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"Any kind of dispute among the Muslim states, particularly the OIC member countries, should be settled through discussions." PM SHEIKH HASINA WAS QUOTED BY HER PRESS SECRETARY IHSANUL KARIM AS SAYING AFTER A MEETING WITH THE OUTGOING IRANIAN AMBASSADOR IN DHAKA (PAGE 3)



"Concern that press freedom and freedom of expression will be affected by the Digital Security Bill is meaningless." LAW MINISTER ANISUL HUQ AT A PROGRAMME IN DINAJPUR (PAGE 3)



"A politician must accept being criticised, being called names. I have been called all kinds of names." MALAYSIAN PM DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD ABOUT INSULTS OF POLITICIANS ON THE SOCIAL MEDIA. (PAGE 8)



Events unreal

Star visits 10 Dhaka spots mentioned in 38 cases against BNP men after Sunday's rally, finds none in the locality saw any attack on buses, police

STAR REPORT

Zafar Dular is the main witness of a case.

In the case, filed with Hazaribagh police in the capital on Sunday, police charged 48 named and many unknown people, mostly BNP men, with attacking police and obstructing them from doing their job.

The problem is Zafar, who claims to be very close to police, has no idea about the incident.

"What case are you talking about?" Zafar said when The Daily Star asked him if he was aware of the case and his being the prime witness.

During the conversation inside the Hazaribagh Police Station around 12:30pm on Wednesday, his phone rang and he swiftly answered the call.

"Sir, I am talking with a journalist. I have heard that Moniruzzaman-2 sir made me a witness of a case," Zafar told the caller, whose identity he would not divulge.

Moments later, a constable, who was standing by Zafar all the while, took him aside.

Within a minute, Zafar, 36, returned to this correspondent and said, "I am very close to police and do many things for sirs [police officers] ... I will say everything before the court, not to you."

COMMON RECOVERIES

- Bamboo sticks, each around 3 feet long
- Iron rods, each around 3 feet long
- Broken pieces of windowpanes of unidentified buses
- Brick chips, stone chips
- Exploded crude bomb containers wrapped with black scotch tape

COMMON CHARGES

- Attack on police with intent to kill
- Vandalising vehicles
- Unauthorised gathering, blocking traffic
- Obstructing police from doing their job

He claimed to be a rickshaw puller.

'SAW NOTHING, HEARD NOTHING'

The complainant of the case is sub-inspector Moniruzzaman, one of the two Moniruzzamans of Hazaribagh Police Station and is referred to as Moniruzzaman-2 in the First Information Report.

SEE PAGE 17 COL 5



Protesters block Shahbagh intersection in the capital yesterday, demanding reinstatement of 30 percent freedom fighter quota for class-I and class-II jobs in civil service. The demonstration at the key junction caused tailbacks on nearby streets.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Digital Security Bill sent to president

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The much-debated Digital Security Bill 2018 was sent to the office of President Abdul Hamid yesterday for his assent, said sources at the Parliament Secretariat and the Bangabhaban.

Amid widespread criticism against some of its provisions that have been termed a threat to freedom of speech and expression and the freedom of the press as well, Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury on Tuesday signed the bill passed by parliament on September 19.

With the president's assent, the bill will become a law.

President's Press Secretary Joynal Abedin told The Daily Star yesterday that Hamid was yet to sign the bill.

Journalists and rights activists have expressed concerns about the new law,

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Jamaat still on BNP's mind

Tarique called leaders of the ally over seat sharing in JS polls, insider says

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The BNP has informally started the process for a seat sharing deal with Jamaat-e-Islami and other alliance partners, indicating that it would not sever ties with the Islamist party.

As Jamaat cannot contest the election with its registration with the Election Commission scrapped, its leaders have to run either independently or under the BNP's banner, said BNP leaders.

They refused to disclose the details of the share Jamaat was getting as it could lead to its other alliance partners haggling for seats and their relations with them getting strained.

The party's acting chairman Tarique Rahman has talked to top Jamaat leaders over phone several times to settle the seat sharing issue, said a senior leader of the BNP.

Tarique, who is in London, also talked with top leaders of the 20-party alliance and asked them to stay united.

The Jamaat issue came to the fore as Bikalpadhara Bangladesh said it would not form any alliance or unity with the BNP if it did not cut its ties with Jamaat.

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Send Khaleda to BSMMU now: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to immediately admit BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) for treatment.

In response to a writ petition, the court asked the authorities concerned of the government to form a fresh five-member medical board to examine Khaleda's health condition and start her treatment.

The board would be headed by doctors of internal medicine Prof Abdul Jalil Chowdhury and

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Carriers held, hunt on for masterminds

Five arrested on way to Benapole; 43kg gold seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All it took was a phone call from India to Bangladesh and the process of smuggling 43kg gold, worth Tk 18 crore, began.

Jahidul Islam, the person who was called, was a carrier for a gold smuggling gang. He was not acquainted with the caller, but was a trusted member of the gang, so much so that he was just handed the 258 gold bars.

The gold was received from an unknown person in Old Dhaka, after which it would be carried to Benapole, from where it would be smuggled into India.



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Quota circular issued amid protests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday issued a circular abolishing the quota system for class-I and class-II jobs in the civil service amid demonstrations for reinstating quota for the freedom fighters' descendants and indigenous communities.

The public administration ministry issued the circular with immediate effect.

According to the circular, the recruitment from grade-9 (class-I) and grade-10 to 13 (class-II) at all government departments, autonomous or semi-autonomous institutions, and various corporations will be based solely on merit.

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Can't take action

Mayor Khokon on illegal posters

MAHBUB RAHMAN KHAN and ABDULLAH AL NAYEEM

Right before the general election, some political parties and nomination seekers have begun pasting posters on the city's walls, defying a law prohibiting such acts.

Making graffiti on walls or putting up posters on them beyond designated places is a punishable offence, according to the Graffiti Writing and Poster Sticking Control Act, 2012.

According to the act, violators will be punished with a fine between Tk 5,000 to Tk 50,000 or imprisonment from 15 to 30 days.

However, flouting the law, many political posters, mostly of the ruling Awami League men, can be seen from the stretch of Malibagh to Bangla Motor in the capital. Most are pasted on the pillars of Mouchak-Moghbar flyover and on the walls of nearby buildings.



The stand of a giant advertisement screen in the capital's Shahbagh is covered with posters. Many Awami League men are pasting such posters on walls across the city in violation of the Graffiti Writing and Poster Sticking Control Act, 2012. More photos on page 16.

Bangladesh self-sufficient

PM says country can implement 90pc of budget with own funding

UNB, Dhaka

Mentioning that Bangladesh will not remain dependent on others, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said her government has adopted all necessary plans and is working accordingly so that the country can secure greater dignity in the global arena.

"Our goal is to improve the living standard of each person, including those from grassroots, and give a decent life to them," she said while inaugurating the 4th National Development Fair.

The PM opened the fair through videoconferencing from the Gono Bhaban.

The three-day event began in the capital and in all the district and upazila headquarters across the country with the slogan "Indomitable Bangladesh in March towards Development". It aims at showcasing the government's development activities.

The PM said Bangladesh now can implement 90 percent of its budget with own financing. "The country not only achieved self-sufficiency in food, but also has become a food-surplus one. Every sector is witnessing development."

Hasina said people witnessed a lot of changes in their living standard during last 10 years. The Awami League had announced the "charter of change" in its election manifesto before the 2008 general election, she added.

Terming the 1996-2001 tenure of AL rule a golden time for Bangladesh, she said her party could not assume power despite securing a higher number of votes than any other

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