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## Bhuiyan protests appointment of official ignoring EC views

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has sharply reacted at the recent transfer of an additional secretary from the Election Commission (EC) and appointment of another official in his place without consulting the EC.

In a statement issued yesterday the BNP secretary general said that the appointment of any official at the EC by the government without consulting the EC went against the Article 120 of the Constitution.

Referring to a news report regarding the appointment published in an English daily the day before, Mannan Bhuiyan also said, it is the Constitutional provision that any appointment to the EC would be done in consultation with the EC.

He said that BNP felt concerned at such a development particularly when the government, according to him, was busy in appointing the Chief Election Commissioner 'unilaterally' ignoring the views of the Opposition.

## Blasts inside bus in Ctg: Death toll rises to 3

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 17: Another person injured in bomb blasts inside a passenger bus on Satkania-Bandarban road on Sunday died at Chittagong Medical College Hospital this morning, raising the death toll to 3.

The dead was identified as Abdul Rahman, 35.

At least 40 passengers were injured when bombs exploded inside the passenger bus bound for Bandarban from Satkania, police said.

Police suspected that the explosions took place while bombs were being carried by a passenger of the bus.

Investigation is going on, police said.

## Mystery shrouds death of made at Ghoran

By Staff Correspondent

Mystery shrouds the death of a minor housemaid whose body was recovered from her master's house at Uttar Goran under Khilgaon police station Monday.

The dead, identified as Roshana 7, a housemaid was working at 255, Uttar Goran.

Meanwhile, the autopsy report indicated that there were injury marks on her body. The family sources, however, said that she died 'naturally'.

The victim died at the house at about 5 pm. Police recovered her body at about 5:30 am and sent it to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy right away.

The post mortem of the body was carried out on Tuesday and the doctor found marks of injury on her body. The physicians suspect that she died from the injuries inflicted on her body.

When contacted, the Duty Officer of the Khilgaon police station said that a case had been filed in this regard, but they were yet to receive the autopsy report.

## Four arrested in Barisal: Firearm recovered

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, May 17: Kotali police arrested four alleged terrorists with a revolver from a computer centre at the eastern side of the Bibi Pukur in the town on Monday night.

Acting on a tip-off, a police team led by Kotali thana OC Rabiul Islam raided the Anshu Computer Centre at about 9:30 pm and arrested Saiful, Kalam, Mustafiz and Musa with a revolver.

A case was filed against them under Public Safety Act (PSA). An arms case was also filed against Musa who was carrying the revolver.



BCL leaders presenting a crest to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at a reception at Paltan Maidan in the city yesterday. — Star photo

## Dhaka-Thimpu talks in July to renew trade, transit accords

Bangladesh and Bhutan agreed to hold bilateral trade negotiations here in July to renew Dhaka-Thimpu agreements on Trade and Transit that expires on September 7, reports UNB.

The trade talks will also include other related issues to facilitate more efficient flow of trade between the two close neighbours, said a joint Bangladesh-Bhutan statement yesterday.

In the statement they stressed the need for improvement of the infrastructure facilities for trade and speeding up the process of opening an additional trade route through Nakugan and Dalu.

The decision on trade talks was taken during the 5-day visit of Bhutanese Foreign Minister Lyonpo Jigmi Y Thinley to Bangladesh.

In the joint communique they agreed that there was vast potential for enhancement of bilateral cooperation in economic, social and cultural

fields, which needed to be concretised through specific measures such as expansion of trade and investments, people-to-people contacts and frequent exchange of visits at different levels.

The two sides appreciated the progress in bilateral trade and expressed their desire to expand it further. In this context, the two sides underscored the important role being played by the private sector of the two countries.

Recalling the significance of SAARC, the two Foreign Ministers agreed to work towards its revitalisation by starting interactions at the official level.

They were convinced that the vast potential of SAARC could only be tapped by accelerating the process of regional cooperation in South Asia.

They stressed the importance of forging sub-regional cooperation under the initiative of the South Asia Growth Quadrangle (SAGQ).

## Present govt is most efficient & competent since '75: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who seeks a second term in office, said people's growing confidence in Awami League will enhance percentage of vote for the party because of her government's pro-people policies and efficiency in running the country, reports UNB.

"Present government is the most efficient and competent government since 1975 (changeover) on all counts," she said while addressing a meeting of Awami League's front-ranking leaders and workers who came to Ganobhaban yesterday morning to greet Hasina on the occasion of her homecoming day.

She asked her workers to make further sacrifice for the cause of the people.

