

BNP rejects

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hold a "discussion programme" yesterday afternoon, but the party must abide by 27 conditions. According to the letter, the permission was granted only for hosting the "discussion programme" and not for using the venue. The BNP would have to seek permission separately from the IEB for using the venue and it must confine the programme activities within the confines of the IEB auditorium. BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Rizvi Ahmed said, "We don't want to hold the programme indoors at Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh."

The party did not receive the DMP's letter till 10:00pm last night, he told this correspondent. BNP leaders said they came to know about the police permission in the afternoon through TV channels. The DMP asked the party to end the rally by 4:30pm. However, DMP Deputy Commissioner (media) Masudur Rahman claimed they sent the letter to the BNP on Monday. The DMP on previous occasions set conditions on holding rallies by the BNP-led opposition alliance. It had imposed 11 conditions and gave 19 directives to the alliance for staging a rally on March 12, 2012. The combine had to organise rallies on October 25, 2013 and May 28, 2014 under 13 and 20 conditions. Asked about the BNP's November 13 programme, DMP official Masud said if the party files a fresh application with them, they would make a decision after considering security issues. Some BNP leaders said they were surprised at the police's decision about not allowing the party to use the VIP Road at Nayapaltan. The DMP on November 3 announced that no political party would be allowed to hold rallies at Suhrawardy Udyan on November 7 or 8 for security reasons. Later, the BNP applied for using the VIP Road as yesterday's meeting venue. In a letter to the BNP, the Dhaka South City Corporation on Monday said it would be illegal if the party held a rally at Nayapaltan without the corporation's permission.

Meanwhile, a heavy deployment of police was seen in front of the BNP headquarters yesterday afternoon. Law enforcers restricted BNP men's access to the office. They only allowed senior party leaders and journalists in the office.

IS abducts

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When the Iraqi forces recaptured Hamam al-Alil, they said they found a mass grave at an agricultural college, with the offensive's Joint Operations Command saying "100 bodies of citizens with their heads cut off" had been uncovered. The UN could not immediately confirm the information, and Shamdasani said her office was still looking into reports last month that IS had killed 50 former Iraqi police officers at the same location. Iraqi forces have been tightening the noose around Mosul since launching the offensive on October 17, with elite troops last week breaching city limits. Meanwhile, the US-led coalition has carried out a series of air strikes against Islamic State targets in Syria to aid a new offensive by armed groups toward the city of Raqqa, the militant group's de facto capital in Syria, the Pentagon said on Monday. Pentagon spokesman Peter Cook said the targets of the air strikes included Islamic State fighting positions and vehicles, including some that could be used to deliver explosives.

The US-led coalition that launched operations against IS two years ago is providing crucial backing to both offensives, with air strikes and special forces advisers on the ground. SDF forces have been pushing south from areas near the Turkish border towards Raqa, and alliance spokeswoman Jihan Sheikh Ahmed said yesterday they had moved to within 36 kilometres (22 miles) of the city. "Two more villages have been taken since yesterday," she told AFP, adding that SDF forces had so far advanced 14 kilometres (nine miles) closer to Raqa from Ain Issa, the main staging point for the operation. "The fighting continues; morale is good and our fighters are determined that this offensive will succeed," she said. Like in the battle for Mosul, the goal of the Raqa offensive is to surround and isolate the jihadists inside the city, before eventually mounting a street-to-street assault. In both cases officials are warning of long and bloody battles ahead, with jihadist forces expected to put up a fierce fight and use trapped civilians as human shields.

UP chairman, his aide shot dead

STAR REPORT

A union parishad chairman and his aide were killed in an attack by unidentified criminals in Daudkandi of Comilla yesterday.

The dead are Monir Hossain, 40, chairman of Ziarkandi union parishad in Titas upazila, and Mohiuddin, 30. Monir was also a local Jubo League leader.

The incident left Monir's three more associates -- Suman Mia, Ismail Hossain and Mohammad Oli -- injured.

