

14-party mourns AL man's death during blockade

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 14-party alliance yesterday brought out a mourning procession in the capital paying homage to AL leader Wajjullah and others who were killed during the blockade programmes on November 13 and October 28 and 29.

Wearing black badges, bearing different banners, placards and chanting various slogans, thousands of 14-party leaders and activists joined the procession which started from Central Shaheed Minar and finished at their party office on Bangabandhu Avenue after parading different city streets.

Prior to the procession, the AL Dhaka city unit also held a rally at the Central Shaheed Minar.

Addressing the rally, the 14-party leaders vowed to continue their movement until their demands were met.

AL Presidium Member Abdur Razzak said the president has failed to prove his neutrality even though

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Eminent citizens fear polls won't be fair as voter list erroneous

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eleven eminent citizens of the country in an open letter to the president and chief adviser (CA) to the caretaker government (CG) said the election would not be free and fair as the current voter list is grossly flawed.

The signatories in the open letter are National Professor Kabir Chowdhury, Obayed-ul-Haque, Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid, Prof

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2 rapists get 30-yr jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday gave 30 years' rigorous imprisonment to two people for raping a 16-year-old girl Salma in April 1997.

Judge Nurun Nahar of the Third Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression handed down the sentence in presence of one of the convicts.

The convicts are victim's uncle Awlad Hossain and Babu of Daiya village of Dhamrai in Dhaka. Awlad was present in the court during the verdict while Babu was tried in absentia.

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Outlaw killed in crossfire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A leader of New Biplabi Communist Party (NBPC) was killed in "crossfire" during a "shootout" between police and his accomplices at Bharatia of Dumuria upazila in Khulna yesterday.

The victim, Sujit Kumar Mondol, 40, was arrested Wednesday night at Prashadpur of Tala upazila in Satkhira.

Police said Sujit returned to Dumuria from India on Tuesday with a view to regroup the armed cadres of his underground party and carry out subversive activities taking advantage of the current political situation. He had fled to

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6 bodies found in Barisal launch capsized spot

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Six bodies were recovered from the hull of ML Mehdi-1, a small motor launch, which capsized in the Kirtankhola River near Barisal port on Wednesday afternoon.

Five bodies are of Shamsunnahar Pakhi, 30, Bilkis Begum, 35, Lily Begum, 31, Sumon, 6, and Rizia Begum, 26. Identity of the other victim could not be known. They all were returning to Lengutia and Jangalia of Mehendiganj upazila from Barisal city.

Four bodies were handed over to their relatives and the remaining two kept at Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital morgue.

Four passengers of the launch remained missing as of 7:00pm yesterday. Divers are continuing

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IMF sets 5 conditions for release of last PRGF tranche

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has set five major conditions, including introduction of uniform taxpayer identification number for the Large Taxpayers Unit (LTU), for releasing the last instalment under the Poverty Reduction Growth Facility (PRGF).

The IMF officials recently apprised the government of the conditions and the government has pledged to meet those, sources said.

"Bangladesh will receive about \$110 million in the middle of next year if it meets the conditions set by the IMF," a high official of the finance ministry said.

As per the IMF prescription, the government will have to introduce

Uniform Taxpayer Identification (UTI) number for the LTU by March next year. The UTI number proposes to integrate the existing Tax Identification Number (TIN) and Business Identification Number (BIN).

Sources in the National Board of Revenue (NBR) said a committee has already begun to work on introducing the UTI and preparatory work has been completed. "We are very much hopeful to introduce the UTI by the IMF timeframe," an official of the NBR said.

Another IMF condition asked the government to conduct joint audits for at least one-third of eligible audits conducted during June 2006 and February 2007.

The IMF also asked for cabinet approval of the corporatisation of

nationalised commercial banks -- Agrani, Janata and Sonali -- by March next year.

As per another IMF condition, the nationalised commercial banks will have to maintain open position in their foreign exchange transactions in line with the central bank regulations.

Referring to the IMF conditions, sources said the government would also have to introduce oil-pricing formula by the end of current fiscal.

"Prior to introducing new oil-pricing formula, the government will have to review and strengthen social programmes designed to mitigate the impact on vulnerable groups of fuel price adjustments," one source said.



Oil derricks are reflected in a polluted puddle on the shore of the Caspian Sea just outside Baku, Azerbaijan.

GLOBAL WARMING White House sued

AP, San Francisco

Environmentalists sued the Bush administration Tuesday for failing to produce a report on global warming's impact on the country's environment, economy and public health.

The plaintiffs claim the government must complete such a report every four years under the Global Change Research Act of 1990. The plaintiffs say the last report was due in November 2004.

The lawsuit seeks to compel the U.S. Climate Change Science Program to issue the national assessment, which should contain the most recent scientific data on global warming and projections for its future impacts.

Without the report, decision makers and the public "are without one of the most important tools to grapple with this complex, potentially overwhelming and yet all important issue," the complaint said.

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, which was named in the lawsuit, had not received the complaint Tuesday and could not

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Iran ready to take final step for nukes

Major powers fail to break deadlock on sanctions

AFP, Tehran/ United Nations

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad yesterday said Iran was ready to take the "final step" in its nuclear programme, as he maintained his defiance in the face of possible UN sanctions against Tehran.

"The enemies of the Iranian people must know that the Iranian people have taken their decision and will resist until the end," the

semi-official Mehr agency quoted him as saying in a speech in Baneh in Kurdistan province.

