

BNP'S 'RAINBOW NATION' It's aimed at recognising defeated forces

Says AL-led 14-party alliance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League-led 14-party alliance yesterday said BNP's "Rainbow Nation" means giving state and social recognition again to the defeated forces of the Liberation War. Amir Hossain Amu, a member of AL advisory council and coordinator and spokesperson for the combine, made the comment at a press conference held at his Eskaton home. In its 27-point outline, the BNP earlier said a "national reconciliation commission" will be formed based on nationalism to realise the party's dream of a "Rainbow Nation" — a country of diverse races and cultures and far away from conflicts and divisiveness.

Regarding the other points, Amu said, "The people of the country have rejected the BNP's anti-state politics in the past and will do so again. The others who took part in the party's

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Afghan female university students, stopped by Taliban security personnel, stand next to a university in Kabul yesterday. Afghanistan's Taliban rulers have banned university education for women nationwide, provoking condemnation from the United States and the United Nations. Story on page 2.

PHOTO: AFP

NAYAPALTAN CLASH Fakhrul, Abbas denied bail for fourth time

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected the bail petitions of BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and standing committee member Mirza Abbas for the fourth time in a case filed over the December 7 clash between party activists and police.

The court, however, directed the jail authorities to provide them with proper treatment in accordance with the Jail Code.

Judge Md Asaduzzaman of Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the order after the two BNP leaders' lawyers moved the petitions on different grounds after the lower courts rejected bail pleas on different dates.

During yesterday's hearing, the defence told the court that their clients' names were not in the first information report of the case and they were falsely implicated as part of political harassment.

In the petitions, they said BNP leaders Amanullah Aman and Abdul Kader Bhuiyan were granted bail by another Dhaka court despite their names being included in the FIR of the same case.

Thus, the defence said, Fakhrul and Abbas should be granted bail considering their social status.

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It's unlawful, a violation of human rights

Say rights activists on cuffing and fettering man during his mother's janaza



SUMON ALI and ABU BAKAR SIDDIQUE AKAND

The incident where an accused BNP leader was seen cuffed and fettered during his mother's namaz-e-janaza in Gazipur has touched off outrage among rights activists and citizens.

Rights bodies have termed it a violation of human rights and a punishable offence.

The accused, Ali Azam, president of BNP's Boali union unit under Gazipur's Kaliakoir upazila, has been behind bars for the past three weeks in a case filed by ruling AL men under the Explosive Substances Act.

Rights activists, locals and Azam's relatives said police should have freed him at least for a few minutes for the

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'Weapons, weapons and more weapons'

Zelenskiy eyes more firepower as he heads to Washington; US set to announce \$2b military assistance

REUTERS, Kyiv/Washington

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy headed to Washington yesterday to meet President Joe Biden, address Congress and seek "weapons, weapons and more weapons" in his first overseas trip since Russia invaded Ukraine 300 days ago.

Zelenskiy said the visit was meant to strengthen Ukraine's "resilience and defence capabilities" amid repeated Russian missile and drone attacks on the country's energy and water supplies in the dead of winter.

His political adviser, Mykhailo Podolyak, said the visit showed the high degree of trust between the two countries and offered him the opportunity to explain what weapons Kyiv needed.

"This finally puts an end to the attempts by the Russian side ... to prove an allegedly growing cooling in our bilateral relations," Podolyak told Reuters.

"This, of course, is not even close. The United States unequivocally supports Ukraine."

Biden will announce nearly \$2 billion in further military assistance for Ukraine that will include a Patriot missile battery to help it

defend itself against barrages of Russian missiles, a senior U.S. official said.

"...Weapons, weapons and more weapons. It is important to personally explain why we need certain types of weapons," Podolyak said. "In particular, armoured vehicles, the latest missile defence systems and long-range missiles."

Zelenskiy's visit was expected to last several hours.



He will hold a meeting with Biden at the White House at 2:30pm (1930 GMT), participate in a joint news conference with the US president and then go to Capitol Hill to address a joint session of the US Senate and House of Representatives.

White House spokesman John Kirby said diplomacy and defence

capabilities would top the agenda.

"Clearly we're going to make sure that President Zelenskiy, when he leaves this country, knows that he's leaving with the full support of the United States going forward," he told MSNBC in an interview ahead of Zelenskiy's arrival.

Russian President Vladimir Putin was defiant yesterday at an end-of-year meeting of top defence chiefs, saying Russian forces were fighting like heroes in Ukraine, would be equipped with modern weapons and would achieve all Moscow's goals.

Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb 24 aiming to capture the capital Kyiv in days, a goal that quickly proved out of reach.

Moscow then focused on advancing along eastern and southern fronts but has suffered a string of battlefield defeats since the summer - amid widespread reports of disorganisation, poor training and shoddy gear - and on Tuesday Putin conceded that conditions in Russian-held areas were "highly complicated".

In his remarks yesterday, Putin said there were no financial limits on what the government would provide in terms of equipment and

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Israel unveils finds from tomb of early Christian figure

AFP, Jerusalem



Israel has unveiled pilgrims' lamps and other finds from the so-called Tomb of Salome, a burial site named for a woman said to have assisted at the birth of Christ.

The tomb was discovered by grave robbers in what is now Lachish national park, west of Jerusalem, in the 1980s.

Subsequent excavations by archaeologists have uncovered a Jewish burial chamber dating back to the Roman period, which was taken over by a Christian chapel in the Byzantine era and was still drawing worshippers into the early Islamic period.

An inscription found on the walls of the grotto led the excavation team to conclude it was dedicated to Salome, a figure associated with the birth of Jesus Christ in eastern Orthodox tradition.

"In the cave we found tonnes of inscriptions in ancient Greek and Syriac," said excavation director Zvi Frier. "One of the beautiful inscriptions is the name Salome... because of this inscription we understand this is the cave of holy Salome."

Salome's role as an assistant to the midwife at Christ's birth is recounted in the Gospel of St James, a text dropped from the versions of the New Testament used by most Western churches.

COUNTING TIGER, DEER 1,330 cameras to be installed in Sundarbans

UNB, Khulna

Bangladesh Forest Department will set up 1,330 cameras at 665 spots in the Sundarbans to count tigers, deer and pigs from January 1, 2023.

The authorities have started installing cameras on both sides of the canals under Kalabogi Forest Station of Khulna Range from December 15 as part of the "Sundarbans Tiger Conservation Project".

Abu Naser, forest official of Sundarbans East zone and director of the project, said, "Apart from counting tigers, this year, the forest department will count deer and pigs as well under the project. They have divided the project into two categories - camera trapping and canal survey. Primarily, the survey along both sides of the canals in Sundarbans has started and through the process, the movement and pugmarks of tigers will be pointed out."

Through the camera trapping process, the authorities will take snaps for two years and later they will analyse the photos captured for the next two months, and after that they will figure out the numbers, he said.

A technical committee has already been formed and the committee decided to install cameras at 665 spots, he added.

Of these, 200 will be set up in Satkhira Range, 140 in Khulna Range, 180 in Sharankhola and 145 in Chandpai

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Dhaka North City Corporation has made a separate lane for Rickshaws by putting dividers on Tejaon Truck Stand Road.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Tigers aim to bounce back

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following yet another disappointing year in the longest format despite starting off with the historic win in Mount Maunganui in New Zealand, Bangladesh will be looking to sign off the year on a positive note as they take on India in the second and final Test starting in Mirpur today.

The hosts were completely outplayed earlier in the first Test in Chattogram, leading to a 188-run defeat. The Tigers, however, will be eager to utilise the rank turner Mirpur surface to their favour as skipper Shakib Al Hasan has recovered from injury and is all set to bowl to strengthen the spin department alongside Taijul Islam and Mehedi Hasan Miraz.

On the other hand, India will once again bank on their spin trio of Ravichandran Ashwin, Kuldeep Yadav, and Axar Patel to dismantle the Tigers batting line-up and, in the process, clinch the series 2-0 and keep their hopes alive in reaching the final of the ICC World Test Championship.

India skipper KL Rahul remains doubtful for the second Test after facing a blow in his hand during a net session yesterday, while regular skipper Rohit Sharma has been already ruled out for the second Test.