The attack was carried out when Monir along with 10 others was heading for a Comilla court in a rented microbus to attend a hearing, reports our Comilla correspondent, quoting locals. Around 7:40am, the vehicle got stuck in a traffic jam on Gauripur-Homna road near a CNG-run autorickshaw stand in Gauripur area of Daudkandi. Suddenly, a group of armed criminals arrived at the scene and

intercepted the microbus with another. Later, the attackers dragged the UP chairman out of his microbus and shot him several times. As Monir's men tried to save him, they were shot too and hacked with sharp weapons, Masum Majumdar, another associate of Monir, told The Daily Star. The attackers fled immediately. Critically injured Monir and Mohiuddin along with the other injured were rushed to a local hospital. As their condition deteriorated, they were referred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Doctors declared Monir and Mohiuddin dead after they were taken to the DMCH around 10:30am, said Abu Salam Mia, officer-in-charge of Daudkandi Police Station. Monir's elder brother Abu Rob said Monir had political rivalries with different local factions. Saiful Alam, convener of Titas Jubo League, said Monir was a joint convener of the Jubo League unit.

PM to honour 2,000

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During her visit, Hasina would inaugurate the distribution possibly at Delhi Cantonment, the source added. Dignitaries and high-profile government officials of Bangladesh would later continue conferring the honour in different cantonments across India during their visits to the neighbouring country. The Indian army would arrange the programmes in phases. Diplomatic sources said Hasina expressed her interest to her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi during his visit to Bangladesh on June 6-7 last year to honour the families of the slain army men to further cement Bangladesh-India ties and fulfil an unfinished agenda. Modi accepted Hasina's plan instantly and agreed to help her honour the family members of the slain Indian soldiers. The PMO sources said the decision to confer the honour was taken by Hasina herself. As many as 1,984 Indian army personnel were killed in the war, according to official sources. However,

Indian NDTV in a report on December 16, 2011 said around 3,900 Indian soldiers were killed and 9,851 wounded in the war. The Government of Bangladesh had earlier honoured a large number of foreign friends who made outstanding contributions to the Liberation War. The recipients, majority of them Indians, included heads of state and governments, politicians, top military officials, writers, journalists and singers. After assuming power, the Awami League-led coalition decided to honour Bangladesh's foreign friends for their contributions to the country's independence. Late prime minister of India Indira Gandhi was given the prestigious Independence Award. Her daughter-in-law Sonia Gandhi received the award on July 25, 2012, on behalf of Indira Gandhi. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the Award of Liberation War Honour in Bangladesh on behalf of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee during his visit on June 7 last year.

Life's changed

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he bought, the money he saved and most other valuables, including mobile phones and wrist watches. "They destroyed not my home and looted not my valuables, but my dream, my happy family," said a dejected Haridas, looking away. Almost all the 107 families of Kasipara have been affected, 30 of them seriously. And they all have a similar story to tell: their homes attacked, valuables looted and they are living in fear. They hardly go out, especially before dawn and after dusk. Panic grips these Hindu villages as soon as dark falls. No one can be seen outside, no sound of radio or TV can be heard. Before the attack over a Facebook post from the account of a Hindu fisherman demeaning Islam, Haridas's life ran almost like a clock. "Every day, I would get up early, worship, go to kitchen market for the day's shopping and then go to work," he said. In the afternoon, he would take tea with his family and closest neighbours. At night, he would watch TV (which has been vandalised) with his wife and children before going to bed. Since the attack, however, he sits and sits, too distraught to work. He also fears further attacks. Priti, who studies in the same class as her sister Protasha, used to collect flowers in the early morning for worshipping with their mother. But with their little family "temple" gone, there has been no worshipping and no flower picking in the last nine days. The second-year exams of the two sisters ended on November 3 and their third-year classes started on Monday. Neither of them is thinking of attending classes for security reasons. "My sister and I have been sleeping at a neighbor's home," Protasha told The Daily Star yesterday. "We stay in our home during the day and go to the neighbour's in the evening to spend the night there." "We wake up around 5:00am but wait till the sun rises to come out," said Priti. Their brothers, Khonkon Sutradhar, a BA first-year student, and Pranoy Sutradhar, a fifth grader, have stopped going to classes and playing cricket. Being the male members of the family, the two are now worried about the family's security. "Safety of the family is my main concern. Playing and hanging out with friends are optional now," said Khokon. As an added responsibility, he now guards their neighbourhood with other Hindu youths. With everything gone, Haridas had

