Special Feature

Fourth National Council of Bangladesh Nationalist Party

The ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) is going to hold its fourth national council session on September 1 and 2. The opening day also marks the 15th founding anniversary of the party.

Ahead of the council session, The Daily Star talked with some top ranking leaders of the BNP, especially those who have been speculated by the media to be aspirants for the position of party secretary general. The leaders interviewed also talked about their political careers, and the problems and prospects of the party as well as the country.

The BNP party constitution, as in vogue, does not mandate the election of either the chairman or the secretary general at the council session. It is the electoral college of the party which elects the chairman who in turn

selects the secretary general. However, there is speculation by the media that the incumbent secretary general may continue or may be changed during the forthcoming council sessions. Certain changes in the party constitution and election of the BNP chief are likely to take place at the sessions.

The interviews of Tariqul Islam, Barrister Rafiqul Islam Miah and Abdul MannanBhuiyanwere conducted by NURUL KABIR while those of Barrister Nazmul Huda, Khondoker Mosharraf Hossain and Tanbir Ahmed Siddiky were conducted by ASIUZZAMAN. The incumbent secretary general declined to be interviewed.

The interviews have been placed alphabetically.

Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan

Abdul Mannan Bhuyan, Labour and Manpower Minister, had been a left wing politician until he joined the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) in 1980. Previously, as the general Secretary of the United Peoples Party (UPP), Mannan Bhuyan developed a dispute with the then UPP chief Kazi Zafar Ahmed. Differing on the political directive to follow, he quit the party in 1979. The UPP was a major component of the National Front (NF) which late President Ziaur Rahman formed in 1978 as a prelude to floating his own party a few months

Presently, he is one of the joint secretaries of the BNP and president of the party's peasant front - the Jatiyatabadi Krishak Dal (JKD). Mannan Bhuyan while explaining his departure from left wing politics told The Daily Star that following parting of ways with the then UPP chief Kazi Zafar Ahmed over political direction of the party, I was basically left with two options — either to float a new political party or to join an organisation committed to the people's interest and national sovereignty.

It would have been foolish to float a new party specially when a large number of left wing political organisations, Mannan Bhuyan said.

'I preferred to join the BNP, because I found Ziaur Rahman,

Dr Khandoker Mosharraf

Hossain, a university professor

turned politician, joined the

Bangladesh Nationalist Party

sociates of late president Ziaur

Rahman and held the key post

of student's affair secretary

since 1979 to 1986 till he was

given the responsibility of one of

the joint-secretary posts of the

11 joint secretaries of 15-year-

old BNP. Gaining full confidence

of the party chairperson Prime

Minister Begum Khaleda Zia he

was given the charge of secre-

tary general during the absence

of Abdus Salam Talukder who

was on a month-long trip to the

United States for medical

as the number one front runner

for secretary general post if

Salam Talukder request the

party chairperson to relieve him

village under Daudkandi thana

of Comilla district, Khandoker

Mosharral Hossain completed

his schooling at Daudkandi

High School of Comilla. He

passed his higher secondary

from Chittagong Government

College and masters from

Dlack.: University in Geology in

He started his political ca-

reer since college. He was

elected assistant general secre-

tary of Sir Salimullah Muslim

Hall students union in 1964-65

and the vice president (VP) of

Haji Mohammad Mohsin Hall

Students Union in 1967-68. He

was the vice-president of the

university of the then Chhatra

Born in 1946 at Gayeshpur

(Talukder) of the party.

Party insiders consider him

He is now number two of the

He was one of the close-as-

(BNP) in 1979.

party.

check-up.



founder of the BNP, to be a big patriot and committed to the national cause."

Bhuyan, however, did not choose a third option - when unable to pursue a particular political ideology, one can quit

Why didn't he? Mannan Bhuyan himself comes out with the answer: "I had been a political activist since my school days, I somehow developed a natural interest for politics. It impossible for me to keep myself aloof from the country's political events.

Born in 1943 at Shibpur thana of Narsingdi district, Mannan Bhuyan had his matriculation (equivalent to Sec-

Dr. Khandoker Mosharraf Hossain

League and an executive mem-

ber of erstwhile East Pakistan

Chhatra League central com-

war, Dr Hossain mobilised pub-

lic opinion in the United

turer of geology in Dhaka

University in 1969 and went to

United Kingdom to obtain a

higher degree in the same year.

He obtained a PhD degree in

1974 from London University

and returned the following year.

