

Government desperate to suppress opposition

Alleges Fakhrul

UNB, Dhaka

B N P Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir



yesterday alleged that the government has become “desperate” to suppress the opposition leaders and activists, being afraid of the ongoing pro-democracy movement. “You (AL leaders) used to say a few days back that we didn’t have the ability to stand on the streets and our backs were broken. But now you have become so restive that you are oppressing people by using all might to stop our movement,” he said.

Fakhrul made the remarks while speaking at a press conference at the BNP chairperson’s Gulshan

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



A policeman gets cloaked in thick black smoke as two buses rev their engines and pass him by on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway. When this photojournalist conversed with the law enforcer, he informed that when he checked the fitness papers of the buses, they were in order, despite the fact that these vehicles are clearly unfit to ply the road. This photo was taken in Jatrabari area recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

JAMA’ATUL ANSAR

Five members of new militant group arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rab claimed to have arrested five members of the newly surfaced militant group “Jama’atul Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya” from Bandarban district on Wednesday.

Four of the arrestees have been identified as Nizamuddin Hiron alias Yousuf, 30, Saleh Ahmed alias Saiha, 27, Sadikur Rahman Suman, 30, Bayzid Islam alias Muaz, 31.

The fifth arrestee is a 17-year-old boy. All the five are in the list of 55 persons who left their homes for Hijrah in last two years, Khandaker Al Moin, Rab’s Legal and Media wing director, told a press briefing at Bandarban Rab camp yesterday.

Sadikur is among four youths left their Sylhet homes while the underage boy was among the eight persons who went into hiding from Cumilla in August last year, he added.

They were arrested in separate drives from the district’s remote Thanchi and Rowangchhari upazila, the Rab official said.

With the five, Rab has so far arrested three dozen members of the newly surfaced militant group.

Counterterrorism officials of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) also arrested some members of this group, said police.

According to Rab, more than 50 youths left their homes in the last two years to join the militant group.

Rajattwa, the metro baby! Woman gives birth in Agargaon station



Surrounded by scout members, Rajattwa in the safe arms of his father at Agargaon Metro Station yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Soniya Rani Roy was supposed to get admitted to a Dhanmondi hospital yesterday as she was in her last stage of pregnancy.

Like the previous time, she boarded the metro rail with her husband from Uttara North Station, intending to get down at Agargaon station and then take a ride to go to Renaissance Hospital in Dhanmondi.

But minutes after the train departed from Uttara station, Soniya began to experience labour pain. After getting down at Agargaon, her husband sought help from the metro-rail staffers, who took Soniya to the station’s first-aid room.

And then, she gave birth to a baby boy right there with the help of a female doctor, who was Soniya’s co-passenger, and scout members.

“It [the service we got at the station] was completely unexpected for us. It’s like the kind of services we get in developed countries,” Soniya’s

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Mountain police for CHT on cards

Government to deploy three battalions in camps left by the army

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Three specialised battalions of armed police will soon be deployed in Bandarban, Khagrachhari and Rangamati to ensure public safety and security.

In line with the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord, the government will deploy the forces in camps left by the army, said home ministry officials.

The home and public administration ministries have already approved the proposal of forming the three battalions, said Farooque Ahmed, additional deputy inspector general (organization and management) of Police Headquarters.

“The proposal now remains pending at the finance ministry. We are hoping to get their approval soon,” he added.

The proposal was first sent to the home ministry on March 15, 2021. Following a series of meetings, a revised proposal was finalised on November 25, 2021.

On December 30, 2021, the proposal was forwarded to public administration ministry to allocate a manpower of 2,650 people to form the three battalions.

The public administration ministry, on July 27, 2022, approved a manpower of 2,260 people.

Meanwhile, on May 25, 2022, police received administrative approval from the home ministry to conduct operational activities of the battalions. According to the proposal, the

AT A GLANCE

70 officials under a DIG to look after 3 hill districts

Total additional DIGs: 5

Total SPs: 11

NUMBER OF OFFICIALS

Proposed posts: 2,260

Bandarban: 730

Rangamati: 730

Khagrachhari: 730

battalions would be named “Armed Police Mountain Battalion”.

The three units will be APMB-18 in Rangamati, APMB-19 in Bandarban, and APMB-20 in Khagrachhari. The battalions will be formed under the leadership of a deputy inspector general of police.

According to CHT people, these police battalions are supposed to have a certain percentage of human resources from the hill tracts. However, the proposal did not mention any such clause.

