

BNP sacks Hena for anti-militant talk

Speaker terms him independent MP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling BNP yesterday expelled its lawmaker Abu Hena from the party for his remarks against the rise of Islamist militants under the direct patronage of a section of the party and the government, terming his statement anti-organisational.

However the outspoken lawmaker from Rajshahi who recently in separate interviews with the media blamed a section of his party colleagues for patronising the Islamist militants will not lose his membership in parliament.

"Abu Hena is now an independent lawmaker. There is no possibility of losing his parliament membership as he did not violate party's decision or cast vote against the party," Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar

told journalists at his office, explaining the constitutional provision.

A BNP press release yesterday evening said BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has expelled Abu Hena from the party.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 7



Abu Hena

Ouster shows govt's support for militancy

Says Hena

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Expelled from BNP for his recent statements against religious militancy, lawmaker Abu Hena said the decision to expel him proves that the ruling alliance is dedicated to bringing about militants' rule in the country.

"I did not hold the entire government or the party responsible for the rise of militancy. Neither did I blame Prime Minister Khaleda Zia. I rather blamed a section of the government and the party for patronising the militants. But now I must say that through my expulsion the ruling alliance has exposed its role in the proliferation of militants in the country,"

SEE PAGE 19 COL 1

SP, 5 NGOs get JMB threat

Rangpur cop role questioned

STAR REPORT

Cadres of the Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) yesterday threatened to kill Netrakona superintendent of police (SP) through a letter while they sent letters to five NGOs in Barisal Wednesday afternoon threatening to blow them up.

The JMB suicide squad threatened to kill SP Ali Hossen Fakir along with his family members as he has recently submitted a charge sheet against the cadres of the militant outfit and sought remand of two JMB cadres named Kawser Alam Sumon and Amanullah alias

Sanaullah.

The JMB operatives in Barisal sent letters to five NGOs-NGO Forum, Shayestabad Altruism Institution of Nationwide Task (SAINT) Bangladesh, Voluntary Organisation for Social Development (VOSD), Padokkhep and Disha, threatening to blow them up as the NGOs do not maintain Islamic code of conduct and are engaged in looting the poor's wealth and taking foreign aids.

Meanwhile, question arose following Tuesday's detection of a JMB den in Rangpur whether or not the police administration itself is

SEE PAGE 19 COL 7

IMF for further belt-tightening

Wants speedy privatisation of Rupali Bank, tax reforms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International Monetary Fund (IMF) yesterday asked the government to further tighten its monetary policy, limit non-concessional borrowing and reduce public expenditure in order to ease inflation and the pressure on foreign exchange reserve.

The IMF found the implementation of key structural reforms slow and uneven, and asked the government to expedite trade liberalisation and the reforms in

tax administration and nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) to improve the country's growth prospect. In this regard he underscored a speedy privatisation of Rupali Bank as well as restructuring and eventual divestment of other NCBs.

"Despite some tightening in monetary policy, high money and credit growth continue and are contributing to inflationary pressures," IMF Asia and Pacific Department Adviser Thomas

SEE PAGE 19 COL 1

Tough law on press

Jalil pledges to resist govt high-ups' move

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil yesterday condemned the government high-ups' suggestion for toughening laws against the press.

"We shall resist the government move to enact such laws. Even if they do this, we'll repeal it if we come to power," Jalil told a press briefing at the AL office following a hartal rally at Muktangan in the capital.

Calling upon the journalists to uphold the truth, Jalil said discussions against the press in parliament encourage police to assault the newsmen.

He said such discussions are the reason why police dared to attack and injure on-duty Channel-i reporter Mahub Matin on November 22 and AP photojournalist Pavel Rahman in front of the AL office yesterday.

Assuring the journalists of cooperation at the time of any crises, he said, "You are the conscience of the nation, keep on

SEE PAGE 19 COL 3

Trade gap widens in quota-free era

WB prescribes 6-prong remedy including bonded warehouses, Saarc cumulation

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

A downside in export growth due mainly to inadequate policy measures to counteract the negative impacts of the MFA quota abolition scaled up the country's trade imbalance by a staggering 239 percent in July to August.

