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Judge appointed in Appellate Division superseding three

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

While many lawyers are protesting the appointment of 17 new judges ignoring the chief justice's recommendation, the government yesterday appointed a judge to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court by superseding three senior judges of the High Court Division.

Justice M Joyul Abedin superseded senior judges Syed Amirul Islam, MD Hassan Ameen and AK Badrul Huq in the appointment signed by President Iajuddin Ahmed after consultation with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

Earlier, Justice Syed Amirul Islam was superseded four times.

Justice Abedin will take oath today.

Supreme Court Bar Association Secretary AM Aminuddin told The Daily Star last night that they will refrain from organising its felicitation programme to welcome the judge.

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Judges' confirmation draws strong protest

Lawyers decry govt decision ignoring CJ's recommendations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 17 newly confirmed judges took oath yesterday amidst protest by a large section of lawyers at the government's ignoring the chief justice's recommended list in confirming services of the judges.

The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) demonstrated at the Bar building denouncing what they said is confirmation of judges on political consideration.

Renowned legal expert Dr Kamal Hossain said he felt as if a grenade had been thrown on him when he came to know about the judges' confirmation. Talking to

the press, he said, "This (confirmation of judges) is an attack on the judiciary and the constitution. This should be resisted."

Former SCBA president Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud said the government threw away recommendations of the chief justice. This is the saddest event in the history of the Supreme Court, he added.

The government on Tuesday confirmed services of 17 additional judges of the HC, ignoring the chief justice's recommendations. There were 19 additional judges awaiting confirmation. The chief justice recommended confirmation of 15

on the basis of their performance over the last two years. But the government included two more judges -- Emdadul Haq Azad and Faisal Mahmud Faizee -- in the confirmation list.

While the chief justice did not recommend these two judges, Faizee had triggered a controversy when he was appointed as an additional judge. The SCBA launched an agitation for his removal questioning the genuineness of his Bachelor of Law (LLB) certificate. But the government ignored its demand. And now the chief justice's recommendations

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Jamaat must follow PM's decision

Says Ershad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposing Jamaat-e-Islami stand against the inclusion of Jatiya Party (JP) into the four-party coalition, JP Chairman HM Ershad said Khaleda Zia is the leader of the alliance and Jamaat will have to follow her decision.

"What Jamaat is saying about Jatiya Party's inclusion into the four-party alliance is not important. The important thing is what Khaleda Zia says on the issue," Ershad said.

"The election is a constitutional process and it will take place on time, no matter Jamaat participates or not," he told journalists after addressing a discussion meeting styled "Role of Politicians in Investment" in the capital yesterday.

Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries

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Jamaat says no to PM on alliance with Ershad

Warns of 'alternatives' if pressed; BNP leaders missing in closed-door meet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami, the key ally of ruling BNP, once again strongly opposed yesterday the move on possible inclusion of Jatiya Party (JP-Ershad) in the ruling coalition at a closed-door meeting with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

If the BNP continues its move to include the JP in the coalition, Jamaat will think about "alternatives", Jamaat leaders hinted the PM at the meeting at her office, sources said.

The PM did not make any comment, a Jamaat leader told The Daily Star after the meeting, wishing anonymity.

A top delegation of Jamaat led

by its Ameer and Industries Minister Motiur Rahman Nizami talked with the PM for about two hours.

No BNP leaders, even its secretary general, were present at the "crucial" meeting, which many BNP insiders considered "very unusual".

The Jamaat delegation included party Secretary General and Social Welfare Minister Ali Ahsan Muhammad Mujahid, Abdus Sobhan MP, Delwar Hossain Saidee MP, Mohammad Qamaruzzaman, Abdul Quader Molla, ATM Azharul Islam and Barrister Abdur Razzaque.

Describing JP Chairman HM Ershad as "unpredictable", the

Jamaat secretary general told reporters, "We have discussed the Ershad issue with the PM. Now, our Majlis-e-Shura will finalise the decision on our stand over Ershad's inclusion and then we will meet the PM again to convey the decision."

"The four-party alliance will remain united and Jamaat will contest the upcoming elections under the alliance," he added.

Jamaat sources said the PM told the Jamaat delegation that she will look into the matter. She also requested the Jamaat leaders to consider the BNP's move to include the JP in the alliance to ensure victory in the next election.

