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REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XIX No. 286

DHAKA MONDAY NOVEMBER 2, 2009

KARTIK 18, 1416 BS

ZILQUAD 13, 1430 HJRI

24 PAGES PLUS STAR FORUM PRICE: Tk 10.00

Hasina sees conspiracy to destabilise country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said in parliament that conspiracy and propaganda are going on in many ways to destabilise the country.

"People will have to remain alert. We will overcome all obstacles if we get people's cooperation and we will build a country free from poverty," Hasina said while speaking on the amended second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

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Babar wants to be taken to hospital

Petitions to HC for jail-gate quizzing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar yesterday filed two separate writ petitions with the High Court for directions upon the government to admit him to hospital and interrogate him at the jail gate in the August 21 grenade attack case.

Babar's wife Tahmina Zaman filed the petitions with the HC on behalf of her husband.

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Tongi reels from fright

Another death raises toll to 3; up to 3,000 people sued for violence

MUKLESUR RAHMAN

Another man died from wounds in hospital yesterday raising the death toll to three in Saturday's labour unrest at Nippon Garment Industries Ltd in Tongi.

Police filed a case against 2,000 to 3,000 unidentified people along with eight others, detained on Saturday with ties to the clashes between police and workers. Two persons died on the spot and 100 others were injured in the incident.

Tajul Islam, 50, a resident of Ershad Nagar in Tongi, who was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with head injuries on Saturday, died early in the morning.

The bodies of the two others -- Bablu Sheikh, 32, a rickshaw-van puller, and Shafique, a construction worker from Ershad Nagar -- were taken to Gazipur Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy on Saturday night.

A correspondent from Gazipur reported that both bodies bore bullet marks.

Later, the bodies of Bablu and Shafique were sent to their village homes in Jamalpur and Bhola, said police.

Tapan Saha, officer-in-charge of Tongi Police Station, told The Daily Star that he had filed the case on charges of assault on law enforcers, vandalism and torching vehicles.

Law enforcers were deployed in and around the garment factory that remained closed following the violent clashes.

Several hundred workers of the factory demanded a fair probe into the incident and trial of the factory owners at a protest rally near Majida High School in Ershad Nagar.

They also demanded punishment to the law enforcers involved in what they said was indiscriminate firing on garment workers and locals.

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With her weeping child in the lap and holding a daily newspaper that printed a photo of her injured husband Tajul, Momtaj Begum cries before media men yesterday at Ershadnagar in Tongi. Tajul has been missing since Saturday's violent clash between police and garment workers in the area.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Steps to lay off not followed

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Garment factory owners are violating labour and industrial laws by closing down factories on the excuse of a slump in work orders from international buyers, labour leaders and legal experts said yesterday.

The decision to close a factory temporarily requires a consensus of workers, but owners are not following this standard procedure and shutting down factories even without giving workers any time.

Supreme Court lawyer barrister Tanjib-ul Alam told The Daily Star that a company must follow three steps before it declares a lay off: giving its workers at least one month's notice, publishing that notice in newspapers, and sending it to the inspector of labour.

He said Nippon Garments Industries Ltd followed none of the steps.

Moshrefa Mishu, president of Garment Sramik Oikya Forum, a platform of garment workers, told The Daily Star that Nippon Garments was shut down without following the industry laws.

She said according to the rules, factory authorities must talk with workers and their representatives before closing a factory, but the authorities of Nippon Garments closed the factory all of a sudden.

She said owners often announce closure of their factories under the excuse of shortfall in orders from international buyers, which is not right.

A compliance officer of an internationally renowned garment factory, who deals with the legal affairs of the company, said, "A notice of closure of factory should be given in time so that workers are not deprived."

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

RMG sector to have TU

Cop firing irks PM; probe body to report within 2 weeks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A meeting of ministers, garment factory owners, garment workers and union leaders yesterday decided to introduce trade unionism in the garment industry.

The meeting held at the labour and manpower ministry formed a 12-member committee to recommend ways to introduce trade unionism in the sector.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, meanwhile, expressed bitter disappointment at police firing on garment workers' demonstration that left three people dead. The PM said she could not understand why the law enforcers had to open fire on the demonstrators.

Even if it had been necessary to open fire, they could have fired blank shots or shot in the leg, Hasina was quoted.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Announcement

From tomorrow we launch a new special page titled 'Science & Life'. It will contain the latest from the ever-expanding world of science and also interesting facts from its glorious past history. It will come out every Tuesday. --- Editor

WAR CRIMES LEGISLATION

West backs trial, int'l norms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Western diplomats remain concerned that unless the government further amends the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act 1973, the trials of war criminals may not meet the minimum international standards of due process and fairness.

The concern was expressed to The Daily Star by diplomats supportive of the Bangladesh

government's decision to hold trials of people alleged to have committed war crimes during the 1971 War of Independence.

These views appear to contradict Law Minister Shafique Ahmed's repeated statements that the current law is sufficient to meet international expectations.

In a series of interviews with The Daily Star, the western diplomats were unanimously

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BNP talks political situation with foreign diplomats

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP, the main opposition in parliament, yesterday briefed foreign diplomats and donor agency representatives about the country's latest political situation, and its preparation for holding its national council in December this year.

The party is planning to invite foreign guests including prominent global personalities as observers to its national council that will be held in the capital, according to party leaders.

At a tea party arranged by BNP last evening, the foreign diplomats wanted to know about the reasons for delaying to hold the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT UP TO Tk 2CR

Bill seeks to drop experience clause

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A bill was placed in parliament yesterday seeking amendment to the Public Procurement Act to drop the provision of past experience as a condition for getting public work contracts worth up to Tk 2 crore.

Planning Minister Air Vice Marshall (ret'd) AK Khandker placed the bill with a proposal for

a few amendments to the act terming it essential for smooth enforcement of the law.

The bill was sent to the parliamentary standing committee on planning ministry for scrutiny and placing report in parliament in two days.

If the bill is passed, procuring entities will not take into consideration past performance, production capacity or financial capability for

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HELLO MAYOR ...
IS THIS OUR FOOTPATH?

Construction materials, piled up on a footpath of Gulshan Avenue, are forcing pedestrians to use the road.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Khaled Mosharraf the mastermind

Claims counsel for Huda, Mohiuddin; demands trials under army act, civil court

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

A defence counsel in Bangabandhu murder case yesterday claimed Khaled Mosharraf, then chief of general staff of the army, masterminded the August 15 killings in 1975.

Abdullah-al Mamun, lawyer for convicts Bazlul Huda and AKM Mohiuddin, came up with the claim while making submissions during the 20th day's hearing on five convicts' appeals

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JMB chief's wife held

The chief flees 20 minutes before Rab operation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Rab team yesterday afternoon held second wife of the chief of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and his sister-in-law busting their rented house at Mayakanon of the city's Sabujbagh through the JMB kingpin managed to flee.

"Maulana Saidur Rahman went out of the house just 20 minutes before the drive," Major MM Shafiqur Rahman of Rab-3 who led the operation

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16,100 Bangladeshi workers in Maldives to be regularised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Maldives government is going to permit 16,100 undocumented Bangladeshi workers to stay and work there, Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said on his return from the country yesterday.

"Maldives authorities assured us that they would not deport any Bangladeshi workers. Rather, the country will try to employ them from January next," the minister told journalists at his office.

Earlier, the Maldives deported several hundred irregular workers after the global recession hit its economy. Thinking another 16,100 workers could face the same fate, the Bangladesh mission initiated a dialogue with Maldives authorities that was

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