In those two months, import rose by 15.44 percent while export inched up by just 3.21 percent, pushing up the trade gap to \$312 million from \$92 million in the corresponding months of fiscal year (FY) 2004-05.

Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) sources said in January, soon after the end of the Multi-Fibre Agreement (MFA) regime, a downward trend set in in export of woven garments, which represent some

42 percent of the country's total export. This is the main reason for the deceleration in the overall export growth, they added.

Industry sources blamed the government's indifference and foot-dragging in implementing the measures demanded by business associations and those recommended by the National

Coordination Council (NCC) formed to offset post-MFA hazards for the slowing down of woven garments export growth. The measures include setting up central bonded warehouses (CBWs) for the apparel industries in export promotion zones (EPZs), endorsing the Saarc cumulation offered by the European Union and creating a special fund for the textile industries.

Bangladesh has been lagging far behind its biggest rival China in exporting apparels to the US and EU markets since MFA termination, observed Centre for Policy Dialogue Research Director Prof Mustafizur Rahman.

EPB sources, too, said, in the face of an aggressive market expansion drive by China, Bangladesh failed to boost its apparel export to the EU countries substantially.

If the government had accepted and implemented the recommendations of the NCC, it would reduce our lead-time and thus improve our market competitiveness, remarked Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association President Tipu Munshi yesterday.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

Transport strike postponed until Nov 27 on govt assurance

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The opposition-backed transport workers have postponed the countrywide indefinite transport strike until November 27.

Bangladesh Road Transport Workers' Federation Executive Chairman and Awami League (AL) lawmaker Shahjahan Khan told the news agency yesterday that the strike was postponed following assurance from the communications minister to meet their demands.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 6

Bhuiyan asks AL to set time for dialogue on EC reforms

JS session prorogued

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has urged Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil to set date and time for dialogue on reforms of the Election Commission to ensure a free and fair election to the next parliament.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 1



PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

Twelve-year-old Asiya Khatun awaits her under-age marriage as intended by her parents. Born to a bede (gypsy) family, Asiya takes it easy, as most of the adolescent girls of the roving community face the same fate. She was photographed in Savar on Tuesday.

AUG 17 BLAST CASE

Charges pressed against 4 JMB men, Moulana Masud spared

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Detective Branch (DB) of police yesterday pressed charges against four members of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) while exonerated former Islamic Foundation director Moulana Fariduddin Masud from the charge in a case filed for the August 17 blasts.

DB Inspector and Investigation Officer (IO) Mohammad Fazlul Haq submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka in the case filed with Airport Police Station.

The IO also dropped names of two others from the charge sheet. They are Israq Ahmad Siraji, accountant officer (part-timer) of Masud's Islahul Muslimene Parishad of Bangladesh, and Sayeed Nizami, co-ordinator of the Parishad.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 6

