People won't respond to call for anti-govt movement

PM tells Sangsad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some political parties and people are repeatedly issuing threats and ultimatums to wage a movement and overthrow the government but they do not have the people's support, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina told parliament yesterday.

This means the people support and have confidence in her administration, she said.

Replying to lawmakers' queries, Hasina also leader of the House asserted that people know the ruling Awami League would be able to take the country forward.

that a long-term plan with a proper direction could take the country forward, and the people's support and confidence were a must for that.

She said her government believes

"Our government is going forward with the full support and confidence of the people," she said.

Replying to another query, Hasina said her government has taken up a SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

Abed honoured

FROM PAGE 16

Sir Abed was chosen from over 160 nominations received from more than 45 countries for the impact, scale and groundbreaking nature of Brac's operation under his leadership, says the press release issued yesterday.

Chairperson of Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission Dr Sima Samar, US Ambassador-at-large for Global Women's Issues Cathy Russell, lawyer and founder of Cherie Blair Foundation for Women Cherie Blair and Vice-president of Ashoka Global Iman Bibars are among the thirteen members of Trust Women Advisory Board that selected Sir Abed for the award.

Last year's winner was Alaa Murabit, founder and president of The Voice of Libyan Women.

As the winner of the Hero Award, Sir Abed received a cash prize of \$5,000.

The award is given every year to an innovator whose bold thinking and contribution has helped women to know and advance their rights. Every year the Trust Women Conference is organised by the global news and information provider Thomson Reuters's charitable arm, Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Nominations are made by the public and candidates are judged based on their leadership and the innovation, impact and scalability of their work.

Brac is a global leader in creating opportunities to end poverty. Having more than 100,000 employees, it is the world's largest non-government organisation, touching the lives of an estimated 135 million people in 12 countries through a wide array of anti-poverty tools such as microfinance, education, healthcare and legal rights training.

To learn more about Brac please visit www.brac.net.

16 foreigners

FROM PAGE 16

Meseja, 45, of Cameroon and Benco, 36, of Ghana, were arrested around 1:30pm, said Md Hasan Chowdhury, additional deputy commissioner (ADC-DB) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police.

They were members of a con gang, he claimed.

Meseja came to Bangladesh five months ago and Benco 15 days ago, said the ADC.

The Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police detained 31 alleged illegal foreigners on November 14. Six of them were later released after they produced documents.

As many as one lakh foreigners, mostly from Africa and Southeast Asian countries, have been living in the country illegally for years, said officials of the

Special Branch of Police. Around 8,000 people from Africa are living in the country illegally and

many of them are involved in crime. In many cases, they destroy their passports and other documents after entering Bangladesh so that law enforcers cannot verify their nationalities and deport them, intelligence officials said.



Three Biman officials and two others, arrested for their involvement in a gold smuggling syndicate, are produced before the press at the Dhaka Metropolitan Police media centre yesterday. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Biman men in gold smuggling racket

FROM PAGE 1

manager (flight services), and Tozammel Hossain, manager (scheduling).

The other arrestees are Mahmudul Haque Palash, an influential Biman contractor close to many Biman highups, and Md Harunur Rashid, owner of "Farhan Money", a money exchange firm in Uttara.

All five arrestees were produced before a Dhaka court. The investigators sought their 10-day remand but the court granted four days for each. Wishing anonymity, an investigator

said Palash is godson of a powerful member of Biman board of directors, and had influence in the airline as well as at the airport. DB Senior Assistant Commissioner

Minhazul Islam said Palash worked as a coordinator of the gold smuggling ring.

The arrests came a couple of days after detained Biman crew Mazharul Afsar alias Russel gave a magistrate the names of people allegedly involved in gold smuggling. He was arrested on 24.

PROPOSED

RAILWAY ROUTES

LINKING BANGLADESH

Lahore - Wagah (Pakistan) - Atari -

Delhi - Kolkata - Gede/Petrapol

(India) - Darshana/Benapol -

Dhaka - Shahbazpur (Bangladesh)

- Maishashan - Imphal (India)

Lahore - Wagah (Pakistan) - Atari -

Delhi - Kolkata - Gede/Petrapol

(India) - Darshana/Benapol -

Dhaka - Akhaura/Gangasagar

(Bangladesh) - Agartala (India)

Imphal - Agartala (India) -

Akhaura/Gangasagar - Chittagong

Port (Bangladesh)

Birgunj (Nepal) - Raxaul -

Singhabad (India) - Rohanpur -

Mongla Port/Chittagong Port

(Bangladesh)

Biratnagar (Nepal) - Jogbani -

Radhikapur (India) - Birol - Khulna

- Mongla Port (Bangladesh)

Bardibas - Inarwa (Nepal) -

Jaynagar - Radhikapur (India) -

Birol - Khulna - Mongla Port (Ban-

gladesh)

Mongla Port/Chittagong Port -

Chilahati (Bangladesh) - Haldibari -

Hasimara (India) - Bhutan

November 12 with five gold bars weighing 2.6 kilograms.

