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Grand alliance left at AL's discretion

Partners ignored in setting policies, strategy to work jointly for democracy as pledged before polls

SHAKHAWAT LITON and HASAN JAHID TUSHER

The ruling Awami League has seldom consulted with its grand alliance partners for taking any decision although the parties pledged before the parliamentary polls to work in unison for good governance and a strong democracy.

Almost 10 months into power, the AL has not convened a single meeting with alliance partners Jatiya Party, Workers Party and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu) to fix the strategy to work as one political force to implement their common electoral pledges.

As a result, the alliance cannot oversee whether the cabinet is functioning and taking measures in conformity with its pledges made before the December 29 polls.

The parties' common goal to politically fight religious fundamentalism and militancy has also failed to gain momentum because of the AL's "lone ranger attitude", alliance leaders told The Daily Star.

"The grand alliance exists, but it is not

active," JSD-Inu Executive President Mayeen Uddin Khan Badal told The Daily Star.

Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon said he recently talked to the AL chief and general secretary about resuming activities of the alliance but no move has been made to this end although both of them assured him of holding a meeting of the alliance.

A number of leaders of the AL and its alliance partners said they feel the urgency to build a national consensus on some major issues like completing the trial of Bangabandhu murder case, holding trial of the war criminals and fighting religious fundamentalists and militants.

Some senior AL leaders, who are not in the council of ministers, also expressed dissatisfaction at the fact that the party formed the government but has very little influence over it, which is affecting the party's political activities.

The AL's policymaking and decision-making bodies have not sat regularly to discuss

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The picture shows wooden structures on the Kalatoli sea beach in Cox's Bazar. Though The Daily Star ran a caption news item on September 15 on grabbing of a strip of the beach, authorities failed to stop the occupiers.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

228 picked up as anti-crime drive begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On the first day of three-day special drives against the criminals in the city, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) picked up 228 people, including two listed criminals, in 24 hours from Thursday morning.

DMP sources said they had arrested two listed criminals, one mugger, two fugitive convicts, two killers, three illegal arms holders, 43 drug peddlers, 94 accused in regular case, and 81 persons

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ATTACK ON TAPOSH It was a remote controlled bomb

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The bomb used in the attack on Awami League lawmaker Fazle Nur Taposh in the capital's Motijheel area on October 21 was remote controlled, said officials of the Detective Branch (DB) of police.

Meanwhile, Khandaker Mehnaz Rashid, detained daughter of fugitive condemned convict in Bangabandhu assassination case Lt Col (ret) Khandaker Abdur Rashid, was put on a fresh remand for four days yesterday. She had been put on a five-day remand earlier.

Assistant Commissioner (AC) Akbar Hossain of DB, who is also the investigation officer (IO) of the case in connection with the attack on Taposh, told The Daily Star yesterday, "We've

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Cabinet decides on future BDR trial Monday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A draft of the gazette notification, which states any future mutiny and other offences in Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) will be tried under the Army Act, will be placed in the Monday's cabinet for approval.

"We have decided to put forward the matter to the next cabinet for approval considering its importance," Shafique Ahmed, minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, told The Daily Star after a meeting at his Indra

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CID INTERROGATION IN AUG 21 CASE BEGINS

Babar has to meet Joj Mia, ex-IOs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department would bring Lutfozzaman Babar, three investigators and Joj Mia face to face in a day or two for interrogation in connection with the August 21 blasts.

CID took Babar, former BNP state minister for home, on a five-day remand yesterday. Earlier on Thursday, the apex court lifted the High Court's stay on Babar's remand.



Lutfozzaman Babar

Babar was brought to the CID headquarters at the city's Malibagh from Kashimpur jail in Gazipur at around 11:30am.

Interrogators quizzed him throughout the day with focus on sources of the grenades used in the August 21 attack that left 23 people killed and scores injured at an Awami League rally on Bangabandhu Avenue in 2004.

Talking to The Daily Star, CID's Senior Assistant Superintendent of Police Abdul Kahar

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BNP protests Star report

The Daily Star has received a three-page protest letter signed by Khandaker Delwar Hossain, secretary general of BNP, regarding our report headlined "Aug 21 Attack on Hasina, AL Rally: It was Hawa Baban Plot" published on October 27. The Daily Star will publish the rejoinder along with its reply tomorrow.

Team of EU parliament due tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

An eight-member delegation of the European Parliamentary Committee on Development led by Nirj Deva MEP (UK) will come on a three-day visit to Bangladesh tomorrow.

The delegation constitutes four Members of the European Parliament (MEP) Ms Franziska Keller (Germany), Niccolo Rinaldi (Italy), Jean Lambert (UK) and John Attard-Montalto (Malta) and three other officials.

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Internet addresses set for change

BBC Online

The internet regulator has approved plans to allow non-Latin-script web addresses, in a move that is set to transform the online world.

The board of Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (Icann) voted at its annual meeting in

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BNP advisers feel ignored in party reorganisation

Professional group playing active role

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

The 18-member Advisory Council for BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is yet to be engaged in the party's reorganisation process creating a sense of isolation among a large section of party leaders.

BNP is set to hold a national council to elect its leaders at different levels on December 8 but party Chief Khaleda Zia has not formally discussed the matter with the Advisory Council members.

Of the advisers, two are working as district conveners while the rest remain almost unattached with party activities.

Exploiting the situation, a group of 10-12 pro-BNP professionals including journalists and businessmen are out to play the role of a think tank for the party creating resentment among party activists, BNP insiders said.

"Any well-wisher can organise a group but he or she should not use the name of the party or the chairperson for personal gains," said a senior BNP leader wishing anonymity.

According to the BNP constitution, the chairperson can have 15 advisers equivalent to the status of party vice president to give her suggestions on special issues.

However, the chairperson has the right to increase the number of advisers to be nominated by the party chief and treated as member of national executive committee.

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CLIMATE CHANGE VICTIMS

EU agrees on €100b fund for poor states

But leaders undecided on Europe's contribution

AFP, Brussels

EU leaders have agreed to enter world climate talks arguing that poorer nations will need 100 billion euros a year by 2020 to tackle global warming, but failed to set levels for Europe's contribution, a draft text said Friday.

"The EU is ready to take its fair share of the global effort by setting an ambitious mitigation target, allowing for offsets and providing its fair

share of public support," said the text, drafted for a summit in Brussels, without saying how big that share might be.

"The European Council endorses the (EU) commission estimate that the total net incremental costs of mitigation and adaptation in developing countries could amount to around 100 billion euros annually by 2020," the draft said.

EU leaders broke off talks Thursday night,

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This recently taken photo shows makeshift huts on an embankment in Dumuria village at Shyamnagar in Satkhira, where thousands of Aila survivors are facing hardship due to poor rehabilitation programme of the government. Inset, Sixty-two-year-old Ayesha Khatun, too, lost her house and belongings in the cyclone and took refuge on the Pakhimara embankment.

PHOTO: WASIM BIN HABIB

Fight for survival still on

Proper rehabilitation eludes thousands of homeless Aila victims in Satkhira

WASIM BIN HABIB, back from Satkhira

Sixty-two-year-old Ayesha Khatun often makes serious attempts to fish in the vast stretches of the Kholpetua river so that she and her paralysed husband do not starve to death.

Sometimes she manages to make a very small catch, which makes her day. But most of the days she returns

empty-handed as her age doesn't allow her to stand against the strong current for long.

Forced by never-ending hunger she still continues her struggle to catch fish as she sees no other alternatives to survive after the cyclone Aila shattered every piece of her dreams.

A resident of Pakhimara village in Padmapukur union, Ayesha could

seek help from her neighbours, but they live in no better a condition on the embankment as refugees.

When all her attempts on a particular day turn futile, and this is almost the daily scene, she opts for begging. But the people in the locality are not much of a big alms-giver.

"Can you tell me what should I do, how can I get the money necessary to be at least alive? There is no

relief from anyone and I need to feed my ailing husband," she told The Daily Star in Garkumarpur Bazar with eyes full of tears.

Like the other Aila survivors, Ayesha too has lost her house and every belonging in the cyclone and took refuge on the three-kilometre Pakhimara embankment.

She once received Tk 3,000 from

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