been struggling to buy food for the family until Monday, when the local administration and the police department gave him Tk 9,000 and three bundles of tin sheets. Yesterday, he bought some small fish and vegetables with some of the money. When The Daily Star correspondents went to his house around 11:00am, his wife was cooking lunch in whatever remains of their kitchen. That, they said, would be their first proper lunch since the attack. By now, Haridas has realised he needs to start everything all over again. The first step is to repair his house with the money and the corrugated iron sheets he got from the government. "I have to start working again. I have no other way to survive," said Haridas. But Bimol Chowdhury, 50, of Ghoshpara is still not sure if he can start his poultry farm again. The attackers looted Tk 2 lakh in cash, four tolas of gold and 600 chickens he was farming in his home. "I started farming two years ago and it brought some fortune for me and my six-member family," said Bimol. Three rooms of his house have been badly damaged, but his main concern is not repairing it, but the safety of his four daughters. "I got Tk 9,000 and three bundles of corrugated iron sheets but that can't give back my life. I see gloom days ahead," he said.

Ex-BCL man

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the evidence against Badrul that he attacked Khadiza with intent to murder her after being refused to be in a relationship with him. The victim herself and 35 others were mentioned in the charge sheet as witnesses, he added. The charge sheet was submitted to the additional judicial magistrate's court of Sylhet. The court fixed November 15 for a hearing on the charge sheet. Badrul is now in jail in the case lodged with Shahparan Police Station. A student of Sylhet Government Women's College, Khadiza was brutally hacked by Badrul with a machete on the campus of Murari Chand (MC) College on October 3. The 23-year-old had gone there to sit for an examination. A part of the attack was filmed presumably by a bystander with a mobile phone. The video clip went viral. Rejaus Sattar, a neurosurgeon of Square Hospital in the capital where the victim is being treated, said Khadiza was in a coma when she was brought to the hospital and was gradually recovering from her injuries.

India withdraws 500, 1,000 notes from circulation

AFP, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi ordered the withdrawal of 500 and 1,000 rupee notes from circulation yesterday in a shock announcement designed to tackle widespread corruption. Modi said that while people could exchange their old notes for new bills at banks or post offices, or deposit them in their accounts, they would no longer be legal tender from midnight. "To break the grip of corruption and black money, we have decided that the 500 and 1,000 rupee currency notes presently in use will no longer be legal tender from midnight ie 8 November, 2016," Modi said in a televised address to the nation. "This means that these notes will not be acceptable for transaction from midnight onwards." The prime minister said that the move was also designed to counter Pakistan-based extremist groups who carry out attacks on India, saying "enemies from across the border" were financing their activities by mass producing counterfeit Indian notes. The government's finance secretary said in a separate statement that there had been a disproportionate rise in the number of 500 and 1,000 rupee notes in circulation in the last five years. The 500 and 1,000 notes, which are worth around \$7.50 and \$15 respectively, are the largest bills in use in India. Modi said that although the existing notes would be "worthless", members of the public would be able to exchange them for new bills at banks until December 30. He said new 500 and 2,000 rupee denomination notes will be issued later by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), while other officials said the new bills would be rolled out from Thursday. Hospitals and transport operators would continue to accept old 500 and 1,000 rupee notes for payment for the next 72 hours.

Ministers point

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security to the religious minority people. Shafiqul also offered an apology to the victims for the failure. Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said although the locals "could not identify" any of the attackers, it won't be a big task for the intelligence agencies to identify them. "It might take some time [to arrest the perpetrators] because whatever we do, we do it rightly and with proper evidence. We don't want to stage a drama like that of Joj Mia [centering the August 21, 2004 grenade attack]," he added. "And we will arrest the rest of the perpetrators. No one will be spared." The minister said the intelligence agencies would be in a better position to tell why the recent attacks on Hindu temples were carried out in different parts of the country as they were working on it. Asaduzzaman said police so far rounded up 74 people based on video footage of the incident. Although the banner of the rally claimed it was an "all party" event, only local AL leaders were present alongside representatives from different religions. Fisheries and Livestock Minister Sayedul Hoque, also the local lawmaker, once again came down heavily on the media, accusing them of making a mountain out of a molehill over the Nasirnagar attack. "The media always want negative reports. They wanted to make it an international issue to defame Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as she has become a world leader," said Sayedul. Making an oblique reference to the BNP-Jamaat alliance, Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Hoque said those who want to create obstacles to the government's development initiatives had carried out the attack. He also said Jamaat men who had created anarchy in 2013 centering sighting of Sayeede's (Jamaat leader Delwar Hossain Sayeede) face on the moon were behind the atrocities in Nasirnagar. Local AL leaders also blamed BNP-Jamaat men of nearby villages for the attack. Over 100 houses and business establishments and at least 17 temples of Hindus were looted and vandalised during the hate attack on October 30 by religious zealots over a Facebook post from the account of Hindu fisherman Rasraj Das, now behind bars. The post shared a doctored photo showing an idol set on the Kaaba. Fisheries and Livestock Minister Sayedul Hoque said, "Rasraj Das didn't upload that image demeaning religion in Facebook. According to an intelligence report, it was posted from Dhaka. The image is now in a forensic lab."