"My politics is for the people and all my decisions and actions are to ensure their welfare... And I hope people would recognise it and elect Awami League for the next term," she said amidst cheers.

Hasina, who returned to Dhaka on May 17, 1981 ending her six years' exile in India, said: "On return home I tried to find out my kin and familiar faces, but I did not find any of them... all have left me."

Hasina said she had lost all of her family in one of the cruelest episodes in human history and tried to find solace in Awami League: "It's like my family."

She left Dhaka for Germany on July 30, 1975 to stay with her scientist husband. Her two kids — Joy and Putul — and younger sister Sheikh Rehana accompanied her and incidentally escaped the massacre. It all happened just 15 days after her departure.

The Prime Minister said she did not know what she should do, where to go, after the August tragedy. She lived some days at the house of Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury who was then Bangladesh Ambassador to Germany.

Some world leaders, including Yugoslav President Tito and Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, offered her political asylum and she decided to stay in India to maintain contact with Dhaka.

About her taking over the responsibility of Awami League as president, she said she was not mentally prepared for it although she was actively involved.

See page 11 col 3

## FEMA recommendations for appointment of CEC, ECs

The Constitution should be amended providing for appointment of Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners by the President in consultation with major political parties, reports UNB.

This was recommended by the Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) on invitation by the Election Commission to recommend reform measures for strengthening the election process in the country.

Clause 118 (1) of the Constitution provides for the appointment of the CEC and other ECs by the President on advice from the Prime Minister.

The recommendations of FEMA were made available to the press yesterday said the President would appoint CEC and ECs in consultation with parties having representation in Parliament must be defined by the law.

If Parliament does not exist at the time of appointing CEC and ECs, the President should consult the parties in previous Parliament.

FEMA said its recommendations to strengthen election process in Bangladesh

See page 11 col 3

## Just to express joy

By DU Correspondent

Activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) yesterday fired three gunshots in front of Madhu's Canteen on the Dhaka University campus.

Witnesses said BCL activists from Mohsin Hall fired the shots at about 11:50 am.

Asked about the reason behind, some BCL leaders said it was just to express joy.



An enumerator is enlisting voters at a house at Faridabad in old part of the city yesterday. — Star photo

## Hillary wins first battle

Democratic convention nominates her for Senate race

ALBANY, May 17: With thousands of supporters, including her husband, cheering in a packed sports arena, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton was nominated for the Senate at the Democratic Party convention in her adopted state, reports AP.

The nomination by the 352 delegates of the only first lady to run for public office was unanimous Tuesday night.

"Make no mistake, this election is not about me or my Republican opponent," Clinton said in a 38-minute address that ended with the triumphant theme from the movie "Chariots of Fire." "It's about the people of New York and our common mission."

The first lady said the mission was to improve the lives of New York's families and children.

"We are producing countless new fortunes, yet we have the second-highest rate of poverty in the country and the biggest gap between the rich and the poor," she said.

Still uncertain was whether Clinton would face Republican Rudolph Giuliani, the New York City mayor whose candidacy was expected to make the Senate race a clash of political titans. Three weeks ago, the mayor announced he had prostate cancer and said he was uncertain if he could continue in the race.

The Republican state convention in Buffalo is on May 30. Shaking hands with supporters, signing autographs and posing for photographs with admirers at the arena in downtown Albany before the convention began, the first lady predicted she would be "victorious in November."

In a last-minute addition to the festivities, President Bill Clinton changed his schedule Tuesday in order to join the crowd of about 10,000 people at the convention.

"I just decided I ought to be

there," Clinton said before leaving Washington. "It's a big deal for her, a big night for her and I want to be there with her. I just want to be there to support her."

The president did not address the convention, but at a reception afterward hosted by top New York Democrats, he told supporters he was "profoundly grateful for the way you have embraced her... She will not disappoint you."

Three weeks ago, Giuliani stunned New York with the announcement that he had been diagnosed with cancer and might have to quit the race. Things turned even more topsy-turvy when the married mayor subsequently confirmed he was seeing "a very good friend," Judith Nathan, and the announced that he was seeking

a legal separation from his wife of 16 years, TV personality and actress Donna Hanover.

Giuliani told supporters at a fund-raiser Monday night that he was "very much inclined" to stay in the race, but still had to determine his course of medical treatment before he could decide on the Senate contest.

Democrats tried to keep the focus on their convention and on the first lady. There was no mention of Giuliani in the speeches.

The delegates didn't seem to care, cheering lustily for speaker after speaker.

