

Separate ministry for FFs if BNP returns to power: Khaleda

Confident of returning to power, BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday assured the freedom fighters of setting up a separate ministry to list genuine Muktioddhas and look after their welfare, reports UNB.

"Inshallah, we will soon go to power. A separate ministry for Muktioddhas will be formed so that they can live with dignity. They will be given responsibility to build the country," she told a gathering of freedom fighters.

Khaleda was addressing a discussion meeting on the occasion of the biennial council 2001 of Jatiyatabadi Muktioddha Dal (JMD) Dhaka city unit at the Institution of Engineers yesterday afternoon.

A 101-member new committee with M A Majid, a DCC ward commissioner and BNP leader, as president and Kabir Ahmed as general secretary was announced in the meeting.

Chaired by M A Majid, the meeting was addressed, among others, by chief founder advisor of JMD Col (retd) Oli Ahmed, former Speaker Shaikh Abdur Razzak, JMD president Redwan Ahmed, Maj (Rtd) Hafizuddin Ahmed, city BNP president and freedom fighter Sadek Hossain Khoka, Mohammad Shahjahan and Mezbuddin Ahmed Shabu.

She asked the freedom fighters to come forward to protect the country's sovereignty and independence.

"People have tremendous confidence in you for your glorious role during the war of independence and your readiness to make supreme sacrifice," she

Gunmen attack UCBL chairman's garments factory

CHITTAGONG, Jan 14:

Unidentified gunmen attacked a garment factory owned by UCBL chairman Zafar Ahmed Chowdhury in the city's Chandan Nagar area tonight, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the gunmen attacked the RR Fabrics and exploded a number of crackers.

They searched for Zafar Ahmed Chowdhury and his wife ward commissioner Hasinga Zafar and left the scene firing shots. Zafar Ahmed and his wife were not there during the attack.

A case was filed with Khulshi thana.

One strangled

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family sources said.

Shefali went to the house of Hasanuzzaman at Tongi with her daughters on Saturday. She locked into an altercation with her husband over the marriage of her husband, sources added.

At one stage Shefali left her husband's Tongi residence leaving her daughters there.

Hasanuzzaman came to his Utara residence at 1 am and started quarrel with his wife. At one stage of altercation Hasanuzzaman started beating her. Shefali fell on the ground following torture, police said.

Hasanuzzaman, his elder brother Khairuzzaman and one Siraj took her to a local clinic where she died. They took the body to the house, police quoting the witness said.

When the guard of the house wanted to know about the incident they could not give satisfactory answer, police said.

Moniruzzaman, the guard then locked the door of Shefali from outside. He immediately informed it to his landlord who called Utara police.

Victim's cousin Shahnaz Begum, filed a case with Utara police accusing Shefali's husband, his elder brother Khairuzzaman and Siraj, friend of Hasanuzzaman.

Khairuzzaman was arrested in this connection but Hasanuzzaman managed to escape.

Split verdict

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that his confessional statement was also not taken properly. Charges against the four other could not be proved, he noted.

Justice Khairul Huq in his 445-page upheld the death sentence of all the 15.

Ruhul Amin has now been elevated to the Supreme Court.

Copies of the split judgement were not available yesterday.

Prokrichi

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country's public administration is heavily centralised in the secretariat and urged to take an immediate decentralisation process with a view to devolution of power and duty.

They also demanded full financial autonomy and administrative empowerment in organisations in grass roots level.

Those present at the press conference included Dr MAK Azad, Prof Jahana Begum, Khar Monjor Morshed, Nurul Huda, M Nazrul Islam and Mabsur Rahman Tutul.

Jalal murder

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ing into cognizance a report published in The Daily Star on January 11.

The news items contradicted a police report that witnesses in the case were not available at their addresses.

The Daily Star correspondents took only three hours to find out the witnesses.

Jalal, a source and driver of the Detective Branch of DMP was beaten to death and his body was found in the water tank on the rooftop of the DB office at Minto Road in the city on March 25, 1999.

Jalal was reportedly killed over sharing of source money.

Four DB personnel including an inspector and canteen manager of the DB office were accused of torturing Jalal to death.

Speaker

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AAPP conference and general assembly as a keynote speaker. He was scheduled to lead a 20-member delegation including officials of the AAPP Secretariat in Dhaka.