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Supreme Court Bar Association leaders demonstrate on the Supreme Court premises yesterday against 'politicisation' in the appointment of High Court judges.

Israel accused of war crimes in Lebanon

Amnesty charges it for deliberately targeting civilian infrastructure; Lebanon asks US to help end Israel blockade

AGENCIES, Beirut/London

Israel committed "war crimes" by deliberately targeting Lebanese civilian infrastructure during the recent conflict with the Shiite Hezbollah militia, the Amnesty International said yesterday.

The human rights group claimed that both Hezbollah and the Jewish state had committed "grave violations" of international humanitarian law but said there was an "Israeli policy of deliberate destruction" of non-military targets.

"Israel's assertion that the attacks on the infrastructure were lawful is manifestly wrong," the

London-based group's executive deputy secretary general Kate Gilmore said as she launched their report into the hostilities.

"Many of the violations identified in our report are war crimes, including indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks.

"The evidence strongly suggests that the extensive destruction of power and water plants, as well as the transport infrastructure vital for food and other humanitarian relief, was deliberate and an integral part of a military strategy."

The report -- "Deliberate destruction or 'collateral damage'?" Israeli attacks against civilian infrastructure -- is based on

research from Amnesty's own missions in Israel and Lebanon, plus interviews with dozens of victims.

Meanwhile, Lebanon yesterday urged the United States to make Israel remove a sea and air blockade it imposed at the start of its 34-day war with Hezbollah fighters.

Prime Minister Fouad Siniora also called on Washington to boost its financial aid to help Lebanon recover from war-related economic damage running into billions of dollars.

"The United States can do more," he told a news conference.

"The United States can support us

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

FDI dipped 15pc last fiscal year

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Foreign direct investment (FDI) declined by 15.16 percent last fiscal year (FY06) in stark contrast with a 107 percent rise in the previous year, according to Bangladesh Bank (BB) statistics.

Economists mainly blamed the government's negotiation skills with prospective foreign investors and increase in profit repatriation for the situation.

In FY06, \$675 million FDI flowed in against \$800 million in FY05, showing a \$125 million dip, BB statistics show. In FY05, FDI flow was \$415 million more than the previous fiscal.

"The government failed to negotiate with prospective foreign investors," Dr Zaid Bakht, research director of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), told The Daily Star yesterday.

Dr Bakht referred to the power projects, which had huge scopes

for foreign investment but the government could not exploit the opportunity.

"Negotiations with prospective foreign investors have been delayed mainly due to the vested groups' ill motives to make brisk money from the deals that resulted in no investment," he said.

He also said profit repatriation in last fiscal year increased, which may be another reason for the FDI inflow.

"A large chunk of FDI that came in the last few years was in the telecom sector. These investors repatriated their profit instead of reinvesting it," he said.

Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), echoed Dr Bakht to say that there no big foreign investment took place in Bangladesh since 2001.

"FDI increased in FY05 as service sector foreign investors

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10 hurt as rival Sunamganj groups clash at AL meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 10 leaders and activists of Sunamganj Awami League (AL) were injured in a clash between the supporters of AL Presidium Member Suranjit Sengupta and the late presidium member Abdus Samad Azad in front of the party's Dhanmondi office in the capital yesterday.

The injured include Nantu Roy, joint secretary of Sunamganj district AL, Amir Hossain, former general secretary of sadar upazila AL, Mahish Kanti Dey and Sayem.

The AL men came to attend the last grassroots level meeting between the district leaders and AL President Sheikh Hasina.

Sources said Suranjit Sengupta after a meeting with AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil and Organising Secretary Abdur Rahman on

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Islam being used for political gain, again

INAM AHMED and ZAYADUL AHSAN

Monday afternoon modernisation of Bangladesh suffered a major setback when Prime Minister Khaleda Zia announced that the highest degree awarded by the orthodox Qawami madrasa would be equated with the master's degree.

The ramifications of her announcement are so far reaching that many think it will forever change the intellectual superstructure of the Bangladesh society. In time, nothing will be the same as before, and everything will change be it economy, politics, culture, society, civil administration and law and order. And all this had been done with one tunnel vision -- to win votes in the upcoming elections.

But Bangladesh's history of this plunge into the abyssal darkness has not been unbroken. Bangladesh was a society of cultural and religious harmony with a thriving progressive political front. Born out of a two-nation theory with the Hindus and Muslims living in separate homelands, Pakistan from which Bangladesh broke away in 1971 through a bloody war still offered the Bangalees the resilience to maintain the religious harmony. In fact, to throw off the yoke of the West Pakistani psyche of mixing Islam with everything and to get closer to the people of Bengal, the Awami Muslim League showed in the mid 50s the courage to drop the middle name to become Awami League.

Against the repressive march of the West Pakistani rulers in the

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CHARGE-FRAMING

Hearing on two more graft cases against Ershad today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

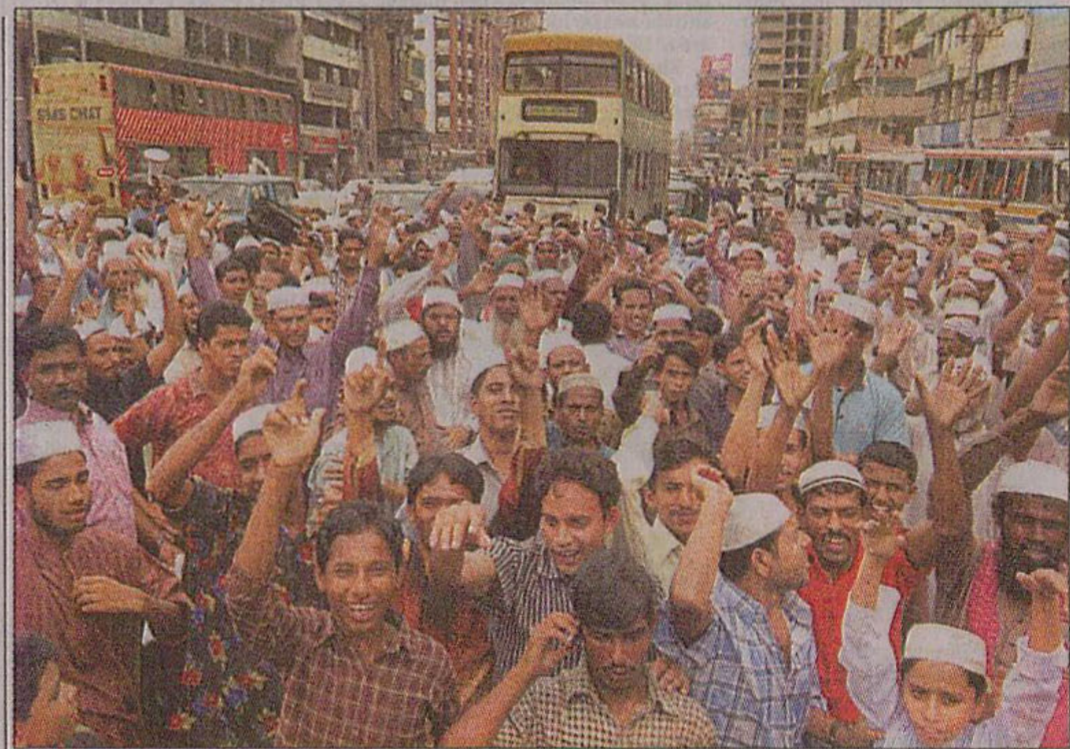
A Dhaka court is to decide today whether charges would be framed in two graft cases against deposed president HM Ershad and five others.

Judge Malik Abdullah Al Amin of the Dhaka Divisional Special Court will make his decision after hearing on charge-framing in the two cases.

Earlier the same court on August 17 acquitted Ershad, also the chairman of Jatiya Party (JP), in a graft case filed against him 14 years ago.

The delivery of judgment in another case against Ershad is scheduled for August 27 in the First Additional Metropolitan Session Judge's Court, Dhaka. It was filed for anomalies in the allotment of

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Musallis bring out a procession blocking Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue at Karwan Bazar in Dhaka yesterday protesting the installation of an electronic billboard just beside the Ambar Shah Mosque.

INDO-BANGLA MEET

Home secys sit today to talk terror help

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India will seek Bangladesh's help to nab some suspects in recent terrorist strikes in the country during the home secretary level talks beginning in Dhaka today.

Briefing reporters on the eve of their departure to Dhaka for the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Shahjahan brings gold

AL MUSABBIR SADI from Colombo

When Shahjahan Ali Rony -- draped in red and green national flag -- proudly walked towards the winners podium at the Sugathadasa Indoor Stadium Swimming Pool, the band was getting ready to play the Bangladesh national anthem for

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