

## US help

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president at the Oval office of the White House, according to a message received from Washington.

Speaking on the occasion, the US president said: "Bangladesh-US relations exemplify the vision of a partnership in protecting our people from terrorist threat and from those who might wish to destabilize democracy."

Obama welcomed, once again, the free, fair, and transparent elections in December 2008 in Bangladesh and assured to help Bangladesh "to extend its democratic roots."

The envoy reiterated Bangladesh's request for granting duty-free and quota-free access of Bangladeshi garment products to the US market.

Ambassador Qader, while conveying greetings from the president and the prime minister of Bangladesh to Obama, underlined the commitment to individual liberty and the cherished values of democracy, rule of law, respect for diversity and pluralism, shared by Bangladesh and the US.

He reiterated the desire of Bangladesh government to further strengthen the multi-faceted bilateral relations between the two countries that have witnessed a remarkable transformation since the restoration of democracy in Bangladesh.

Qader also highlighted Bangladesh's vulnerability to challenges of climate change.

Recalling his recent meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in New York during the UN's General Assembly,

## BNP's absence

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alert so that none can take away their democratic rights," she said.

The premier said she along with the speaker made efforts to bring the main opposition back to the House but they refrained from joining the third session.

Hasina alleged that the previous BNP-led alliance government patronised militancy and criminal activities.

"Militants have acquired a large arms cache. We are sincerely working to improve law and order," she said.

"Even my party activists will not be spared if they are found guilty of committing any crime," she warned.

Referring to the recent labour unrest in Gazipur, she feared that another attempt might be made to create such unrest again.

The prime minister said anti-corruption drives will continue and the government will not interfere in the activities of the Anti-Corruption Commission.

She claimed that the country's overall situation has improved.

Speaker Abdul Hamid hoped that lawmakers will perform their duties properly to make parliament effective.

The speaker in his concluding speech said the third session, which began on September 7, had 22 sittings and passed 11 bills.

Liberal Democratic Party Chief Oli Ahmed and independent lawmaker Fazlul Azim spoke on behalf of the opposition bench on the last day of the third session.

They said law and order in the country has not improved and urged the government to take effective measures in this regard.

"Problems will not be resolved through speeches. Realistic measures have to be taken to improve the situation," Oli Ahmed said.

## Labour law

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Jamaat-e-Islami lawmakers opposed the bill and asked to send it to the relevant committee for further scrutiny. But their proposals were not placed in the parliament, as they were absent.

Employees of the ports will now be allowed to collectively form one trade body at each of the ports, says the bill.

According to the bill, trade union must be formed in line with the provisions of the act within six months from the date of enforcement of the law and with the formation of the unions all the existing trade bodies will be dissolved.

The bill makes a provision on qualification of workers saying that one can be registered as a member of trade union on completion of one year's service.

The Act empowered the government to control the activities of trade unions and it may cancel registration of a trade body on grounds of violation of the law.

Workers' provident fund, gratuity and welfare fund will be put under the jurisdiction of the port authorities concerned and the authorities will maintain and conduct those.

## 20 BDR men seek to retract confessions

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Obama described her as a pragmatic, wise leader.

Obama also recalled Hasina's invitation and assured that he was looking forward to visit Bangladesh.

The US president warmly welcomed the ambassador to the Washington DC and said Bangladesh, by virtue of her firm belief in democracy, remains a natural partner of the US.

He highlighted the broad range of strategic interests and fundamental democratic values shared by the two countries.

Referring to his Cairo speech, Obama reiterated his desire to see a Muslim majority Bangladesh where economy is "robust," educational opportunities are in "abundance" and international investments are in "plenty."

Earlier, Qader was greeted with a guard of honour from a smart contingent of US Marines on arrival at the entrance of White House.

## Textbook

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secondary level, 1.51 crore for Dakkhil, 1.74 crore for Ibtidai and 16.4 lakh for Technical Board books.

Till yesterday around 58 percent of the textbooks were printed.

Around 22.38 percent books for the primary schools, 44.39 percent for the secondary schools, 84 percent for the Ibtidai have already been sent to deputy commissioners of districts and upazila nirbahi officers for distribution, sources said.

Besides, around 12.6 percent of Technical Board books have been printed and 4.4 percent of Dakkhil books have been sent to the districts.

It will take a few days to complete the printing of Dakkhil and technical board books, as the number of books to be printed is small, sources said.

However, distributions might be delayed, as the binders will be on leave during Eid-ul-Azha, officials said.

The education ministry at a meeting yesterday decided to request the binders to resume their work as early as possible after the vacation.

