and convert 1,000 vehicles. The government has allocated Tk 15.61 crore to complete the project by 2003.

"We have called for bids for installation, commission of necessary equipment for six stations and hope that the six stations will be on operation by the end of this year," an official of the RPGCL said.

The RPGCL will also repair and install three abandoned CNG stations in the city, hoping that it will ease the situation a little, as the capacity of these stations are double than the existing stations.

Heat wave

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characterised by loss of fluid due to dehydration caused by a bacteria, Vibrio.

Serious dehydration from diarrhea may also cause death. Fluid loss through vomiting, diarrhea or excessive urination and inadequate intake of water or a combination of both can cause dehydration. The most common cause of dehydration in infants and children is acute gastroenteritis with vomiting and diarrhoea.

Dehydration is classified as mild, moderate and severe. Depending on age, mild dehydration is seen with 3-5 per cent loss of body weight, moderate dehydration with 6-10 per cent and severe dehydration, which is life-threatening, is seen with more than 9-15 per cent loss of body weight.

Most types of diarrhoea are generally short-lived. Diarrhoea stops in a few days without treatment.



British troops of 45 Commando (Zulu Company) board Chinook helicopters of 27 Squadron RAF at Bagram Airbase in Afghanistan Friday to deploy on Operation Condor. The 1,000-strong force of marines with US troops was sent with air support to aid Australian special forces involved in a firefight with the enemy.

ROK President's son held in bribery scam

AP, Seoul

A son of President Kim Dae-jung was arrested yesterday on suspicion of influence-peddling in a series of scandals that has sapped the popularity of his father.

Kim Hong-gul, 39, the youngest of the president's three sons, was accused of receiving over a million dollars in bribes last year from a businessman who is now in jail.

Television footage showed Kim leaving the state prosecutor's office late Saturday.

"I am sorry to have caused a trouble," he told reporters before heading toward a Seoul prison. "I am sorry," he said, when asked by a reporter what he had to say to his

parents.

Kim Dae-jung, a Nobel Peace Prize winner who campaigned for the presidency on a platform of clean government, has not been implicated in any scandal. However, corruption investigations involving government officials as well as two of his sons has hurt his image.

Kim's single five-year term ends in February, and by law he cannot seek re-election. Presidential elections will be held in December.

Hong-gul has become the second son of an incumbent South Korean president to face criminal charges. If convicted of bribery, he could be sentenced to up to five years in prison.

Kim Hyun-chul, second son of

former President Kim Young-sam, was arrested in 1997 on bribery and tax-evasion charges.

The scandal has provided fodder for opposition criticism in the run-up to a presidential election on December 19.

"The case will be dealt by law and President Kim will continue to firmly focus on state affairs," presidential spokesman Park Sun-sook was quoted as saying by local Yonhap news agency.

Judge Lee Hyun-seung at the Seoul District Court said he issued the arrest warrant because there was a strong case against Hong-gul and it was feared he would destroy evidence if not put behind bars.

India asks Pak envoy

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announced a 50 per cent reduction in the staff strength of Pakistani mission in Delhi.

Asked if there would be any order to further cut the number of Pakistan high commission staff in New Delhi, Singh said at present the only change related to Pakistani High Commissioner.

When pointed to the exchange of fire between Indian and Pakistani troops in Rajouri sector of Jammu and Kashmir, the External Affairs Minister said a "fire assault" was conducted following Pakistani provocation and very extensive damage has been caused on the Pakistani side.

The cabinet committee on security was briefed by the chiefs of three defence services about the situation on the ground. Prior to this, the services chiefs briefed Vajpayee and other members of the cabinet committee on security about the operational status of the armed forces.

Given the gravity of the terrorist attacks near Jammu, some diplomatic actions by India against Pakistan were on the cards as Vajpayee government has been under mounting pressure to be doing something concrete to counter Islamabad's aiding and abetting terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.

In his reply to the debate in both houses of Parliament on Friday, Home Minister L K Advani had said government would take final decision after consulting the military leadership.