Meanwhile, these officials led by Qazi Monzur-I-Mowla is likely to leave for Phnom Penh today.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the Armed Forces War Course conducted by the National Defence College at the Mirpur Cantonment yesterday. The Prime Minister is seen, among others, with the course members. --ISPR photo

EU ambassadors urge govt, opposition to work together

European ambassadors yesterday said the government and the opposition should work together for a fair election and accept its results to ensure a healthy democratic process in Bangladesh, reports UNB.

"This is the election year and democratic process would depend much on freedom and fairness of the election and acceptance of the results by the parties concerned," Swedish Ambassador Anders Johnson told reporters at the embassy.

Danish Ambassador Finn Thilsted said the EU wants to see the democratic process, on which Bangladeshi people have got strong commitment, continue through holding impartial elections under a unique system of caretaker government.

The EU envoys would not, however, comment on whether the prevailing hostility between the ruling party and the opposition is conducive to free and fair voting.

Ambassador Johnson felt the need for constant dialogue between the two parties, strengthening democratic institutions like human rights organisations, appointing Ombudsman and active role by civic society and the media for effective functioning of democracy.

Referring to President Shahabuddin Ahmed's New Year address to Parliament requesting all to sink differences and work together, he said this is the occasion when the ruling party and the opposition can

join their hands for smooth functioning of democracy by ensuring fair voting.

About EU-Bangladesh cooperation, the Swedish Ambassador said the first Joint Commission meeting of the European Commission and Bangladesh would be held here in March to identify priority areas of interaction and implement development projects.

EU and Bangladesh signed the Cooperation Agreement last year in Brussels for a wider cooperation in aid, trade, investment, environment, science, culture and social sectors.

Besides, UN world conference on LDCs would be held on May 3 to deal with an EC proposal to allow free access of products of the least developed countries, including Bangladesh, to the EU market.

"We like to see the proposal implemented," Johnson said, adding that during his country's presidency from January to June, Sweden would try hard to enhance the broad partnership between the 15-member European Union and Bangladesh.

He said the three Es enlargement of EU members, environment and employment would be the main focus during Sweden's presidency over the European continent.

PM asks armed forces

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not come under external attack and for this, prevalence of democratic system in neighbouring countries is also very much important.

Democracy is also important for economic development, she told the function, observing that the people of South Asia are poor and for their economic development, regional peace and democracy are imperative.

Bangladesh proved in all respects that it is a peace-loving nation and participation of the members of Bangladesh armed forces in the UN peacekeeping missions is a proof of it, she pointed out.

The image of the country has brightened at home and abroad for its peace posture and for restoring democratic process, the

Prime Minister observed.

Terming the members of the armed forces as a symbol of national independence and sovereignty, Sheikh Hasina said her government had taken necessary steps for upgrading and modernising the armed forces.

"We are doing our best to build up a strong armed forces despite all limitations and resource constraints," she told the function, adding that the government has faced a lot of obstructions while taking development measures for the defence forces.

Referring to the restoration of democracy through a long struggle, the Prime Minister said people's confidence in the existing democratic system in the country is growing.

With the restoration of democracy, the present government is

taking all necessary steps for rapid development of the country, she said and mentioned her sincere efforts in this regard.

She said the government had restored discipline in economic sectors ensuring steady growth in every field.

Commandant of the NDC Major General Abu Kaiser Fazlul Kabir received the Prime Minister on the college premises and delivered a speech welcoming her at one of the highest educational institutions of the defence forces.

Chief of Army Staff Lt General M Harunur Rashid, Chief of Naval Staff Rear Admiral A Taher and Chief of Air Staff Air Vice Marshal Jamal Uddin Ahmed, Vice Chancellor of different universities and high civil and military officials were present.

They prayed for stay of the proceedings on the grounds that police would arrest the lawmaker and his son before a decision on the rule issued earlier.

Additional Attorney General Mahbub-e-Alam opposed granting of stay of proceedings, saying it would lead to stay of proceedings of cases against hundreds of criminals.

He said that it was a case showing what the MPs and their sons and spouses were doing.

It prompted the court to observe that the MPs' wards are involved in kidnapping, murder and other crimes. Newspaper reports showed that most of them are wards of ruling party MPs.

The court further observed that there is a 'smell' of politics in the present case.

Moshred Khan, his son and BNP leader Abdullah Al-Noman, among others, were present in the court.