"Printing 19 crore books is a big task and NCTB earlier faced difficulties in distributing 7 crore free textbooks in time in the beginning of this year," the minister said.

The National Monitoring Committee led by education ministry asked the printers at the meeting on November 1 to expedite their work.

## DCC councillor

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showing Arif arrest in the case. The court fixed the date of hearing for the bail on Sunday.

The CID also sought a 10-day remand for the ward-53 councillor.

CID sources said they had prayed before the court for the arrest and remand of Arif following information provided by detained former BNP state minister Lutfuzzaman Babar, Harkatul Jihad al Islami (Huji) founder Maulana Sheikh Abdus Salam and Huji chief Mufti Abdul Hannan. The three are now being interrogated in connection with the grenade attack case.

Earlier on October 15, CID arrested Arif from his residence in connection with the bomb attack on CPB rally and later was implicated in the Narayanganj blast.

## 4 injured

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The injured were identified as Sheikh Nazrul Islam, 43, Bagerhat district AL leader, his friend Nasir Uddin, 44, Kachua upazila unit AL joint secretary, Abdur Rashid, 58, a former accountant of PWD, and shoe factory employee Kartik Das, 40.

All the injured were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

DMCH sources said tiny pieces of broken glasses were found in the flesh of the wounded people.

Injured AL leader Nazrul Islam said, "We heard a big bang and then I found blood spurted from my body."

Other injured Rashid and Kartik said they were hit by shrapnel as they were waiting for buses at around 2:30pm.

Contacted, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Nur Mohammad told The Daily Star, "The motive behind the explosion and the persons behind the attack could not be known immediately."

Major MM Shafiqur Rahaman of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-3) said, "We are yet to make sure if the bomb was exploded on any of the injured people."

"So far we have not been able to collect any evidence from the spot and none has been arrested in this connection, he said.

He will hold councils of upazila, union and ward units after completing the members' recruitment across the country so that the next central council of the party is held in three years as stipulated in the Awami League constitution," the AL general secretary said.

Meantime, the sub-committee on foreign affairs led by Shafiq Rehman threw a

## 'Crossfire' only worry

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Sources in the home ministry say there is pressure from Ansar not to rehabilitate any outlaws in the force this time as many of those rehabilitated in 1999 deserted the force later.

But the situation is different this time as deaths in so-called shootouts or crossfire have been occurring for the last five years. Some of the well-known top tier leaders including Mofakkar Chowdhury and Dr Mizanur Rahman Tutul were killed in similar fashion during the BNJ-Jamaat rule.

A number of dreaded outlaw leaders were also killed in 'crossfire' or 'shootouts' with law enforcers. Only infamous outlaws like Kashai Siraj and Laltu who killed scores of people, many by burning alive in brick kilns, are still in jail since they surrendered in 1999.

The current leadership in Kushtia fears they might face the same fate of 62 'comrades', who were killed in 'shootouts' since the ongoing crackdown on outlaws began on August 22.

The Prime Minister's Office gave the order for massive crackdown on the outlaws due to a serious slide in law and order in the region marked by frequent killings.

Sources say against this backdrop, leaders of different factions of outlawed outfits and underground parties now consider surrender and return to "normal" life.

Home Minister Sahara Khatun on October 12 informed the House the government would soon announce its surrender offer so that the outlaws may return to "normal" life.

Members of the law-enforcement agencies are also against the surrender move right now and are eager to continue the operation to arrest the outlaws.

"We want to see an end to the outlaw problem and want security for our lives," said a local businessman wishing

to remain anonymous.

The report states that most of the firearms and ammunition are smuggled in from India, though some underground parties smuggle weapons from Myanmar through Bandarban and Cox's Bazar borders.

## RMG culprits

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The government would take measures to elevate the BGMEA Institute of Fashion and Technology (BIFT) to a university to meet the growing demand of skilled manpower in the sector.

Mentioning her government's development scheme as the development of rural economy Hasina asked the government to employ more skilled people to reduce poverty.

Admitting the negative impact of global recession she said the government has already formed a taskforce committee to address the problems in the sector.

The PM said the owners should not to make profit only but to pay more attention to the workers.

Hasina also suggested exploring the potentialities of new apparel markets in Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and South Africa. "We should not restrict our markets only to the USA and the EU," she said.

The manufacturers should not rely only on making clothes, she said, adding that they should develop innovative designs to be more competitive in the global apparel market.

The scenario of the country's apparel sector will change a lot if Bangladesh can obtain duty-free and quota-free (DFQF) access to the US

market, she said.