He was promoted to the post of

professor in 1986. He was the

chairman of the Department of

Geology from 1987 to 1990. He

resigned from his university po-

sition in January 1991 to con-

test in the parliamentary elec-

has been published in the

Who's Who in the World

Yearbook for his significant con-

tribution to the field of geology.

A total of 21 research papers

have been published during his

The biography of Dr Hossain

Dr Hossain joined as a lec-

During the 1971 liberation

mittee in 1968.

Kingdom

ondary School Certificate) in 1958 - the year General Ayub Khan had promulgated Martial Law all over the country. Meanwhile, Bhuyan developed an interest in leftist politics, especially through the literature published by the Calcutta based Kollol group.

He, however, started his political career at the Narsingdi College in 1960. He was elected Social Welfare Secretary of the College Union under the banner of a cultural organisation named the Progati Sangha. In those days political activities were strict y prohibited under Martial Law.

A student of the Dhaka University in 1961, Bhuyan appeared to be one of the organisers of the then East Pakistan Chhatra Union that played a pivotal role in the education movement of the student community in 1962.

He served the Chhatra Union as its Organising Secretary during 1964-'66 and as General Secretary during 1966-'67.

Meanwhile, Mannan Bhuyan had his Bachelor of Arts (Hons) degree from the Department of the General History in 1964 and completed Masters degree in 1965 from the same department. He also had LLB.

Earlier, he was elected Cultural Secretary of the student union of the university's History Department and mem-

academic and professional life.

ister of ministry of energy and

mineral resources on March 20,

1991 and later appointed as the

cabinet minister on September

He is married and has two

In an interview with The

Daily Star he said that the

council will be a turning point

for the party and a large num-

ber of new faces will occupy the

leading posts. He said that they

have received a "tremendous"

feedback from different corners

which made them hopeful of

achieving good results in the

party has concentrated in the

government for the past two

and a half years and now they

He said that the people re-

jected the negative politics of

the Awami League but at the

same time added: "I will not dub

Siddiky on the other hand, in

an interview, said that the

politics of the AL is gone and

Dr Mosharraf expressed his

He commented that al

though there was noone who

was a candidate for the next

secretary general of the party,

there were a number of capable

leaders to officiate the key post.

had so far carried out all the re-

sponsibilities given to him and

would do any other entrusted

upon him in future.

He further added that he

opposition to politics in the

BNP leader Tanbir Ahmed

are going to concentrate in or-

ganisational matters

the AL as dead.

name of religion.

Dr Mosharraf said that his

16 in the same year.

sons and a daughter.

next election.

He was made the state min-

Continued on page 11

Barrister Rafigul Islam Miah

1977: Major General Ziaur Rahman announced his 19 point socio-political and economic programme.

1978: The Nationalist Front (NF), comprising the Jatiya Gonotantrik Dal, Mashiur Rahman led National Awami Party (NAP), the United Peoples Party (UPP) led by Kazi Zafar Ahmed, the Muslim League (ML) led by Shah Azizur Rahman, the Muslim League (ML) led by Khan A. Sabur, the Labour Party and the Tafshili Feder-ation were formed. Ziaur Rah-man was elected president of the country as a Nationalist Front candidate on June 3,1978.

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) was floated on September 1 comprising all the components of the NF excepting the UPP. Ziaur Rahman was elected founder Chairman of the BNP while Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury became the first Secretary General of the party.

1979: The BNP takes part in the country's second Parliamentary Polls held in February and comes out a powerful majority securing 211 seats including 30 reserved for the

1980: The first National Council Session of the party was held on January 25 and 26.

1981: The second National Council Sessions of the party was held on February 9 and 10. The party Electoral College reelected Ziaur Rahman as the BNP chief who retained Prof Chowdhury as the Secretary General. President Zia was killed in a military putsch in Chittagong on May 30. Vice president Justice (retd) Abdus Sattar took over as the acting president of the country.

Justice Sattar also took over as the chief of BNP. He later won the next presidential polls held in November.

1982: The BNP government headed by justice Sattar was overthrown from the state power by then army chief Lieutenant General H M Ershad on March 24, 1982. President Sattar, however, told the nation, through state run broadcasting media, that he had willingly handed over power to Ershad.

1983: Begum Khaleda Zia entered the country's political arena as the vice chairperson of the BNP.

A significant faction of the party deserted the BNP under the leadership of Shamsul Huda and Abdul Matin to join the Ershad regime.

The BNP formed the seven-party political alliance against the Ershad regime.

1984: Khaleda Zia became chairman of the BNP following the retirement of justice Sattar, an octogenarian leader, from politics on February 12. She was subsequently elected by the party as its chairperson on August 10.

