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JS body suggests 10 lakh-strong 'reserve force'

Trained civilians to help armed forces protect sovereignty

SHAKHAWAT LITON
The parliamentary standing committee on defence ministry recommended forming a National Reserve Force (NRF) with trained civilians to ensure people's effective participation alongside armed forces in protecting Bangladesh's sovereignty from external aggression.

Reviewing the draft of the country's first defence policy, it recommended inclusion of the provision for building NRF and sent it to the Armed Forces Division on April 4. The AFD is working to prepare the policy, sources in the committee said.

Considering the country's economic situation and size of demography, the parliamentary body also chalked out the proposal in details for having the NRF in a complete shape by 2021 with 10 lakh members under supervision of the armed forces.

Under a national service scheme, they will be provided with military and other necessary trainings so that they can be engaged in development activities during their training period, members of the committee said citing the proposal.

The committee also suggested that the government reserve a

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Arson attack

Shops, factories gutted in Kamrangirchar; 30 hurt; dispute over land, extortion cited as reasons

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In broad daylight, a group of criminals attacked and set fire to at least 25 business establishments and looted cash and valuables injuring 30 people in the process at Kamrangirchar in the capital yesterday.

Locals said ruling party cadres equipped with firearms, sharp weapons, hockey sticks and bamboos made the attack at Ashrafabad around 10:30am. They set fire to at least six plastic factories, four sawmills and 10 shops and looted several other business establishments.

As the employees of the establishments tried to protect valuables, the criminals attacked them injuring at least 30 people.

A source said a dispute over land might have been the reason for the attack while another source said illegal toll collection was the reason.

News agency UNB reported that several affected shop owners alleged that the attack was made to grab land.

Local lawmaker and State Minister for Law Quamrul Islam

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PHOTO ON PAGE 16

A foreign embassy gave 'hint'

Says civil aviation minister about threat to airport

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister GM Quader yesterday revealed that a western country's embassy in Dhaka informed the government about the possible terror attack or plane hijacking at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on Thursday.

In the wake of such

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PINKY'S DEATH BY BURNING

Mother alleges police bent her statement

MUKHLESUR RAHMAN, from Kishoreganj

The case in connection with 16-year-old girl Mariam Akhter Pinky's death by burning in Kishoreganj took a new turn yesterday as her mother alleged that Tarail police distorted her case statement.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday Pinky's mother Latifa Akhter said police recorded the incident as a case of suicide instead of a murder, taking advantage of her traumatised state right after her daughter's horrific death, although she specifically wanted to file a murder case without mentioning any suspect.

Latifa said, "My statement was distorted, I will go to the police station again and request them to rerecord the real fact."

Kishoreganj Superintendent of Police (SP) Mir Rezaul Alam told The Daily Star, if the complainant wants to change her statement or add something new to it, she has the scope, and police will allow her.

Meanwhile, Tarail police could not arrest the alleged stalker and killer Tabarak, four days into the incident yesterday. The case was transferred to the Detective Branch of police on Thursday, said Sub-inspector of Tarail Police

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Rooftop billboards block the sky at Gulshan-1. Ninety percent of illegal billboards in the capital are on rooftops, which are not being torn down due to a High Court stay order obstructing the same court's latest directive for dismantling them. Illegal billboards, inset, at Dhaka University Doyel Chatter that are allegedly filling the pockets of ruling party backed Chhatra League leaders.

PHOTO: STAR



Rooftop hoardings still posing threat

Stay order stands in way of demolition

TAWFIQUE ALI

The recent High Court directive to demolish illegal hoardings is almost ineffectual as a previous HC stay order prevents authorities from dismantling thousands of unsafe and unauthorised rooftop hoardings in Dhaka.

A HC bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik and Justice Md Delwar Hossain on March 22 directed Dhaka City

Corporation to dismantle all unauthorised hoardings except those that have obtained the HC stay order against their demolition.

The HC bench of Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Farid Ahmed in an order on December 10, 2007 stopped Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha, the DCC and the police from dismantling rooftop hoardings until a writ petition filed by Outdoor Advertising

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BCL's business with billboards

RAKIB AHAMMED

A group of Bangladesh Chhatra League leaders are allegedly involved in leasing out space for billboards on the Dhaka University campus.

Campus sources said a number of Chhatra League central leaders, DU unit leaders and presidents and general secretaries of four dormitories are involved in the business.

BCL sources said these leaders make up to Tk 30,000 per month from each of the 12 billboards on the campus.

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Villagers block highway demanding electricity

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Hundreds of villagers of Chandura village under Bijoynagar upazila of the district barricaded the Dhaka-Sylhet highway yesterday demanding continuous supply of electricity.

Local and police sources said that more than 500 villagers led by Chandura Union Parishad Chairman Dali Rani Das and sadar upazila Awami League president Kazi Haris Mia thronged to the upazila parishad office in the morning and chanted slogans demanding uninterrupted power supply in their village.

Later, they put a barricade on the highway from 9:00am to 10:00am. Hundreds of vehicles remained stranded on both sides of the road during the blockade.

"The electricity goes off so frequently that we cannot

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MURDER OVER TENDER Main suspect among 5 held in Panchagarh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

The law enforcers yesterday arrested five people in connection with Thursday's Chhatra League activist Faruk Hossain murder case in Panchagarh.

Faruk's brother Fazlul Haque filed a case yesterday with Panchagarh Sadar Police Station accusing 16 people including district Awami League Publicity Secretary Toyabur Rahman, district Krishak League General Secretary Amirul Islam and Office Secretary Julfikar Ali in connection with the killing.

Faruk Hossain, 17, organising secretary of ward-1 BCL unit was killed in a factional

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Foil plot to hinder war crimes trial

Ashraf asks party men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Syed Ashraf Islam yesterday asked his party men to scupper the conspiracy of war criminals who are out to hinder the war crimes trial.

"The war criminals have hundreds of crores of taka. They will try to hold back the trials with the power of money," Ashraf, also the LGRD and cooperatives minister, said while addressing a rally in

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Ruling party wins Lankan polls

UPFA secures 117 seats, opposition UNP 46

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's ruling party cruised to victory yesterday in parliamentary elections but fell short of the two-thirds majority that would have allowed President Mahinda Rajapakse to amend the constitution.

Rajapakse's United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) secured 117 seats in the 225-member assembly with another 45 seats left to be declared, showed results released by the Elections Commissioner.

The main opposition United National Party (UNP) won 46 seats. "This is a huge endorsement of the work of the president,"

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Minister asks AL men to shun violence over tender

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Planning Minister AK Khandaker yesterday asked the ruling party men to refrain from tender manipulation.

The minister was speaking at the extended meeting of Sujanager upazila unit Awami League here.

The government is determined to hold the trial of war criminals, he also said.

"The party workers should

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