

PM to be sued for deaths in custody, warns Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday questioned the legal basis of army deployment and cautioned that the prime minister would be sued "for the deaths in custody during the ongoing operation."

She was talking to reporters at Zia International Airport before her departure for Bangkok on an eight-day trip to Thailand and India.

The Awami League (AL) chief will reach the Indian capital New Delhi on November 25 to attend a conference on "Peace and Non-violence." She is likely to return home on November 30.

Hasina said failing to curb crimes, the Prime Minister called out army and "every day people were being killed in army custody". Even yesterday's newspapers reported two deaths in army custody

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Young man murdered in Fatullah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Police recovered the body of an unidentified young man from West Talla area under Fatullah thana yesterday.

Sources said local people found the body at an abandoned house in the morning and informed the police.

On receiving information, Fatullah police rushed to the spot and recovered the body. They sent it to Narayanganj General Hospital for autopsy.

The body bore marks of stab injury, police said.

Accused in Adv Nurul Islam murder case held in Ctg

BSS, Ctg

Detectives of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) yesterday arrested an accused in the sensational Advocate Nurul Islam murder case in Laxmipur.

The arrested was identified as Mohammad Abu Quasem, 45, son of late Abdul Aziz of Laxmipur.

Quasem is one of the close associates of Abu Taher who kidnapped and killed Laxmipur BNP leader Advocate Nurul Islam.

Acting on a tip-off, detectives raided the Pahartali City Gate area and arrested Quasem from a residence.

BADC may raise boro seed price by 25pc

REAZ AHMAD

The price of boro seed supplied by Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) may be raised by 25 percent next year.

This is being contemplated to avoid "artificial crisis" of the seed, as happened this year, by making it competitive to those supplied by the private sector, sources in agriculture ministry said.

The proposed enhancement will make it Tk 20,000 a tonne from Tk. 15,000 a tonne now.

They said that taking advantage of less stock and lower price of BADC-supplied boro seeds this year, a section of dealers and traders hoarded the seed and raised its price by 50 to 100 percent.

The retail price of BADC's Boro seed is Tk. 15 per kilogram while the private sector companies and NGOs market their seed at Tk. 25 to Tk. 30 a kilogram.

Farmers hanker after BADC seed because it is cheaper and its quality is much better. BADC's boro

seeds have an average germination rate of 90 percent compared to 70 to 80 percent of the seed supplied by the private sector.

A little rise in price of BADC seed will discourage hoarding by dealers and traders and thus serve the farmers better, the sources said.

To avoid crisis, BADC is also planning to increase its production and supply of boro seed to 12,000 tonnes next year. This year's supply target was 10,000 tonnes, but the actual supply was 75,000 tonnes, grown through BADC's contract growers.

Field reports gathered by the ministry and BADC during the current boro sowing season also said that though government marketed the seed at the fixed price, farmers had to procure those at much higher prices, sparking off protests and demonstrations by them in different parts of the country.

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Liaquat Hossain



Arman Khan

2 notorious criminals of infamous gang

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Both Liaquat Hossain and Arman Khan are most wanted criminals of the city and belong to the infamous gang, Five Star. Both were branded as activists of al-Qaida in a section of the Indian press, but records clearly show that they were never involved with such an organisation.

Criminal records of the two, arrested by Kolkata police on Saturday, reveal that they gradually turned hardened criminals following their secret training on lethal weapons, arms and explosives at some places in the capital.

Family records of Liaquat showed that he had migrated to the city from a rural area in his adolescence, seeking fortune. Arman grew up in the city's Moghbazar area. The Telegraph of India however tried to portray Arman as a Pakistani national who settled in Bangladesh a few years ago.

Liaquat Hossain, 46, son of late Munir Uddin Ahmed of Crokerchar village in Shibchar Police Station of Madaripur district, is now ringleader

of the Five Star gang. Known as a don in the crime world, his present address is flat-14/C, Mona Tower, 3, New Eskaton.

Sources said Liaquat involved himself in student politics in his early life. He was a leader of Awami League's student wing Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and was in jail for long during the autocratic rule of HM Ershad. He was freed upon an understanding with the autocratic regime just before its fall.

Later, he joined Jubo League, AL's youth front and became a member of its central committee. During the five-year AL rule from 1996, he was arrested four times for criminal activities but each time he was shown not wanted.

Liaquat became very influential at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) when AL came to power. Once he was locked in a tussle with the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina's assistant press secretary Bahauddin Nasim, now convener of Awami Sechchasebak League. Following the feud, Liaquat along with his close accomplices Hannan and Aurango was declared unwanted at the PMO. Liaquat was also ousted from Jubo League due to his criminal background.

Sources said Liaquat is the only graduate among the 23 listed top criminals of the country.

In February last year, he had opened fire on a BNP procession near Malibagh crossing in the city. The then AL lawmaker HBM Iqbal was leading a party procession from

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Arms deposit: Response 'very disappointing'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The extended deadline for surrender of licensed firearms expired on Thursday with a "very disappointing response" from their possessors, sources said yesterday.