1985 : Khaleda Zia replaced Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury with Lieutenant Colonel (retd) Must-afizur Rahman as the Secretary General of the party.

1986: The BNP boycotted the country's third parliamentary elections held under the Ershad government on May 7 and called upon the people to resist any elections under the Ershad

The Awami League led the 8-party alliance and the Jamaat took part in the elections and the AL came out as the second largest party in parliament securing 90 seats.

1987: Khaleda Zia replaced party general secretary Mustafizur Rahman with K M Obaidur Rahman. 1988: Khaleda Zia expelled party general secretary Obaidur

Rahman and his followers in the party's central body for their alleged dubious role in the anti-Ershad movements. Obaed, however, claimed that he was ousted because he had

been demanding decentralisation of the powers of the party Barrister Abdus Salam Talu-kder replaced Obaidur Rahman. The party boycotted the country's fourth parliamentary polls

held under the Ershad regime and decided to reinvigorate the movement agai-nst Ershad 1989: The party held its third National Council Sessions on March 8 and 9. The Electoral College made Khaleda Zia the chief of the party. Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder retained the

secretary generalship. 1990: The party signed an accord with two political alliances - the eight party alliance led by the Awami League and the left leaning Five-party combine - on November 19. Which offered the nation an outline of constitutional transfer of power by

General Ershad and the holding of parliamentary polls under a care taker government. The Ershad regime was compelled to quit power in the face of united agitation by the students and the joint movement of the

three alliances on December 6. 1990: The party took part in the country's Fifth Parliamentary polls held in February 27 and came out as a majority securing 171 seats including 28 reserved for women party members.

1991: Khaleda Zia was sworn in on March 20 as the first woman Prime Minister of the country under acting president Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed. Her colleagues in the BNP also took oaths as ministers on the same day.

The 12th amendment to the constitution seeking switchover to the parliamentary system of governance, moved by Khaleda Zia, was passed unanimously by the fifth parliament on August 6.

The bill received support of the people in a referendum on September 15 and Khaleda Zia took oath as the head of the government under parliamentary system on September 19. - Compiled by Nurul Kabir

Barrister Rafigul Islam Miah, Public Works Minister, joined the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) one and half years

September 1, 1978. Professor A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury, founder secretary general of the party, introduced Rafiq to president Zia immediately before the country's second parliamentary polls in 1979. Later Rafiq sought nomination from the party. He, however, failed to secure the party ticket for parliamentary polls and left for England where he had been living since 1969.

after late president Ziaur Rah-

man floated the party on

Zia and Rafiq met each other for the second time in 1980 when the former, on his way back to Bangladesh from Havana, had a meeting with the Bangladeshis living in London. Barrister Rafiq had been serving the Bangladeshi illegal immigrants as the legal adviser. At that time Zia suggested that Rafiq return home and join his

Rafigul Islam Miah went to England to study law in 1969 and secured his Bar-At-Law from the Lincolns Inn in 1974.

Following Ziaur Rahman's proposal, Barrister Rafiq returned home in February 1980 and was made publicity secretary of the BNP in April the same year.

He was elected member of Parliament in 1991 and joined the cabinet as the State Minister, in charge of the ministry of Labour and Manpower, on March 20 the same year.

Rafiq was appointed Cabinet Minister for Public Works on September, 19, 1991

Although he entered the country's national politics

of the Comilla District Student Action Committee, an affiliated body to the Dhaka University based Central Students Action

Committee that led the educa-

tion movement in 1962. The Central Action Committee had formed 17 such district bodies with a view to launching a countrywide agitation against the recommenda-

tions of Hamudur Rahman

Commission. Rafiq was one of the seventeen regional student leaders, one each from all the then 17 districts of the country, who jointly issued a press statement rejection Hamudur Rahman's recommendations on September

17, 1962. The college authorities expelled him "for his involvement in the activities subversive of the state" and the concerned police authorities issued a warrant of arrest against him under the State Security Act.

Rafiq, while recalling his college-days political activities, told The Daily Star that he had failed to move a writ petition, challenging the warrant of arrest, due to want of money.

He said, a famous lawyer demanded a big amount of money to move the writ and concerned national level politicians also showed indifference

to his case. "This was one of the reasons why I decided to be a lawyer and developed a disliking for he Chhatra League and its parent organisation," Rafiq told this

correspondent. Rafiq passed the B Sc examinations in 1964 and got admitted into the Dhaka University. to study law, the same year. He had his Masters degree in 1967.