America votes

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Mary Wheeler, 94, held her nose when asked which candidate she was supporting as she stood in line to vote at the Coliseum ballroom in St Petersburg, Florida, an important presidential battleground state. "I always vote Republican, so I guess I'll do that," Wheeler said. "He can make a fool of himself but I think he may be able to straighten things out a little bit," she said of Trump. In Cleveland, Timothy Sommerfelt, 30, said he voted for Clinton at the Joseph M Gallagher School polling site. "I don't think Donald Trump would do a good job," Sommerfelt said, adding that his vote "is a vote against Donald, obviously." **FIRST WOMAN PRESIDENT?** Clinton, who is aiming to become the first woman US president, cast her ballot at an elementary school near her home in Chappaqua, New York early yesterday morning. "It is the most humbling feeling. I know how much responsibility goes with this. So many people are counting on the outcome of this election, what it means for our country. And I'll do the very best I can if I'm fortunate enough to win today," Clinton said. Clinton has claimed her first victory in the US presidential election -- on the tiny island of Guam in the west Pacific Ocean, writes independent.co.uk. Votes in the US territory, which has a population of around 160,000, do not count towards the final result, but have historically been a reliable indicator of which way the vote will swing. Clinton took 71.6 per cent of the territory's votes, with her Republican rival Donald Trump lagging behind on 24.2 per cent. Guam has predicted the result of the presidential election correctly in its straw poll for the last 32 years, according to the Los Angeles Times. The only year it did not manage to predict the president was in 1996, when a typhoon disrupted voting on election day. **'WE'LL SEE WHAT HAPPENS'** Trump, a former reality TV star, received a mixture of cheers and jeers as he arrived to vote at a school in Manhattan. He said voting so far looked good for him. "It's very good generally speaking. It's a great feeling." Asked if he would concede if the TV networks declared Clinton the winner, he answered, "Well, we'll see what happens." Trump, who has argued that the political system is rigged against him, previously has said he might not accept the election results if he loses. More than 40 million voters cast ballots before Election Day in early voting in many states. Trump, launching his first bid for elected office after decades as a public figure, has positioned himself as an agent of change, vowing to crack down on illegal immigration and end trade deals he says are harming US workers. He was expected to draw support heavily from white voters without college degrees. Clinton was likely to draw support from college-educated voters and Hispanic and black voters. She has vowed to largely continue the policies of Obama and to overcome income inequality among Americans, with a divide between the rich and poor. Major bookmakers and online exchanges were confident she would win. Online political stock market Predictit put her chances yesterday of capturing the White House at 80 percent, down 2 percentage points from Monday. Trump advisers say the level of his support is not apparent in opinion polls and that they believe the real estate developer is in position for an upset victory along the lines of the "Brexit" vote in June to pull Britain from the European Union. **TRUMP CAMPAIGN SUES IN NEVADA** Trump sued the registrar of voters in Clark County, Nevada, over a polling place in Las Vegas that had been allowed to remain open late last week to accommodate people who were lined up to vote. Trump and Democrat Hillary Clinton are in a close contest for Nevada's six electoral votes in yesterday's election after a long and contentious campaign. Nevada is one of several states that permits early voting and Las Vegas is viewed as a base of support for Clinton. Nevada state law says voters who are in line at 8:00pm, when the polls close, must be allowed to cast their ballots. Trump's lawsuit, filed in a Nevada state court on Monday, said election officials violated state law because they allowed people to join the line after 8:00pm at a polling location at a Latino market. Trump, who said last month that he might not accept the outcome of the national election if he thinks it is unfair, asked in the lawsuit that the ballots from the Latino market be kept separate from other votes, pending any legal challenges to the state's results. "We have to keep the system honest," Trump said on Fox News. **MUST-WIN STATES** An early indicator of who might prevail could come in North Carolina and Florida, two must-win states for Trump that were the subject of frantic last-minute efforts by both candidates. Races in both those states were shifting from favouring Clinton to being too close to call, according to