"In the nuclear case we are ready to take the final step and I hope that by the end of the year (Iranian year to March 2007) we will be able to hold the great celebration of Iran's nuclear right," he added.

Ahmadinejad, who has made a string of similar comments in recent days, did not specify where the step

would take Iran's nuclear programme.

However Iranian officials have repeatedly said that the short-term goal of Iran's nuclear programme is to install some 3,000 centrifuges to enrich uranium at its plant in Natanz by March 2007.

This would in itself represent a massive step from the two cascades

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Deprived of promotions and postings during the BNP-Jamaat regime, a section of government officials stage a sit-in inside the office of the establishment secretary yesterday.

Croc farm sees first of eggs

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Crocodile farming at the country's first ever reptile reproduction enterprise has witnessed its first success as two crocodiles laid eggs this season.

Reptiles Farm Ltd, a private entrepreneurship reptile reproduction farm, started farming crocodiles commercially at Hatiber village of Uthura union under Bhaluka upazila in Mymensingh in 2004.

Currently, there are 68 crocodiles including 54 female crocodiles in the farm.

"We hope to get 2,500 to 3,000 eggs next year if the weather condition favours because moderate rainfall is needed to stimulate the crocodiles for reproduction," said Mushtaq Ahmed, managing director and chief executive officer of the farm.

Three entrepreneurs Mesbahul Haque, Mushtaq

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PHOTO: AMINUL ISLAM

Saltwater crocodiles are being farmed at Hatiber village of Bhaluka upazila in Mymensingh. Reptiles Farm Ltd is the first crocodile farm in Bangladesh.

Barrage of attacks kill 22 Iraqis, 4 US troops

AGENCIES, Baghdad

A series of attacks by suspected insurgents using guns, bombs and mortar shells killed 13 Iraqis in the capital yesterday, officials said. Four US Army soldiers also died during combat missions.

Elsewhere, US ground and air forces killed nine suspected al-Qaeda in Iraq insurgents on Thursday during a raid in Youssifiyah, a rural area about 20km south of Baghdad, the military said.

In Thursday's deadliest attack in Baghdad, gunmen opened fire on a bakery, killing nine people, police

said.

Such attacks are usually carried out by Sunni-Arab militants since most of the bakeries in the city are run by Iraqis from the country's Shia majority.

Those killed in the shooting at 7:30 a.m. in Baghdad's eastern neighbourhood of Zayouna included employees of the bakery and its customers, said police Capt. Mohammed Abdel-Ghani.

The attack at the al-Rafidain Bakery left pools of blood on the floor, some containing pieces of Middle Eastern bread that had been dropped and furniture overturned during the panic.

"The gunmen stormed into the bakery and killed workers while they were baking. They had done nothing bad," said one man who joined other local residents outside the small store after the attack. He spoke on condition of anonymity out of concern for his own safety.

Three civilians and two Iraqi policemen also died in four other attacks in Baghdad on Thursday morning.

A roadside bomb exploded at 7 a.m. in another part of Zayouna, killing one Iraqi policeman and wounding three, said police Lt. Bilal Ali.

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JUDICIARY SEPARATION Judgment on 13 top officials' contempt charges on Sunday

UNB, Dhaka

Judgment will be delivered on Sunday on the contempt of court charges against four secretaries and nine mid-level officers of different ministries for non-compliance with the directives of the Supreme Court for separation of the judiciary from the executive.

After a brief hearing yesterday, a seven-member full court of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassir Husain, set November 19 for delivering the judgment.

Four secretaries, who are facing the contempt of court charges, are Kamal Uddin Siddiqui, the ex-principal secretary to the prime minister, Alauddin Sardar, Mahbubur Rahman and Siddiqur Rahman Chowdhury.

They are charged with "impeding" the implementation process of separation of the judiciary from

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Pakistan tests nuke-capable ballistic missile

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistan successfully test-fired an intermediate range, nuclear-capable Hatf 5 (Ghauri) ballistic missile yesterday, the military said.

Arch-rival India had been informed of the test beforehand, and was expected to conduct a missile test itself shortly, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam said.

"Pakistan can be justifiably proud of its defence capability and the reliability of its nuclear deterrence," Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, who watched the test, was quoted as saying.

"Pakistan believes in peace that

comes from a position of strength and operational readiness," he said in a statement.

The Hatf 5, with a range of 1,300 km, was first tested in 1998, the same year Pakistan and India conducted nuclear tests and became nuclear-armed states.

The Hatf 5 was last reported to have been tested in 2004. This time the Army Strategic Forces Command conducted the tests, whereas previous tests were overseen by scientists, officials said.

The neighbours embarked on a peace process in early 2004 after

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Hearing of 6 condemned JMB men's petitions on Sunday

UNB, Dhaka

Turning down the time extension plea of the state defence counsel, the Supreme Court (SC) fixed Sunday for hearing the petitions of six condemned JMB militants, seeking leave to appeal against the High Court verdict.

On August 31, the High Court confirmed the death sentences of six JMB militants awarded by the trial court in the sensational Jhalakathi judges' killing case.

A seven-member full court of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassir Husain, passed the order yesterday,

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2 JP leaders meet Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two leaders of Jatiya Party (JP-Ershad) last night met Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina at her Sudha Sadan residence and discussed current political issues of the country.

Sources said the two JP leaders, Barrister Anisul Islam Mahmud and Ziauddin Bablu, reached Hasina's residence at 8:50pm and

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Prayer Timing		
November 17		
	Azan	
Fajr	5-05	5-40
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-21	5-24
Esha	7-00	7-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		