The Daily Star obtains a copy of the proposal.

The DIG office, responsible for the battalions, will have 70 members while the battalions will have 730

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

CJ assigns HC bench to dispose of Holey Artisan attack case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique yesterday assigned a High Court bench led by Justice Shahidul Karim to hold hearing and disposing the death reference and appeals of the Holey Artisan attack case, as its paper book has already been prepared by the office concerned of the court.

The HC bench of Justice Shahidul Karim will now fix a date for starting hearing of the death reference and appeals of the case, Supreme Court spokesperson Mohammad Saifur Rahman told The Daily Star yesterday.

On July 1, 2016, five militants, armed with guns, machetes, and grenades, stormed the upscale eatery in the diplomatic zone in Gulshan and held the diner hostage before brutally killing 20 of them – three Bangladeshis, seven Japanese, nine Italians, and one Indian.

The militants were killed during a rescue operation by army commandos. Two police officials and a chef of the café were also killed during the 12-hour standoff while another injured staffer of the eatery died later. A Dhaka court on November 27, 2019, sentenced seven militants to death for their involvement in the attack.

AL to stay on streets to prevent BNP’s anarchy: Quader

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League will remain cautious about BNP’s movement and stay on the streets to protect people’s lives and property, said Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday.

“We will be cautious about BNP’s movement so they can’t create any anarchic situation. We are on the streets and won’t leave as we’ll perform our duty to protect the lives and property of people,” he said.

Quader, also the road transport and bridges minister, made the remarks while talking to reporters at the secretariat on current issues.

While replying to a question about BNP’s leadership, Quader said, “Awami League will join

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

MONEY LAUNDERING

Two top Destiny officials denied bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday denied bail to Destiny Group Managing Director Md Rafiqul Amin and Destiny Multipurpose Cooperative Society Ltd Chairman Mohammad Hossain in a money laundering case involving Tk 2,000 crore.

Two separate HC benches dismissed two appeals filed by Rafiqul and Hossain seeking bail in the case.

The bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Khizir Hayat dismissed the appeal of Hossain and the bench of Justice SM Kuddus Zaman and Justice Fahmida Quader dismissed the appeal of Rafiqul.

A Dhaka court on May 12 last year sentenced all 46 accused, including Destiny Group Managing Director Rafiqul Amin and Destiny-2000 president Lt Gen (retd) Harun-Ar-Rashid, to different terms of imprisonment in the money laundering case.

Brac to hold ‘Hope Festival’ next month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Marking its 50 years of founding, Brac will organise a three-day festival in the capital in February, upholding stories of people’s successes and hosting a range of cultural performances.

Brac made the announcement during a press conference at a city hotel yesterday.

The “Hope Festival”, which is open for all, will be held at Bangladesh Army Stadium on February 9 to 11, from 11:00am to 10:00pm.

Anyone can register on the website -- brachopefestival.net -- to attend the festival, which will be the “epilogue” of Brac’s yearlong observances marking 50 years.

Brac Bangladesh Executive Director Asif Saleh said they started their 50th anniversary celebration about a year ago. Their plan was to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

A celebration of culture

Four-day Parbatya Mela starts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It was as if a piece of life on hills were brought to the capital. In this carnival of exchanging cultures, the people of the hills gathered to give a glimpse of their lives to the citizens of living in concretes.

Dhaka residents were seen busy browsing through traditional clothes or tasting the flavours brought fresh from the hills.

Such was the sight at “Parbatya Mela” currently ongoing at the Shilpakala Academy yesterday.

The four-day fair has been organised by the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs, aiming to introduce and promote the products of the small ethnic communities.

State Minister for Cultural Affairs KM KHalid inaugurated the fair as chief guest with Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Minister Bir Bahadur Ushwe Sing in the chair.

At the end of the inaugural event, people started gathering on the complex premises. The shops opened, with bits and pieces of Bandarban, Rangamati, Khagrachhari in them.

Traditionally cooked dishes from the hill tracts were being sold at some stalls, including the famous Kola Pitha, Bora Pitha, Sanni Pitha, bamboo chicken and bamboo fish.

Meanwhile, many were decorated with agricultural products and fruits, including Binni rice, jhum pineapple, orange, perennial jackfruit, coconut kachu and Banglalkala.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



A woman uses a traditional handloom for weaving at the Parbatya Mela organised at Shilpakala Academy in the capital yesterday. The four-day fair includes traditional food, clothes and other items of the hill tracts, and cultural performances by artists from Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachhari.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN