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# BNP suffers dilemma over return to JS

## AL needs opposition in House but makes no move

By Nazmul Ashraf

BNP is still undecided about joining the Jatiya Sangsad session beginning November 1. And chances are slim that the party will return to the House while the anti-government campaign is gathering steam.

The ruling Awami League sources spoke of fresh plans about attempts to bring the opposition parties, especially the BNP, back to parliament. But no concrete move has been made as yet.

The opposition parties walked out of the House on July 5 protesting the passage of the Upazila bill when the treasury bench rejected the changes they had proposed. They have since refused to join JS sessions.

It is very crucial for the government to ensure opposition presence in the House during the forthcoming session when it hopes to move the planned constitutional amendment on parliamentary seats reserved for women.

The Cabinet recently approved a draft law seeking continuation of the reserved seats for another 10 years as the provision expires in 2000. The passage of the bill requires two-thirds of the House members, which the ruling party and its allies cannot make.

According to sources, the BNP lawmakers are divided in their opinions on their return to parliament. Quite a large

number, which is growing, of MPs argue that joining the JS sessions would be meaningless after launching the "one-point movement" to oust the government.

This group of MPs, strongly backed by their non-MP party colleagues, also insists that the resignation letters of the party lawmakers be submitted to the Speaker immediately "to begin the process of end to the present Parliament".

More than a year ago, BNP MPs deposited their resignation letters with party chief Khaleda Zia.

But others prefer joining the coming session before deciding on a "permanent boycott". This group argues that the party MPs' presence would help "expose" the treasury bench and thus could make a better case for the boycott.

Meanwhile, recent remarks by Khaleda, who seldom attended sessions of the 39-month-old seventh Parliament, bore clear indications of her party's permanent boycott.

Opposition chief whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain told The Daily Star yesterday that the BNP was yet to decide on its return to parliament. A decision will come from a meeting of the BNP Parliamentary Party (BNPPP), which he said was expected when the session would be very close.

Asked about differences in

opinion on attending parliamentary sessions and the party chief's indication for a permanent boycott, he said, "An official decision would only be taken in the BNPPP meeting".

An influential party leader said the planned BNPPP meeting would be influenced to a large extent by the developments in the days before November 1 as well as during the October 21 hartal called by BNP-led alliance.

A BNP decision on the Parliament is also subject to consultations with its partners - the Jatiya Party of Ershad and Jamaat-e-Islami, he added. The other alliance partner, IOJ, has no MP.

Sources indicated that the crucial decision might also come from the party's policy-making National Standing Committee or even from the party chief as was the case with the last session which BNP did not attend. The BNPPP only endorsed her decision but did not resolve to continue the boycott of the present parliament.

The BNP's boycott of the 14th session ending in the first week of September was attributed to the government plan to allow transhipment facility to India.

The last time the party MPs were present in the House was July 5, three days before the 13th session was over.



Secretaries general of four opposition parties holding a meeting with JP chief H M Ershad in the city yesterday to chalk out their next action programmes. — Star photo

## Benazir wants to be PM, Imran backs coup

LONDON, Oct 19: Former Pakistani leader Benazir Bhutto said today she wants to return to her homeland and become prime minister again, reports AFP.

Benazir, speaking in London where she is now living, urged the country's new military ruler, Gen Pervez Musharraf, to draw up a timetable for a return to democracy after last week's bloodless coup.

Although declining to condone the coup which ousted the elected government of her arch rival Nawaz Sharif, she has already voiced understanding that the situation had become untenable.

Speaking here today, she insisted: "I do want to go back to Pakistan to participate in a free election."

She said she wanted "to go back to my people and ask them to elect me as a prime minister" again, but "only when I feel that my people have a chance to exercise their political rights."

Imran Khan

Meanwhile, former cricket star-turned politician Imran Khan said today he was prepared to provide alleged evidence of "corruption" against deposed premier Nawaz Sharif.

"We will fully cooperate with the new government as we have collected details of money laundering, corruption and fraud against Sharif," the 45-year-old Khan told reporters in Karachi.

"I see his future in jail," Khan said, branding Sharif's two-and-a-half year tenure as "dictatorial and aristocratic rule of a corrupt ruler."

He backed the military coup, saying: "whoever believes in democracy never likes to see the military coming into power, but the situation here was different. It was necessary, it was their compulsion."

## 11 BNP men

 From page 1  
The Second Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court yesterday framed charges against the 11 under Section 3 of the Explosives Act.

A petition was moved on behalf of the accused for discharging them from the case. Rejecting the petition, the judge Mian Mohammad Sharif fixed January 3 for cross-examination of the witnesses.

## No steps taken

 From page 1  
He said, "The responsibility does not lie with the health ministry alone. There are many government bodies for checking food adulteration."

Referring to the responsibility of Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) in this regard, Reza said, "If those industries are allowed to manufacture adulterated food, then the country could be flooded with such hazardous food."

At the last board meeting on October 6, 1999 Justice Qudus Chowdhury gave his legal opinion which was different from his earlier opinion at the inquiry stage.

"ICB has not requested for dropping the proceeding against the defaulting companies. Though apparently it is satisfied with the arrangement made with them regarding payment of dividends, I think instead of dropping the proceeding at this stage, it would be better to keep these pending till ICB reports about full payment. If full and final payment is made after en-

## DG level meeting begins Oct 25 Issue of undemarcated border to be raised

By Mizan Ali and Sheikh Nazrul Islam

The issue of still undemarcated 6.5 km border and 35.5 km demarcated border where pillars could not be marked will come up at the forthcoming DG level meeting between Bangladesh, India and Indian BSF in Dhaka, highly placed official sources said yesterday.

The undemarcated land border includes 1.54 km along Barabari, 1.2 km along Muhurichar and the rest along Lathi Tila, officials said.

The two countries share 4156 km land border. Of this, 6.5 km are yet to be demarcated and pillars could not be marked in 35.5 km since the signing of Indo-Bangladesh Treaty in 1974.

The four-day DG level meeting is scheduled to begin on October 25. This will be part of the twice-a-year regular meetings between top officials of BDR and BSF.

The meeting is being held against the backdrop of increasing border clashes, killing of Bangladeshis by BSF and 'push-in' of Indian citizens into Bangladesh by BSF, creating tension in some border areas.

Twenty-six Bangladeshis were killed in BSF firing in the last 10 months up to October 4, according to a home ministry report.

Besides, 957 people have been pushed into Bangladesh by BSF through different border

## Sonia to become Leader of the Opposition

NEW DELHI, Oct 19: Congress President Sonia Gandhi today ended all speculation by deciding to become the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and chose to retain the Amethi seat in the House and give up Bellary, reports PTI.

Sonia's decision came on the eve of the first session of the newly elected Lok Sabha and a week after she was unanimously re-elected Chairperson of Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP), notwithstanding its poor showing in the recent elections.

In deciding to retain Amethi seat, which she won by over three lakh votes, Gandhi has ended all speculation that she would resign the seat to make way for her daughter Priyanka Vadra, who was in charge of her election campaign there.

Her decision to become the floor leader of the 112-member Congress Party in Lok Sabha also puts at rest speculation that she would nominate someone else to the post. The name of senior party leaders ND Tiwari and Madhavrao Scindia figured in the media.

cashment of the post-dated cheque the Commission may dispose of the proceeding by playing a record of its dissatisfaction on the default and send a warning note for the future," according to Justice Chowdhury's revised opinion.

The latest legal opinion has created the scope for the SEC to decide to wait till October 31, 1999. But the SEC's move has been criticised by many market operators who say that it may give wrong signal to the market as the SEC had earlier "gone by the book" penalising many other companies without showing such "leniency".

"The SEC has clearly discriminated against the small companies, which had been punished earlier. It's no level playing field. The regulators have not acted neutrally," said a market analyst.

Asked, the SEC chairman MA Syed said that the regulators had only given an opportunity to the Beximco companies

areas over the last 20 months. Officials termed this "a second wave of push-in" by BSF.