opinion polls. Democrats also are seeking to break the Republican lock on control of the US Congress. A strong turnout of voters for Clinton could jeopardize Republican control of the Senate, as voters choose 34 senators of the 100-member chamber on Tuesday. Democrats needed a net gain of five seats to win control. All 435 seats in the House of Representatives were being contested. The House was expected to remain in Republican hands. Trump revelled in the drama of the negative presidential campaign and seized the spotlight time and again with provocative comments about Muslims and women, attacks against the Republican establishment and bellicose promises to build a wall along the US southern border with Mexico to stem illegal immigration. But the spotlight was not always kind to Trump. The release in October of a 2005 video in which he boasted about groping women damaged his campaign and left him on the defensive for critical weeks. Clinton, with a long reputation for secrecy, sustained damaging blows from her handling of classified information as the country's top diplomat. FBI Director James Comey shook up the race and slowed Clinton's momentum with an Oct 28 announcement the agency was reviewing newly discovered emails perhaps related to her email practices. But on Sunday, Comey ruled out criminal wrongdoing by Clinton.

India puts

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Supreme Court earlier in the day against the ban after a government panel accused it of broadcasting sensitive details of January's terror attack on the Air Force base in Pathankot. The decision of the inter-ministerial committee to impose the one-day ban on the channel, starting at midnight on November 9, provoked widespread criticism both within and outside the country. Reporters without Borders called on the authorities to stop using national security as a pretext for silencing the media. The Editors Guild's criticism was the sharpest. "The decision to take the channel off the air for a day is a direct violation of the freedom of the media and therefore, the citizens of India and amounts to harsh censorship imposed by the government reminiscent of the Emergency. This first-of-its-kind order to impose a blackout has seen the Central government entrust itself with the power to intervene in the functioning of the media and take arbitrary punitive action as and when it does not agree with the coverage." The Guild also said the order was unprecedented and that the Centre appeared to have given itself the power "to intervene in the functioning of the media and take arbitrary punitive action as and when it does not agree with the coverage." The organisation, a grouping of the editors of all major newspapers and magazines in the country, said if the government found any media coverage objectionable, it could approach the courts. **NAIDU DEFENDS BAN** The Opposition too criticised the government's assault on free speech. Stung by the remarks of Congress Vice President Rahul Gandhi, and others who accused the BJP government of creating emergency-like situation in the country by restricting freedom of expression, Minister Venkaiah Naidu said national interest was supreme. Meanwhile, NDTV's petition is scheduled to be mentioned before a bench of Justices AK Sikri and NV Ramana at 2:00pm. On its website, NDTV has refuted the allegations, pointing out that other channels and newspapers reported the same information.

Probe body

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Contacted, Kazi Sarwar Intiaz Hashmi, additional director general of DoE, said they would look into why the probe body could not inspect the ship in the three working days. "We are also under pressure for forming the probe body after giving our clearance to have the ship beached," he said. "We gave the clearance but it does not mean we cannot investigate any allegations," he said. "It's the DoE's duty to investigate and reinvestigate such allegations." Contacted, Abu Taher, president of BSBA, claimed that the ship does not have toxic residues. "All the concerned departments had inspected the ship and gave the clearance," he said. According to Platform on Shipbreaking, a Brussels-based NGO, the Maersk-owned floating oil production and storage tanker, North Sea Producer, left the UK in May and was directly towed to Bangladesh. It arrived in the country, after being renamed MT Producer, on August 14. The ship is currently being torn apart on a tidal beach, sadly known for human rights abuses and environmental pollution caused by improper shipbreaking. Ms Janata Steel Corporation imported the vessel for breaking at a shipbreaking yard in Sitakunda.