Meanwhile Rafiq became active in the Tamuddun Mailish and came in contact with the personalities like Principal Continued on page 11

Tanbir Ahmed Siddiky

through the BNP in 1980, Barrister Rafiq had almost al-

ways been involved in political

activities, since his college days,

under Magura Thana of Comilla

district, Rafiq passed his

Matriculation (equivalent to

Secondary School Certificate)

from a local high school in

for Higher Secondary Education

Khan had promulgated Martial

Law all over Pakistan in October

Bachelor of Science (B Sc) in

1961 at the Victoria College, as-

sociated himself with the

Chhatra League and devoted

himself to the then education

movement against Ayub regime

Rafiq was elected Convener

Rafiq, while a student of

the same year.

in 1962.

He went to Victoria College

Meanwhile, General Ayub

Born in 1943 at Sreerampur

both at home and abroad.

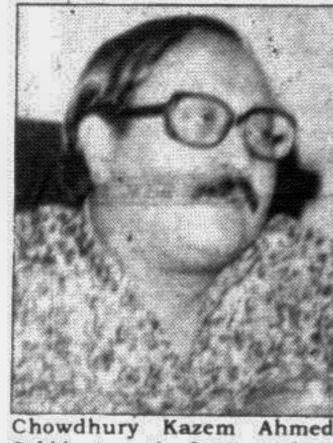
Tanbir Ahmed Siddiky entered into active politics in 1978 when Ziaur Rahman formed BNP. He was the founder treasurer of the party and a close associate of late President Ziaur Rahman.

Earlier, he contested in the Pakistan National Assembly in 1970 as an independent candidate from Gazipur area but lost due to the surge of the Awami League. Securing 37,00 votes he saved his election deposit along with only two others across the country. He lost by only eight votes in a provincial assemble election in 1965. He was only

Educated in St Gregory, Notredame College and Dhaka University, Siddiky practised law in Dhaka High Court for seven years since 1964. He is now the Chairman and Managing Director of 'Baliadi Siddiky Group of Commerce and Industry'.

He was a Member of Parliament from 1979 to 1982 and the Commerce Minister for 1980 and '81.

Tanbir Ahmed Siddiky claims to be the 37th direct descendant of Hazrat Abubakar Sddik (pz). His predecessors he says, migrated from the Middle East to settle at Baliadi village now under Kaliakoir thana of Gazipur district, in 1612. They ruled the area as 'zamidars' of Baliadi. His grand father,



Siddiky, was the first president of Bengal Muslim League with Sir Salimullah as secretary general.

He lost the February 1991 election to the Awami League candidate by a narrow margin.

Tanbir Ahmed Siddiky was the president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry in 1979, and third-time president of Dhaka Chamber of

Commerce and Industry since Considering his ability to overcome all sorts of odds his

friends call him Napolean. "The politics of the Awami

League is outdated and will meet its natural death like the Pakistan Muslim League; this has generated hope for success

Tariqui Islam, Post and

Telecommunications Minister,

entered the country's political

arena in the early sixties. An ac-

Jessore.

in the next five elections," Siddiky told The Daily Star in an interview that took place before the fourth national

The people of the country neither appreciate fundamentalism practised by Jamaat nor do they believe in secularism prescribed by the AL. They believe in a combination of equal treatment and opportunities irrespective of religions," he

Tanbir claimed that the BNP has introduced a new style in the country's politics. Ziaur Rahman, founder of the party was a very creative personality, Tanbir observed.

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), said Tanbir, also convener of the council preparatory committee would like to win the next five consecutive elections to design and implement a 25year economic plan.

Siddiky, a former commerce minister in late President Ziaur Rahman's cabinet, said that without a long-term plan, the country's economic and political stability and progress will not be achieved.

There are records in Malaysia and Singapore where a political party has won five consecutive elections and played a vital role in developing the country, said the 54-year-old leader who is one of the vicechairman of the party.

Barrister Nazmul Huda



Barrister Nazmul Huda, Information Minister, was involved in active politics since his student days at school and entered national politics in 1977 when late President Ziaur Rahman organised Jagodal later was renamed BNP on September 1, 1978. He is one of the nine founding members of the party. He inherited a flavour for politics from his grand father late Fazlur Rahman who was central minister of Pakistan.

Born on January 6, 1945, Nazmul Huda finished his schooling at Nabakumar institute in 1957. In 1962 he graduated with honours in political science and in 1963 obtained Masters on the same subject from Dhaka University. After obtaining Bar-at-Law from Lincoln's Inn, London, Huda returned home in 1969 and started practising Law in Dhaka.

