

Leadership crisis grips Jatiya Party

By Staff Correspondent

Two years after it was forced out of power the Jatiya Party is now in shambles with acute leadership crisis.

"We are following the politics of 'chirkut' (missives) coming from our jailed leaders, which is creating a lot of crisis in the party," an agitated party leader said requesting anonymity.

A newly inducted Presidium member and a "favourite lady" of party chairman H M Ershad have become very powerful, said the leader, and forcing many veterans to become inactive. The JP leader later identified the two as Sayeed Tarik and Zeenath Mosharruf.

The JP became the third largest party in Parliament after bagging 35 seats in the February '91 election.

The crisis began with replacement of Shah Moazzem by A B M Shahjahan as the Acting Secretary General by "orders" of Ershad.

Khaledur Rahman Tito was later made the full-fledged Secretary General and Sayeed Tarik was inducted in the Presidium, also by orders of Ershad, party insiders said.

Ershad also wanted that Zeenath be inducted into the party Presidium, the source said adding that this was not carried out for the "sake of party image."

But Zeenath is now de facto chief of the women's front of the party and last month she restructured the front which was later approved by the Presidium. She allegedly engineered dropping of four women from the JP's central

body. The source also alleged that Tito was "trapped" by a section of leaders competing for the post of secretary general and was sent to open the sealed party office. The appointment of the new Acting Secretary General, Hassanuddin Sarker, also created controversy as his selection was made bypassing three Joint Secretaries General.

A large number of workers have become disappointed at the sudden unexpected changes in the leadership when the party is running without an office and facing an "unofficial ban" on its meetings in and around the capital, the source added.

Acting party chief Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and parliamentary party chief Moudud Ahmed, however, said that "JP has no such crisis."

When contacted over immediate-past Acting Secretary General Shahjahan said that he was maintaining a distance from the party because of intense groupings. He had also refused a Presidium post, he added.

Another source said that the party had also been suffering from an "acute financial crisis as the financier-leaders" had almost withdrawn themselves from the party activities.

The "release-Ershad-movement" has now bogged down as most of the leaders have become confused about the future strategy of campaign against the government, insiders said.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia inspecting the Army winter exercise at Jhenidah in Jessore yesterday. — PID photo

PM : Armed Forces

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Recalling the sacrifices of the people of the area had a tradition of struggle. The area was liberated before the triumph of final victory, she recalled. She paid tributes to those who made supreme sacrifices to achieve the independence.

Describing the national army as our pride, she said they have liberated the country fighting together with the people. She said the army have a glorious role in maintaining peace in Chittagong Hill Tracts. She said the army have always stood beside the people in nation building activities and in organising relief and rescue during natural calamities.

The Prime Minister said the fame of the Bangladesh army have spread all over the world. She said the members of the armed forces who have been engaged in UN peace-keeping operations in different countries, have been earning fame for the country. She said we have to uphold this honour and image and we have to further enhance it.

Referring to restoration of democracy in the country, the Prime Minister said if we want to give it a stable and institutional shape, we have to make it meaningful to the people. She said, democracy can become meaningful to the people through economic development. She said, the fate of the people have to be changed.

Earlier, she witnessed a combined winter training exercise at Jhenidah.

Dhakaites spend Tk 144 cr a year on coils, aerosols

The residents of Dhaka city spend about Taka 144 crore per annum for buying coils and aerosols to get rid of mosquito menace, according to a survey result presented at the annual conference of Bangladesh Zoological Society in Dhaka yesterday, reports BSS.

The survey further said, on an average every family spends Taka 80 and about 15 lakh households in the city spend about Taka 12 crore per month for some kind of anti-mosquito materials, mostly coils.

The conference was held at the Institute of Food and Radiation Biology of Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Savar, about 40 kilometres north of the capital.

According to the survey 52.4 per cent households use mosquito coils and 26 per cent spray aerosol inside their houses.

The survey on knowledge, attitude and practice of the dwellers of Dhaka metropolis towards mosquito and its control was conducted in Mirpur area where 82.9 per cent people are literate. Of the people of the area 39.5 per cent are service holders, 33.5 per cent businessmen and 27 per cent daily labourers.

Scientists Touhiduddin Ahmed, Shireen Akhter, Jamal Uddin Dewan and Rafique

Probe body on Ctg incident starts work

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 14: The one-man inquiry commission formed to probe into the January 2-3 incident at Halishahar in Chittagong Port city started its work today, officials sources said.

Two witnesses and victims of the violence testified on the first day before a one-man inquiry commission formed with Justice Sultan Hossain Khan.