In a confessional statement to the magistrate on November 17, Russel gave names of 61 staff of Biman and Caab allegedly involved in gold and currency smuggling. Dr Moinul Khan, director general of

customs intelligence, said they seized 677 kg gold and arrested 88 people at the country's three international airports in the last 17 months. A section of the arrestees are staff of Biman and Caab. Besides, APBn personnel seized 112

kg gold and arrested at least 25 people in the last two years at Shahjalal airport, said officials.

Last month, a four-member probe body headed by Moinul found the involvement of 14 people, including 10 low-level officials and staff of Biman, in the smuggling of 124 kg gold worth Tk 54 crore.

The National Board of Revenue initiated the probe after the largest ever gold haul at Shahjalal airport on July

countries have not yet been fixed

either. Separate negotiations have to

the Saarc ministerial meeting first and

then will be signed in the Summit,

Musharraf said, adding that if any of

the countries do not agree to the terms

to get consent of all the member states

and the next is to properly follow up

and implement the framework agree-

Increased connectivity will facilitate

investment and trade activities, and

ensure overall economic development in

The Saarc Regional Railways

Agreement will enable transportation

of passengers and goods through rail-

ways across the region on certain terms

will have to take measures for main-

taining trains and servicing locomo-

tives at interchange points, providing

immigration and visa facilities, and

ensuring security for passenger and

The draft also states any signatory

If the agreement is signed, Bangladesh

Railway may turn into a commercially

profitable organisation by carrying cargo

Once signed, the Saarc Motor Vehicle

Agreement will allow movement of

cargo, passenger and personal vehicles

from any Saarc country inside the

allowed to carry passengers and cargo,

Only authorised operators will be

According to the draft, the countries

the region, the cabinet secretary hoped.

ments.

RAILWAYS DEAL

and conditions.

cargo transportation.

on the long routes, it says.

ROAD CONNECTIVITY

signatory countries.

country may withdraw itself.

The immediate challenge, he said, is

of a memorandum, it won't be signed.

The draft MoUs will be approved in

be held for this later, he said.

Road, rail, waterways to link entire South Asia

In its 523-page report to the NBR on cies." They would be arrested if they are October 26, the probe body recommended punitive measures against the 14 people.

Asked whether the authorities took

action against the 10 Biman staff, its acting managing director AM Mosaddique Ahmed yesterday said they didn't as they were yet to receive any compliant against them from the government. Referring to the latest arrest of the

three Biman officials, he said action would be taken against them in line with the existing rules. Seeking anonymity, another Biman

official said if the allegations against the Biman staff are proved in court, they will lose jobs.

DB PRESS BRIEFING

LAHORE

Talking to reporters, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Joint Commissioner Monirul Islam said names of many top-ranking Biman officials came up during primary interrogation of the five arrestees.

"We are checking the information with the reports of intelligence agen-

and permits for this will have to be

taken from proper authorities of the

charges will be levied at the entry

fees and all the fees and charges will

The country, through which the

The authorised officers of the coun-

try can inspect and search the

transiting vehicles, according to the

allow the movement of prohibited or

restricted goods through its territory.

draft of the agreement.

or ratified then.

points.

country.

countries concerned, the draft states.

found involved in gold smuggling, said the official. In reply to a query about close ties between Palash and a member of

Biman Board, Monirul said, "Legal steps would be taken against all the persons whose names come up in the investigation. It doesn't matter how powerful they are or what positions they hold." Minhazul Islam, senior assistant commissioner of DB, said Shafiul Azam Talukder Mintu, a Bangladeshi

living in the United Arab Emirates, bought gold in Dubai and smuggled it to Bangladesh through this syndi-Some Biman officials decided on the routes and the methods of smuggling that gold into the country, said Minhazul, also investigating

officer of the 2.6 kg gold smuggling

Rashid, the owner of "Farhan Money", made major investments in the illegal trade, and had gold smuggled to India via Bangladesh, he added.

PROPOSED RAIL ROUTE BETWEEN PAKISTAN-INDIA-BANGLADESH-INDIA

MATARBARI POWER PROJECT Cox's Bazar DC, 27 others sued for 'graft'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Ruhul Amin, deputy commissioner of Cox's Bazar, and 27 others have been sued for allegedly embezzling Tk 23 crore of Matarbari coal-fired power plant project. AKM Kaisarul Islam Chowdhury, a

resident of Matarbari, filed the case with Cox's Bazar Senior Special Judge's Court yesterday. Judge Md Sadiqul Islam took cognisance of the case and transferred it

to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) for probe, said Mostaq Ahmed, lawyer for the complainant. The DC has been made the prime accused. The other accused include

Cox's Bazar Additional Deputy Commissioner (revenue) Zafar Alam, land acquisition official Arefin Akhter Noor, Maheshkhali fishery department official Moshiur Rahman and Project Director Mohammad Illias.

The accused forged documents to misappropriate the money, the first information report said.

1975-81 Coups

MP unhappy as govt does not have info

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government had no information regarding how many coups had taken place in the army and how many servicemen were killed or hanged between 1975 and 1981, a minister told in the House yesterday.

