

AL joins JS, slams govt for crime check failure



PHOTO: STAR

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina speaks at the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A blistering attack of opposition lawmakers on the ruling coalition for what they said was its failure to control crimes apparently jolted ministers yesterday, as the Awami League came back to the House after on-and-off boycott of sessions.

"Who is the prime minister -- Bangla Bhai or Khaleda Zia?" Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina asked, indicating the rise of an Islamist outfit blamed for a series of killings in vigilante action since April 1 and police's failure to arrest its chief Bangla Bhai.

Hasina accused the government of failing to deliver and demanded immediate arrest of Bangla Bhai and a stop to all crimes. "The dual rule -- one by the BNP-Jamaat coalition and the other by Bangla Bhai -- cannot be

allowed," she said.

The AL that boycotted 152 sittings of the eighth parliament since it came into being on October 28, 2001 returned to the House, a day after its parliamentary wing decided to take part in the House activities.

"We have heard the prime minister ordered the police to arrest Bangla Bhai, but he was not captured. Rather, his men brought out a procession under police protection," Hasina said, pointing to the militants outfit's recent armed showdown in Rajshahi city.

AL lawmaker Shahjahan Khan, attending the 12th session that saw tabling of the FY2004-05 budget, blasted Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman for more allocation in the revised budget.

AL's comeback to the House
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Recruiters warned against sending workers to Iraq

RAFIQ HASAN

The government yesterday warned private recruiting agencies against sending workers to Iraq till the situation becomes normal for foreign workers' stay in that country.

If any agency is found involved in such recruitment, they will face stern actions including suspension of licence and confiscation of deposit money. If necessary, cases will also be filed with special tribunals against the offenders.

The expatriate welfare and overseas employment ministry issued the warning in a letter to the recruiting agencies.

The letter followed reports that some recruiters were sending workers to Iraq in the name of giving them job in Jordan.

The situation in Iraq is yet to become normal for foreign workers' stay and there is no demand for them now. So, no-one should be cheated by the recruiters, the letter said.

It recalled that earlier the government had brought back some

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CEC writes to PM for army as secy declines

EC may inform people if faced with obstacles to holding free by-polls in Dhaka-10

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The refusal of the EC secretary to ask for troops deployment in polling centres for Dhaka-10 by-poll has prompted the CEC to request the prime minister yesterday for the same and touched off fresh tension in the EC.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Syed and the three election commissioners held a closed-door meeting at the EC Secretariat yesterday and agreed to stick to its decision on army deployment in each polling centre of the constituency for the July 1 vote, sources said.

The CEC's letter conveyed the decision to the PM, the sources added.

The EC, enraged at Secretary to the EC Secretariat SM Zakaria's refusal, may go public if further problems surface over staging the by-election in a free, fair manner.

"If anyone creates problems and does not extend full cooperation to the EC in holding the by-election in a free and fair manner, we will take the matter very seriously. If the situation turns complex the EC may inform people about all obstacles it has been facing in holding the poll," Election Commissioner AK Mohammad Ali told The Daily Star yesterday.

On the secretary's refusal, he said, "The secretary cannot but carry out the Election Commission's decision. We will consider the matter."

"The commission has decided

to ask the government to deploy army personnel in each polling station. According to the constitution, the executive body is bound to implement the commission's decision in holding elections in a free and fair manner," Ali pointed out.

Zakaria on Monday grounded his refusal on his ignorance about such a decision. The secretary also maintained that security for the Dhaka-10 by-election would be taken in line with a home ministry plan that provides for deployment of two army companies in the constituency.

The EC saw its request for deployment of army personnel during the union parishad and municipal polls turned down by the government.

Muggers shoot factory staff, loot Tk 20 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Snatchers reportedly looted over Tk 20 lakh after shooting an official of a garment factory at Pallabi yesterday.

The wounded, Moinul Islam, commercial manager of Classic Supply Limited at Mirpur-12, is now being treated at Orthopaedic Hospital with a bullet in his left leg.

Moinul and accounts officer of the factory Rokon Uddin drew Tk 20 lakh and 50 thousand from Sonali Bank's Ramna Corporate Branch. After making a payment of Tk 40 thousand on the bank premises, they started for the factory, a sister concern of Kumu Group, in the car of one of four directors of the factory.

