

Foreign chapters of AL demand Hasina's release

Rallies in US, UK Australia, Canada

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US, UK, Australia and Canada chapters of the Awami League (AL) yesterday staged separate demonstrations demanding immediate release of detained party chief and former prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

Australia chapter of AL staged protests in front of the Bangladesh High Commission in Canberra, US chapter staged a demonstration near the State Department in Washington DC while Canada unit held protest rally in front of parliament building in Ottawa.

They also demanded a free and fair election as early as possible.

Addressing the demonstrators in Washington DC, Hasina's son Sajeeb Wazed Joy urged all to get united ... for the sake of the country and democracy, New York-based news agency News World reported.

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Waterlogging in DND area never rang a bell

PORIMOL PALMA

Taslima Khatun, along with her four skinny children, stand on a culvert on Matuail Medical Road watching people fishing in the pool formed by heavy rain in the last few days.

Though the scruffy kids, who reside in a rented house at DND (Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra) project area, seemed happy enjoying the catch, Taslima looked blank, indifferent.

"We are here because it has become difficult for us to stay in the room, where there is a little space in between the bed and the tin-shed. We have already put three pieces of brick under the legs of the cot to lift it so that it does not go under water," Taslima said.

"We remain awake whole night as we don't want to die from bites of snakes or insects," said Rahima

Khatun, who was also found standing there with her two children to escape from water.

They told The Daily Star yesterday afternoon that most people who do not live in the multi-storey buildings in the DND area are facing similar realities with no firewood to cook and no higher place to take shelter.

Taslima said they are now depending on foods of the nearby shops, which include flattened rice, puffed rice, biscuits and bananas.

"We sometimes try to cook at others' ovens. Though it is not always possible as many other families also try to take a chance."

Abdul Mannan, a carpenter of the local lawmakers Salahuddin and Giasuddin during the last BNP-Jamaat rule, Shah Alam, also a

Rahima said her children cannot go to school due to water logging in the area. "This is not a problem of a week only, rather it is a problem of the whole rainy season. Whenever there is heavy rain, there is water logging," she said.

Reporters write reports whenever there is water logging in the DND area, but nothing is changed, sighs Rahima, who along with her family members have been living in the area for the last six years.

This sort of sufferings are not new, rather (they are continuing) for almost last two decades, said Shah Alam, a middle aged shopkeeper at Matuail.

Asked about the initiatives of the local lawmakers Salahuddin and Giasuddin during the last BNP-Jamaat rule, Shah Alam, also a

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PHOTO: STAR

People living in single-storey houses in Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra embankment area suffer the most as the entire locality is flooded with stagnant rainwater, making way for serious health hazards.

Govt to form body to build awareness on mass hysteria

8 students faint in city school

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the wake of the mass seizure that had afflicted over a hundred schoolchildren across the country, the government decided to raise awareness about the pandemic temporary illness by forming a platform comprising representatives from all affected sections of the population.

Meanwhile, in the first outbreak of the psychogenic illness in the capital, eight female students of a school in Mirpur fainted yesterday.

Health Adviser Dr ASM Matuir Rahman speaking at a seminar yesterday said a platform of doctors, teachers and parents of students will initiate an awareness raising programme at union levels

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PHOTO: STAR

POISONOUS DELIGHT...Rag pickers grab mangoes being destroyed at a garbage dumping ground at Matuail in the capital yesterday. A mobile court seized 65 baskets of mangoes with poisonous chemicals and ordered the fruits to be destroyed.

Hearing on Rangs Bhaban dispute begins in SC

UNB, Dhaka

The hearing of a government appeal against the High Court judgment on the dispute over demolition of the 22-storey Rangs Bhaban began at the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday.

In May 2000, the High Court in its verdict upon a writ petition filed by the Rangs Group declared the Rajuk notices illegal, saying that the construction of the Rangs Bhaban was done as per the plan approved by Rajuk following the terms and conditions. It further said the Rajuk notices imposing sanction of the plan and its other letters asking the petitioner to remove the construction beyond 6th floor have been issued without lawful authority.

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Suicide bomb kills 26 at Iraq children's hospital

Four US soldiers die in attacks

AFP, AP, Hilla/ Baghdad

A suicide car bomb exploded across the street from a children's hospital in the Iraqi city of Hilla yesterday, killing at least 26 people and wounding 69, police and medical officials said.

