

NOVO THEATRE

Stay on re-probe into graft case against Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a stay order on the approval of Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) chairman to start an investigation against the former prime minister Sheikh Hasina into three cases of corruption involving the Novo Theatre.

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14-party liaison body formed to gear up movement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 14-party opposition alliance formed a liaison committee yesterday for taking policy-planning decisions regarding their planned united movement against the BNP-Jamaat-led alliance government. The opposition alliance is likely to take a new shape after the

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CHARGE SHEETS IN SERIAL BLASTS CASES

Govt orders careful probe to punish perpetrators

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday gave strict order to the investigators of the August 17 countrywide bomb blasts to prepare the charge sheets carefully so that conviction in each case is ensured.

Sources said the home ministry has cautioned the investigators against any loopholes in the charge sheets, leading to "final report", failure in proving the charges.

A home ministry meeting on law and order with State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar yesterday also ordered to begin the trial of the bomb blast cases in a month.

The trials of all cases will be held and completed in 60 days at the Speedy Trial Tribunal, the sources said.

Charge sheets of 16 of the 152 cases have already been submitted, Babar told reporters.

A secretary-level committee is monitoring the developments, he said.

As the reporters mentioned that the law enforcers have only succeeded in arresting the bombers and failed to arrest those in the upper echelon of the militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), the state minister said, "We're trying our best."

13 ROUTE OF FERTILISE SMUGGLING SEALED

Thirteen maritime points identified as the most used routes have been sealed off to check smuggling of fertiliser, the meeting was told.

Around two lakh tonne fertilisers are smuggled to neighbouring India and Myanmar as the prices of fertilisers are much higher in those countries than in Bangladesh.

RIGOROUS PUNISHMENT BY MOBILE COURTS

The mobile courts have been ordered to impose more rigorous punish-

ments, including cancelling of licences, for food adulteration as many are still continuing with the offence even after being punished once.

"We have observed that minor punishments are not working as deterrent," Babar told reporters.

FAKE AND FORGED BILLS

Following law enforcers' concern over flowing of plenty of fake and forged local currency ahead of Eid, Babar ordered the Criminal Investigation Department, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and Detective Branch of police to deploy separate teams across the country to seize the bills and arrest the culprits.

PASSENGER HARASSMENT AT ZIA

The home ministry asked the Special Branch (SB) of police to

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Huda rejects again his JAF ouster

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communications minister Nazmul Huda yesterday dismissed his expulsion from the Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum (JAF) by his rival group in the feuding pro-government lawyers' association, saying there is no legal basis behind the ouster.

"There is no provision for a

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Rampant graft in Rangpur public hospitals

Finds Survey

RAFIQUE SARKER, Rangpur

A survey report published yesterday by the Rangpur unit of the Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC) expressed concern over deplorable condition of medical care in all hospitals in the district

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PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, centre, enters the Masjid-e-Nabawi in Medina in Saudi Arabia to say her prayers on Wednesday.



PHOTO: STAR

A field of the Rajarbagh Police Lines in the capital is banked with unregistered rickshaws seized by the Dhaka City Corporation. The picture was snapped yesterday.

KHULNA BNP FEUD Dissolved committee leaders seek party chief's intervention

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A section of leaders of the dissolved Khulna city committee of the BNP at an emergency meeting yesterday blamed some 'self-proclaimed' leaders of the BNP for the intra-party feud of the unit and appealed to the party chairperson to look into the matter 'impartially'.

"The foul game and dirty politics were engineered by a group of vested interests led by a person who is neither a lawmaker nor a decision-maker in the party," BNP Whip Ashraf Hossain said in an oblique reference to the senior joint secretary general of the party.

Leaders isolated from the people

have suddenly emerged as the most powerful ones by amassing huge wealth and side tracked the dedicated leaders who stood by the BNP under the leadership of Khaleda Zia, Ashraf told the meeting held at the party office and chaired by lawmaker M Nurul Islam, who headed the dissolved committee.

Presidents and secretaries of 27 out of 31 ward committees of five thana units of the city BNP attended the meeting, organisers said.

Ashraf appealed to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia to examine if the dissolution of the

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Security beefed up at gas field, banks over JMB threat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Security has been beefed up in Beanibazar gas field and other commercial banks at upazila headquarters after the manager of Sonali Bank local branch received a letter sent by JMB, threatening bomb attacks on those installations.

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ENERGY SECTOR

\$230m ADB aid for development of infrastructure

AFP, Manila

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) said here yesterday it would lend a total of 230 million dollars to Bangladesh to expand that country's natural gas infrastructure and delivery system.

The loan will help construct

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Correction

Our yesterday's news analysis headlined "Power disaster due to dubious policy" in its sixth paragraph reads: "The behind-the-scene reason for cancellation of the bid was that the chief of Summit Power is an Awami League (AL) parliamentarian". It should read, "... that the brother of the chief of Summit Power is an Awami League (AL) parliamentarian."

Summit Power is a non-political business entity and is headed by Aziz Khan while his brother is Faruk Khan MP. We regret the inadvertent error.