One of the major points that came through the parliamentary

debate was the disappointment expressed by members cutting across party affiliations about the United States' role in putting pressure on Pakistan to halt cross-border terrorism.

As the temperature in Indo-Pak relations rise by the day, US Ambassador to India Robert Blackwill met Jaswant Singh and National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra on Friday and American Secretary of State Colin Powell had telephoned Singh on the day before.

Blackwill is understood to have urged Indian leadership to exercise restraint and give more time to US to persuade Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf to do more to rein in the terrorists operating from his country.

India, however, has made it clear to US that it is highly skeptical about Musharraf's ability and sincerity to act against the terrorist groups.

The United States is reportedly contemplating to rush its Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage to India and Pakistan in the second week of June but highly-placed government sources here say that is too late a time.

AP says, Pakistan's Foreign Ministry issued a statement expressing disappointment with the expulsion and said Qazi would be recalled.

"The government of Pakistan will continue to work for the de-escalation of tension between Pakistan and India and for the complete normalisation of diplomatic relations between the two countries," the statement said.

Bush denies failure

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gain from the issue.

"Any time anybody suggests or implies to the American people that this president had specific information that could have prevented the attacks on our country on September 11, that crosses the lines," said Fleischer.

"I think that the American people will be very wary of any politician who seeks to turn the sorrow of victims into their own political gain."

One of Bush's harshest critics, however, stressed the need for a full investigation.

Democrat Richard Gephardt, the House minority leader, told CNN the US government had failed the American people.

"We failed the American people in a very important respect. We did not protect them properly," he said. "This is not blame-placing.... We support the president on the war against terrorism -- have and will. But we've got to do better in preventing terrorist attacks."

Bush, speaking at a White House awards ceremony, said he considered protecting America his most important job and promised to use the "might of America" to achieve the goal.

He said the mission was still critical as threats to the homeland remained real and required a determined response.

"We're in for a long struggle. It's a tough war. This enemy is not going to quit. So therefore, in order to protect innocent lives, this country must have the will and the determination to chase these killers down one by one and bring them to justice and that's exactly what is going to happen so long as I am the president of the United States of America," he said.

National security adviser Condoleezza Rice said Thursday Bush had been briefed August 6 on a report saying militants from al-Qaeda might resort to hijackings.

Fleischer also confirmed that two days before September 11 the White House national security team had finalised a directive for Bush to sign that would have launched an all-out assault on the Islamist militant group with the aid of Afghan rebels based in the north of the country.

Bush had not taken action on the directive when the September 11 attacks happened.

Rice also said neither she nor

Pakistan said India's decision to expel its ambassador would add to tensions between the two neighbours and urged New Delhi to resolve differences through dialogue, according to Reuters.

"Actions like these add to tension, whereas efforts should be in reduction of tension," Foreign Office spokesman Aziz Ahmed Khan told state-run Pakistan Television (PTV).

Firing intensified on the border Friday and increased through the night into Saturday morning, with both sides using mortars and recoilless guns, witnesses said.

Also Friday, a bomb left on a motor scooter exploded in a busy shopping area in Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu-Kashmir states, killing two people and injuring 17, police said.

In Indian villages along the frontier, the carcasses of animals lay in the summer heat in abandoned villages, their stench mixing with the smell of used ammunition.

"It's a war," said Bishamber Dass, one of 10,000 people who fled their homes Friday night and was sheltering in a makeshift camp. "The boom of the guns could be heard even at the distance of five kilometres from the border."

Military officials said four soldiers had been wounded, while three civilians had been killed and seven wounded in the most intense cross-border firing this year.

Pakistan's government-run television reported four civilians were killed and 40 wounded by Indian shelling.

Young man dies

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But failing to arrange the money, Badal's family went to the DB office on May 9 to inform about the matter. At this, the DB officials got furious and ordered Badal to be given electric shock and beaten right in front of his brother, aunt and the general secretary of Baraipara Panchayat (arbitration committee).

In a critical condition, Badal was placed before the court and later sent to Narayanganj jail on the same evening, family members said.

