

3 Bangla Bhai men nabbed

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Naogaon police yesterday arrested three operatives of Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) and picked up two leaders of the Islamist outfit for interrogation.

The arrestees are Abdus Salam, Abdul Hannan and Zahidul Islam and the leaders picked up are Hemayet Uddin Himu and Abdur Rahman -- all from Atrai upazila.

Police authorities in Naogaon have also asked the Detective Branch to investigate incidents of JMJB cadres' repression on women at Siddikia Madrassah camp at Bhati village in Raninagar upazila.

Naogaon Superintendent of Police Fazlur Rahman said the arrestees are accused of torturing outlaws that surrendered at Bhati camp.

About the two JMJB leaders, he said they will be quizzed as part of the efforts to nab operations commander of the militant outfit Bangla Bhai and then released.

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30 pry teachers fall sick during hunger strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 30 teachers fell sick yesterday and three of them were taken to hospital as the 72-hour hunger strike by the non-government primary teachers ran into the final phase.

About 100 non-government teachers have been taking part in the programme since Sunday at Muktagaon in the city to drum up support for their demand of nationalisation of jobs, an election pledge of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party.

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Anti-govt leaflet prompts security build-up at Secretariat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-government leafletting at the Secretariat on Sunday has prompted the law enforcers to beef up security there.

The security arrangements were even more intensified yesterday ahead of today's visit there by the prime minister, who will address a secretary committee meeting.

Plainclothesmen are also deployed inside this centre of the country's administration to counter

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Prayer Timing		
June 2		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-45	6-50
Esha	8-15	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		

New Iraqi president named, governing council disbands

US favourite Pachachi turns down largely ceremonial post

AP, Baghdad

The U.S. and Saudi-educated head of Iraq's Governing Council was named president of the interim Iraqi government yesterday, after the Americans' preferred candidate turned down the post.

The selection of Ghazi Mashal Ajil al-Yawer to the largely ceremonial post broke a deadlock over the makeup of a new Iraqi government set to assume power on June 30.

Hours later, the Governing Council voted to dissolve immedi-

ately rather than remain in office until the transfer of sovereignty June 30, said council member Younadam Kana.

Kana told reporters that 20 of the 22 members of the U.S.-appointed body, which was appointed last July, agreed to disband. She said that two members expressed reservations, arguing the interim constitution adopted in March required the council to continue its work until the sovereignty transfer.

As word of the appointment was

announced, a car bomb blew up outside the offices of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, which is located just outside the green zone headquarters of the U.S.-run coalition in central Baghdad.

It was not immediately clear if the blast was tied to Tuesday's government announcement.

Council members had angrily accused the American governor of Iraq, Paul Bremer, of trying to i n s t a l l

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Explosions kill 14 in Iraq

AP, Baghdad

Bombs exploded yesterday in central Baghdad and near a US military base in the northern city of Beiji, killing at least 14 people as authorities in the capital announced the shape of a new government that will take control at month's end. In Baghdad, a car bomb exploded outside the offices of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, killing three people and injuring 20, the military said. It was one of several blasts heard in the capital just after reports circulated that Ghazi Mashal Ajil al-Yawer, current head of the Iraqi Governing Council, had been selected as president of the interim government set to take power June 30.

Ambulances raced to the scene near the headquarters of the US-run coalition, and US troops kept people back. TV video showed debris and a charred wall of a building.

Minutes earlier, another blast, followed by gunfire, sent a cloud 100 feet billowing into the dusty air

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PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia waters a neem sapling in a tree plantation campaign after inaugurating a tree fair at the National Parade Square in Dhaka yesterday.

AL leader survives second attempt

Protestors block Khulna-Jessore highway

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A local Awami League (AL) leader survived a second attempt on his life with grievous bullet injuries, as a gang fired at him in Jessore Monday night, sparking violence in an industrial town.

Witnesses said Shaikh Abdul Wahab, president of AL's Abhoynagar upazila unit, lost consciousness from chest, back and hand wounds he suffered in a hail of bullets before he could leave Shankarpasha Ferry Ghat for home by motorbike shortly after 8:00pm.

A special river transport took the 52-year-old to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) from Khulna Medical College Hospital where he was first treated.