"This is the kind of excitement we haven't seen since Bobby Kennedy," state Democratic Chairman Judith Hope said on the eve of the convention.



US President Bill Clinton (R) joins his wife and Senate candidate Hillary Clinton at the New York State Democratic Convention in Albany yesterday, where she was officially nominated by the Democratic Party as a US senatorial candidate for the state of New York. — AFP photo

## Several quakes shake Taiwan: three killed

From Page 1

TAIPEI, May 17: Several moderate earthquakes struck central Taiwan today, killing three people and triggering landslides that blocked roads, seismologists and media reports said, according to AP.

The casualties were caused by three tremors that jolted Taichung County, about 130 kilometers (80 miles) south of the capital, Taipei.

A hotel worker died in the town of Kuku when the shaking caused him to fall, officials said. Details were not available on the two other deaths.

Local media had conflicting reports on the number of injuries, with accounts ranging from 15 to 27 injuries.

A TVBS cable news report showed huge boulders blocking mountain roads and a pickup demolished by falling debris. Emergency workers raced to get the injured in helicopters flying to hospitals.

In September, a 7.6-magnitude tremor jolted the same region, killing about 2,400 people and destroying thousands of homes. Since the massive quake, more than 12,000 aftershocks and tremors have rattled Taiwan. Most have been harmless.

The most severe quake on Wednesday was of magnitude 5.3. Its epicenter was about 40 kilometers northeast of the Sun Moon Lake resort area, the island's largest natural lake, the Central Weather Bureau said. The lake is about 150 kilometers south of the capital Taipei.

## Naziur under fire

From Page 1

hubbud Ahmed and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleed Zia.

After the meeting, Bhuiyan told the newsmen that the meeting discussed the preparation on May 25 joint public meeting at Sylhet to be addressed by BNP Chairperson Khaleed Zia, JP Chairman HM Ershad, Jamaat-e-Islami

Ameer Gohar Azam and Islami Oikya Jote Chairman Asizul Haq.

BNP leaders M Shamsul Islam and Anwar Zahid, JP leaders Nazim Rahman Manjur, ABM Gohar Mostafa and Mostafa Jamal Haider, Jamaat leaders Matur Rahman Nizami, Ali Ahsan Mujahid and ATM Azharul Islam, IOJ leaders Fazlul Huq Amini, A R M Abdul Matin and Principal Masud Khan attend the meeting.

Liaison sources said Nazim told the meeting that he was misquoted by the newspapers. But the leaders of BNP and two other component parties of the alliance told Nazim that they were present at Paltan rally and heard the remarks while he was speaking.

Finally, Nazim agreed to issue a statement to the press saying that he was misquoted. The meeting decided to release the statement to all newspapers in Dhaka and Sylhet.

The CLC meeting advised all leaders of the alliance to refrain from making any comment which may create misunderstanding among the leaders and activists.

Sources also said the BNP secretary general apprised the CLC members about Tuesday's meeting between President Sha-

hubbud Ahmed and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleed Zia.

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## Bomb blast kills 14 in Lanka

LONDON, May 17: A bomb blast killed at least 14 people and wounded 42 in the east Sri Lankan town of Batticaloa today, a pro-Tamil rebel website said, reports Reuter.

The website (www.Tamilnet.com), monitored in London, did not give any details of the blast in the Tamil-majority town which came as government troops battled the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels in the northern Jaffna peninsula.

## News Analysis

## Cong faces crisis of confidence

From Pallab Bhattacharya

NEW DELHI, May 17: A day after India's top opposition leader Sonia Gandhi led a march of senior Congress leaders to protest Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee government's cut in subsidies on essential goods, her party is not entirely in an upbeat mood.

And there are two main reasons for this. An editorial in Congress's official mouthpiece "Sandesh", written by its editor and senior party leader Vasant Sathe, takes a pot shot at the party central leadership, causing flutter and consternation in party circles.

The editorial talks of the party "once again facing a crisis of confidence and confusion and mental depression among senior members of Congress."

It says "Sonja has been and continues to be fully aware of her own limitations, both inherent and circumstantial... Her natural reserve and shy nature was a great handicap with the media and the intellectual elite. Language was one of her major hurdles."

But Sathe is also appreciative of the 'progress' made by Sonia Gandhi. She has acquired a good command over

Hindi and is able to communicate effectively in huge public meetings... even in the Lok Sabha she is now making effective intervention," the editorial says.

Sathe says there is a "crat culture" for which all leaders find a common uniting point in the Nehru-Gandhi family.

