

Hearing of case against Bahauddin adjourned till October 31

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Fourth Assistant Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka, yesterday adjourned the hearing of the foreign currency smuggling case against AFM Bahauddin Nasim, former assistant political secretary to Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, till October 31.

Judge Mocklesur Rahman Al-Azad adjourned the hearing following a time petition by the defence lawyers.

In the petition, the lawyers Shahara Khatun, and Mohammad Habibur Rahman stated that they had earlier filed a criminal revision with the High Court seeking quashment of the case.

The High Court, after hearing on September 17, issued a showcause notice upon the government to explain within two weeks why the proceedings of the case should not be quashed. So, they prayed for adjournment of the hearing till disposal of the revision, the lawyers said.

Nasim, also joint convener of Awami Sechchasebak League, was arrested from ZIA on February 27 on charge of smuggling foreign currency.

Later, he was shown arrested in a case filed with Madaripur Sadar thana on charge of firing gunshots on the motorcade of the then opposition leader Khaleda Zia.

The Investigation Officer (IO) of the case submitted a charge sheet against Nasim on April 12.

The court framed charges against Nasim on July 20.

Meanwhile, a sedition case against Nasim, was filed with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka on March 11.

Nasim, now in the jail custody, was produced in the court during the hearing.

Satkhira blast Two more nabbed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Two more persons were arrested in connection with the September 28 bomb blasts in Satkhira and placed on a three-day remand yesterday.

Police arrested Moinuddin Mohan, a ward commissioner and Jubo League leader, in Shyampur Upazila, and Nazrul Islam, Bhomra unit leader of the ruling BNP-affiliated Truck and Tank Lorry Sramik Union, in the Bhomra land port area in the early hours.

The bomb blast case is rumoured to take a new turn with the arrest of Mohan and Nazrul, said sources.

Nazrul is known as the bodyguard of the BNP district unit Vice-President Abdur Rouf, younger brother of the notorious criminal Abdus Sabur. Sabur is an accused in the local daily Patradoot editor SMAlauddin murder case.

Mohan and Nazrul are accused in a case of robbery on the rice-laden trucks at the Bhomra land port.

Meantime, police raided the houses of two Jubo League leaders -- Shahadat Hossain and Zakir Hossain -- in the early hours of Monday, but could not arrest them.

Two groups of the district unit of the ruling BNP -- one led by Rouf and the other by the district unit Jatiyatabadi Krishak Dal President Mohammad Ali -- are blaming each other for the bomb blasts, said sources.

Six people arrested earlier in connection with the bomb blasts were taken to Dhaka yesterday for further interrogation by the Special Branch (SB) of Police.

Meantime, central leaders of the 11-party alliance visited the injured yesterday. At a briefing at the local press club, they have alleged that the government is playing on the issue to oppress the opposition activists.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Oct 2		5-46 pm
Oct 3	5-50 am	

Prayer Timings		
Oct 2		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-15
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	5-52	5-58
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation

Shrimp exporters mull own quality control

REAZ AHMAD

Shrimp exporters are thinking of self-policing the quality management upon fresh warnings by major importers of Bangladeshi shrimps -- the European Union (EU) and the US.

They are exploring the feasibility of developing an alternative 'seal of quality' (SoQ) programme on their own and minimising dependence on the quality assurance certification by the fisheries and livestock ministry.

The alternative initiative involves setting-up of an inspection and spot-checking mechanism and a test laboratory and imposition of penalty on those who fail to measure up to export standards.

The EU and the USA together account for over two-thirds of Bangladesh's yearly 350 million dollars earned from the shrimp export that comes next to the garment and knitwear industry.

The office of the SoQ programme, a joint effort by the Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association (BFFEA) and the Agro-based Industries and Technology Development Project (ATDP), will open in Dhaka on October 3.

Commerce Minister Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury and Director of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Gene George will attend the ceremony.

Still, the fisheries and livestock ministry wants to hold on to the authority of issuing quality-assurance certificates.