DMCH doctors told The Daily Star that the condition of Wahab, also former upazila chairman, was critical.

The latest in a series of attacks on political leaders in the south-

west triggered mob violence in Wahab's hometown of Noapara in Abhoynagar upazila that damaged scores of buses, trucks and other vehicles.

The incident also prompted businesspeople to shut their shops in response to a hartal call in Noapara yesterday and AL leader's supporters to block Khulna-Jessore Highway, disrupting traffic for hours.

The AL and its front organisations, bringing out protest processions, have threatened a tough movement in the event of police's failure to arrest attackers in 72 hours.

Police launched a combing operation in Abhoynagar to hunt down the attackers with suspected ties to an extremist outfit, said Superintendent of Police in Jessore Shahidul Islam. Three used shells of rifle bullets were seized from the scene.

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20 killed by law enforcers last month

Odhikar report says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcers killed as many as 20 people across the country last month, said a report on human rights by Odhikar, a coalition for human rights.

In its report Odhikar said that nine people were killed in police custody during the time.

It said five journalists were injured and two others assaulted in May while 19 others were threatened and six others implicated in cases.

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Ershad sees united JP before polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chairman of Jatiya Party (JP) HM Ershad yesterday expressed optimism that the JP factions would unite before the next election to contest with a renewed vigour and determination.

"Efforts to reunite the three factions have already been initiated and I can assure you of the success as the other factions leaders too feel the same urge to get together," Ershad said.

Ershad, also a former president, said this while speaking at Face To Face With Women Journalists, a

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Each Gram Sarkar to get Tk 10,000

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Gram Sarkar will get Tk 10,000 each in the next Annual Development Programme by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, sources said.

The Gram Sarkar will utilise the fund in forestation, sanitation and social charity in villages. An additional Tk 40 crore will also be used for strengthening the institution.

Out of 45,000 villages, 39,430 have Gram Sarkar.

New probe proves DFP graft

REZAUL KARIM

A fresh inquiry has unearthed irregularities in the purchase of audio equipment worth Tk 23 crore at the Department of Films and Publications (DFP) and accused its director general (DG) of sealing a raw deal for the department.

The six-member committee headed by Mizanur Rahman Majumder, joint secretary (development) of the Ministry of Information, also points an accusing finger at three other top DFP officials.

Officials at the information

ministry said this time the government is finalising the process to either terminate DG Syed Mahbubur Rahman or force him to go into retirement. The DG was previously charged with corruption and two separate inquiries found the charges against him were correctly based.

Under the project with an inflated cost of Tk 118 crore to expand the DFP building and film and laboratories facilities, which was approved back in 2001, the DFP was to install high tech digital Dolby (noise reduction) audio technology in its theatre. The

equipment purchase at Tk 23 crore was approved.

But the DFP never had any theatre suitable for Dolby systems, the inquiry report says.

The equipment supplier delayed supply by a year and the DFP received the equipment on December 24 and 26 in 2002. However, no step has been taken since then for installation, testing, commissioning and on-site training, adds the inquiry report.

Top DFP officials, in the meantime, took steps to illegally pay the

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Cop's costly mistake

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Police have arrested one Anwar Hossen, 25, in place of Anwarul Hoque, 45, a wanted convict, about eight years after he was sentenced in a cheating case.

Innocent Hossen has been in Rangpur jail for the last 22 days without an allegation against him.

Hoque has been absconding since October 17, 1997 after the Court of Additional District and Sessions Judge awarded him an eight-month imprisonment and slapped a fine of Tk 1000.

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Held outlaws name BNP MPs, leftists as godfathers

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Three arrestee activists of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) in their confessional statements to police yesterday gave the names of their 'godfathers and patrons' who include 'some ruling party lawmakers and leftist leaders', police sources said.

The arrestees -- Abdur Razzak Sarkar alias Art Babu, Mahfuzur Rahman Jewel and Badiul Alam Pintu -- also talked about the PBCP hideouts in and around the north-western region.

Police also gathered some more information from documents seized in the PBCP Rajshahi regional headquarters recently.

But top police officials declined to disclose the names of the godfathers or give details of the information they got.

Art Babu and Jewel were arrested by Ramna police in Dhaka on May 22 and Pintu from Hajrapukur in Rajshahi on May 28.

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