He was an executive committee member of Pakistan Students Federation in London in 1967. During the Independence War in 1971 he gave refuge to the freedom fighters at his village home at Shainepukur, Dohar, Dhaka. On December 8 he led a huge procession from Bagra to Bhagyakul in protest against the brutality by the occupied Pakistani forces

standing committee.

Barrister Huda was active in Anti-autocracy Movement and was arrested on November 28, 1983 during the Secretariat siege and detained under the Special Power Act.

He was elected MP from the Dhaka-1 constituency in February 1991 election and was first given the portfolio of the State Minister for Food on March 20 later becoming the Minister for Information on September 19, 1991.

He has also been associated with greater Dhaka Association, as founding member of Bangladesh human rights council, president of Bangladesh-Ca-



Barrister Huda entered national politics in 1977 at the call of late President Ziaur Rahman. As a joint convenor of Jagodal he organised the party in Dhaka. In 1978 he became the member of the steering committee of the Nationalist Front which backed Zia in the presidential election. He was the youngest among the nine founding members of the BNP

Continued on page 11

CHAIRPERSONS—PAST AND PRESENT



Shaheed Ziaur Rahman



Justice Abdus Sattar

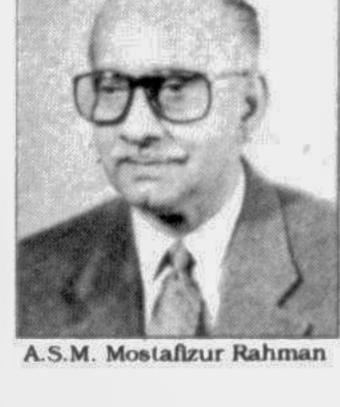


Begum Khaleda Zia

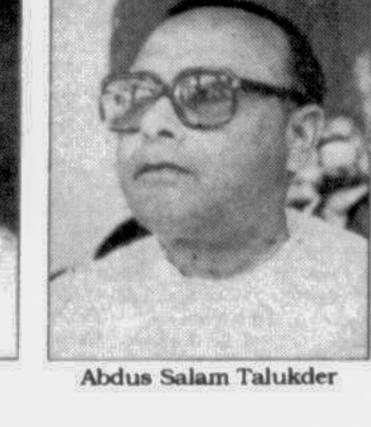
SECRETARIES GENERAL—PAST AND PRESENT

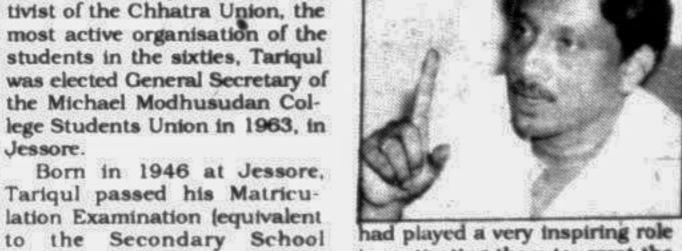


Badruddoza Chowdhury









shahid minar. Tariqui was elected president

of the broader Jessore District

involvement in politics over last Presently one of the vicechairmen of the Bangladesh

Tariqul Islam

Nationalist Party (BNP), Tariqui joined the party in 1978. The first time he had been put behind the bars was when

Certificate) in 1961, and got

admitted into the Modhusudan

College. He had to spend many

years of his life in prison for his

he was elected joint convenor of the Jessore District Unit of the Movement, in 1963, for Establishing Bangla at all levels of the State. This time he had been in jail for eleven months. Earlier, he,

along with his colleagues in the college students union, erected the first shahid minar (monument in honour of the martyrs of the Language Movement in 1952) of Jessore in the premises of the Modhusudan College Tariqui, while recalling the incident, told The Daily Star that litterateur Abdul Hye, the then principal of the college,



Chhatra Union in 1964. After passing the higher secondary examinations (HSC), he got admitted into the Dhaka

University to study Economics in the last quarter of 1964. But he left Dhaka for the Rajshahi University the next year 'as the Rajshahi Unit of the Chhatra Union needed to be stronger'. The central leaders of the Chhatra Union, who had

been engaged in organising a nationwide agitation against the autocratic regime of Ayub Khan, requested him to go to Rajshahi and Tariqui happily accepted the proposal for the sake of the organisation'. He was made President of the Chhatra Union's Rajshahi University Unit in 1965 and he

devoted himself to organising the stan sits of the country's northern region for a demo-cratic movement against the Continued on page 11