Dilip Chakrabarti dead

By Staff Correspondent

Senior journalist of Daily Bangla Bani and noted artist of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra Dilip Chakrabarti died at his residence yesterday evening. He was 56.

Dilip had been suffering from diabetes and heart ailment for long. He is survived by his wife, a daughter and a host of well-wishers. His mortal were cremated at a Post a gola a Shashanghat yesterday night, a press release said.

On hearing of his death news, journalists from different newspapers rushed to Dilip's Nabendra Bashak Lane residence to pay their last respects to him.

Dilip joined the Daily Sangbad as its Faridpur district correspondent in the 60s. He played a vital role in the Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra as an artist during the War of Liberation in 1971.

He joined in weekly Cinema in 1972 and later joined the Bangla Bani as Staff Reporter.

Along side journalism, Dilip was involved in different cultural activities. He was an enlisted artist in BTV. During 60s and 70s decades, Dilip acted in a number of films, including "Titas Ekti Nadir Nam," "Lathial," "Janome Janome" is a novel by the late journalist.

Dilip was also a member in different capacities of the Press Club, BFUJ and DDUJ.

HC rules

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Khadimul Islam said that the order would be given on production of a reference on stay of a case against weekly Robbar under the Special Powers Act (SPA).

Counsel of the petitioners could not produce it before the court yesterday and it led to a difference of opinion between the two judges.

After hearing the petitioners' counsels and the state attorney, Justice Saeed Ahmed was about to give an order staying the proceedings of the case for three weeks. But Justice Khadimul Islam said he would like to see all the proceedings on the reference before ordering a stay.

Earlier on Thursday, the Bench issued a rule on the government to show cause within two weeks why the PSA should not be declared ultra vires the Constitution.

The petitioners ---- Barrister Syed Ishaque Ahmed, Dr Kamal Hossain, MA Malek, Kandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed and Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmudargud said the PSA is ultra vires the Constitution as it denies fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

They prayed for stay of the proceedings on the grounds that police would arrest the lawmaker and his son before a decision on the rule issued earlier.

Additional Attorney General Mahbub-e-Alam opposed granting of stay of proceedings, saying it would lead to stay of proceedings of cases against hundreds of criminals.

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Rubel murder

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case till 2:30 pm today.

Rafiq in his statement said that he had been at the Ramma thana since 1997. At about 10 pm on July 23, 1998 Rubel's brother Mohamad Iftekharuddin along with 10 others came to thana. They got the death news over telephone, he added.

Iftekhar told in the thana that he would teach a good lesson to Haifil Islam Thakur as Thakur killed his brother Rubel, Rafiq said. Iftekhar filed a case against Thakur but Iftekhar left the thana without filing a case at about 12 pm on July 23 last year, he added.

He further told the court that a murder case was filed with Ramma thana the following day.

SI Haifil Islam Thakur, ASI Abdul Karim, Havildar Nuruzzaman, Constables Mir Farooq and Ratul Parvez were arrested in the case.

Mukuli Begum along with two other women came to thana to evict a shop in front of Rubel's residence, Rafiq added.

Of the accused including AC Akram and Mukuli Begum were present in the court yesterday.

Nepal, India agree on flood control measures

KATHMANDU, Jan 14 : A 10-member joint Indo-Nepal technical team agreed Saturday to a series of measures to control flooding in Nepal, blamed on an Indian-constructed dam, state-run radio said, reports AFP.

The Nepalese delegation, from the Department of Irrigation and Water Resources, had left here Wednesday for talks with their Indian counterparts, Radio Nepal reported.

Key to the talks was the flooding in Nepal's southwest region, allegedly caused by India's Laxmanpur dam.

Nepal maintains that the Indian dam, completed in 1998, caused flooding which affected 15,000 people living in 10 villages in the Banke district, close to the Indian border.

As part of the measures, India has agreed to pay for the construction of a seven-kilometre (4.3-mile) embankment on the

Meeting with foreign diplomats

Khaleda's demands shame for nation: Kibria

Finance Minister S A M S Kibria yesterday termed BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia's presentation of certain demands relating to next general elections before foreign diplomats as a matter of shame for the nation, reports UNB.

"It's parliament that enacts or scraps a law when needed. But what the caretaker government or foreigners could do here?"

In reply to a question, the Finance Minister said in the past Awami League also had met diplomats and exchanged views informally