After the latest EU warning of the suspected presence of bacteria in Bangladeshi shrimp, the commerce ministry convened a meeting on September 22, where the fisheries and livestock ministry officials strongly advocated the ministerial authority of certification, official sources said.

Fisheries Ministry Secretary Dr Zahurul Karim told The Daily Star that his

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Militant mayhem mars Gas stations call strike from Oct 8

6 Indian troops, 8 others killed in attacks

AFP, Mumbai

Eight bus passengers and six Indian troops died in a day of bloody attacks yesterday by suspected Islamic militants in Indian Kashmir, marring the third round of a legislative vote in the disputed state.

Another 19 people were injured when militants attacked about a dozen polling stations with grenades, rockets, landmines and gunfire, police said.

In a further incident on a day also marked by protests and claims the security forces had coerced people

into voting, police said a soldier was killed in an explosion during a sweep of a venue at the southern town of Doda which was to be used for an election rally.

Indian electoral officials said 41 per cent of voters had turned out in the four districts where the four-phased staggered vote was held yesterday.

Releasing provisional results at a press conference in Srinagar, the region's summer capital, chief election officer Pramod Jain said 25 per cent of voters turned out in Anantnag district, 28 per cent in

adjoining Pulwama district, 56 per cent in Udhampur and 59 per cent in southern Kathua district.

Jain said the voting was marred by a series of violent incidents aimed at "scaring away" the voters.

"After very successful and violence-free first two phases of elections, our friends from across the border made a desperate attempt to disrupt the polls," Jain said in clear reference to Pakistan, which India accuses of sponsoring the rebel militancy.

The vote began and ended in

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The Bangladesh Petroleum Dealers, Distributors, Agents and Pump Owners Association yesterday decided to go on a countrywide shutdown of filling stations from October 8 for an indefinite period.

The decision was taken at an emergency meeting after the government did not meet their demands, says a press release.

Earlier, the state minister for energy promised to meet their demands in two months at a meeting on July 16, the association leaders said.

The demands include an increase in commission on oil sales,

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PHOTO: STAR

Some elderly people take a break during a rally, brought out in the city yesterday to mark the International Day of Older Persons.

One year of October 1 elections

BNP celebrates 'ballot revolution' AL observes 'black day'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling BNP yesterday celebrated the first anniversary of 'ballot revolution' marking its landslide victory in the October 1 general election last year.

The four-party alliance led by the BNP won the polls securing more than two-thirds majority in the parliament.

The main opposition Awami League observed October 1 as "black day". As part of its programmes yesterday, the BNP brought out a victory procession from the Central Shaheed Minar in the afternoon.

Prior to the procession, BNP's cultural wing Jasas held a rally. It was addressed by Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed, Education Minister Dr Osman Farruk, State Minister for Commerce Barkatullah Bulu and Deputy Minister for Education Abdus Salam Pintu.

In the evening, Prime Minister and BNP chief Khaleda Zia met a cross section of people at the Prothanmontri Bhaban. She exchanged pleasantries with the leaders and activists of BNP and its alliance partners and others.

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STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) observed a 'black day' yesterday to mark the first anniversary of the eighth parliamentary election with 'manipulated results'.

The AL faced a debacle in the election on October 1, 2001 and blamed the then president, the chief election commissioner and the caretaker government for what it called a 'deep-rooted conspiracy'.

To mark the day, the AL staged demonstrations and held rallies across the country yesterday. The party had to shift its rally from Muktangan in the city to the Bangabandhu Avenue, as it was not permitted by the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) to hold the programme there.

With the Dhaka city unit AL President Mohammad Hanif in the chair, the rally was addressed by, among others, AL presidium members Amir Hossain Amu and Abdur Razzak, party lawmaker Ahsanullah Master, and city unit leaders Omar Ali, Iskandar Mirza, Fazlur Rahman and Abdul Haq Sabuj.

In his speech, Hanif criticised the ruling alliance for making the parlia

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15 die as Indian navy planes collide



AFP, Mumbai

Two Indian Navy transport planes flying in an air show collided in mid-air yesterday in the western state of Goa, killing 15 people and injuring another 15, officials said.