She asked the manufacturers to work to attain DFQF access in the US market, as the government will play a supportive role in this venture.

At his speech as the special guest, Finance Minister AMA Muhith said he would take measures to improve the sick industries. He suggested the entrepreneurs to go for loans from the government's housing fund to build dormitories for the workers.

He said at present the government gives Tk 1 crore as loan to set up effluent treatment plants (ETP) in the factories. "We have a plan to increase the loan amount in near future," he added.

LGRD (Local Government and Rural Development) and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashraful Islam said female workers of rural areas now play an important role in the family, as they have become breadwinners with the rapidly growing RMG sector in the country.

In his speech BGMEA President Abdus Salam Mursedy demanded that the government increase incentives on total export performance, reschedule facilities for bank loan, improve of law and order and give 5 percent quota on bank interest rates.

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan, among others, spoke at the inaugural ceremony.

## BNP men asked

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create obstacles to holding council in various districts.

A few BNP leaders claimed that they have already received information that ruling party leaders are making plans to foil BNP councils.

A number of BNP leaders met the party chairperson to discuss the issue at her Gulshan office on Wednesday night.

The chairperson discussed the matter with us after we received information that ruling party leaders with the help of local administration are planning to foil BNP council in some districts," Goyeshwar Chandra Roy, BNP joint secretary general, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We will hold councils of upazila, union and ward units after completing the members' recruitment across the country so that the next central council of the party is held in three years as stipulated in the Awami League constitution," the AL general secretary said.

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## Khaleda out

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officials and employees except the civil surgeon were on duty but the hospital authorities, police or public works department could not say anything about it.

District unit BNP brought out a procession in the town around 10:30 pm on the day protesting the incident. They also held a meeting on Shahid Minar premises yesterday afternoon.

The BNP leaders said after the 50-bed hospital was turned into a 250-bed one at a cost of Tk 20 crore, Khaleda Zia, the then prime minister, unveiled the foundation plaque of the hospital building on March 17, 2005.

However, district Awami League general secretary Abu Naeem Patwari Dulal claimed that the 50-bed hospital was turned into a 200-bed one at a cost of Tk 25 crore.

Police said the relation among the top brasses of the outlawed parties and the women was confirmed through checking the mobile phone call list of Anhki and Rani.

Sources in the police said a good number of women involved in outlawed party activities are either members of mainstream political parties or maintain relations with influential political leaders.

Police also said they raided a house owned by Tushar around 3:00pm following information gleaned from Anhki and arrested Champa where she took shelter to avoid arrest.

She will reach at Paro International Airport, Bhutan at 12:30 pm (local time).

Bhutan is the first country that recognised Bangladesh as an independent state immediately after the country's Liberation War.

The PM's entourage will include Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, Industries Minister Dilip Barua, Commerce Minister Faruk Khan, PM's adviser H T Imam and Principal Secretary M Abdul Karim, and former ambassador M Ziauddin.

Buddhist Monk Dharma Mitra Mahathero and Ven Sudhhananda Mahathero, eminent personalities Kazi Akram Uddin Ahmed, Dr Md Habibe Millat, Prakrta Ranjan Barua, Md Rezaul Karim Razu, journalists Farazi Azmal Hossain and Abu Bashir Nurul Hossain and Abu Bashir Nurul Hossain are also included in the entourage.

During her stay, Hasina will have bilateral meetings with King of Bhutan Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and her Bhutanese counterpart Jigme Thinley.

Bhutanese Foreign Minister Lyonpo Ugyen Tshering, Speaker of the Bhutan National Assembly Jigme Tshultrim and Chairman of Bhutan National Council Namgyel Penjore and Minister for Economic Affairs of Bhutan Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk will also call on the Bangladeshi premier during her visit.

Hasina will attend a luncheon hosted by the King of Bhutan and a dinner hosted by Bangladesh ambassador to Bhutan.

The PM will hand over some earthquake relief materials to her Bhutanese counterpart tomorrow.

She is expected to return home on Monday.

## Taposh attack

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Maj (retd) Bazlul Huda, on a four-day remand and Nazmul Hasan Sohel and Mabuhul Hasan Emran, sons of Lt Col (retd) Mohiuddin Ahmed, another convict of August 15 killings case, and Freedom Party leader Abdur Rahim on one-day fresh remand.

Besides, he sent Kamrul Haque Swapan, younger brother of Maj (retd) Dalim, another convict in Bangabandhu murder case, and Freedom Party leader Shafiqul Sofi to jail.

Earlier, Swapan had been grilled for 12 days while Sofi for six days in two spells of remands in the bomb attack case, police said.