"Not that there are no other more brilliant and seasoned leaders in the Congress (I)... It is a harsh reality that Sonja is the only Congress (I) leader who continues to draw huge crowds in all parts of the nation. If she had not the charismatic Nehru-Gandhi appeal, the disgruntled elements could have tried to rock the boat, even if they had no alternative," says the editorial.

Significantly, it also suggests in an indirect manner the need for Congress leaders in the age group of 70 and above to make way for younger ones.

This assumes significance in the backdrop of murmurs by the younger leaders in the party to have a greater say in its affairs and complaint about a coterie of aged leaders around Sonia Gandhi.

Sathe's comments, though

not a direct attack on Sonia Gandhi's leadership, certainly raised eyebrows in a party whose chief has always been the focus of adulation often bordering on sycophancy.

Reacting to the editorial, Congress's official spokesman Anil Shastri told reporters here yesterday that it did not reflect the party's views. But he was clearly hard put to explain why the editorial was carried by the party's mouthpiece.

This is the second time in recent months that the party's official organ has caused embarrassment to the rank and file of Congress.

Sometime back, the magazine had published an interview with Ajit Pawar, the nephew of Sharad Pawar who had quit Congress after raising the banner of revolt against Sonia Gandhi's leadership because of her foreign origin. Ajit Pawar is now a minister in a coalition government between Congress and Sharad Pawar-led National Congress Party in Maharashtra state.

The editorial came a few days after the flutter caused by

## Bangladesh for prohibition of chemical arms

HAGUE, May 17: Bangladesh has renewed its commitment to the prohibition of chemical weapons and their destruction to uphold the world peace, reports BSS.

Reiterating Bangladesh's commitment to Chemical Weapon Convention (CWC), Ambassador Ghas Uddin told a conference here yesterday that "even though Bangladesh is not possessing the same, we are for destruction of chemical weapons."

Bangladesh Ambassador is leading a four-member delegation at the fifth conference of the states parties to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) now in session here from May 15.

One hundred and thirty-five states parties as well as some observer states are taking part in the four-day session.

The convention on the prohibition of development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and on the destruction of whole range of poisonous and harmful chemical weapons from the face of the world.

Gyash Uddin, the Bangladesh Ambassador to the Netherlands and Permanent Representative to the OPCW, while participating in the conference urged all involved for universal participation in the CWC in order to maintain world peace and security.

He underscored use of chemicals for peaceful purpose and urged the need for regional/sub-regional framework for cooperation among the developing countries, which are parties to the convention.

He said the developing countries need greater cooperation for availing the benefit of the full implementation of the convention for socio-economic development.

The Ambassador also requested the OPCW secretariat to pay more attention and cooperation in organising more sponsorship of CWC related training courses, seminars and workshops to educate the technical and policy making personnel of national authorities involved.

He also reiterated Bangladesh's full support to successful implementation of the CWC for noble cause of humanity.

## DB men allegedly misbehave with Evidence staff

By Staff Correspondent

Plainclothed policemen on Tuesday allegedly entered the office of the English weekly "Evidence" and misbehaved with members of the staff of the weekly.

A press release of the weekly yesterday said that five armed men, who introduced themselves as DB police entered the office at about 2pm and wanted to know about the office room of Evidence Editor Major (Retd) Manjur Gader, who is also a central leader of BNP, from the security guards and the telephone operator.

The DB men allegedly abused the security guards when they were refused to see the Editor. They, according to the press release, also threatened the female telephone operator when she failed to provide the editor's mobile phone number.

The press release said that the DB personnel entered the office in violation of a High Court order issued in January this year. The Evidence Editor had filed a writ petition seeking a court order to stop frequent raid by police at his house and business place.

The HC order had said "pending hearing of the rule, the respondents are restrained from making entry into his house, place of business, search or seizure except in due process of law".

A general diary has been lodged with Mohammadpur thana police regarding Tuesday's incident, the release added.

## Angry students damage shops, houses

By Staff Correspondent

Angry students damaged more than 50 thatched houses and shops after a student of the Sher-e-Bangla Krishi Institute was stabbed by a local young man at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Pakka Market in the city yesterday morning.

The victim was identified as Mainul Islam Sohel.

The incident occurred at about 11 am when Sohel went to a nearby barber shop at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Pakka Market. He locked into an altercation at the shop with one Tapan of Agargaon colony. At one stage Tapan stabbed Sohel, police said.

Students of the Krishi Institute later ransacked the shops and thatched houses, witnesses and police said.

A case was filed with Tejgaon thana. None was arrested in this connection.

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