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## AL culprits warned

PM asks for stern action against extortion, tender manipulation; vows to spare none for tarnishing party image

HASAN JAHID TUSHER and SHAKHAWAT LITON

Awami League President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday gave orders for taking action against party men involved in extortion, tender manipulation and other unlawful activities, which are tarnishing the image of the party.

"Stern actions will be taken against those involved in any unlawful activity. Nobody will be spared," the AL chief told a meeting of the AL Central Working Committee (ALCWC) at the party's Dhanmondi office.

AL General Secretary and LGRD Minister Syed Ashraf Islam told reporters after the meeting that they have received many complaints of extortion, tender manipulation and other malpractices by party men. "We will take tough

actions against those involved in these activities upon investigation," he said.

On facing the existing acute shortage of power, Hasina told the meeting that it needs time to resolve the crisis. "It is possible to generate 4,500MW power using coal from Barapukuria mine, but before starting mining, locals will have to be rehabilitated," she said.

The PM asked State Minister for Forest and Environment Dr Hasan Mahmud to conduct a feasibility study to assess relocation of Barapukuria locals and submit the report to the cabinet soon.

The new ALCWC, which sat for the first time since its formation last July, discussed the overall socio-economic and political and organisational matters.

At the five-hour-long meeting, AL central leaders said the massive involvement of leaders of the party, Chhatra

League, Jubo League and Swachhshabak League in extortion and tender manipulation is tarnishing the image of the government as well as the party, meeting sources said.

Demanding immediate action against party leaders and workers involved in such unlawful activities, they said both the government and the party would have to pay heavily if this is not checked now.

The AL pledged before the ninth parliamentary polls to take stern actions against such crimes to implement the party's charter for changes.

The ALCWC decided to assign seven organising secretaries of the party the task of watching activities of party men and report to the party high command, meeting sources said.

The highest decision-making body of

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Dhanmondi Playground becomes unplayable after a beverage company arranged a programme there to promote marketing of their product. Earlier a month-long fair was held there depriving the children and youth. The photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

## PM wants jam relief

Orders taking all steps, constructing elevated expressway soon

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain to take immediate measures including construction of an elevated expressway in the capital to ease nagging traffic jam.

The premier's directive came after central Awami League leaders addressed the issue at the AL Central Working Committee meeting at the party president's political office in the city's Dhanmondi.

Many committee members drew the communications minister's attention to the issue and asked him what steps have been taken to ease traffic jam in the capital.

Hasina, also president of Awami League, asked the minister to come up with a priority project like construction of elevated express-

way. She said her cabinet would approve the expressway project within a month for its immediate implementation.

The AL leaders, many of whom attended the committee meeting for the first time, advised the premier to relocate less important government offices out of the capital to ease tailbacks.

They also proposed having three to four entrances for Dhaka-bound vehicles from the port city considering heavy traffic on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway.

Some party leaders also urged the premier to take measures for tackling the aftermath of earthquakes in Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet and other parts of the country.

Referring to the earthquake on the Eid day, AL leader Akhtaruzzaman told the meeting that the government should take necessary

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## Jalil mentally imbalanced

Says Ashraf after ALCWC meet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC) yesterday blasted Abdul Jalil, a member of AL advisory council, for his recent derogatory statements about the party and the last parliamentary election, but it did not decide to take action against him.

"Organisational actions cannot be taken against a mentally imbalanced person,"

AL General Secretary and LGRD Minister Syed Ashraf Islam told journalists after a meeting of the highest decision making body of the party.

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## Venue aspect of Aug 21 to solve some puzzles

Charge sheet says decision taken 'centrally' but skips detailing the info

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

The charge sheet in the August 21 grenade blasts case points to a meticulous plot to kill the then opposition chief Sheikh Hasina, but clears up no questions along that line.

The charge sheet submitted on June 9 last year does not explain if the attackers knew about the venue before Awami League on August 20 announced that it would hold the rally at Bangabandhu Avenue.

AL sought the government's permis-

sion to use Mukhtangan for the rally a week before August 21. But as it did not get any response even on August 20, it decided to settle for Bangabandhu Avenue.

The decision was published in the newspapers the following day.

Security experts say the August 21 blasts where Arges grenades, weapons exclusive to military, were used to ensure severe casualties could not be staged without long and elaborate preparations.

So the perpetrators might have learned about the venue well before the AL announcement and prepared accord-

ingly. Huji cadres infiltrating AL might have got the information for them.

Experts say the investigators should find out when the planners and perpetrators learned that Bangabandhu Avenue would be the venue.

They should also seek to know whether the conspirators knew that AL would opt for Bangabandhu Avenue in the event of not getting permission to use Mukhtangan.