Earlier, during 1992-95, BSF pushed in 14,505 people into Bangladesh. But BDR with the help of people of bordering areas sent them back.

The issue of border demarcation and marking of pillars were also raised at the last DG level meeting held today in March this year and a DG level meeting between land records departments of the two countries.

"The issues could not be settled as per the decisions of the meetings," said one official requesting anonymity.

Earlier, it was decided that by May this year, demarcation of 6.5 km land border will be completed and pillars will be fixed along 35.5 km marked borders. But the decisions were never complied with by India and the process is on for over 25 years," he added.

Some top officials of the home ministry and the foreign ministry told The Daily Star that the neighbouring country always raised various pleas to delay the process.

## JS body discusses 38 audit objections of Railway

The Public Accounts Committee of the Parliament yesterday discussed 38 audit objection reports involving about Tk 5 crore of Bangladesh Railway of the 1987-88 financial year placed by the Comptroller and Auditor General, reports UNB.

A number of decisions were adopted to resolve the objections in the meeting after elaborate discussion. The meeting also discussed the income and expenditure of the railway, maintenance of railway property, development of passenger service and handing over of some train services to the private sector.

Besides, the meeting laid stress on special survey of the railway lands.

Presided over by committee chairman SM Akram, the meeting was attended by MK Anwar, M Mujiur Rahman, Abul Kalam Azad, Nurul Islam Nahid and AHM Mustafa Kamal.

## Young man

 From page 1  
hospital morgue for autopsy.

Jašin's mother, Rahima Begum, lodged a murder case against the man, saying he had moved forward in line with Musharraf's demand in a speech on Sunday laying out his post coup plans.

The Frontier Post newspaper said there was "large-scale capital flight immediately in the wake of the government-army differences".

It said that 1.5 billion dollar was shifted by members of the ousted "ruling elite" to banks in countries such as Thailand, Japan, Germany, Canada and the United States.

The newspaper did not name its sources for the report. Musharraf said in his speech the defaulters had four weeks to settle their debts "after which their names will be published and the law will take its due course".

The defaulters, many high-profile politicians, owe the banks more than 200 billion rupees (4 billion dollar), and several banks responded to Musharraf's statement that he would crack down on corruption by placing advertisements in newspapers.

"Pay your loans before the hand of the law forces you to do so with penalty," said an advertisement placed by the state-owned Habib Bank.

The Guardian said Musharraf appeared to be clear about his objectives. Musharraf said he would announce the composition of a caretaker government in a few days. The delay has not been due to indecision — the delay has been getting the right people," he said.

## Top lawyers decide not to plead for Ershad Shikdar

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Oct 19: Noted lawyers of Khulna Bar Association have decided not to plead for Ershad Shikdar in court.

Some lawyers have expressed their desire to defend him in the court while others are in a fix what to do. But all are afraid of taking his case because of public sentiment, according to sources in the association.

Leaders of the ruling party and all its front organisations have been urging the lawyers not to defend him in court.

When asked, advocate Feroze Ahmed, Secretary of Khulna Bar Association, today said the association has not taken any decision. It will depend on individual decision, he said.

Shikdar was produced before the court of Additional District & Sessions Judge (Court-I) Hasan Imam today in connection with the Jhal murder case. He was produced before the same court in connection with the same case earlier on October 6.

But charge could not be framed today due to some legal complications, said AC (Court) Ebadul Islam. Four out of the 10 accused in this murder case are absconding. They are Nasir Khan, Faruk Jamai, Shaheb Ali and Zainal Shaikh. The next date for hearing the case has been fixed on November 23, he said.

KMP today claimed that Shikdar killed at least 23 people only during the last ten years. The victims were Moslem, Jainal, Panna, Nantu, Insaf, Khaleque, Kamal, Shajahan, Teko Aziz, Dakaiya Aziz, Akimul, Abul, Jahangir, Farid,

See Page 11 Col 6

## AL, opposition call meetings at same venue

## KCC showcase on Shikdar, 4 others soon

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Oct 19: KCC ward commissioners who remained absent from three consecutive general meetings will be served showcase notices.