"Most of the wounded were women and children, and the blast destroyed 15 vehicles and about 20 nearby shops," said Lieutenant Eid al-Shammari of the local police.

Doctor Mohammed Dhia, head surgeon at the Hilla hospital confirmed the casualties, adding that 25 of those wounded had serious

injuries, including severe burns.

Medical officials earlier confirmed that bodies had been evacuated to two hospitals in the area.

The bombing in a mostly Shia town came hours before the US ambassador to Iraq and his Iranian counterpart met in a second round of face-to-face talks aimed at controlling Iraq's spiralling violence.

It was not immediately clear who was behind the bombing, but in the past such attacks have been blamed on Sunni insurgent groups such as al-Qaeda in Iraq, which is trying to overthrow Iraq's US-backed government and foment unrest.

Meanwhile, four American soldiers were killed in Iraq at the weekend in separate attacks across the war-torn country, most involving roadside bomb blasts, the US military said on Monday.

One was killed when insurgents detonated a bomb near his vehicle in Baghdad on Saturday, while the other died of wounds sustained in a blast on Sunday.

A third soldier was killed on Friday when a roadside bomb struck his Humvee south of the city of Samarra, in a Sunni region north of the capital that sees frequent

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Nowshin's father applies for second autopsy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Father of Sadia Nowshin Priyanka, a college student found dead at her home at Moghbazar in the capital, yesterday submitted an application with Ramna Police Station demanding a second autopsy of his daughter.

Ramna police have forwarded the application to court for further instruction.

In the application, Nowshin's father Sultan Faruque rejected Nowshin's autopsy report saying that the "doctors were influenced while preparing the report".

He made several observations in the application suggesting that Nowshin could not have committed suicide since the entrance of the flat was found locked from outside after the incident. Also, besides the main knot closest to her neck, there were three to four extra knots on the scarf that was found tied around her neck. It would be quite impossible for a person to commit suicide and tie those extra knots.

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BCL men burn effigy of Mainul

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the student wing of Awami League, yesterday morning burnt an effigy of Law Adviser Mainul Hossain on the Dhaka University (DU) campus demanding his resignation for his 'biased activities'.

Earlier they took part in a procession at the same place demanding unconditional release of AL President Sheikh Hasina.

The demonstration was part of the BCL's weeklong programme announced last week. They also held demonstrations at different districts across the country.

This is the first time an adviser's effigy was burnt when all political activities including processions are banned in the state of emergency.

Sources said about 15 BCL activists led by DU unit of BCL President Sohel Rana Tipu brought

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Textbooks printed on poor quality papers

Press owners sell NTCB-supplied quality paper to market, use lowly ones

SURANJITH DEABNATH

Printing press owners continue to print the primary and secondary level textbooks using low quality paper instead of 'security paper' and Karnaphuli white print paper provided by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB).

The unscrupulous printers sell the paper supplied by NCTB and use the cheaper Indian paper for printing the textbooks, but the authorities are yet to take any effective step against them.

Admitting the malpractice, NCTB Chairman Prof Yusuf Farooq said, "We have received these allegations against the printing press owners and issued show cause notice against several of them but they seemingly don't care

it. What more can we do than issuing the notice?"

Bangladesh Printing Industries Association (BPIA) President Rabbani Jabbar, however, said they always print textbooks with the paper provided by the NCTB.

"We are not responsible for the textbooks with low quality paper that are in the market. Some fake printers who are not awarded the tender, market these textbooks with low quality paper in the absence of inspection by NCTB," he said.

Against the backdrop of increase of the paper price in international market, the government has continued to give an annual subsidy of Tk 5 crore since 2002 to enable the students of primary and secondary levels to purchase quality paper textbooks with low cost.

But the students had to buy low quality paper textbooks for last five years as an unscrupulous group led by present leaders of BPIA print the textbooks with low quality Indian paper instead of the paper provided by the NCTB and cheat a huge amount of money every year.

With the blessings of immediate past BNP government, especially former state minister for education Ehsanul Haq Milon and former education secretary Shahidul Alam, the 32-member executive committee of BPIA virtually took control over all textbook printing related tenders under the NCTB since 2001.

The committee's domination continues even during the present caretaker government, NCTB officials said.

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US at loggerheads with Iran in Iraq talks

Tehran accused of supporting militia

AFP, Baghdad

The United States yesterday accused Iran of stepping up its alleged support of militia groups fighting in Iraq, after the arch foes' second round of rare face-to-face talks in Baghdad.

