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MEETING WITH HASINA MP draws flak from grassroots

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

In a meeting with Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, Cox's Bazar-4 lawmaker Abdur Rahman Badi and Ramu upazila Chairman Sohel Sarwar Kajol yesterday received heavy flak from the grassroots for their "unlawful activities".

In response, Hasina said lawmakers with questionable character would not be given the party ticket in the next election.

She said tough actions would be taken against those found to have involvement in unlawful activities. She told this to the grassroots at Gono Bhavan during a views exchange meeting.

Accusing Badi of establishing tyranny, building his personal cadre force and harbouring BNP-Jamaat men, who infiltrate into the Awami League, the Cox's Bazar grassroots asked Hasina to save the party from people like Badi.

They told Hasina that Badi and his men are involved in many unlawful activities including tender manipulations and Bangladesh-Myanmar cross-border illegal trade, meeting sources said.

They told her that these activities are tarnishing the images of the government and the party and she must take action to save both.

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MORE STORY ON PAGE 5



Artists perform with a boat on stage during the opening ceremony of the 16th Asian Games in Guangzhou, China, yesterday. The Asian Games officially opened with a glitzy gala ceremony, culminating years of planning for a massive event that is set to reinforce host China's regional sporting dominance. More on sports page.

DISPUTE OVER BIDDING Criminals shoot Pabna contractor

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A gang of criminals yesterday shot a contractor, also an activist of BNP, at Kalikapur Bazar in Pabna in a dispute over a tender.

One of the gang members was held with a firearm.

Police said the criminals fired shots at Rabiul Islam, 45, son of Humayun Biswas of Tebunia village, at about 5:00pm at Kalikapur Bazar while he was returning home.

Locals chased the attackers and caught Shanto, a member of the gang, with a revolver.

Rabiul, an activist of Malingchha union BNP unit, was whisked off to Pabna General Hospital in a critical condition. He was later shifted to the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

On information, police rushed to the spot and arrested Shanto, a local cadre.

Md Samiul Alam, officer-in-charge of Ishwardi Police Station, said Rabiul was attacked following a dispute with Shanto over submission of bids for a tender for Tebunia Horticulture Centre.

Stalker fined Tk 5,000

UNB, Brahmanbaria

A man was punished by a mobile court for stalking a woman in Nabinagar upazila headquarters yesterday.

The accused was identified as Abdus Sattar, 35, son of late Tayeb Ali of Komolpur College Para of the upazila.

A mobile court, led by magistrate Shamsul Islam Mehedy, in a trial at the local police station premises fined him Tk 5,000 and handed down other punishment in presence of locals in the afternoon.

Local sources said Sattar



Turkish PM due today

BSS, Dhaka

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his spouse Emine Erdogan arrive here today on a two-day visit.

This will be the second

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Two killed in 'shootout'

Rab says they were carjackers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two people were killed in a shootout between Rapid Action Battalion personnel and alleged carjackers in Ashulia early yesterday.

The deceased are Hasan Matbar, 25, and Monir Hossain, 28. Rab claimed they were involved in carjacking.

Acting on a tip off that some carjackers were waylaying near Morning Glory School on Bishmail-Jirabo Road, a special team of plainclothes Rab went on a drive to capture them, says a Rab press release.

The press release claimed that the gang halted the unmarked Rab vehicle and tried to overpower the Rab personnel inside to

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Eastern bypass uncertain

Governments fail to mobilise funds in 13 years

MORSHED ALI KHAN

The fate of the Dhaka Integrated Flood Control Embankment-Eastern Bypass Road Multipurpose Project or the Eastern Bypass Project seems uncertain due to unavailability of funds nearly 13 years after it was approved.

Water Development Board (WDB) officials said over the years, they had to revise the massive project several times to reduce cost. "In inter-ministerial meetings, the higher authorities expressed doubt about availability of about Tk 2,667 crore for the project, and asked us to revise it again and again," said a top WDB official.

On April 5 this year, an inter-ministerial meeting decided to shelve the project on grounds that funds could not be mobilised, he told The Daily Star.

The ambitious project, okayed by the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecne) in 1998, envisaged building a 30-kilometre-long dyke-cum-bypass along the Turag and Balu rivers on the eastern fringe of the capital. The bypass was planned to encompass 124 square km fast growing urban and semi-urban areas between Tongi railway bridge and Kanchpur bridge. Without the eastern bypass, a vast area remains unprotected from recurring floods.

"In a bid to revive the project, the water resources ministry recently asked us to give a summary of the project so that it can be taken up with the higher authorities," said a senior engineer of the WDB. "We are now preparing the summary."

Official sources said failing to find a financier for the project, the government had earlier asked the WDB to break up its components and distribute those also among Dhaka City Corporation, Rajuk, Department of Environment, and Roads and Highways Department for implementation.