On May 17, he was transferred to the Dhaka Central Jail. As his condition deteriorated, he was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) later in the day. Badal died at the hospital at about 9:15pm on the same day.

The body was sent to the DMCH morgue for autopsy. The inquest of the victim was carried out at the morgue in presence of a lady magistrate last night while the autopsy would be carried out today.

Victim's elder brother Sagar, aunt Monowara Begum and general secretary of Baraipara Panchayat Kazi Rashid who went to the Dhaka

Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue yesterday to receive Badal's body alleged that police tortured Badal to death.

They also said police had falsely implicated Badal in the rape and murder of a local girl who was raped and killed by criminals and her body thrown into the river on October 5 last year.

The girl's mother Nasima Begum later filed a case with the Bandar Police Station accusing Kelen, Jewel and another unidentified person.

Police arrested three people in this connection.

Three months after investigation, the case was shifted to the Narayanganj DB for further investigation. DB also arrested some others in connection with the rape and murder of the young girl.

3 armed cadres of PBCP held in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Terokhada thana police arrested three armed cadres of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) on Friday night from Adampur and Arjuna villages.

The arrested PBCP cadres are Mithu Molla, 34, Omar Ali Biswas, 38, and Rafiqul Islam, 32.

Police also recovered a 303 rifle and a shutter-gun from their possession.

Acting on a tip-off, police swooped on the house of one Bachchu Mia at Adampur village where PBCP cadres were holding a secret meeting. Sensing the presence of police, the members of the outlawed party tried to escape. Police arrested two of them -- Omar Ali and Rafique -- from the spot while others managed to flee. A 303 rifle was recovered from their possession.

Police later raided the house of one Abdul Hye at village Arjuna where outlaw Mithu Molla was staying.

Mithu Mollah fired shots from the house, injuring OC Shamsul Huq and SI Ziaur Rahman.

Mithu Molla also received bullet injuries when police returned fire. Police arrested the outlaw with a shutter-gun and sent him to Khulna Medical College Hospital for treatment.

Listed criminal arrested in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police arrested a listed criminal from the city's Shershah Colony on Friday night.

Police raided the colony at around 11pm and nabbed Mahbulul Alam, 27.

Police said Alam was wanted in eight cases.

Magistrate assaulted by expelled examinees

UNB, Noakhali

A Magistrate was assaulted and his car damaged for expelling 11 HSC examinees from two centres in Hatia during the English second paper examination yesterday.

Russel, an unruly examinee at Hatia Afazia Degree College, was arrested on order of the Magistrate, Rezaul Karim.

Police fired four gunshots when the expelled students and their supporters blocked the main road of Hatia upazila obstructing vehicular movement.

Two of the troublemongers were arrested and a case was filed against them.

Titas unions

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source. In another development, Petrobangla and Titas management discussed the use of two motor vehicles by a union leader and the nephew of another unionist.

Shahnoor Hossain, secretary of the Jatiyatabadi Sramik Karmachari Union (JKSU), illegally took away a Pajero jeep allocated to a high official on Friday for personal use. Bachchu Sheikh, a clerk of Titas and nephew of JKSU President Habibur Rahman, also took away a pick-up van on the same day. None of them returned the vehicles till 4:00pm yesterday.

Sources said Shahnoor has been forcibly using the Pajero for the last one month and also fitted an air-conditioner in the jeep for his own convenience.

Sources further said a deputy general manager of Titas has been asked to explain how and why he allowed these employees to use the motor vehicles.

When contacted, Acting Managing Director of Titas Mohammad Obaidullah said, "I have not yet received the probe committee report."

"If the report finds the allegations true, we will not hesitate to take departmental actions," he told The

Daily Star yesterday.

He also denied any political pressure regarding Mahbubur Rahman, who is the vice-president of the Jatiyatabadi Sramik Karmachari Union.

Meantime, the Titas management was asked yesterday to take strict measures against the thieves who plunder as much as Tk 200 crore worth of gas a year.