The decision was taken at a special meeting of KCC ward commissioners held today in the conference room with Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman in the chair.

The Mayor named five ward commissioners who did not attend any of the general, special and monthly meetings in the last two years. The absentee ward commissioners include Ershad Shikdar elected from ward No-21.

A KCC source said that Ershad Shikdar attended only 10 general ward commissioner meetings.

The Mayor expressed his firm determination to take necessary action against the five ward commissioners. But he did not make it clear whether Ershad Shikdar will be removed for his alleged involvement in 17 murder cases.

The Mayor did not also say anything regarding serving showcase notice upon Ershad who is under police custody.

## Sharif

 From page 1  
probe," he said adding a decision on whether to send person to a civilian or a military court would depend on the charges.

Reuters adds: Pakistan banks began a push against defaulters today as the country waited for coup leader Gen Musharraf to name a cabinet, now expected in three or four days.

Major state-owned banks placed advertisements in newspapers urging defaulters to step forward in line with Musharraf's demand in a speech on Sunday laying out his post coup plans.

The Frontier Post newspaper said there was "large-scale capital flight immediately in the wake of the government-army differences".

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## Trawler capsizes: 8 fishermen missing in Bay

CHITTAGONG, Oct 19: Eight fishermen were missing at a trawler capsized in the Bay early today with 24 fishermen and crews aboard, reports UNB.

Crew of two foreign ships in the outer anchorage rescued 20 fishermen of the trawler FB Sagar.

Port Radio Control sources said Greek flag-carrying oil tanker spires rescued 12 while Panamanian MV Marry Noor another four.

The rest eight were missing till filing of this report.

## Bus driver beaten to death in Tangail

TANGAIL, Oct 19: A bus driver was beaten to death at Alenga in Kalihati thana here last night, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Julhasuddin, 30, of village Moshajan in the same thana. According to police, a group of people attacked Julhas at the bus stand at about 10 pm and mercilessly beat him with iron rod and stick. He died on the spot.

A case has been filed with local police accusing seven people in this connection.

## Girl gangraped, strangled

JESSORE, Oct 19: Armed hoodlums killed a minor girl after violating her at a remote village here Monday night, reports UNB.

Police and hospital sources said the 12-year old girl of Avoinagar thana was picked up by the miscreants at gunpoint at 10.30 pm.

They took her to a nearby abandoned house and raped her one after another. Later, they strangled the girl.

Police recovered the body this morning and sent it to sadar hospital for autopsy.

## UZ polls

 From page 1  
Manjur said it "unanimously" decided that chiefs of the four parties would meet "immediately".

"We will sit in the first week of November to finalise the date for a meeting of Khaleda Zia, HM Ershad, Golam Azam and Azizul Haq. Now there is no confusion about it."

He said the meeting discussed the government's "conspiracy" to disunite the four parties and expressed the determination to maintain unity.

"None of the alliance partners will step into government's conspiracy," he said.

Replying to questions, he said formation of an election alliance, sharing of seats and formation of future government will be discussed later. "The main objective of the parties is to oust the Awami League government first".

Asked if the parties will participate in the Upazila polls if the Chief Election Commissioner resigns, he said, "This is not the prime issue now. Our objective is to topple the government." He categorically said JP will not participate in Upazila polls without a caretaker administration.

BNP leaders Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, M Shamsul Islam MP and Anwar Zahid, JP leaders Nazir Rahman Manjur, Kazi Firoz Rashid and ABM Golam Mostafa, Jamaat leaders Matiuur Rahman Nazami, Mohammad Kamaruzzaman, Abdul Qader Mollah and ATM Azharul Islam and IOJ leaders Fazlul Haq Amin and ARM Abdul Matin attended the meeting.

## Bijoya Dashami today

By Staff Correspondent

Bijoya Dashami today. Durga Puja, the greatest religious festival of the Hindu community, began on Friday last.