Other sources however said the Eastern Bypass Project has been dropped

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State minister for law gets threat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Law Qamrul Islam yesterday received a threat over the cellphone to release the detained Jamaat-e-Islami leaders before Eid-ul-Azha.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) Shibly Noman of Ramna Police Station said an anonymous caller threatened the state minister that if the Jamaat leaders are not released before the upcoming Eid, his [Qamrul Islam] house would be blown up.

The state minister informed the OC of the incident around 11:30 last night. A general diary in this connection was instantly recorded with the police station.

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Police source hacked to death in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Unidentified criminals hacked man to death at Chak Chaitiyani village of Pabna Sadar upazila yesterday.

The deceased Mirazul Islam, 40, of Chak Chaitiyani of Pabna Sadar, was working as a source for both police and Rapid Action Battalion, claimed local police.

Md Mohosin-Uz-Zaman, officer in charge (OC) of Pabna Police Station, said a group of unidentified criminals hacked Mirazul severely leaving him critically injured at early hours.

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A pond heron hunter shows his catch at Lalbagh area in Rangpur town while selling the birds. Catching of such birds, selling and consuming them are illegal under the Wildlife Preservation Act.

PHOTO: STAR

Hérons in danger

Poachers in northern districts catching a large number of such birds for customers in Dhaka

RAFIQUE SARKER, Rangpur

Poachers are indiscriminately trapping and shooting a large number of pond herons and cattle egrets in the vast marshlands of the northern region every day to satisfy the appetite of consumers in the capital.

It's very usual for car riders in Dhaka to find vendors offering herons, lesser whistling or egret in the evening at different intersections. The vendors mainly sell these wild birds for meat consumption at Sheraton Hotel intersection, Elephant Road and Moghbazar targeting the car riders for a good price.

In almost every evening the vendors shout to sell the birds at Sheraton intersection.

"I was driving the car when a vendor came to offer me herons at Tk 1,200 for two pairs. The police know about it but never take actions though selling, trapping, killing and consumption of these birds are illegal," said Dr SMA Rashid, a wildlife expert.

Besides these city points, wild birds are sold at some other markets including Tongi bird market on every Sunday and Thataribazar in old city.

Asked, a bird seller at Tongi said, "We can always get the birds whenever we need."

Market sources say most of the supply comes from Rangpur, Tangail and neighbouring districts of Gazipur and Manikganj.

In the northern region, poaching of pond herons and cattle egrets has reached such a point that the species now face extinction. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) however classified these species as "least concern", meaning their number was satisfactory.

But as these species are disappearing fast from the marshlands and ponds, ecosystem of the northern region would come under a threat, environmentalists warn.

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Beggars' census on the cards

Tk 12cr scheme taken for their rehabilitation

ALPHA ARZU

In an attempt to rehabilitate beggars and offer them a better living, the government is going to conduct a comprehensive census in the capital.

The Tk 12.47 crore scheme aims to provide accommodation to disabled paupers while the healthy ones would get opportunity for self-employment in their districts of origin.

The beggars will be issued identity cards inscribed with details of their physical and social conditions, sources at National Foundation for Development of the Disabled Persons (NFDDP) said.

The single-day census will be conducted soon to ascertain the number of beggars and build a duplication-free database for the government's website, said Gazi Mohammad Nurul Kabir, managing director of NFDDP of

social welfare ministry.

At least 70 non-government organisations (NGOs) have applied to the ministry to deal with the census and prepare the database with photographs. About 10 to 12 NGOs would be involved to conduct the census, said an official.

Md Iqbal Hossain, chief of the project dubbed "Rehabilitation and alternative employment opportunities for the beggars" told The Daily Star that they are scrutinising the applications of the NGOs.

Half of the programme budget will be spent for the survey. "We are yet unsure about how many beggars we can rehabilitate with the remainder of the fund," added the project chief.

Officials said on the basis of age and ability, the government and NGOs will jointly rehabilitate them by providing training on carpentry,

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College student kills herself

Her roommate also makes suicide attempt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A student of Siddheswari Girls' College died while her roommate fell sick after they took poison to commit suicide at their mess in the city's West Malibagh early yesterday.

The reason behind the suicide attempts, however, could not be known immediately.

Deceased Tarana Shirin Jebin, 19, from Noakhali, was a higher secondary student, and her roommate Tania Rahman Tanisha, 18, from Comilla, is a student of Mirza Abbas Women's Degree College in the capital.

Saleha Begum, a tenant of an apartment of a six-storey building in the area, sublet her one room to Jebin and Tanisha five months back.

She said Jebin's uncle AKM Shamsuddin around 2:00am started shouting from the main gate of the building asking her to open the gate. He also told her that one of the girls informed him over the phone that they took poison, and he had to rush them to

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OnlinePoll

Do you think 1-year jail term and fine are sufficient to stop stalking in the country?

- Yes (27.5%)
- No (70.1%)
- No Comments (2.4%)

Total votes: 371

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think Bangladesh will be benefited through the exchange of enclaves and territories in adverse possession between Bangladesh and India?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net

Prayer Timing

November 13		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-00	5-35
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-22	5-25
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation