

Open gruel kitchens for the monga-hit: AL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League yesterday called on the government to declare the northwestern region a disaster area because of monga or a near-famine situation and open gruel kitchens for the starving people.

"At least 51 people have died from starvation in northwestern districts, but the government has turned a blind eye to the suffering of the starving people," said AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil at a press conference at the party's Dhanmondi office.

He also called for distributing adequate VGF (Vulnerable Group Feeding) cards among the poor people.

Jalil claimed that monga did not break out during the tenure of the previous AL government as it had taken necessary steps to tackle such situation.

Terminating the BNP-Jamaat alliance a fundamentalist force, the AL general secretary alleged that the non-government organisations could not carry out relief activities in the Monga-hit region because of threats by the fundamentalist elements.

Party leaders who visited the northwestern districts, including Rangpur, Nilphaman, Lalmonirhat, Kurigram and Gaibandha, from November 4 to 7 and distributed relief among the destitute were present at the press conference.

AL leaders Mukul Bose, Asaduzzaman Noor, Nazma Rahman, AHN Ashiqur Rahman, Mostafa Rashidi Suza, Fazle Rabbi, Sharfuddin Ahmed Jhantu, Mustafizur Rahman, Siddique Hossain, Subid Ali Bhuiyan, Lutfur Rahman, Dr Hamida Banu Shova and Benzir Ahmed visited the area.



GramreenPhone Grahak Kalyan Parishad forms a human chain at Muktangan yesterday demanding reduction in call charge.

PM performs umrah

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia performed umrah in Makkah on Tuesday. She took iftar with other devotees and spent the holy night of Shab-e-Qadr at Masjidul Haram, according to a message received in Dhaka yesterday.

After Magrib prayers, the PM performed umrah and offered munajat seeking divine blessings for peace, continued welfare and prosperity of the country and the people.

Earlier, she flew in Makkah by a special royal aircraft from Madina.

She was accompanied, among others, by her youngest son Arafat Rahman, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin, Mohammad Mosaddek Ali MP and Bangladesh Ambassador to Saudi Arabia SM Ekramul Huq.

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Govt sets Tk 1,000cr target from fisheries sector a year

Noman tells IBTC website launching ceremony

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh has set a target to earn Tk 1,000 crore a year from fisheries sector by boosting export of traditional and non-traditional varieties by 2008.

The government in collaboration with Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters Association (BFFEA) has been promoting a programme titled: "Mission-2008" to achieve the goal. Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al Noman said this while launching a website on fisheries resources of Bangladesh initiated by Infofish Bangladesh Trading Corporation (IBTC) at the Jatiya Press Club (JPC) in the city yesterday.

The website www.inforishbiz.com will introduce Bangladeshi fish resources to the world and work as a bridge between the exporters and farmers of Bangladesh and the buyers.

"Foreigners are only familiar to

our Hilsha and Shrimp. But we have a large varieties of species to project which are more delicious and nutritious than those of other countries," the minister said.

Terminating the IBTC step as a very noble but challenging endeavour, he said, the website must be informative and based on authentic data.

"It must be handled very carefully and information should be disseminated in a very authentic way to avoid any misconception abroad about our fishery sector," he added.

Justice Naimuddin Ahmed in his speech as special guest said "I had submitted the draft of the government when I was the chairman of the Law Commission." "But, I don't know why appropriate action was not taken to this effect," he added.

Director General of Department of Fisheries Nasir Uddin, JPC General Secretary Showkat Mahmaud, IBTC chairman Pavel Alma and Managing Director Chowdhury Miral Ahmed also addressed the function.

Noman said the "Information Technology Act" is waiting for approval of the cabinet. He called upon the IBTC officials to promote the fishery sector of Bangladesh.

Tk 6.5 lakh looted at Ctg hotel Manager arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Miscreants looted about Tk 6.5 lakh from six traders at a city hotel in the early hours of yesterday.

The six wholesale shoe-traders boarded Hotel Tourist at Darul Fazal Market adjacent to New Market two days earlier, police said. A gang of six or seven stormed into the hotel when the traders had just finished their Sehri. The criminals took away Tk 6 lakh 42 thousand from them at gunpoint and fled the scene.

Following a case lodged by one of the traders with the kotwali Police Station, police arrested hotel manager Rahmat ali and his son Iqbal Ahmed.

The traders alleged that Rahmat and Iqbal had links with the criminals and informed the gang about their stay in the hotel.

Detectives still clueless to smugglers of Saudi rials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Intelligence agencies until last night, three days into the seizure of seven lakh Saudi rials equivalent to Tk 1.07 crore at Zia International Airport (ZIA), could not unearth any clue to the smugglers.

Customs intelligence found the rials Monday night abandoned in a black handbag onboard a Dubai-bound flight, No. 0025, of Biman Bangladesh Airlines. But they could trace neither the carrier nor the owner of the money.

A customs official yesterday filed a general diary with ZIA Police Station in this connection.

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DHAKA TODAY

Discussion
Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad, Kedriya Command Council, organises a discussion and iftar party, with its Chairman Abdul Ahad Chowdhury in the chair. Venue: Purbani Hotel. Time: 3.00pm.

Rotary Greater Dhaka
The Rotary Club of Greater Dhaka will distribute new clothes among the slum children. Venue: IUBAT, House # 135, Road # 9A, Dhanmondi. Time: 2.30pm.

Lions Dhaka Central
Regular meeting and an iftar party of the Lions Club of Dhaka Central will be held. Members are requested to attend the meeting on time. Venue: Niloy Apartment, Flat # 2A, 224 Bara Maghbazar. Time: 4.00pm.

DHAKA TOMORROW

Discussion
Al-Quds Committee Bangladesh will hold a discussion on "The plight of Palestinians and the new approach to solve it", with Vice Chancellor of National University Prof Dr Aftab Ahmad as chief guest. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 4.00am.

Poetry recital evening
The Gantabba, a literary magazine, organises a poetry recital evening and iftar party to mark the 40th birth anniversary of its Chief Editor poet Sheikh Nazrul. Venue: 21/3 Talloa Officers' Quarters, Agargaon. Time: 5.00pm.

1,309 more held
UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested 1,309 people, including a listed criminal, on various charges from different parts of the country in the last 24 hours ending at 6.00am yesterday.

During the period, the law enforcers recovered 18 firearms, five other weapons and 38 bullets and filed 11 cases against 18 people under the Arms Act, says a police headquarters' press release.

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