According to police sources, less than two hundred firearms were deposited with different police stations in the city during the five-day extended period.

The government on November 5 ordered surrender of all licensed firearms to police stations or deputy commissioner's offices.

As less than 20 percent of the licensed arms were deposited till November 15, the government on November 16 extended the deadline till November 21. But only several hundred arms were deposited across the country, district administrations and police sources said.

The sources said 1,50,000

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AL-BNP gunfight leaves 35 hurt in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

At least 35 people were injured, 12 of them with bullets, in a gunfight between the supporters of BNP and Awami League near Terokhada Edgah Maidan yesterday morning.

The bullet-hit people, including five policemen, were admitted to Terokhada health complex.

According to police and witnesses, the clash erupted at around 7 am between the supporters of Awami League leader Shaikh Harun and BNP leader Milu Chowdhury over possession of a fish depot.

Both the rival groups used firearms and spears during the clash that continued till 8-30 am.

Police fired 12 rounds of bullets to disperse the clashing groups, witnesses said.

Supporters of the BNP leader torched several houses of their rivals.

Security forces have been deployed at Terokhada upazila headquarters apprehending further violence. None was arrested till filing of this report at 9 am yesterday.

ASM NURUNNABI

Some areas under the Keraniganj Police Station of Dhaka district are known as Zinjira. Keraniganj is a sort of an Island on the southern side of the Dhaka City at the confluence of the rivers Buriganga and Dhaleswari. Zinjira includes a number of places such as Kaliganj, Mandail, Char Kaliganj, Aganagar, Kathuria, Dakpara and Islambad where quite a good number of small and medium-sized industries have sprung up.

But in the mind of the general public, the name Zinjira is associated with inferior quality and adulterated products. However, it may perhaps not be fair to paint a totally dark picture of Zinjira as a source of all kinds of fake and inferior goods. Many people maintain that Zinjira has some positive aspects that get overshadowed by the amount of bad press that it usually gets.

The drive for establishment of medium-scale industries in Zinjira began after independence when most non-local owners of industries left the country abandoning their

Zinjira: Time to shed the bad image

DOWN TO EARTH

assets, which were taken over by their local agents. These local agents used their work experience under previous owners to expand the existing businesses as well as set up their own industrial enterprises and various other businesses in diverse fields.

The patronage they received from the government in this respect was a helpful factor. Soon, the drive for setting up new industrial and business ventures got a boost when potential entrepreneurs

started looking for suitable sites to set up their factories. In the face of intense competition for every inch of available space, the focus of entrepreneurs started to shift toward Zinjira where lands were available at comparatively lower prices. Thus, industries of various kinds began to grow in Zinjira. From 1986-87, the textile and garments industries set up there began to play an important role in raising the volume of our garment export.

Nowadays, many quality prod-

ucts are reportedly coming out of Zinjira. The garment industries at Kaliganj in the Zinjira area are said to produce high quality trousers and jackets of jeans and other export quality apparel. There are also textile mills in this area, which reportedly produce sarees of good enough quality to withstand competition from sarees from across the border. It is estimated that there are more than 50 textile mills at Zinjira whose products have won a good

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66 children die at RMCH in last 22 days

No step yet to set up neonatal ward

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

As many as 66 children died at the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) in the last 22 days, raising the 11-month count to 716 until yesterday.

Hospital records show that the age of most children was not more than 30 days.

The RMCH does not have essential equipment to provide proper child healthcare. Nor did the hospital authorities take any initiative to set up a separate neonatal ward even if the number of deaths of newborns rise in winter, said sources.

In the first 20 days of November, more than 70 children were admitted to the hospital and at least 61 including 35 newborns died. In September, the count of child deaths was recorded at 95, with 45

newborns. One hundred and ten children were admitted. In October, the RMCH recorded 88 deaths, including 57 of neonates.

The number of child deaths was 53 in January, 52 in February, 71 in March, 54 in April, 59 in May, 48 in June, 67 in July and 63 in August.

The RMCH records cited for such deaths various diseases like asphyxia, prematurity and low-birth weight, malnutrition, pneumonia, neonatal tetanus, typhoid, convulsion, Organo phosphorous compound poisoning, protein energy malnutrition, septicemia, pulmonary tuberculosis, pericardial effusion, diarrhoea, hepatitis, encephalitis, meningitis, jaundice, anaemia and various infectious diseases.

And more than 60 per cent of the children died of birth asphyxia.

Physicians at the RMCH paediatric department pointed to lack of awareness among mothers and guardians, irregular check-up, lack of maternal and postnatal care and unsound delivery. Untimely arrival of patients at the hospital and premature conception sometimes lead to child death, they said.