The US ambassador to Iraq said that Iran, despite professing support for the government of Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, has deepened its support for Shia militias in the two months since the delegations last met.

"We have actually seen militia-related activity with Iranian support go up and not down," US Ambassador Ryan Crocker told reporters, referring to the period

since the Iranian, Iraqi and US delegations last met on May 28.

"When there are results, the results that count will be results we see on the ground. Rather clearly we haven't seen those kind of results so far," he claimed, after several hours of talks with Iranian and Iraqi officials.

The talks began at 10:15 am (0615 GMT) at the office of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, who began the meeting with a brief speech, according to an official at the Iraqi premier's office.

"We hope to see your support in stabilising Iraq. We do not want to see Iraq interfering in the affairs of others, nor do we want anyone to interfere in its internal affairs,"

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Why keeping children in jail not illegal

HC asks govt to explain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court issued a rule nisi upon the authorities concerned to show cause why imprisonment of children in jails should not be declared illegal.

The authorities were also asked to send the children to juvenile correctional centres.

A High Court bench of Justices Syed Mahmud Hossain and Farid Ahmed passed the order upon hearing of a writ petition filed by Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust and Ain O Shalish Kendra.

The law firms filed the writ petition following newspaper reports, which said children were imprisoned in jails instead of correctional centres.

On behalf of the petitioners, lawyer Nizamul Haque Nasim conducted the case while lawyers Amatul Karim and Abanti Nurul assisted him.

Pak clashes kill 35 militants, 4 troops

US ups pressure on Musharraf to act against militants, offers air support

AFP, Islamabad/ Khar

Heavy fighting has killed at least 35 Islamic militants and four government troops in a Pakistani tribal area dubbed an al-Qaeda safe haven by Washington, the military said Monday.

The latest clashes in the lawless North Waziristan tribal agency bordering Afghanistan came as pro-Taliban groups there warned Pakistani soldiers to quit fighting or face the "gift of death" through new suicide attacks.

Washington has intensified pressure on Islamabad to step up military action, warning it may launch strikes there -- comments Pakistan called "irresponsible and dangerous."

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The US military has offered to provide air support and "supporting fires" for Pakistani military operations against al-Qaeda but in the past has been rebuffed, US defence officials said Monday.

General Peter Pace, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, disclosed the offer of US military and intelligence assistance on Friday in a meeting in Schweinfurt, Germany with family members of US troops.

Pace's comments were first reported by a CNN correspondent travelling with the general. Defence officials on Monday confirmed his remarks but said the offer was not new, but rather of a longstanding character.

Ivorians want ties with Bangladesh

Keen to import medicine, garment

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK, back from Ivory Coast

The Bangladeshi peacekeepers have struck up such a bridge of friendship between Ivory Coast and Bangladesh that it has opened a window of opportunity for full diplomatic and commercial relations.

A cross section of eminent Ivorians, including its former president and a parliament member, while talking to The Daily Star correspondent in Ivory Coast has expressed their interest to have diplomatic ties with Bangladesh.

The Daily Star correspondent met a number of Ivorians in early July during his visit to see Bangladeshi peacekeepers' activities under UN mission.

"War is not a good thing," said Zamble Bitah, one of the 175

Ivorian MPs, "but this war has brought us one good thing; we've come to know about Bangladesh and the people of Bangladesh for the first time.

"Through interaction, we got the impression that the Bangladeshis are caring and their contributions to the lives of the Ivorians are very impressive."

Bitah, who is also a businessman, said he is very much interested to do business with Bangladesh.

"I would like to import medicines and garments from Bangladesh. Presently our medicine market is dominated by Chinese drugs. We know that Bangladeshi medicines and garments are good and affordable."

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PHOTO: STAR

Members of Bangladesh Army medical corps on the UN peacekeeping mission in Ivory Coast treat locals for free at one of the temporary medical camps in the city of Daloa.

12 to die for murdering businessman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A court here yesterday sentenced 12 people to death and eight others to life imprisonment in a murder case.

First Additional District and Sessions Judge Rezaul Karim pronounced the verdict at around 4:00pm in businessman Jane Alam murder case. The businessman was murdered at Amirabad in Lohagara upazila in 2002.

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Prayer Timing		
July 25		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-20	4-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-50	6-55
Esha	8-15	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		