

JS session begins today, AL to boycott

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Sangsad (JS) goes into its 19th session today with the main opposition refraining from attending it before its November 22 grand rally, while the ruling coalition is also planning how to counter the opposition's agitation.

The main opposition Awami League (AL), which has been boycotting the House since last year, continues its boycott, preparing for the showdown on November 22, where it is likely to issue an ultimatum to the government to realise its demands for electoral reforms.

"There is no scope of joining the session before holding our grand rally...We can discuss the issue of joining parliament after the rally," Deputy Leader of the Opposition

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Govt did mistake by taking militants lightly

Rajshahi mayor says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi City Corporation Mayor and ruling BNP lawmaker Mizanur Rahman Minu yesterday said the government had made a mistake by taking the militants lightly and not bringing them down during their rise.

"The government should have monitored their activities since the beginning and dealt with them with an iron hand," the mayor said at an exchange of opinion at the city BNP office.

"It was a great mistake that the militants could not be identified as a ferocious and strongly organised force."

The BNP legislator also said the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Outdoor ad business in mighty hands

ABDUL KADER

An influential quarter very close to the top command of the ruling BNP has established a veritable monopoly in outdoor ad business in the capital in the name of its beautification.

For the last three years Advance AD and its unofficial partner Arkay Group have been in control of the most lucrative advertisement spots in the city, especially those owned by the government and Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), business

sources said.

Some of the sources said the prime minister's sons are also the real, behind-the-scenes, owners of Arkay Group. The twin firms, according to them, have been enjoying every support from the DCC and other government authorities concerned in rearing and running the monopoly.

The sources said, driving other entrepreneurs and firms out of the business, Advance AD alone has been pocketing the lion's share, over Tk

100 crore a year, of the roughly 150-crore annual outdoor ad market of the city. Arkay has not been doing any worse either. Together, the pair bags around 80 percent of the capital's total outdoor ad revenue.

Of some 300 ad firms in the city, a number of decades-old ones have been forced to wound up their ventures in this area by the sudden and rapid rise of hegemony of Advance A D and Arkay, some

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Hajj agencies agree to new fare, but plane crisis looms

REAZ AHMAD

The Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (Haab) has finally accepted the latest government offer of \$1050 as hajj flight fare per pilgrim.

The executive committee of Haab took this decision at a meeting yesterday afternoon.

The representative body of 363 hajj agencies, Haab was agitating for fixing the fare for 56,000 non-ballotee hajj pilgrims at par with 2,600 ballotee pilgrims at \$950 each.

The national flag carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines which is in a bad shape with its dwindling fleet had

already expressed its inability to fly more than 18,000 hajj pilgrims (2,600 ballotee and 15,400 non-ballotee).

This left the overwhelming majority of indenting pilgrims in a state of uncertainty about performing hajj in January next year due to non-availability of flights.

Representatives of foreign airlines including Saudi Arabian Airlines, Qatar Airways and Kuwait Airways, who had earlier agreed to fly pilgrims from Bangladesh at \$1150 per passenger, are now declining to carry them at the revised fare rate of \$1050 as decided by Biman's management

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

JUDGE KILLING Lawyers to form human chain today

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Sammilita Ainjibi Samannay Parishad (SASP), a forum of pro-opposition lawyers, will form human chains from 4:00pm to 5:00pm today on all the Bar premises across the country protesting the killing of two judges in a bomb attack in Jhalakathi on November 14.

The lawyers will also hold a protest rally at the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital at 4:00pm tomorrow.

SASP Member-Secretary Advocate Subrata Chowdhury told the news agency that the Islamist militants have been challenging the constitution and the judicial system of the country.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

ATTACK ON SYLHET JUDGE Charge sheet filed against 3

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Sylhet Kotwali police yesterday submitted charge sheet in one of the two cases filed in connection with the bomb attack on the Sylhet Divisional Speedy Tribunal Judge Biplob Goswami on October 18.

ABM Faruque, investigation officer (IO) of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the Cognizance Magistrate Court-1 of Sylhet.

The accused are-- Akhtar Hossain and Obayedullah Prodhania, both operatives of the banned Islamist militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and Moulana Saifuddin Ahmed, Imam of the city's Bhangatikor mosque.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Suicide bombers held, say they were to kill Panchagarh judges

HASAN JAHID TUSHER, Panchagarh from

Police yesterday arrested three cadres of Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), including one who planted a bomb in front of the Panchagarh district judge court on August 17, from a residence in the district and recovered a large amount of bomb making materials, books, weighing machine and other paraphernalia.

The arrestees, Tanviruzzaman alias Salman alias Murad, and Shafiqul are from Dinajpur, and

Ashjad alias Awkat is from Dimla upazila in Nilphamari. Shafiqul and Awkat denied involvement with the JMB.

The police said the arrests were made based on information extracted from Abdul Awal, son-in-law of the suspected chief of the JMB, Abdur Rahman. Awal had been arrested from Thakurgaon on Friday.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and a large contingent of the police from Thakurgaon and Panchagarh took

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

QUESTION LEAK Scrapping of 27th BCS test demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thousands of 27th Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) candidates who could not obtain the leaked questions of Friday's preliminary test in advance are now going through uncertainty as the Public Service Commission (PSC) is still silent on the issue.

Officials of the PSC and the education ministry yesterday refused to comment about the incident. When The Daily Star contacted PSC controller SK Md Alauddin, his only response was: "Oh, you are a reporter. Please don't disturb me by asking about

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Gulshan Lake being filled up

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Rajuk, the city planning authority, looks on helplessly as a local ward commissioner of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) fills up a large section of Gulshan-Badda Lake at Shahjadpur for a housing project.

Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha is unable to stop or intervene in the filling of the water-body, as the area is not under its jurisdiction. Rajuk Chief Engineer Mohammad Emdadul Islam said more than half of the lake is in the 680-acre Batera Mouza, which the government de-requisitioned in 1991.

Rajuk in 1950's had acquired some 3,000 acres of land including Batera Mouza and adjacent areas to set up the Gulshan-Baridhara Diplomatic Zone. But, in face of strong protests and pressure from the locals, who preferred to keep

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



IN DEVELOPER'S GRIP: A worker is seen filling up a part of the Gulshan-Badda Lake in Shahjadpur yesterday.