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AL demands removal of controversial HC judges

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League (AL) yesterday demanded a purge of the "inefficient, dishonest and controversial additional judges" of the High Court who it alleged were appointed merely on political considerations.

A resolution adopted at an emergency meeting of the AL presidium members, joint secretaries and organising secretaries held at its Dhanmondi office said they must be removed for keeping the judicial system in order.

The meeting resolved that the image of the judiciary "has been shattered" following the removal of a judge for taking bribe and a judge sitting at the bench with fake

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

SECURITY THREAT IN COX'S BAZAR

UN restricts staff movement

ASHAQ WARES KHAN

The United Nations has restricted movement of its staff and their family members in Cox's Bazar district because of security concerns and asked them to take permission from its security officials before going anywhere within the district.

The restriction came after the UN took a decision to raise the security warning to level two after a meeting on October 28 in its Dhaka office.

The decision was taken after two of its staff were attacked twice at the Kutupalong Rohingya refugee camp

by a group of refugees and outsiders. UN assistance to the camp has been suspended since October 13 because of security reasons.

A World Food Programme (WFP) field official, Mehrez Khan, was manhandled by the refugees at Kutupalong camp on September 23.

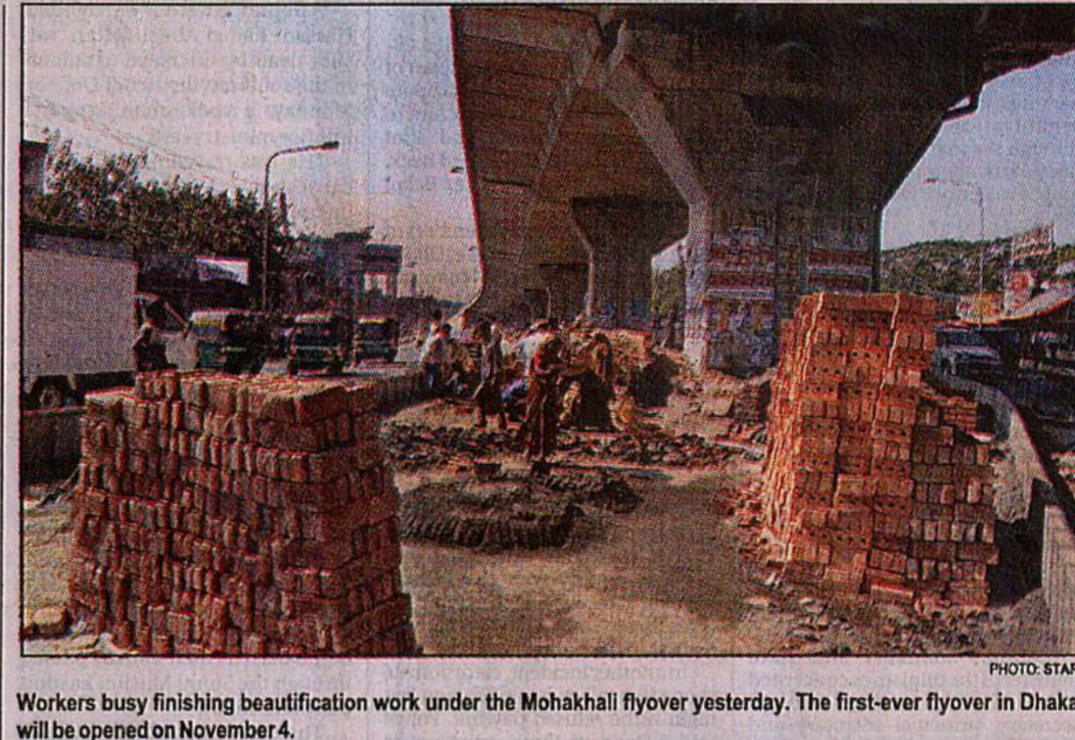
On October 12, as a UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) car was travelling from Teknaf to Cox's Bazar carrying non-Bangladeshi UN staff, including the head of WFP Dhaka office, Douglas Coutts, it was surrounded by hundreds of refugees opposing repatriation in front of Kutupalong camp. Police later escorted out the UN team.

"Our staff no longer feel safe. Until the safety level is restored we cannot reenter the camp and provide assistance," Jorgen Lissner, resident coordinator of the UN in Bangladesh, told The Daily Star.

Lissner said the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management has been informed about the incidents.

"We are hoping that they (the ministry) will take some steps to ensure security at the camps so that

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6



Workers busy finishing beautification work under the Mohakhali flyover yesterday. The first-ever flyover in Dhaka will be opened on November 4.