In response, ruling Awami League lawmaker AKM Jahangir Hossain, who made the question, expressed his dissatisfaction over the respective ministry's failure to provide the information.

"The minister's answer dissatisfied me much. People have the right to know how many army officers and soldiers were killed in coups taking place in between 1975 and 1981," Jahangir said while making a supplementary question to the minister.

"We have heard that several thousand people were killed during and after the coups at the hands of Ziaur Rahman. Many air force officers were hanged in the name of containing revolt in the force. We have the right to get clear information in this regard," a lamented Jahangir added.

He categorically wanted to know how much time the government needed to come up with detailed SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

FROM PAGE 1

book launches taking place at multi-

The first day's sessions will see a number of celebrated Bangladeshi authors engaged in different sessions with many internationally acclaimed authors, poets and historians. The Bangladeshi authors include Syed Shamsul Haque, Selina Hossain, Fakrul Alam, Wasi Ahmed and Tahmima Anam while foreign authors include William Dalrymple, Patrick French, Rana Dasgupta, Aamer Hussein, Michael Puett and Fatema

The gates to the festival will open for all at 10:30am and the inaugural session will be held at 11:00am. No entry fee or registration is required for participating in any sessions or panel discussions, according to the festival

This year Hay will touch upon mathematics and science literature besides fiction and sports and political and journalistic writings, keeping in line with its theme of telling stories in different media and pushing the

jects such as ancient wisdom and scientific thinking, the seeking of truth and knowledge, and the intersection

between personal and political space. Exciting events for children will be arranged from 9:45am to 5:30 pm

on Friday, including a painting session for those aged 6-14 years. Music, dance performance and recitation ranging from the tradi-

feature prominently to entertain dis-

cussants and participants as well as

upholding the cultural values of Bangladesh. The schedule of the events for the entire festival can be found at http://hayfestivaldhaka.org or at http://www.thedailystar.net/the-dailystar-hay-festival-dhaka-2014-

50922. The Daily Star is the title sponsor

57pc people have access to safe toilet FROM PAGE 16 proved Sanitation: Challenges in clean, it said.

Alok Kumar Majumder, country coordinator of Bangladesh Wash Alliance, said around 25 percent girls do not go to school due to a lack of separate and safe toilets.

Girls who attend schools without safe, private, separate toilets are more likely to drop out during puberty, depriving themselves of the education that could help break the cycle of poverty, according to the UN.

Sludge Management" organised by Bangladesh Wash Alliance in the capital's Department of Public Health and Engineering Auditorium. Meanwhile, WaterAid yesterday said

over 1,400 children under the age of five die every day in the world due to diarrhoeal disease caused by not having access to safe drinking water or a basic toilet.

They do not have soap or sufficient

Alok said this at a seminar on "Im- water to keep their hands and bodies

WaterAid, together with international

health and development experts, sent an open letter to Ban Ki-moon, secretary general of the United Nations, calling on him to end the waste of life

in this manner. Prof Mujibur Rahman, a teacher of the department of Civil Engineering at Buet, in the Wash Alliance seminar said the achievement in sanitation in the country might be lost if the govern-

ment failed to introduce effective

faecal sludge management.

ENERGY COOPERATION

In his keynote speech at the seminar, he said people in the rural areas use pit-latrines, containing sludge for a long time, while the urban people use septic tanks for treatment and disposal. When the sludge management system

goes out of control, it might have serious effects on the environment and people's health, said Prof Mujib.

In Dhaka, only 20 percent people were under the sewerage network.

could be attributed to the lack of access to sanitation, clean water and hygiene.

According to the United Nations, about 35 percent -- 2.5 billion of the

planet's 7 billion people -- live without basic sanitation facilities. Besides, one in three women and girls

agement is done properly, he said. The WHO estimates that 88 percent of diarrhoeal mortality among the young

around the world do not have access to

basic toilets.

Saarc Framework Agreement for

DHAKA - AGARTALA

The relevant firms of the countries The member countries will decide will set the conditions for trade in on traffic volume through mutual energy through bargaining. negotiations, and all sorts of fees and As per the draft agreement, the

Energy Cooperation (Electricity).

enjoy tax waiver. The transmission planning agencies vehicles will move, will fix the rate of of the member countries will help to set up the Cross Border Grid have to be paid in the currency of that Interconnection in their respective

cross-border electricity trading will

(BOM) the Cross Border System. The member countries will jointly set up the Electricity Grid Protection System and the System Operation and Settlement Mechanism for cross-

areas, and to Build, Own and Maintain

If any dispute arises among the Saarc countries, they will settle it

through talks. If talks fail, the issue will be sent to the Saarc arbitration council.

The member countries may not border electricity trade.

The agreement will be reviewed every three years and can be amended

Any member country can withdraw The Saarc countries may trade crossitself from the agreement on six border electricity voluntarily under the months' notice.

Only two percent of the sludge man-

The festival

ple venues on the academy grounds.

Hassan.

directors.

boundaries of mind. Panel discussions will cover sub-

tional to the experimental will also

supplement/programme-schedule-

of the festival.