Titas will investigate to detect the customers who are involved in gas pilferage. Those found guilty might lose gas connection forever, the energy state minister said yesterday.

Around 77 per cent of gas from Titas is consumed by eight power and four fertiliser plants. In this segment, the systems loss is negligible (less than two per cent) as gas supply to government entities does not leave any scope for theft.

In the other segment, there are 8.5 lakh domestic consumers using 8.48 per cent of gas, 6923 commercial consumers using 1.68 per cent and only 2450 industrial consumers using 11.4 per cent of gas. And the major portion of theft is committed at the industrial consumers' end.

Special passport

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in Malaysia are often charged Tk one lakh as opposed to the standard Tk 60,000 at the maximum.

Recruiting agency owners however alleged that the government was playing a contradictory role regarding manpower export by calling for increasing the flow of foreign currency earnings on the one hand and creating various obstacles to manpower export on the other.

They said besides increasing passport fees, the government has stopped issuing immigration permission for jobs in Kuwait.

Sources said around 2,000 workers with visas from Kuwait embassy are stuck here for that reason.

The director general of the Bureau of Manpower Export and Training Shahidul Haq declined to talk to The Daily Star about the matter but an official of the bureau only said immigration permission for Kuwait was stopped due to a gov-

ernment policy.

Manpower export to Saudi Arabia was also hampered recently as the Saudi embassy refused to stamp visas on passports with endorsement for change of profession following reports fake seal and signature were used for endorsement.

A large number of passport books were thus discarded, as workers had to obtain fresh passports. This was one of the reasons for a passport crisis in the country, said one source.

However, following a meeting with BAIIRA leaders, the embassy later agreed to issue visas accept the passports a week after endorsements are made and issue visas upon getting a list of endorsement from the passport office.

More than one lakh Bangladeshis go to work in Saudi Arabia every year and almost half of the country's total remittance earnings come from that country alone.

Bad loan portfolio

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When it was pointed out that fees for the lawyers who fight cases on behalf of the banks are meager, he hinted that a portion of the recovered bad loans could be given to the legal advisors as incentive.

The BEA also suggested a bar on loan rescheduling for more than three and appointment of an ombudsman for the financial sector to check corruption.

Explaining the compulsions under which the next budget is being formulated Saifur said there are demands for zero-tariff benefit from different quarters. "I have 300 such requests. But I think all sectors should have duty even if of a very minimum level."

He said there are many sectors like education, women development, health and infrastructure where allocations can not be slashed.

Mentioning the reasons for dwindling foreign assistance, he said donors are tagging more and more conditions. "Even the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are now criticising the Asian Development Bank for being too soft on loans and conditions," Saifur told the BEA members.

Watch it prison!

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said H.R. Hussain, the superintendent of a jail in Calcutta, the capital of West Bengal.

"Some are even trying to ape the soccer stars in the playgrounds of the jails," he added.

Hussain said prisoners had pleaded with authorities to install colour television sets, which will be put in the common rooms of the 53 jails in the state.

"It's a welcome change in the tedious life of the prisoners and we will not be surprised if all inmates remain glued to the screens throughout the night to watch their stars work wonders with the ball," Hussain said.

"Not only prisoners, but inmates of juvenile (correctional) homes are also agog with the ensuing World Cup and government officials are visiting the juveniles to install TV sets to inspire the inmates."

West Bengal Juvenile Board chairman Hiranmoy Saha said they would be showing the semi-finals and final on big television screens.

"We will encourage all youths in the homes to watch the games as it is an opportunity to divert their attention towards a positive outlook in life and bring them to back into

mainstream society," he said.

Saha said the state government had appealed to some non-governmental organisations to help with the cost of the television sets for the 200 or so juvenile homes in West Bengal.

"It will be a great help to the inmates of jails and juvenile homes if the government installs television sets to watch one of the greatest event on the earth", Saha said.

One killed

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Zakaria Chowdhury and general secretary Advocate Fazlul Huq Sarder at a press conference at the local press club.

The namaj-e-janaza for the Jubo League