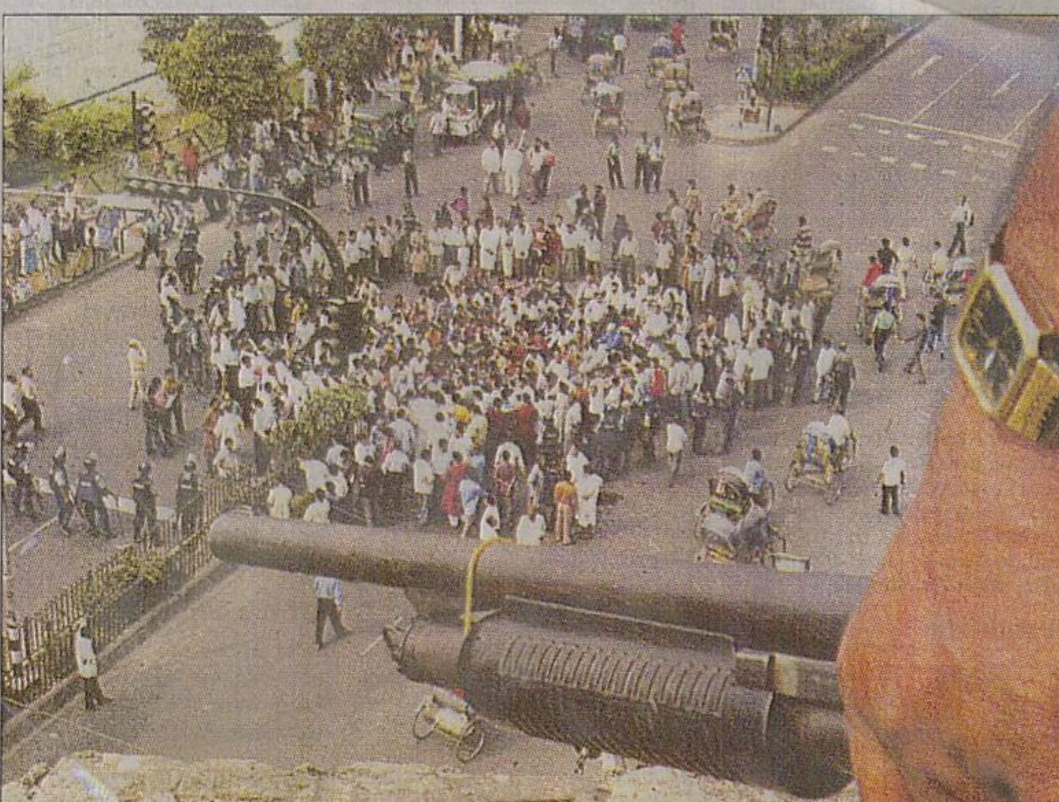


PHOTO: STAR

Awami League leaders and activists hold a meeting on Mirpur Road at Russell Square in the city during the hartal hours yesterday.

Robber killed in 'crossfire'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

A highway robber was killed in 'crossfire' as Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and his accomplices clashed yesterday.

Rab-3 sources said they arrested Daniel, 42, leader of a group of 50 highway robbers, at Zogardia in Arահazur upazila on Wednesday.

Following his statement, the elite force took him to Gopaldi Zalakandi graveyard yesterday to recover weapons.

The Rab claimed its team came under fire and countered the attack. The elite force drove away the attackers and found Daniel bullet-hit in the spot.

He was pronounced dead upon

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

Sporadic clashes mark 14-party hartal

50 injured in Dhaka, Netrakona

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition activists clashed with police in riot gear in the capital yesterday during the 14-party sponsored dawn-to-dusk hartal leaving at least 30 people, including an Awami League (AL) lawmaker and two photojournalists, injured.

The series of clashes between the hartal supporters and the police took place in front of the AL central office, Gulistan, Dainik Bangla intersection and Lalbagh in

Dhaka. Besides, the police clubbed AL processions in Netrakona, injuring some 20 people.

The opposition activists locked in a clash with the police when the law enforcers barred them from taking out a procession from the AL central office on Bangabandhu Avenue at noon.

Failing to break the police cordon at around noon, the AL activists pelted brickbats at the cops near the party office. The policemen also threw brickbats at the

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

Niko says it's not quitting Bangladesh

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Canadian Niko Resources yesterday categorically said the company is not quitting Bangladesh.

"We are not quitting. Here we are for long-time partnership," Edward S Sampson, executive chairman of Niko, now visiting Dhaka, told the news agency.

The chief of the company, however, said they are counting \$50,000 a day for the rig they had mobilised for exploration in Chhatak gas field, known as Tengratila, and it will be huge losses if they have to wait further

SEE PAGE 19 COL 5

Welcome to REHAB Fair

23-27 November 2005

Winter Garden, Dhaka Sheraton Hotel

Stall No. 11

UNITED CITY
home is where the heart is

100% UNDISPUTED LAND, LET'S GO FOR IMMEDIATE REGISTRATION.....

Our Features:

- We sell land that belongs to us.
- Customers have the option to verify our legal documents.
- Our filling level is 1 feet above the flood level of 1988, 1998 and 2004.
- More than 30% land of the project is allocated for common civic facilities.
- We ensure on time completion and handover of plots.
- Our plots are demarcated with 3 feet high wall.
- Minimum plot size is 5 Katha

Rajuk Registration No. RD-008
Member REHAB
Loan facilities from DBH & National Housing

Neptune Land Development Limited
United House, 10 Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan 1
Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh Tel: 8850161-5
Mobile: 0173045893, 0173045894, 0173045895,
0173045896, 0173045897, 0188341113, 0152390231

United City a concern of United Group