The incident occurred as the car (Dhaka Metro Gha 13-8312) reached the factory on road No 6 in block-A at around 1:15pm, Sub-

Inspector (SI) Atiqur Rahman of Pallabi Police Station said.

"As we opened the doors to get down, four snatchers in two motor-bikes positioned themselves on both sides of our car," Rokon Uddin said while describing the incident.

"I was sitting in the rear seats with Moinul and the bag was kept at our feet. The snatchers asked Moinul to hand in the bag, but he refused," he said.

On his refusal, they shot Moinul in the leg and took the money and sped away in the direction of Mirpur-10, Rokon added.

He said he could not identify any of the snatchers who were aged between 25 and 30.

"The snatchers followed them all the way from the bank," SI Atiqur Rahman said quoting Moinul.

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Goodbye pesticides

Pheromone trap working wonder in Jessore

REAZ AHMAD, Back From Jessore

It is a small chemical capsule in a plastic bottle half-filled with water. But it works wonders -- insects flock to the bottle to drown.

Farmers, who earlier used to apply heavy doses of pesticide in their vegetable fields, now need only this wonder capsule they call 'talisman'.

Scientists call it pheromone -- the female sex hormone of insects -- that attracts the male.

This technology will radically change the use of pesticide in Bangladesh, making

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See page 11 for detail diagram of the Pheromone trap



PHOTO: STAR

Farmers check a pheromone trap, billed as a substitute for highly toxic pesticides, at a Jessore village.

Dhaka blacklisted for human trafficking

Faces possible US sanctions if records not improved by Oct

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, with AFP

The US on Monday blacklisted Bangladesh among 10 nations for failing to adequately fight international sex trafficking, opening the way for possible sanctions.

The list can lead to cutoffs in non-humanitarian and non-trade-related US aid, the US Department of State said. Affected aid could include military, educational and cultural assistance.

It singled out Bangladesh alongside other new entrants Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Guyana, Sierra Leone and Venezuela for not doing enough to combat trafficking and will be subjected to sanctions unless they demonstrably improve their records by October.

Bangladesh has moved from "Tier 2" to "Tier 3" because it failed

to make significant efforts to prosecute traffickers and address the complicity of government officials in trafficking, the State Department report explains.

"Tier 3" is a grouping of countries that are not making "significant efforts" to combat the trafficking of human beings, particularly of women and children.

Nations deemed to be complying with US and international efforts to fight trafficking are placed in "Tier 1," while those making "significant efforts" are placed in "Tier 2."

Officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, when reached last night, would not comment on the inclusion of Bangladesh in the list before running through the State Department report.

The foreign minister and the

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Identify real source of terror acts

Morshed tells Istanbul meet

UNB/WEB NEWS, Dhaka

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan has underscored that the war against terrorism cannot be won by military means alone and said the real sources of acts of desperation should be identified and the root causes must be addressed.

"The war against terrorism can be won through promoting tolerance, fostering dialogue and supporting mutual respect and consideration," he told the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) in Istanbul on Monday night.

Reiterating Bangladesh's commitment to fighting terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, Khan said: "A few fringe elements should not be allowed to damage the

image of Islam and jeopardize the interest of the Muslim world."

The election for the office of secretary general of the Organisation of Islamic Conferences (OIC) is expected to be held later on Tuesday in which candidates from Turkey, Malaysia and Bangladesh are vying for the job.

He proposed a twin agenda for peace and development of the Islamic ummah. A political agenda should emphasise on peaceful resolution of conflicts affecting the members states of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) and a socio-economic agenda focussing on the key areas of concern in the Islamic world, he said.

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84 promoted to joint secy rank

Many seniors superseded for political considerations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday elevated 84 deputy secretaries of various BCS batches and cadre, mostly of administration, to the rank of joint secretary, infringing seniority of a good number of officials.

Of the 84 new joint secretaries, 60 belong to administration and 24 to other BCS (Bangladesh Civil Service) cadre. The three others are (non-BCS) promoted departmental officers. The pass marks for the

promotion was 85 out of 100, official sources said.

Officials of 1982 BCS regular batch were given top priority in promotion. Of the administration cadre members, 48 come from 1982 BCS regular batch, seven from 1981 batch and one each from 1973 and 1974 batches.

Highly placed sources said a good number of officials were dropped from the promotion list, despite recommendations by the

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