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Excessive media coverage helps rise of militancy, says Nizami

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The media by giving excessive coverage of militants are in fact contributing to the rise of religious militancy in the country, Jamaat-e-Islami Amir Muttir Rahman Nizami said yesterday in an interview with private TV channel ATN Bangla.

Nizami, also industries minister, accused The Daily Star of blowing the Bangla Bhai issue up out of proportion and said such undue coverage would rather help breed hundreds of militants like Bangla Bhai.

"The Daily Star had run a Bangla Bhai story with an eight-column heading," said the Amir of ruling coalition partner Jamaat-e-Islami. "If one can easily hit the headlines by committing wrongful acts, then hundreds of Bangla Bhai will be

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Advance Ad's protest and our reply

Advance Ad, an advertising firm, has protested a news item published in The Daily Star on November 20 headlined "Outdoor Ad business in mighty hands".

It claimed it has no association with Arkay Group as mentioned in the report and has no outdoor billboard sites under Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) areas. Under the beautification project, the DCC tasked it with beautifying the area between Bijoy Sarani up to Agargaon Link Road.

Terming false the information that Advance Ad has been pocketing the lion's share over Tk 100 crore a year out of roughly estimated Tk 150 crore outdoor advertising market in the city, the rejoinder said the firm's yearly turn over is less than Tk 3 crore.

It also protested a part of the news that reads "Of some 300 ad firms in the city, a number of decade-old ones have been forced to wind up their ventures in this area by the sudden and rapid rise of

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Ashraf under fire at BNP meeting

Paltan rally Dec 12

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the face of growing Islamist militancy driving a wedge between the ruling BNP leaders, the party policymakers have taken a hard line against anti-party statements in this context.

The stiff party line was conveyed to its leaders at a joint meeting of the BNP and its front organisations yesterday at the Minto Road residence of the party Secretary General and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

At the meeting, some BNP leaders criticised Whip Ashraf Hossain for his statement against

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Biman at height of flight disarray

Pays fat bills for stranded passengers

REAZ AHMAD

The national flag carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines has earned the bad name of erratic schedule manager by operating flights to as many as 26 international and six domestic destinations with a dwindling fleet of only 12 aircraft.

Hundreds of air passengers suffer each day due to irregular flight schedules and in worst cases, many of them have to wait overnight and also for days together to get a berth in the flights. And Biman is paying fat bills for food and accommodation of the waiting passengers.

Describing the flight schedule disarray, a top Biman official said, "Biman is now clinically dead. It really requires a big push for taking off."

Official sources confirmed that more often than not Biman fails to operate on schedule its flights on various routes, particularly international routes. Every day several flights are delayed by six hours to 24 hours, forcing the financially weak Biman to pay at least \$20 for each stranded passenger for food and lodging.

Citing some instances of Biman's erratic flight schedules, sources in the national flag carrier said Biman's Dhaka-Jeddah flight scheduled for 9:20 pm on Monday left Dhaka at 7:00 am on Tuesday, and another Dhaka-Jeddah flight, which was due to leave Dhaka at 5:45 pm on Tuesday, eventually left at 3:30 am on Wednesday. Dhaka-Kuwait flight scheduled for 7:45 pm on Monday was delayed for 25 hours and left Dhaka at 8:45 pm on

Tuesday.

Biman's flight to Rome scheduled for at 4:15 am yesterday was rescheduled for 10:45 am yesterday.

Dhaka-Dubai-London flight scheduled for 1:30 am on Saturday last left Dhaka at 10:00am on Sunday while Dhaka-Jeddah-Paris-Rome flight, which was due to leave Dhaka at 4:15 am on Sunday, left about 17 hours behind schedule at 9:00 pm that day.

Monday morning's (11:30 am) Dhaka-Hong Kong flight took off from Zia International Airport at 9:00pm, delayed by over nine hours.

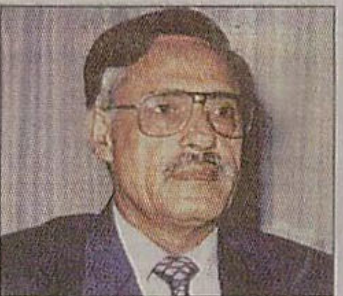
"If you want to take a full account of our flight schedule mismatches from me, I will get tired because so many flights

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Time to unite against militancy: Oli Ahmed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Stressing the need for being united like in 1971 to face the rise of militancy, BNP's standing committee member Col Reid Oli Ahmed yesterday said the whole nation is anxious about the recent trend of bomb attacks.



"Time has come now. We have to be united like in 1971 to destroy the evil forces in the country," Oli Ahmed told The Daily Star yesterday, terming the militancy as the burning issue of the moment.

"We also have to free the country from the grips of rampant corruption and undesirable persons engaged in destruction, the nation is shaken by the act of those undesirable elements," he said. "The persons who are carrying out destructive activities and are engaged in corruption can not be friends of the people. They should be treated as enemies of the country," he said.

Replying to a query about Abu Hena's claim that he had informed the government about the rise of

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100 BNP leaders will speak out, says Hena

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expelled from the BNP, lawmaker Abu Hena yesterday said about 100 lawmakers and leaders of the ruling party are with him, who will go public against the militants in time.

"Wait, you will see what is going to happen," Abu Hena told journalists at Sonargaon Hotel.

He said his expulsion from the BNP is an injustice to him.

He said sections of the BNP and of Jamaat created the dreaded killer Bangla Bhai and that there is no difference between Motiur Rahman Nijami and Bangla Bhai.

The prime minister will have to be held accountable on the militant issue, he said.

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Due to lack of dredging, the Kaliganga river in Manikganj district turns into a sandy channel in the dry season, although it floods the banks during the rains. The photo was taken yesterday.

Dense fog disrupts ferry, launch services

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dense fog disrupted ferry and launch services on different river routes on the Padma-Meghna yesterday for hours, stranding hundreds of vehicles on both sides of the rivers and causing sufferings to the passengers.

According to our Manikganj correspondent, ferry and launch services on Daulatdia-Paturia-Nagarbari routes on the Padma were disrupted for seven hours from 2:00am yesterday due to dense fog.

Over 1,200 vehicles with about 50,000 passengers aboard remained stranded at Paturia and Daulatdia ghats as the ferries were forced to anchor either at the ghats

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Hena's expulsion prompted by Jamaat, allies, says opposition

UNB, Dhaka

Opposition political parties yesterday said expulsion of BNP lawmaker Abu Hena exposed the "clandestine entente" between the government and the Islamist militants responsible for the country-wide bomb attacks and terrorism.

It was "proved" once again that the BNP acts on the advice of Jamaat and their allies, leaders of Awami League, Workers Party, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) told UNB.

"Abu Hena spoke absolutely the

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Terror-financing NGOs remain unscathed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Certain Middle East-based international non-governmental organisations operating in the country are still untouched despite months-old intelligence confirmation of their financing the Islamist militant outfits.

After the August 17 countrywide orchestrated bomb strikes, intelligence reports recommended that the government ban the Kuwait-based Revival of Islamic Heritage Society (RIHS) and take action against a number of other Middle Eastern NGOs found to be linked with the Islamist extremists.

"Arresting the militants and busting their dens are not the only

solutions when they continue to enjoy foreign funding," remarked an investigator.

Following the arrest of Islamist militant Kingpin Asadullah Al-Galib, chief of Able Hadith Andolon Bangladesh (Ahab), intelligence agencies found further evidence of such funding -- by cheque and cash and sometimes even by hundi.

The investigators recovered a large number of computer documents, diaries, notes, books, booklets, leaflets and audiotapes from Galib's house, and Ahab offices and madrasas in Rajshahi. Analysing the information retrieved from the documents the investigators arrived at a more or less accurate profile of Galib

including his connections with Islamist militants and funding agencies abroad.

USE OF FOREIGN FUNDS
From confessions and statements of arrested militants, and accounts of expenditures and diaries of militants seized by the law enforcers, investigators learned that the banned Islamist outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) is implementing plans originally hatched by Ahab and another outlawed group Harkat-ul Jihad (HuJI).

The JMB spends roughly Tk 60 lakh a year for maintaining its full-time leaders and cadres, and Tk 1 to 5 crore for buying explosives and

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8 JMB men held in 3 districts

STAR REPORT

The police yesterday arrested eight suspected members of the banned Islamist militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) in Bhola, Rajshahi and Tangail districts.

One of them, a former activist of Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS), the student wing of ruling Jamaat-e-Islami, was arrested in Rajshahi and another in Tangail.

The remaining six were held in Bhola with a large amount of bomb-making materials, reports BDNews.

Among them, Abdul Majid is a teacher of agriculture at Char

Fashion College. Four others were identified as Abdullah Al Mamun alias Faruq, 28, of Banchharampur of Brahmanbaria district, Humayun Kabir alias Anas, 23, of Fulgazi of Feni, Noor Hossain, 23, of Adarshapara of Kushtia, and Enamul Haq, 12, of Haluaghat of Mymensingh. Faruq has a bachelor's degree in computer science from the Rajshahi University, the police said.

Later, they were taken on a five-day remand for interrogation.

Our Tangail correspondent reports: Kalihati police early yesterday arrested JMB cadre Monwar Hossain, 17, who admitted to his

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Bangla Bhai used govt vehicle

Says JMB leader

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, from Bogra

Militant kingpin Bangla Bhai and his followers used a government vehicle during their operations against outlaws in the northern region in April last year, a JMB source said.

Bangla Bhai, operations commander of Jagrata Muslim Janata, Bangladesh (JMB), and his followers used a pickup van of a department under the agriculture ministry.

The operatives of the outlawed JMB and Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) kept the vehicle for about two months, a JMB com

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One step ahead in Syndication...

Prime Bank Limited as Lead Arranger for raising fund for micro credit lending program of BRAC, congratulates the participating banks for extending support in arranging a Syndicated Term Loan of

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