

BNP MPs ask PM to axe corrupt ministers

Khaleda rejects law and order downslide claim at parliamentary party meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling BNP lawmakers at a parliamentary forum yesterday asked Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to downsize the cabinet dropping corrupt and inefficient members and take stern action against them.

She asked her party deputies to help law-enforcers in improving law and order at a meeting of the BNP Parliamentary Party of which she is the chief.

The deputies at the Sangsad Bhaban meeting criticised ministers for failing to control price hike of essentials and rein in crimes, saying

some ministers' failures overshadowed the achievements of the government.

"You have popularity, why will you take responsibility of the corrupt and failures of inefficient ministers? Downsize the cabinet dropping the corrupt and inefficient members," meeting sources quoted Nazim Uddin Alam as telling the prime minister.

"People are getting frustrated as you are not taking any action."

Seventeen lawmakers spoke and 188 lawmakers attended the meeting that according to Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain also touched on price spiral of essentials, corruption, alternative political stream of former president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury.

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JS body invites Hasina to discuss constitution amendment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary standing committee yesterday invited the Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Sheikh Hasina to its meeting to seek her party's opinion on the much-talked about 14th amendment bill to the constitution.

Chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on law, justice and parliamentary affairs ministry Khandakar Mahub Uddin Ahmed also requested the opposition leader to send her two deputies to the

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ATTACK ON MANNAN'S FIRMS

Business leaders demand compensation

Ask govt to protect enterprises from any further attacks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Business leaders yesterday demanded compensation from the government for the damages to business establishments of Major (Rtd) Abdul Mannan done in attacks following his resignation from the ruling BNP.

The demand came in a joint meeting of leading chambers and business associations, which condemned the offences and urged the government to protect the business

concerns from any further attacks, warning that otherwise the government shall remain responsible.

Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) convened the meeting, attended by its president and directors and presidents of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, Bangladesh Textile Mills Association, Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association, Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry and

Bangladesh Chamber of Industries. The business magnates deplored the current course of 'confrontational politics' and urged all political parties to show respect to others and practice tolerance.

In a press briefing after the meeting, FBCCI President Abdul Awal Mintoo said, within four to five days, the federation would set an agenda by listing the irritants and deterrents to business, law and order and democratic practices and

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Vietnamese president arrives today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A red carpet reception awaits the Vietnamese President Tran Duc Luong when he arrives in Dhaka today on a three-day visit to boost bilateral trade and diplomatic ties.

President Iajuddin Ahmed will receive Luong at Zia International Airport at 11.30am. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will also be present at the airport.

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Govt to buy four subs, fighters

Navy shopping list includes Tk 1,911 cr war machines

UNB, Dhaka

A range of heavy martial gears including submarines, fighter planes, helicopters, maritime patrol aircraft and patrol vessels are in procurement process as part of the government's drive to modernise the country's armed forces, Minister in Charge of Defence in parliament Hafiz Uddin Ahmed told the House yesterday.

Replying to a question from MM Shaheen, Major (Rtd) Hafiz said the process was underway to procure four submarines by 2012, which would give the navy a three-dimensional base.

The minister said besides commissioning submarines and other

warships, two maritime patrol aircraft would also be added to the naval fleet.

Missiles, torpedo counter-measure system, long-range surface to air missiles and a helicopter that can operate from ships will also be procured to increase the combat-power of the existing ships of the Bangladesh Navy.

Hafiz said the warships and other of purchase would cost about Tk 1,911 crore, the four submarines accounting for Tk 1,200 crore.

An agreement was signed with the British Royal Navy for purchasing five offshore patrol vessels, he told the House, adding three of those had already joined the fleet of

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A billboard in the city's Segunbagicha is covered with posters of Bangladesh Nationalist Party leaders seeking to fight the by-election to Dhaka-10 constituency that fell vacant at the resignation of Major (Rtd) Abdul Mannan.

EU diplomats visit CHT today

BSS, Dhaka

A high-profile delegation of the diplomatic missions of European Union (EU) countries and the European Commission in Dhaka embarks on a three-day visit to the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) today.

The delegation will see firsthand the ongoing humanitarian relief efforts at Mahalchhari, visit development projects and meet local leaders and government officials there, UNDP sources said yesterday.

The delegation includes Dutch Ambassador Sjet Ijzerman, British High Commissioner David Carter, Italian Ambassador Pietro Ballero, Swedish Ambassador Borje Mattsson, Ambassador of the EC Esko Kentrschinsky, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of France Fabienne Drout, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Denmark Tom Hansen, Deputy Head of Mission,

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Announcement

A special supplement on Bangladesh Business Awards 2003 will be published tomorrow.

Jamuna Group chief Babul arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent Jamuna Group Chairman Nurul Islam Babul to jail after police arrested him in connection with the murder of a dredger worker in September last year.

He was taken to the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) at 2:10pm that denied him bail.