The hearing began in the Zila Parishad auditorium, will continue till Jan 30 between 10 am and 5 pm everyday.

Earlier, Justice Hossain visited the trouble-hit Halishahar area and met the leaders of different political organisations.

The Halishahar incident left at least 10 people dead and many others injured.

Gavaskar rescues 8 from hands of rioters

NEW DELHI, Jan 14: Sunil Gavaskar, India's saviour in many cricket battles, rescued eight people from a murderous mob in Bombay amid Hindu-Muslim rioting and added another chapter to his legend, reports AFP.

The "Little Master," who retired as Test cricket's highest run getter, was on the balcony of his eight-floor World sea face flat on Monday when he saw the 30-strong mob chasing a carload of people, press reports said today.

A brick hurled by a rioter made the speeding driver lose control of the car, which lurched sideways and smashed into a wall, the Pioneer newspaper said.

But before the mob could get at the petrified occupants of the vehicle, Gavaskar had raced down to the scene "with courage not unfamiliar," it said.

The former Indian skipper and legendary opening batsman was joined by a neighbour as he confronted the rioters and reasoned with them that "even the people in the car were human beings," his wife Marshneil was quoted as saying.

The mob dispersed after being told that "we were all Indians first and everything else came next," and the three men, three women and two children were saved from possible death.

Gavaskar was modest, saying he had done only what any citizen should have, the Pioneer said.

Neither the mob nor its would-be victims were identified by their religion. Hundreds have died in the Hindu-Muslim rioting which broke out January 5 in Bombay, Gavaskar's home city.

Beanibazer

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He, however, addressed a spontaneous gathering at Sheolabazar.

Mujammil Ali former chairman of Beanibazer thana was in the chair, while JP MP Sharfuddin Khushru, acting JP Secretary-General Hasanuddin Sarkar also spoke.

Mizan Chowdhury criticised different repressive measures of the government against the political opponents.

Though Section 144 was in force, groups of armed people were seen moving at the thana head quarters in presence of law-enforcing personnel.

1400 units

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fire incidents were reported in which property worth Taka 50.5 lakh was gutted.

Sources said parts of the old Dhaka, specially Islampur, Lalbag and Kotwali area have been identified as highly fire-prone area. Most workshops and business houses there are operating without fire licences. However, the Fire Department had recently held talks with the Islampur Cloth Merchants Association on the issue and, as a result, 2650 cloth merchants would soon obtain fire licences.

According to sources about 25 per cent of the garments units in the country do not have licences and are inadequately equipped for fire fighting. They said garments industries are most vulnerable to fire and added that country's worst fire incident occurred in Saraka Garments in 1990 in which 28 workers were burnt alive.

Sources said the Fire Department was now preparing a list of the garments units operating without fire licences and would soon send notices to the units for taking licences.

The Midnight File

Danish PM resigns

COPENHAGEN, Jan 14: Danish Prime Minister Poul Schluter resigned today following the publication of an official report accusing him of lying to parliament over a refugee scandal. Schluter, who informed the press of his resignation, has been the country's premier since 1982, reports AFP.

35 killed as Turkish planes bomb Kurdish camps

DIYARBAKIR (Turkey), Jan 14: Turkish warplanes bombed Kurdish rebel camps in the southeast Thursday, killing at least 35 guerrillas, the Anatolia news agency reported. The strikes were apparently in retaliation for stepped-up assaults by guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers Party, who reportedly killed 14 people on Wednesday in three separate attacks in the southeast, Anatolia said, reports AP.

Military action against Iraq not acceptable: Arab League

CAIRO, Jan 14: The head of the Arab League strongly criticised today the US-led military strike against Iraq, calling the attack a threat to Baghdad's territorial integrity and to the safety of the Iraqi people. Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdel-Maguid said military action against Iraq was not acceptable, reports Reuter.

18 killed, 60 hurt

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Affair Minister Tarikul Islam. Two Fire Service vehicles rushed to the spot within an hour of the accident from Manikganj. Among the 47 injured, 25 were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital and Pangu Hospital and eight others were admitted into Manikganj Hospital, police and hospital sources said.

Our correspondent who visited the spot said that the bus fell on the dry river bed from nearly 50 feet height and was badly damaged.

People in the area alleged that the bridge was faulty as 34 people were killed there in a similar accident in May, 1989.

No relative of the accident

EC deadline

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In a statement prepared for his confirmation hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Christopher said, "I can assure you that this administration will vigorously pursue concerted action with our European allies and international bodies to end the slaughter in Bosnia."

Meanwhile, Bosnia-Herzegovina has asked the United Nations to allow UN troops to use their weapons and act as a genuine protection force.