The emergence of Goddess Durga will be held tonight. President Justice Shahabuddin, Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in separate messages greeted the members of the country's Hindu community on the occasion of their religious festival.

Maj Gen (rtd) C R Dutt, BU, Bhandonta Bodhipal Mahathero and Siril Sikder, the two Presidents and Dr Nim Chandra Bhoumik, General Secretary of Bangladesh Hindu, Buddhist, Christian Unity Council yesterday greeted the Hindu community.

The leaders urged them to be imbued with the teachings of Bijoya and eliminate crime and injustice for prosperity of the country.

Mayor of Dhaka Mohammad Hanif yesterday visited different Puja Mandaps including Shakhari Bazar, Tanti Bazar, Mohammadpur Bashbari, Raier Bazar, Zafraabad and Pulpur.

## Student's bid to mug teacher on DU campus

By DU Correspondent

A former Dhaka University student, Hafizur Rahman, yesterday made an abortive bid on the campus at mugging Dr. Muhammad Shahjahan Mir, who once taught him Bengali literature at the university.

The mugger, however, was polite in his approach during the stick-up.

"Sir, give me Tk 500," said the student riding a racing bicycle, as he waylaid the rickshaw carrying his former teacher.

Refusal by the teacher rather enraged his former student, who, in turn, raised his demand to Tk 2,000, which he threatened to extort forcibly, unless the teacher obliged willingly.

The teacher then cried out for help. A crowd chased the mugger into the adjacent Zahurul Haq Hall, where he resides, illegally.

Stupefied by the behaviour of his former student, Dr Shahjahan lodged a complaint with the Proctor's office. He also filed a case with Ramna police in this regard.

"It is really unfortunate that one of my former students tried to rob me," Dr Shahjahan later told The Daily Star.

He denied having any bone of contention with Hafizur, when the latter used to be a student of his.

Hafizur was expelled from the university three on charges of copying at the examinations. Allegations have it that he was ousted from the Bangabandhu Hall on charges of theft.

Sources said that university authorities refused to admit him into M. Phil course at DU in view of the allegations against him.

## Another guest house in Baridhara sealed

By Staff Correspondent

Another unauthorised guest house in the city's Baridhara area was sealed by a joint team of Gulshan police, Special Branch of police and Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) yesterday, police said.

The joint team has started sealing unauthorised guest house in posh areas of the city after a special committee, headed by Director General of DNC, was formed to curb drug abuse.

The joint team has so far sealed six guest houses in Banani, Gulshan and Baridhara areas since Friday.

The joint team yesterday raided Best Eastern, a guest house, on Road Number One in Baridhara at about 4 pm.

A general diary was filed with Gulshan thana in this connection.

## Senior US official to visit Dhaka from Oct 23

By Diplomatic Correspondent

A senior US government official, Matt Daley, will be in Dhaka on a two-day visit beginning October 23. He will be here to discuss a wide-range of bilateral issues concerning Washington and Dhaka with senior government officials and leaders, a spokesman of the US embassy said yesterday.

Referring to a report published in a daily yesterday that US President Clinton's envoy Bruce Reidel will proceed to Dhaka from Delhi, the spokesman said, the report was not correct.

On President Bill Clinton's proposed visit to Bangladesh, the spokesman said the US intention to visit Dhaka early next year, but no date has yet been worked out.

Regarding Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's desire to take a bilateral trip to the US, the spokesman said that no date has been fixed yet. He, however, added, "We are working with the Bangladesh Ministry of Foreign Affairs."

At the last board meeting on October 6, 1999 Justice Qudus Chowdhury gave his legal opinion which was different from his earlier opinion at the inquiry stage.

"ICB has not requested for dropping the proceeding against the defaulting companies. Though apparently it is satisfied with the arrangement made with them regarding payment of dividends, I think instead of dropping the proceeding at this stage, it would be better to keep these pending till ICB reports about full payment. If full and final payment is made after en-

## SEC bends rules to favour Beximco cos

 From page 1  
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