Law enforcers of Gulshan and Badda police stations, Rapid Action Team, Detective Branch, Criminal Investigation Department and Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) raided Babul's house in Gulshan-2, scaling the compound wall at 2:15am.

A law enforcer identified himself as a DGFI staff after a member of Babul's family answered the door. The DGFI man forced him to the Cantonment Police Station without allowing him to make a phone call, his family said.

"About 100 law enforcers raided the house. Police beat a guard as he refused to give them the key to the main gate of the building," says a

press release of Jamuna Group that described the arrest as harassment.

Sources said the law enforcers took him to an unknown place from the police station and returned him after one and a half hours of interrogation by intelligence agencies.

Police clubbed photojournalists in the act of taking snaps of Babul when he was produced before the CMM's court.

In the forwarding report, police linked Babul as having a role in the killing of Alam Pramanik on September 1 last year and alleged the businessman went underground after the incident. Sixteen-year-old Alam worked for a real estate project in Badda.

In judicial statements, three witnesses named Babul as involved in the murder, police said, adding he should not be freed until the probe ends.

Monirul Islam, owner of the dredger, who filed the first information report (FIR), said his employees including Alam were sleeping on the dredger on that night.

According to the FIR, an armed

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India draw level with Pakistan

REUTERS, Lahore

Rahul Dravid and Mohammad Kaif yesterday hit magnificent unbeaten half-centuries to help India beat Pakistan by five wickets and square their five-match one-day international series 2-2.

The deciding game will be played here tomorrow.

Dravid scored 76 for his 51st one-day half-century and Kaif added 71 to rescue India with a sixth-wicket stand of 132 from 130 balls after the visitors had been reeling at 94 for four.

India finished on 294 for five, overhauling Pakistan's challenging 293 for nine with five overs to spare before a sell-out 24,000 crowd at the Gaddafi stadium.

Dravid anchored the Indian innings, adding 68 with Yuvraj Singh (36) and then sharing in the match-winning stand.

The 30-year-old Indian vice-captain's 92-ball knock included nine fours. Kaif scored his seventh one-day 50 after the bowlers wilted

under some swift scoring from opener Virender Sehwag (26) and Saurav Ganguly (21).

Earlier, Pakistan skipper Inzamam-ul-Haq had blasted 123 from 121 balls, his second century of the series, after electing to bat.

Opener Yasir Hameed, who came into the match with scores of 86 and 98 in his last two games, played sensibly again for a 68-ball 45 before he mis-read a ball from left-arm spinner Murali Kartik and was stumped.

Inzamam arrived at the crease in the ninth over after Indian paceman Irfan Pathan had rocked the home side by removing opener Shahid Afridi, for three, and number three batsman Younis Youhana, for nine.

But Pakistan piled on 95 runs in the last 10 overs, all rounder Abdul Razzaq, going on the rampage with a 24-ball 32.

"Our bowlers were not disciplined. They conceded too many runs and extras allowing India to score more than seven per over early," Inzamam said.

2 GIs killed in Iraq

REUTERS, Baghdad

Anti-US guerrillas fired rockets into the middle of Baghdad in a rare daylight salvo yesterday, killing two civilians and wounding six people, including an American soldier, a US military spokesman said.

The latest violence followed worldwide anniversary protests against the war the United States launched to topple Saddam Hussein and disarm Iraq of unconventional weapons, which have yet to be found despite Washington's best efforts.

"Three rockets impacted in

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Japan waives \$1.4b loans

New measure to reduce debt burden

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Japan yesterday waived \$1.4 billion in loans to Bangladesh until 2018 under a newly-introduced Debt Relief Measure programme that will reduce its debt burden.

This year alone, \$160 million in loans will fall under the waiver programme.

The waived amounts will have to

be spent on sectors specified by the Japan government. At least 25 per cent of the funds will go to road maintenance and the rest to programmes relating to education, health and anti-poverty schemes.

An agreement for the debt cancellation was signed yesterday at the Economic Relations Division (ERD) with Japanese Ambassador

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Bumper removal order stayed

UNB, Dhaka

The Supreme Court yesterday stayed the March 8 High Court order, directing the DMP to remove extra bumpers from vehicles after notifying the public about the order within a month.

Chamber Judge of the Supreme Court Justice Amirul Kabir Chowdhury also fixed March 31 for hearing of the petition filed by Kamruzzaman Chowdhury.

Kamruzzaman, a car owner, challenged the legitimacy of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) directive to remove additional bumpers

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Toll-takers keep two families confined to their houses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Misceants have kept two Hindu families confined to their own houses at Shindhurol village of Bagmara upazila for last several days and threatened to burn their houses if the toll they demanded was not paid by tomorrow.

The families of Punya Chandra Mondol, 52, and Pramada Kanta Mondol, 48, did not dare to complain to the police fearing reprisal. Sources said the misceants have kept a close watch on the families and asked them not to flee the village.

The misceants who demanded Tk 1.5 lakh as toll by last Monday (March 15) attacked the houses of the two, as they did not pay up. They

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