In a letter to the Secretary General's office released Wednesday, Bosnia-Herzegovina UN ambassador Muhamed Sacirbey cited last week's assassination of Bosnia's Deputy Prime Minister Hakija Turajlic while under the protection of French UN forces as a striking example of the inadequacy of the UN mandate.

The UN protection force, the letter said, was unable to use its firepower or take other steps to prevent the official's abduction and killing last Friday.

A spokesman for Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said meanwhile a UN commission would fully investigate Turajlic's death.

Cold wave

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was comparatively warmer. "It is usual in the winter season of our country," the weatherman said.

The lowest minimum temperature of the day — 7 degrees Celsius — was recorded in Rajshahi where it was at 13 degrees the previous day.

In Dhaka the temperature recorded on Thursday was 10.6 degrees which was 15.8 degrees the previous day. In Khulna the minimum temperature Wednesday was 17 degrees that dropped to 11.8 degrees on Thursday.

The temperature was 7.5 degrees in Rangpur and Dinajpur and 7.4 degrees in Ishurdi, the official said.

Bombay riots

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a licensed revolver from the jeep in which they were travelling by the army on January 11.

Bapat said cases had been registered against them under relevant sections of the Bombay Police Act and Indian Arms Act. Asked why the MLA was arrested despite possessing a licensed weapon, he replied that under Section 135 of the Bombay Police Act, carrying of even licensed arm in public place was an offence.

Others were arrested for possessing unlicensed weapons violating the Indian Arms Act.

The Commissioner put the number of post mortems performed until noon at 329, excluding the 14 killed today. Of the 329 victims, 184 persons died in stabbing, 113 in firing and 32 in arson.

Police fired at four localities and 32 cases of arson were reported.

Clinton warns Iraq

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unity," he told the Iraqi News Agency.

"We denounce this attack and we reserve the right to respond and that is what we shall definitely do."

Referring to the exclusion zone, Aziz said Baghdad "rejects this unjust decision — like the recent ultimatum — and will oppose it."

Aziz also confirmed that Iraq was lifting a ban on UN flights into its territory and halting cross-border incursions into Kuwait.

President Saddam Hussein denounced the Allied air strike Wednesday and urged his people to fight a holy war.

"Fight them as you fought the enemies of God," he said during the speech broadcast live on Iraqi television and the US Cable News Network in reference to the Gulf war.

"Stifle the hatred in their guns," he added, insisting the United States and its allies would be defeated.

"Another battle has started," Saddam said, wearing a military uniform and black beret as he addressed the nation: "The criminals have come back."

Iraq today activated the radars of its anti-aircraft missile batteries in the south one day after air strike, a military sources reported.

The source, quoted by the official in a news agency, said the radars which were not in action during Wednesday's air strike could track down enemy planes.

Meanwhile Kuwait said today its armed forces were on high alert after allied air strikes against Iraq but it was confident Baghdad would not retaliate against the Emirate.

"All our forces are on high alert... we have put them on a full alert," Information Minister Sheikh Saud Nasser Al-Saud Al-Sabah said in answer to questions at a news conference.

But he said he was confident Kuwait was well protected against any possible Iraqi retaliation across the border and any such measures by Baghdad would be punished.

AP adds: US warplanes were back over southern Iraq on Thursday, assessing the damage from their raid on radar sites and missile batteries and vigilant for signs of Saddam Hussein's threatened retaliation.

Senior US officials said Wednesday's half-hour military strike by American, British and French planes in southern Iraq accomplished its mission, but estimated that pilots destroyed only half the missiles they targeted.

The air forces of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates also were involved in support roles. The Iraqi military claimed it suffered only "superficial" damage and that 19 soldiers and civilians died. Saddam threatened to "turn the skies

of Iraq into a lava against the oppressors."

Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney brushed off Saddam's defiant response as "not in touch with reality" and said claims of civilian casualties were "the same kind of gibberish we heard from Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War."

The American jets on patrol Thursday were taking pictures to verify damage reports and looking for any signs Saddam's loyalists would try to strike back.

Senior military officers and pilots involved in the allied mission said their planes faced no resistance from the Iraqi air force or surface-to-air missiles.

"There was no activity today of any alarming nature at all," Adm. Phillip J. Coady, commander of the 10-ship US naval fleet in the Gulf, told reporters aboard the USS Kitty Hawk.

The only Iraqi response on Wednesday appeared to be a small amount of anti-aircraft fire.

Reuters adds: The Russian parliament voted today to debate a right-wing call for the Kremlin to pull its two warships out of the Gulf in protest at Wednesday's US-led raid on Iraq.