The two planes, each carrying six crew members, took off from the resort state's main airport in Panaji and hit each other in mid-air at around 10:00am (0430 GMT) in the nearby area of Zuarinagar, police said.

"Fifteen people have been killed, including the 12 crew members and three civilians on the ground," Pradeep Srivastava, a senior police official at the scene, told AFP by telephone.

"The rescue operation is now over," he said. "There were people trapped in a house that was under construction but we believe that most of them have been rescued."

Srivastava said many of the bodies were badly mangled after the planes collided. One of the planes crashed on a road and the other on the building where the construction crew was working.

He said another 15 people on the ground were injured and taken to the hospital for treatment.

The Indian navy's western command has set up a board of inquiry into the collision.

"The board will look into the various aspects of the crash and try

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Arms recovered from a house at Feni: 2 held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Feni

Police recovered seven guns from a house at East Ukilpara in the town at midnight on Monday.

Acting on a tip-off, Feni thana police led by SP Helaluddin Badari raided the house of one Sedu Mia, 40, and recovered the guns.

Police picked up Sedu Mia and his wife Mafia Khatun for interrogation.

Hasina asks her men to unseat 'corrupt' govt

UNB, Habiganj

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged her party men and people to launch a movement to unseat "the corrupt and repressive regime" and rescue the nation from the "suffocating situation."

"Pull down the BNP-Jamaat government and protect the country from terrorism, repression and corruption," she told wayside public rallies on her way from Sylhet to Habiganj.

Hasina, who is on a 3-day organisational tour of greater Sylhet district, gave her "oust-government call" one year after the October 1 parliamentary polls that saw an unprecedented debacle for Awami League.

Terming her five-year rule a "golden era" for Bangladesh, the former prime minister said people's misery would end with the return of

Awami League to power. She said that 12-month rule of BNP-Jamaat government made life unbearable for people due to price hike and increased VAT and taxes without corresponding rise in income, as well as widespread terrorism, rape, murder and repression.

Now the government is trying to sell gas to India to "get huge kick-backs and make fortune depriving the people," she told crowds at Sherpur in Moulvibazar, and at Auskandi and Nabinagar Bazar in Habiganj district.

Reiterating her party's policy on natural gas, she said gas could only be exported after meeting the local demand and keeping reserve for 50 years.

Charging the government with conspiracy to sell gas, she said people would not allow any export without meeting their demands.

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DB raids Obaidul's house

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective police raided Awami League (AL) leader and former state minister Obaidul Kader's Segun Bagicha residence in the city yesterday.

When contacted last night, his wife said a five-member team from the Detective Branch (DB) of police came to their apartment at around 7 am and wanted to know whereabouts of Kader from security guards and others at the building. They told the police team that he (Kader) was not staying at the apartment for about six months and that they did not know anything more.

However, police stayed there till 11 am.

Mrs Kader said that DB police had also come to their apartment in the guise of drivers three days ago and asked their driver whereabouts of her husband.

Meanwhile, AL President Sheikh Hasina has condemned and protested 'illegal' raid by the DB police at the residence of Obaidul Kader.

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Disabled but not a burden

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Even a few months ago, Ibrahim, a fifteen-year-old physically challenged teenager belonging to the underprivileged class, engaged in begging to financially help his family. "I didn't want to become a burden on my family for my deformity," said Ibrahim.

However, Ibrahim stopped begging due to the help provided by Centre for Services and Information on Disability (CSID), an organisation committed to aid the disabled. He is now learning to make leather goods.

As many as 23 physically challenged children from the slums of the capital vented their agony at the meet-the-press organised by the CSID yesterday.

About 46.67 per cent of the 400 slum-dwelling physically disabled children engage in begging, says a CSID report. In most cases, they are forced by their own families into begging, with the rest working as hawker, labourer, domestic help and sales assistant, the report added.

While talking to journalists, the children pointed out the basic problems they confront because of their deformity. They grieved over their inability to attend school. Families, classmates and even teachers dis

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