1 dies as Dhaka jail wall collapses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman died and four others were injured, when a 40-foot wall of the Dhaka Central Jail collapsed on the adjacent jail guard quarters yesterday afternoon.

The dead was identified as Rozina Begum, 20. The injured are Anwara Begum, 35, her daughter Aduri, 8, Halima Begum, 40, and her 10-year-old daughter.

Witnesses said the age-old 14-foot high and 1.5-foot wide prison wall collapsed on the guard quarters, popularly known as Azhar Colony, at about 4:20pm.

"Eight tin-roofed houses were razed to the ground when the huge wall fell on them," a witness told this correspondent. "Another 25 houses were also damaged."

Locals immediately rushed to the scene to rescue the victims as most of the jail guards were on duty during the incident.

"We removed the bricks and pulled the injured out of the debris," said Sabur Mahmud, an office assistant of the prison who took part in the rescue operation.

The incident took place when the inmates at the guard quarters were preparing for Iftar.

The injured were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Rozina was declared dead as soon as she was taken to the hospital. The condition of Anwara and her daughter is critical.

"We pulled Anwara out of the debris and found Aduri under her mother's body," Sabur said. "Anwara might have tried to save her daughter."

The jail guards filled up a marshland of one and a half bighas in the '90s and built the houses when the government took a move to build some structures there.

"They first built their houses leaving quite a space from the wall but later they constructed more houses close to the wall due to lack of space," said Mannan Sarkar, a retired guard of the prison and one of the first settlers.

The government repaired other walls of the Dhaka Central Jail a month back but did not work on this one, the residents complained.

Locals said the wall was weak in its foundation. After last week's continuous downpour, it developed some cracks and tilted towards the houses.

No letup in onion price spiral

Traders predict grimmer future

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Price of onion has doubled in the city markets in the last few days, and traders say shortage of supply and drastic fall in import from India might push its price further up.

Onion was selling at as high as Tk 50 to Tk 65 per kg yesterday against Tk 26 to Tk 32 only days back and around Tk 24 before the Ramadan. The local variety of onion sold at Tk 58 to Tk 65 and the Indian variety at Tk 50 to Tk 55 a kg at different city markets yesterday.

Traders say onion price would continue to go up at least until the Eid and it might last about a month before the arrival of seasonal onion in the market.

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Explaining the skyrocketing of onion price in the local markets, business sources said its price also went up sharply in India, import from where greatly meets the annual demand in Bangladesh.

Onion production in India was poor this year and consequently import from that country has come down to almost half that on the previous years. This is a major factor behind the unusual price rise of onion, importers and wholesalers said.

Bangladesh mainly imports onion from India's Karnataka, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and West Bengal states, and also from Myanmar.

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Dutch airport fire kills 11 detainees

AFP, Amsterdam

A fire swept through a detention centre at Amsterdam's Schiphol airport overnight, killing at least 11 people awaiting expulsion from the Netherlands, Schiphol's mayor said yesterday.

Police said that 15 people had been injured, including police and security guards, and that the death toll could rise.

"The eleven who died were detainees," mayor Michel Bezuigen told a news conference with police, fire

officers and justice ministry officials at the airport, which lies around 10km from Amsterdam.

"They were illegals in the Netherlands," said a spokesman for the prosecutors' office, Martin Bruinsma.

It was not immediately clear what caused the fire, which broke out around midnight (2200 GMT) and was brought under control around four hours later.

The cells at Schiphol airport are mainly used to lock up people carrying drugs for traffickers and people who have been refused

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SURANJIT DEBNATH

Despite tight security measures including installation of closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras and metal detectors at city's bus, launch and railway terminals, homebound passengers still seem troubled by insecurity stemming from the law enforcers' failure to contain blast incidents.

Besides deployment of police, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), Bangladesh Rifles and other law enforcement agency members, CCTV cameras have been put up at Sadarghat launch terminal and metal detectors at bus terminals and Kamalapur Railway Station to ensure security for the people leaving the capital to celebrate Eid-ul-Azha at their village homes.

But all these steps have yet to allay fear among the people who still seem nervous about going to public places as the government in recent months has failed miserably to ward off bomb attacks across the country and capture the perpetrators of those crimes.

"How can we feel secure at places

like Sadarghat, Kamalapur and Gabtoli when militants are blasting bombs one after another right under the law enforcers' nose," said some of the passengers who came to collect advance tickets yesterday.

SADARGHAT TERMINAL

Five CCTV cameras have been set up at Sadarghat launch terminal. People and luggage are being checked at all

entrances to the launch terminal. A mobile court has been engaged to receive complaints from the passengers all day long.

Four other mobile courts will soon be active on 45 routes from November 1 to continue for 15 days after the Eid day. Detective Branch of police and the coastguard personnel

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PHOTO: STAR

An electrician installs a CCTV camera at the entrance to Sadarghat launch terminal yesterday as part of stepped up security measures.

Sehri-Iftar			
Ramadan	Oct	Sehri	Iftar
23	28		5-25
24	29	4-42	5-25



Prayer Timing		
October 28		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-41	4-47
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-25	5-40
Esha	7-30	8-00
Source: Islamic Foundation		