

Hu becomes China's new president

Jiang retains military power



Hu Jintao

AFP, Beijing

China made profound changes to its elite leadership amid classic communist pomp and ceremony yesterday, appointing Hu Jintao president but retaining his predecessor Jiang Zemin in the powerful position of military chief.

Hu, 60, assumes the job left vacant by Jiang who came to the end of his 10-year term, sealing what could be the first orderly transition of power since the Communist Party was founded in 1949.

But while Jiang ceded the presidency, he was reappointed chairman of the state Central Military Commission and, at least in the short term, will remain China's

supreme leader.

The CMC chairmanship is a hugely powerful job and was the only top slot filled by Jiang's predecessor Deng Xiaoping during a decade when he acted as so-called "paramount leader".

The job in essence gives Jiang, and not Hu, the ultimate power in China as whoever controls the 2.5 million strong military has historically controlled the vast country.

There was only one candidate for each of the posts -- in line with communist party rules -- and they were elected for a duration of five years at the National People's Congress, the parliament meeting in Beijing's cavernous Great Hall of the People.

Further strengthening Jiang's grip on power was the appointment of his right hand man Zeng Qinghong to the vice presidency. According to the constitution, Zeng would become president should the post be vacated for any reason.

The other key appointment Saturday was Wu Bangguo, number two in Chinese politics, as chairman of China's 2,900-member parliament, replacing the retiring party loyalist Li Peng, 74.

The poker-faced bureaucrat's new role as chairman of the Standing Committee of the National

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Brothers abducted, killed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Madaripur.

Miscreants in police uniforms abducted and killed two brothers on Thursday night at Rajarchar village under the Sadar thana of the district.

The dead are Nazrul Islam Choukidar, 40, and Tajul Islam Choukidar, 36.

Police and family members said 20 to 25 miscreants in police uniforms entered the residence of Nazrul and Tajul, blindfolded them and took them to a graveyard about 100 meters away.

The miscreants first shot them and then slaughtered them to death.

Farida Begum, wife of Nazrul, said the hoodlums identified themselves as police and asked them to open the door.

The miscreants left the place chanting slogans in support of the Purbobanglar Sarbahara Party.

Police visited the murder site on Friday and recovered five spent cartridges. Police also detained two persons for interrogation.

Police said Nazrul was accused in 11 cases while Tajul in five.



PHOTO: AFP

American marines of the USMC (US Marine Corps) put a flag on an antenna of HMMWV (High Mobility Multi Wheeled Vehicles) in the north of the Kuwait desert near the Iraqi border yesterday. The USMC began breaking-out chemical warfare suits amid last-minute preparations for an invasion of Iraq.

PDB promises summer peace

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Power Development Board (PDB) yesterday said it has taken measures to ensure a steady power supply so that load shedding during the coming summer remains tolerable.

"We have taken all possible measures for uninterrupted supply of electricity and contain load-shedding during summer," PDB Chairman Syed Abdul Mueed told reporters at a briefing in the city.

He said PDB has issued request letters to all deputy commissioners (DCs) and would hold discussions with business leaders to keep electricity consumption at minimum level during peak hours, that is, between 6.00 and 9.30 in the evening.

Load management could improve if shopkeepers reduce using illuminations at their shops; cleaners do not use iron; and household users do not run electric pumps during peak hours, PDB chairman said.

It is possible to reduce consumption by about 500 megawatt (MW) during peak hours through rescheduling of holidays of different shopping malls and markets, he said.

Termining the electricity consumption pattern during peak hours 'peculiar', the PDB chief said

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Police expose militant plan to bomb C'nawabganj celebrations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police have unearthed an Islamic militant group's plans to sabotage the centenary celebrations of Chapainawabganj municipality beginning today and the ensuing Independence Day programmes and recovered some bombs from their hideout, sources said.

The group -- Jama'atul Mujahidin is suspected to have links with the Rajshahi-based outlawed Shahadat-e- Al Hiqma, district police reported to authorities in Dhaka yesterday.

Chapainawabganj Pourashabha has organised a month-long programme in observance of its 100th founding anniversary. The programme includes cultural functions to be participated by leading singers of the country.

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PHOTO: STAR

Campaigners ride elephants (left) in electioneering of the Barisal City Corporation polls and the Awami League lawmaker Asaduzzaman Noor addresses an election rally in support of Enayet Pir Khan, a mayoral candidate from the same party, in Barisal yesterday.

Olonga also calls it quits

AFP, East London

Zimbabwe fast bowler Henry Olonga announced his retirement from international cricket on Saturday, saying his anti-government protest made it difficult for him to return to his country.

"I have been receiving threatening e-mails since the protests which I believe have made it dangerous for me to return to Zimbabwe," Olonga said.

Olonga and teammate Andy Flower, who has also retired from the international game, wore black arm-bands during his team's World Cup opener against Namibia in protest at the government of President Robert Mugabe.

Barisal BNP rift widens

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

The rift in BNP has widened following the expulsion of District BNP secretary Ebaudul Huq Chan and City BNP president Ahsan Habib Kamal for refusing to follow the party line on the Barisal City Corporation polls, sources said.

BNP leader Wahed Hossain, president of ward 25, has also been expelled and five other district leaders have been showcaused for disregarding the party's decision on the nomination of election candidates.