This raises the question whether the

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The elephant that was found dead, allegedly killed by poachers, in the forest of Naikkhongchhari in Bandarban. Forest officials preserved its tusks, inset.



## Elephant poached

A CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A wild male elephant was allegedly killed at a rubber garden near Alikkhong village of Baishari union under Naikkhongchhari upazila in Bandarban Thursday night.

Locals suspect that miscreants poisoned the elephant to take away its tusks. However, local forest official Zahirul Haque said they were yet to find any proof of poisoning, as they did not receive the autopsy report.

He recovered the body Friday afternoon and it was buried after autopsy.

Zahirul said the tusks were with the body when it was found and forest officials cut those out to preserve.

A general diary was filed with Naikkhongchhari thana Friday night.

Wild elephants had been invading houses up the hills in Alikkhong mouza in search of food for last few days, said Syed

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## GANG RAPE BY BCL MEN Local newsmen under pressure

Section of party leaders out to silence media

STAR REPORT

A section of ruling party leaders mounts pressure on local journalists to stop reporting further on the incident of gang rape of the teenage girl at Kalapara upazila in Patuakhali.

Under immense pressure, the editor of a local daily had to sack one of its reporters who covered the September 25 incident. The reporter filed a general diary with the police seeking protection.

The administration is yet to take any step to arrest the culprits or arrange medical test for the victim, whose family had to flee home for fear of reprisal.

Locals said a clique of local ruling party men forced the victim's family to describe the fact of gang rape as an incident of torture at a hurriedly called press conference.

The local ruling party men, who earlier fined 16 BCL men Tk 10,000 each for their involvement in the crime, claimed that the girl had not been raped. They, however, did not send any rejoinder to the media.

Gofran Biswas Palash, Kalapara correspondent of local daily Sathi, who received death threat from unidentified criminals on Thursday night, was summoned to the local police station the

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## Schoolgirl raped in Pabna

Culprit nabbed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A schoolgirl was raped at Ramanandapur village in Pabna Sadar upazila on Friday.

The victim, a student of class three of a local primary school, was rushed to Pabna General Hospital in a critical condition after the incident took place around 2:00pm, sources said.

Victim's family filed a complaint with Pabna police station stating Sabbir Ahmed Pash, 22, son of local businessman Forkal Ali and also a neighbour, took her inside his residence and raped her while she was playing near her residence.

Pash is a student of Jamia Ashrafia Madrasa of Laskarpur village under Sadar upazila, the complaint said.

Md Motiur Rahman, officer-in-charge (OC) of Pabna

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## Myanmar border tense again

Yangon restarts barbed wire fencing, mobilises troops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Tension mounted on Naikhangchhari border of the district as Myanmar restarted erecting barbed wire fence along its border with Bangladesh from Friday and deployed additional army personnel on their side yesterday.

Local sources said erecting fence from pillar No 41 to 45 on their side by Myanmar border security force Nasaka under the supervision of its army and yesterday's additional deployment of the military forces have escalated the tension in the border area.

Some residents of Ghumdhum area said they saw Myanmar army personnel were patrolling alongside Nasaka members on their side. They apprehend that Myanmar has increased the army deployment to resume exploration of oil and gas in the disputed block No 11 in the Bay of Bengal.

Contacted, Deputy Commissioner Mizanur Rahman said

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## 3rd session of JS resumes today

BNP unlikely to join

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The third session of parliament resumes at 4:00pm today, after an 18-day recess for Eid-ul-Fitr and Durga Puja, in which participation of the main opposition BNP is uncertain.

The current session is likely to decide on the fates of former speaker and lawmaker Jamiruddin Sircar, former deputy speaker Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui and former chief whip and BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain in light of the probe report on their alleged corruption.

A number of bills are also

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## Lashkar linked to grenade attacks

Detained Indian militants disclose

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Investigators will show detained top Lashkar-e-Taiba leaders Mufti Obaidullah and Monsur Ali arrested in a number of deadly grenade and bomb attack cases soon as the two disclosed significant information about such attacks.

"We already initiated a move to show them arrested in the CPB rally [at Paltan on January 20, 2001] blast cases and having them in remand in those cases today. We suspect they might have been involved in the attack," said a top official in the Criminal Investigation Department.

The official said they are also thinking about having them in remand in a case filed in connection with the grenade attack on Awami League rally on August 21, 2004 that killed 23 AL leaders and workers.

According to information gleaned from the two top Indian militants during interrogation, they had secret meetings at Harkatul Jihad Al Islami leader Mufti Hannan's residence before his arrest in 2005 and had maintained close contacts with Huji leaders who are accused in those cases.

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