Jin suggests ways to get more FDI

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The visiting Asian Development Bank (ADB) Vice-president Liqun Jin yesterday stressed independence of the judiciary, increased gas, electricity, water supplies, and a transparent tender process for Bangladesh's getting more foreign investment.

Jin made the observation as head of a five-member delegation that met Communications Minister Nazmul Huda to discuss his agency's assistance in the development of communication infrastructure.

Huda sought ADB help for launching electric train service between Dhaka and Chittagong and building a 6.01-kilometre Padma bridge. He told Jin the government has moved to build separate dedicated express ways between Dhaka

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



Eid-shoppers choose from a variety of popular Benarasi saris at a shop in Mirpur Benarasi Palli in the capital yesterday.

BAN ON OLD BUSES

Transport strike on Nov 6

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transport owners and workers have called strike for November 6 in Dhaka in protest against the government decision to ban 10-year-old diesel-run buses and minibuses in the city.

Transport owners and workers under the banner of Bus Minibus Malik Sramik Sangram Parishad yesterday at a press conference at the National Press Club announced the programme.

They also threatened to go for tougher movement after Eid if the government does not withdraw the decision to remove over 10-year-old buses from the city.

"If the government removes 10-year-old buses from the city, thousands of owners and workers will be jobless," Maharaj Hossain, coordinator of Bus Minibus Malik Sramik Sangram Parishad said.

Rather, 35-40 year-old buses belonging to Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation run without fitness and cause traffic jam and pollution in the city, he alleged.

"It will be very illogical if the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

VAT RETURN FILING

NBR to issue notice on retail, wholesale shops tomorrow

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) will start issuing notice on some 3,000 big retail and wholesale shops tomorrow for filing VAT returns in line with a recent decision it reached with business and trade leaders.

The NBR would fine and even shut up shops on their failure to submit VAT returns in time. It has also asked medium and small wholesalers to make disclosure about estimates of their projected monthly sales and VAT returns by November 30.

Shop owners went on a series of strikes in July-August to press the government to rescind the new budgetary provision that brings the shops under the VAT net.

At the end of last month, a meeting between the president of Federation of Bangladesh

Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), leaders of shop owners' associations and the NBR high officials decided that those shops with a daily sales of over Tk 10,000 would have to pay VAT at the rate of 1.5 percent on their actual sales. They would also have to keep sales register and file VAT returns along with tax invoice on a monthly basis.

Those with daily sales between Tk 1,000 to Tk 10,000 are to disclose to the authorities their projected VAT returns for the fiscal year through their associations. The shop owners have been told to clear the VAT for five months by December and then submit their returns monthly.

Those with sales below Tk 1,000 a day would have to pay the minimum VAT stipulated in the budget.

The new measures would be put

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Bills to ensure 'accountability' of NGOs soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two bills proposing to ensure 'desirable' accountability of the non-government organisations (NGOs) will be placed in parliament soon, the local government rural development (LGRD) and cooperatives minister told the House yesterday.

The Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Ordinance, 1978 and the Foreign Contributions (Regulation) Ordinance, 1982 will be amended to

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Children under nine can't be punished for crimes

UNB, Dhaka

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday passed the Penal Code (Amendment) Bill 2004 raising the minimum official age of criminal responsibility of a child from seven to nine years.

Piloting the bill, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed said under the new provision a child of nine years could be exempted from criminal responsibility while a child in the age group

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Eid tickets sell at exorbitant prices

STAR REPORT

Transport owners protesting a communications ministry directive have kept selling of tickets in abeyance, indicating tremendous suffering to the commoners while going home before the Eid-ul-Fitr.

The communications ministry at a meeting with transport owners association Thursday gave a directive barring them from increasing bus fares on the occasion of Eid.

The ministry has also decided to deploy mobile teams to monitor the bus fares during Eid rush.

Most of the transport companies, who usually start selling tickets in advance 15 to 16 days ahead of Eid, have not begun the sale until

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

LOW-GRADE GOODS

Sloth cop response makes drive futile

AKBAR HOSSAIN

The drive of Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) against substandard and fake goods cannot run with greater success due to lack of timely response from the police, BSTI sources said.

Besides non-cooperation from the law-enforcing agencies, lack of manpower within the BSTI is another cause, which is holding back its drive against illegal goods, said the sources.

Although the BSTI geared up its drive against substandard and fake goods since the beginning of Ramadan, most of the shop owners in the city are still selling goods without BSTI seal.

Sources in the BSTI said on-duty magistrates are sometimes reluctant to go for harsh punishment against the sellers of substandard goods under the newly promulgated 'Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution Amendment Act 2003'.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

Comilla-7 by-polls Dec 18

UNB, Dhaka

By-election to Comilla-7 parliamentary seat will be held on December 18.

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday announced the election schedule through a gazette notification, said an official handout.

As per the schedule, nomination papers can be submitted to the returning officer and assistant returning officer till November 22, nomination papers will be scrutinised on November 23 and the last date of withdrawal of candidature is November 30.

Deputy commissioner of Comilla has been appointed returning officer and upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Barura assistant returning officer.

The seat fell vacant after the death of BNP lawmaker AKM Abu Taher on September 23.

Deputy governor of Baghdad killed

23 Iraqis, GI die in fighting

AFP, Tikrit

Seventeen Iraqis were killed and eight wounded on Sunday when two mortars slammed into a hostel used by workers at a local factory in the northern town of Tikrit, officials said yesterday while six others killed in Ramadi.

The shells had been intended for a nearby US base, but missed their target, said police colonel Ibrahim Jaburi, adding that it was the second time the hostel had been hit by mistake.

"The number of killed has risen to 17 and the number of wounded remains at eight," said Hamad Hamud, the governor of Salahuddin province, where Tikrit is located.

"The attackers were targeting a US base, which is close to the residence on the eastern side of the city," Jaburi told reporters.

Employees at a factory for sand and other construction materials

live in the dormitory where the Russian-made mortars struck. Most had come from Iraq's southern provinces such as Basra and Nasiriyah, police said.

Funerals were due to take place in the town yesterday.

Six Iraqis were killed and 15 others wounded in another day of violence in the restive Iraqi city of Ramadi yesterday, hospital officials said.

The cause of the deaths was not

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

FALL FROM HIGH-RISE

3 dead, 1 injured in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three people died and one was critically injured falling from two high-rise buildings in the capital yesterday.

Mohammad Bhutto, 22, and his cousin Mohammad Manjur, 21, along with 14 workers were plastering, standing on a bamboo-stage to the wall on the 14th floor of an under-construction building at

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

Sehri-Iftar

Ramadan	Nov	Sehri	Iftar
18	2		5-22
19	3	4-44	5-22

Prayer Timing

November 2

	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-44	4-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-22	5-28
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

SL Muslims declare 'war' on Chandrika

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's main Muslim party yesterday withdrew from a peace panel set up by President Chandrika Kumaratunga and declared "all out war" against her for allegedly trying to splinter the minority community.

The Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) said it was staying away from the first official-level meeting of the National Advisory Council for Peace and Reconciliation, which Kumaratunga launched last month.

SLMC leader Rauf Hakeem said Kumaratunga had engineered the defection of three of his legislators over the weekend in an effort to change the constitution and that the move was prejudicial to minorities.

Three SLMC dissidents were sworn in by Kumaratunga at the weekend as non-cabinet ministers, boosting the strength of her coalition government in the 225-member assembly where it has a wafer thin margin.

"She wants to use our members and form a constituent assembly and resort to extra constitutional means to change the constitution and perpetuate herself in office," Hakeem told reporters.

He said the government was seeking to change the proportional representation system to reduce the number of legislators from minority parties and vowed to stage a campaign to resist the move.

"She is trying to destabilise the Muslims," Hakeem said. "We are taking her on. We are declaring all out war on her."

Muslims, who are the second largest minority after Tamils, form 7.5 percent of Sri Lanka's 19 million population, but their block vote has considerable leverage as majority Sinhalese votes are split down the middle between two parties.

Tamils who account for 12.5 percent of the population also have a huge influence over national politics.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Pakistan PM due tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz arrives tomorrow in his capacity as the Chairman of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) before he hands the Chair over to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia during the 13th Saarc summit in Dhaka between January 9-11.

Aziz will call on President Iajuddin Ahmed and hold talks with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at an iftar party tomorrow.

In the first leg of his visit between November 1-4, Aziz already visited Nepal and will arrive here from Bhutan. He will visit India, the Maldives and Sri Lanka after Eid.

Shaukat Aziz will be accompanied by ministers, parliamentarians, businessmen and senior foreign ministry officials.



Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore, left, speaks to captain Habibur Bashar during a practice session at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday. Bangladesh take on New Zealand in the first of three RC Cola one-day internationals at this venue today. BTV and STAR Sports will telecast the match live from 8:50 am.

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- Free Sunnate Khatina for the poor Muslim boys.
- Helps poor patients & distributes free medicine through Medical units.
- Runs school and college.
- Technical and vocational education programmes to the orphans & the poor.
- Distribution of relief materials among the poor in time of natural calamities.
- Burial programmes of unclaimed dead bodies and helps burial of dead bodies of poor & distressed families.
- Carries dead bodies to the remote areas and provides air-conditioned dead body carrier service at the time of needs.
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