The showcaused leaders are Mostafizur Rahman and Anisur Rahman of BNP, and Milon, Mazharul Islam Jahan and Azad Kader of JCD (Jatayatnabadi Chhatra Dal).

All six had been working for Kamal and Chan.

Other rebellious leaders have also been blacklisted for expulsion, BNP sources said.

On the other hand, Awami

League and some other opposition parties supporting Nagorik Parishad's Enayet Pir Khan have been campaigning hard to drum up support for the mayoral candidate.

AL leaders including Asaduzzaman Noor MP, former agricultural minister Matia Chowdhury and Obaidul Kader, Workers' Party leader Rashed Khan Menon, Jubo League president Jahangir Kabir Nanok, BCL vice-president Balaram Poddar and AL organising secretary Mahamudur Rahman Manna are now in Barisal to campaign for Enayet Pir Khan.

Twenty more AL MPs and Dr Kamal Hossain are also scheduled to come to Barisal to campaign for Pir.

Jatiya Party (JP) chairman Hossain Mohammed Ershad came to Barisal yesterday to campaign for JP candidate Abdul Majid Munshi and addressed two public meetings at Kendriya Shaheed Minar and Kalfizra area besides several street gatherings.

Ershad said there was no proper

administration in the country, people's lives were in disarray due to heavy market price of essential commodities and that Bangladesh was known to the world as a terrorist country. The World Bank and other donor countries have taken an adverse view of Bangladesh due to corruption, he said.

Shah Moazzem, Ruhul Amin Howladar, Shafiqul Alam Prodhon, Sardar Amjad Hossain and Golam Kibria Tipu of JP also addressed the meetings.

Meanwhile, candidates, the administration and poll observers say that the pre-poll situation is growing more volatile as election approaches.

Listed criminals including commissioner candidates Faruk Ahmed alias Panama Faruk, Martuza, Monsen Gulzar, Mehedi and Alauddin are also coming to the fore

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Robbers stab ex-SP, loot residence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Armed robbers looted cash, gold ornaments and other valuables after stabbing a retired police superintendent (SP) at his Uttara residence on Friday.

The victim has been identified as former SP Akramuzzaman. The miscreants

also injured the victim's wife Maksuda Zaman and daughter Mou.

A gang of seven entered onto the first floor of the four storied building at road No. 1, sector 9 of Uttara Model Town during Juma prayer. Akramuzzaman was not home at the time.

The gang confined Maksuda Zaman and Mou to a corner and looted Tk 2 lakh in cash, over 25 tota of gold ornaments and four mobilephones.

When the landlady and her daughter tried to raise their voice, Mou was hit over the head with a pistol and Maksuda with a knife.

The robbers were fleeing the spot when Akramuzzaman returned. As he tried to hold one of the gang members another stabbed him in the abdomen.

The injured were rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital

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Public administration training policy gets final approval

BSS, Dhaka

The country's first Public Administration Training Policy (PATP) got final approval yesterday.

The 7th meeting of the National Training Council, with council chairperson Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the chair, approved the PATP with a view to 'establishing good governance and enabling the public administration to face the challenges of the 21st century'.

Under the policy, only those with work experience in training institutes or who have made substantial contribution as guest speakers in training courses will be

eligible for appointment as heads of training institutes.

The PATP encourages decentralisation of training activities to ensure optimum use of the assets and facilities in training institutes outside the capital.

The 29-member executive committee of National Training Council headed by Industries Minister MK Anwar presented the draft PATP for final approval. It was approved with some minor amendments.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia expressed her firm belief that the new policy would make a far-reaching contribution to enhancing efficiency of public administration in Bangladesh.

The policy aims at establishing the entire public administration on a firm regulatory structure and accelerating and enlightening the administration, she said.

She said the present policy was adopted as there was no coordinated policy in this regard.

"The government's goals and its pledges to the people including eradication of poverty can be materialised by establishing a disciplined, effective and efficient administration pursuing a proper training policy, she observed.

Khaleda Zia said there are mea

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Two shot dead, another beaten to death in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two persons were shot dead and another was beaten to death in the city in the last three days. All the three were traders.

A vegetable trader, Nayan, 30, was shot by a gang at Tejkuinpara railcrossing yesterday afternoon. As his wife raised an alarm, the gang exploded some bombs, injuring her.

Both were rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared Nayan dead.

His wife was admitted to the DMCH but she fled later.

Besides, some unidentified people beat to death a vegetable trader, Ibrahim Khalil, at RN Das Road in the city's Sutrapur area in the early hours of Friday. Police recovered his body in the morning.

The victim's wife filed a murder case with the Sutrapur Police Station.

A youth named Enam was arrested from Gandaria area as a suspect in the murder and sent him to court yesterday.

In another incident, Amanullah alias Birbal, 40, a trader, and his

friend were shot by five gunmen at Jurain on Thursday night.

Birbal died on way to the DMCH and Dilu was admitted there.

Birbal had contested the last city corporation election as an independent candidate for the post of commissioner.

Police said he might have been killed as a sequel to previous enmity concerning the election.

Birbal's brother filed a murder case with the Shyampur Police Station.

None could be arrested till the writing of this report last night.