"A group of countries is imposing conditions on a sovereign state (Iraq)," nationalist deputy Sergei Baburin told the chamber. "We cannot share with these countries responsibility for this reckless violation of international law."

He called for the two Russian warships, sent to join US British and French naval units in the Gulf in October in an act of solidarity with the West, to be withdrawn.

China expressed deep regret today that the situation in the Gulf had deteriorated and called on Baghdad to adhere to UN resolutions.

Pakistan has called for an emergency session of the United Nations Security Council to discuss the situation arising from the allied raid on Iraq, a federal minister said today.

India today reacted cautiously to the US-led bombing on Iraq, expressing the hope that "dangerous escalations" would be avoided.

52 feared killed in Polish ferry capsizes

RUEGEN (Germany), Jan 14: A Polish ferry capsized and sank during a fierce storm in the Baltic Sea on Thursday, and German television said 52 people were believed to have died, reports AP.

Fourteen people were saved, according to rescue workers, after a storm packing winds of up to 90 mph raged across the Baltic and apparently caused the ferry to capsize early this morning.

Pindi introduces death penalty for drug trafficking

ISLAMABAD, Jan 14: The Islamic government introduced new legislation Thursday to impose the death penalty for drug trafficking, the state-run news agency said, reports AP.

Life in prison is the maximum penalty under current law.

"In order to check the menace of trafficking of narcotics which has assumed alarming proportions in recent years, it is expedient to award capital punishment," Law Minister Abdul Ghafoor was quoted by Associated Press of Pakistan as saying.

Pakistan is a major heroin producer and the main transit route for the export of an estimated 2,000 tons of opium — the raw material used to produce heroin — from neighbouring Afghanistan.

For centuries, opium was the narcotic of choice in the region. The 1979 invasion of Afghanistan by the former Soviet Union brought the technology to produce heroin.

JCD-BCL clash

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Hasanuzzaman and Titumcer. Police said a group of BCL activists attacked JCD thana unit General Secretary Salahuzzaman Opel on the college campus at about 9 am and beat him seriously. He was admitted to the local hospital.

Hearing the news, JCD activists went on rampage and started search for BCL men. Police said clashes between the two rival student groups occurred on the fourth consecutive day.

To avert further trouble, local administration in the evening asked the people over microphone not to come out of houses between midnight and 6 am.

Authorities, however, would neither call the prohibition curfew nor Section 144.

Police were posted at different points as tension gripped the entire thana headquarters.

Peace talks still have chance: Prabhakaran

COLOMBO, Jan 14: Prabhakaran, paramount leader of Tamil separatists of Shri Lanka, hoped that the ongoing ethnic war must be ended by negotiations and political settlement, Colombo Bishop Fernando said here today, reports Xinhua.

The Bishop said at a press briefing that he felt the chance of peaceful negotiation is very much alive to end the war, which has reportedly claimed more than 250,000 lives since it began in 1983.

That is the impression, he said he had after he met Prabhakaran, leader of the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), during his just concluded trip to northern Jaffna peninsula, the heartland of the rebel group.

The LTTE, the most powerful military group of minority Tamils, is fighting to set up a separate Tamil state in the north and east of the island country.

The Bishop said the rebel leader told him during their talks that good gestures made by the Colombo government will be greatly appreciated.

The rebel leader released two of the 41 police constables LTTE has kept in custody since 1990 when he was requested by the Bishop for a gesture of goodwill on his part.

10 hurt as rival groups clash in Pabna

PABNA, Jan 14: At least ten people were injured, three seriously, in a clash between the rival supporters of Paurasava chairman candidates at Mandal Para in the town today (Thursday), reports UNB.

Witnesses and police said the clash erupted following an altercation between the supporters of Advocate Sheikh Shahidullah and Jahurul Islam over bringing out processions at about 10 am.

Of the injured Rabiul Hossain (28), a shopkeeper, Azmat (25) and Farhad (30) were admitted to the Sadar Hospital with serious wounds.

Bush awards Reagan

WASHINGTON, Jan 14: Former President Ronald Reagan was awarded the nation's highest civilian honour, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, in an emotional presentation Wednesday by his successor, President George Bush, reports AFP.

The 81-year-old former president was accompanied by his wife Nancy and members of his family and 1981-1989 administration at the ceremony in the White House east room.

"I have been called a great communicator... it's not an easy thing to communicate what I feel right now," said Reagan in accepting the medal from his former vice-president.

"You are a true American hero," Bush said, adding, some men reflect their time. Ronald Reagan changed his time.