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Plots afoot to oust the govt

Says prime minister

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said a group of political parties joined hands with the BNP-Jamaat alliance to try to oust her government and return the country to an era of darkness again.

“Mr Manna, Dr Kamal Hossain, Communist Party, left-leaning parties are now tagged with BNP-Jamaat alliance for forging movement to oust the Awami League government,” she said.

Hasina, also the president of the ruling Awami League, was speaking at the opening of a weeklong programme marking the Golden Jubilee founding anniversary of the Bangladesh Krishak League, an associate body of the party.

The programme was held at Krishibid Institution, Bangladesh while the prime minister joined it virtually.

“What is their motive to oust the government”, she asked. “[It is just] to deprive the people of all the facilities that are being given by the government,” she said.

She said that some political leaders in the country never remain beside the people during any crisis, but are very much busy talking about the movement for ousting the Awami League government.

“What is the fault of the Awami League government? Why do they want to oust it?” she asked.

Hasina said people voted the Awami League to power in 2008 national polls in support of the party’s election manifesto.



Ignoring traffic rules and their own safety, two students crossing one of the busiest streets in the capital amid a heavy traffic. The photo was taken on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HOQ

JS committee slams LGD for project delays

RASHIDUL HASAN

A parliamentary body yesterday expressed strong resentment over repeated delays and cost rises in almost all projects under the Local Government Division.

The Parliamentary Committee on Estimates during a meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban said a project to build important bridges on rural roads started in 2017.

In the beginning, the project duration was four and a half years, which was later revised to seven years. With the time extension, the estimated cost has gone up from Tk 3,900 crore to Tk 6,400 crore.

So far, only 18 percent of the project work has been done.

Including this, most projects under the Local Government Division are going on at a slow pace, observed the parliamentary committee.

It asked the Ministry of LGRD and Cooperatives to submit a report explaining the delays in the project implementations.

Meeting sources said the committee had asked for information on the projects a few days ago but the ministry provided it Tuesday night. For this, the committee expressed discontent yesterday.

At the meeting, the committee members questioned why everything is not properly reviewed in the beginning and why most of the projects are being revised repeatedly.

Project directors should take the responsibility for the increase in time and cost, if necessary, disciplinary action

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HC grants record 1,498 bail petitions in a day

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

In a historic move, a High Court bench yesterday disposed of 1,498 bail petitions.

This is the first precedent in the history of the country’s judiciary that an HC division bench has disposed of so many bail-related cases in a single day, court sources said.

The HC bench of Justice Sheikh Hassan Arif and Justice KM Zahid Sarwar Kazal disposed of the rules on the ground that all accused petitioners, who obtained ad-interim bail earlier, have not abused bail after getting released from jail.

Day labourer Md Amin Sheikh, 35, from Poyda village in Pabna was arrested on February 8, 2018 in a robbery case, which was lodged with Ullapara Police Station in Sirajganj six years back.

The case was filed by Tabibul Alam Khan of Khademtola village in Ullapara on December 22, 2012.

Tabibul stated in the case statement that unidentified robbers broke open the doors

and entered the houses of his uncles – Sharif Khan and Khorshed Alam Khan – and a cousin in the village, and looted gold ornaments, mobile phones and Tk 7.67 lakh from them. The robbers had threatened them at night the previous day.

Police submitted the charge sheet in the case against Amin Sheikh and other accused to the court concerned in Sirajganj on December 31, 2013.

After spending more than 10 months behind bars, accused Amin Sheikh obtained bail from the High Court in the robbery case.

Following a bail petition filed by Amin Sheikh, the HC on December 17, 2018, granted him ad-interim bail for a year and also issued a rule asking the state to explain in four weeks why he should not be granted permanent bail.

Later, Amin Sheikh got released from jail, but his bail petition along with the rule had been pending with the HC over the years.

Interestingly, neither the lawyer for Amin Sheikh nor the

state has taken any initiative for hearing and disposal of those at the HC.

Even, Amin Sheikh’s lawyer Md Kawser Ali has forgotten the rule and bail of Amin Sheikh, though his name and address have been mentioned as the lawyer in documents attached to the bail petition.

“I cannot say whether I have moved any bail petition on behalf of any accused named Amin Sheikh before the High Court. Therefore, I will not make any comment on this issue,” Kawser Ali told The Daily Star.

Like this one, several thousand such long-pending bail petitions have been pending with the HC, which is dealing with a backlog of more than five lakh cases.

Against this backdrop, an HC bench in a major decision yesterday disposed of a 1,498 long-pending bail petitions, including that of Amin Sheikh, confirming the bail of all accused petitioners.

Earlier, the judges of the HC bench examined the relevant

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Germany envoy unhappy with BNP ‘quoting’ him

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

German Ambassador to Bangladesh Achim Troster yesterday said he is unhappy about what the BNP told media about his meeting with the party’s leaders on March 17.

After the meeting at the party chairperson’s office in Gulshan, Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, BNP standing committee member, told reporters that the German ambassador expressed concerns about human rights and democracy in Bangladesh.

“I was a bit unhappy about this,” he said at the DCAB Talk, a flagship event of the Diplomatic Correspondents Association, Bangladesh (DCAB), held at the Jatiya Press Club.

Troster said he and his deputy made the courtesy call as the BNP invited them.

The next day, he read in newspapers quoting the BNP leader who said the German ambassador uttered concerns about the human rights situation and democracy in Bangladesh.

“I am directly speaking to you. You can quote me. But why I should be quoted by a third party?” Troster termed his meeting with BNP leaders as just a courtesy call-on when he wanted to know why BNP refused to participate in the



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Additional policemen are deployed in front of the New Market on Mirpur Road yesterday to tackle any further untoward incident. The area turned into a battleground after shopkeepers and students of Dhaka College clashed the day before. Shops in the area remained closed yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Two killed in firecracker factory explosion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Two women were killed after a reported lightning strike at an illegal firecracker factory in Mymensingh’s Nandail upazila yesterday morning.

The victims were Nasima Begum, 30, wife of Abul Hossain of Banshati village, and Afila Begum, 45, wife of Abdul Gani of the same village.

The two had been making firecrackers for the last three months at the house of Abdul Helim, a cosmetics trader, said police, adding that he went into hiding after the incident.

Quoting locals, Mizanur Rahman Akanda, officer-in-charge of Nandail Police Station, said there were

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Water on Europa closer to surface

AFP, Paris

Ridges that criss-cross the icy surface of Jupiter’s moon Europa indicate there are shallow pockets of water beneath, boosting hopes in the search for extra-terrestrial life, scientists said Tuesday.

Europa has long been a candidate for finding life in our solar system due to its vast ocean, which is widely thought to contain liquid water – a key ingredient for life.

There is a problem: the ocean is predicted to be buried 25-30 kilometres (15-17 miles) beneath the moon’s icy shell.

However, water could be closer to the surface than previously thought, according to new research published in the journal Nature Communications.

The finding came partly by chance, when geophysicists studying an ice sheet in Greenland watched a presentation about Europa and spotted a feature they recognised.