Professor Dr AB Siddiqui, chairman of the paediatric department of the Rajshahi Medical College (RMC), said, "RMCH is a tertiary hospital in the region... moreover, patients usually come to the hospital at the last moment, and the last-minute treatment requires special healthcare facilities that the hospital lack."

The two paediatric wards (ward Nos. 10 and 24) at the RMCH do not lack skilled manpower, said the former principal of the RMC.

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Hepatitis-B vaccination programme from next month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An estimated 22,000 lives of children under one could be saved annually when a national hepatitis-B vaccination programme starts next month, officials said.

With the approval of the prime minister, the health ministry would soon announce a date for launching the vaccination programme, now introduced in the Extended Programme of Immunisation (EPI).

All preparations have been completed and the vaccine is being brought very soon, possibly from Belgium, EPI sources said.

Children in six districts and one city corporation are now being immunised with the vaccine under a pilot project.

The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) has committed to provide funds for hepatitis-B vaccine worth about US \$ 40 million in five years. The programme would continue even after that period.

Meanwhile, several studies show that around five per cent of the population in Bangladesh are 'chronically infected with hepatitis-B virus. According to a WHO estimate, about 10 million people in the country would die of the chronic disease in 10 years.

Farmer killed in clash over land in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A farmer was killed and his brother injured in a clash over land dispute at Digram village in Godagari Upazila yesterday morning.

Abul Kashem, 32, son of Khoka Mondol of Basudevpur village in Chapainawabganj was stabbed by his rivals during the clash. He died on the spot.

Victim's brother Abul Kalam was admitted to Godagari health complex with critical injuries.

According to police, supporters of Kashem and Tajmul of the same village clashed over a piece of land near Ghuntighar at the village.

At about 11 am yesterday, Tejmul group equipped with lethal weapons attacked Kashem's men while they were reaping crops on the land.

Police arrested three persons for their alleged involvement in the clash. They are Tozzammel Haque, 60, Babul, 25, and Shohel, 17.



PHOTO: STAR

A motorcar passes by on a potholes-strewn road in the city's Malibagh area yesterday. Many pockmarked roads filled with rainwater make rides inconvenient.

US, Russia urge Iraq to disarm immediately

REUTERS, Pushkin, Russia

The United States and Russia urged Iraq yesterday to disarm fully in accordance with a UN Security Council resolution or face "serious consequences".

"We call on Iraq, in strict compliance with UNSC resolution 1441, to cooperate fully and unconditionally in its disarmament obligations or face serious consequences," a joint US-Russia statement said.

The statement was released as US President George W Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin met to discuss Iraq. The statement piled more pressure on Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to declare and disarm suspected

weapons of mass destruction.

A London report says, Britain would prefer any military action against Iraq to be backed by a fresh resolution of the United Nations Security Council, Foreign Secretary Jack Straw has said.

"The most likely course of action, if military action is required -- which it is not at the moment -- is that we go to the security council, which is where there would be discussion," Straw told BBC television late Thursday.

"Our preference has always been for a further resolution for the security council," added Straw, speaking from Prague where he is attending a landmark NATO summit.

HPSP programme expires in July Door-to-door FP services may be reintroduced

NAIMUL HAQ

The government plans to reintroduce the door-to-door family planning services after expiry of the Health and Population Sector Programme (HPSP) next July.

Over the years, the country has suffered heavily as thousands of family planning workers were withdrawn from field services and stationed at static points for every 6,000 people as part of the reformed sector-wide programme, said the government.

Under the new health plan -- Health, Nutrition and Population Sector Programme (HNPP) -- the health ministry in a three-year conceptual framework proposed reintroduction of home services by family planning workers instead of community clinic services.

"It was a monstrosity, if not, nonsense," Health Secretary M Fazlur Rahman told The Daily Star yesterday, referring to the community clinics built in a couple of years.

"The HPSP came abruptly and did not see the expected level of success. We have proposed rectification to the sector-wide approach to streamline the sec-

tor, but we will respect the ongoing reforms," said Rahman.

The health secretary expressed concern over the possible population rise due to suspension of the household-family planning service.

"We have reports on families having more children than they desire and most important of all, the coverage of immunisation has also declined."

Pointing to the country paper presented yesterday at the Dakar second GAVI meeting of partners, Rahman said the immunisation coverage has gradually increased since 1991, but a declining trend set in since 1994, which indicates that the family planning workers played a vital role in routine immunisation.

The conceptual framework document states that development partners strongly influenced the HPSP to 'test' it as a new form of development assistance. Rahman said, "We don't want to be dictated by the development partners. We'll spend the money to meet our own needs."

Due to some functional flaws in the sector-wide

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Sehri, Iftar timing

Ramadan	Nov	Sehri	Iftar
17	23	4-5	5-14
18	24	4-56	5-14
19	25	4-57	5-14

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Nov 23		5-11 pm
Nov 24	5-19 am	

Prayer Timings

Nov 22		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-55	5-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-14	5-24
Esha	7-30	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation