

## Some JP MPs may join BNP soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some parliament members from both factions of Jatiya Party led by H M Ershad and Anwar Hossain Manju are likely to join BNP soon.

Sources said about half a dozen JP MPs have recently met BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and other top BNP leaders and expressed their willingness to join BNP. The main opposition has also advised JP leaders to prepare for joining.

JP (Ershad) leader Dr Rustam Ali Farazi MP also had an exclusive meeting with Khaleda Zia at her Banani office at about 11:30 p.m. on Monday. The details of discussion could not be known, but sources hinted that the JP leader might have discussed his joining BNP.

The sources said the BNP is looking for prospective JP MPs and negotiating with them. Some senior and mid-ranking BNP leaders have been designated to continue talks with the JP MPs and try to bring a maximum number of them to the party.

They said a number of JP leaders currently with Ershad are also bargaining for nomination in the upcoming election. The BNP has already rejected some JP leaders, who have no footing in their constituencies, but are bargaining for nomination.

The BNP sources said the JP MPs, who are willing to join the party, have been asked to arrange huge public gatherings in their respective constituencies and join BNP at that function. The JP MPs have also been given an option to come with party leaders and activists at 29 Minto Road and join BNP.

## Hearing on writ challenging PSA deferred

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The High Court has deferred till Monday the hearing on a writ petition challenging the validity of Public Safety Act (PSA).

A Division Bench of the HC yesterday gave the deferral order as defence lawyers prayed for time to prepare their case following the government's reply to a rule issued by the court earlier asking why the PSA should not be declared ultravires the Constitution.

Barrister Syed Ishtiaque Ahmed, on behalf of BNP lawmaker M Murshed Khan who filed the writ on January 12 this year, told the court that he was yet to get a copy of the government's reply.

In response, Attorney General Mahmudul Islam said a copy of it was sent to Dr Kamal Hossain, one of the counsels for Murshed Khan.

But Ishtiaque Ahmed said they were yet to get it.

After hearing both the sides, the Division Bench comprising Justice MA Aziz and Justice Mohammad

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Leaders and activists of Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) march towards Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) office to lay a siege yesterday, protesting frequent load-shedding in the city and elsewhere in the country.

## New upazilas, police stations to be set up

UNB, Dhaka

National Implementation Committee on Administrative Reorganisation (NICAR) at a meeting yesterday approved in principle a policy for setting up new upazilas, police stations and police investigation centres.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina chaired the NICAR meeting at her office. According to the new policy, the administration will consider the number of unions, population, manpower and administrative and financial structures for the establishment of a new upazila.

The policy provides for required manpower to smoothly run the administration, maintain law and order, and continue development works.

The meeting was informed that two new upazilas would be set up at Modhya Nagar in Sunamganj district and at Dhanbari in Tangail while three new police stations at Sayestaganj in Habiganj, Enayetpur in Sirajganj and Kachakata in Kurigram.

Besides, 25 police investigation centres will be set up at Hatgangopara and Jhogipara of Bagmara and Premtali of Godagari in Rajshahi, Chatalpar of Nasirnagar in Brahmanbaria, Mangalpur of Biral in Dinajpur, Kabirhat of Sudharam in Noakhali, Notakhola of Harirampur in Manikganj, Harinabari

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## PDB, AES sign accord on Haripur plant

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Power Development Board (PDB) yesterday signed a short-term agreement with the AES for supplying 235 MW power from the Haripur Power Plant much ahead of schedule.

The AES, a US power company, will have to start supplying power to the PDB within the two weeks of signing of the contract, which is valid until October 31. After the period, the AES would start supplying 360 MW power as per the original contract.

And as this power supply has been arranged outside the actual contract, its tariff will be higher than

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## Financial crisis grips MPA

QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna

Mongla Port Authority is now using its fixed deposit to meet expenses in the face of severe financial crisis.

The revenue income has fallen to such an extent that the authority is finding it difficult to meet even its bare necessities.

The port authority is at present not in a position to spend money for any development work including dredging.

According to MPA Chairman Commodore K N Ahmed, more than Taka 10 crore have so far been drawn from its FDR to meet the financial crisis, over 60 per cent of money drawn from the FDR has been exhausted for dredging and other purposes, the chairman said.

But according to reliable sources in Mongla port office, major amount of FDR money has been spent to pay salaries of officers and employees.

The chairman admitted to this correspondent that food and jute

carrying ships have stopped coming to Mongla port since February this year. Foreign ships are avoiding the port due to siltation problem in the channel. "As a result, our revenue income has come down," he said.

Referring to frequent labour unrest and strikes in addition to manifold problems including alarming increase in piracies and extortions, a high official of MPA's administrative section expressed his frustration at the present situation. He termed the situation 'extremely deplorable' so far as revenue income

is concerned.

The MPA chairman, however, expressed his hope that money drawn from FDR would be refunded with the increase of revenue earning. Number of ships for berthing will increase after completion of dredging work, he said.

Meanwhile, the port authority has decided to reduce at least 500 labourers of different categories within the next few months through golden handshake, allocating a sum

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Will journalist Tipu remain disabled?



The Daily Star- প্রথম আলো

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## Jakiganj people fear fresh BSF attacks

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, From Sylhet

People on the Jakiganj border fear fresh attacks by the Indian Border Security Forces (BSF) in the wake of several incidents, including killing of a Bangladeshi national and other provocative activities by the BSF during the last few days.

The number of BSF camp is higher compared to that of the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR). The BDR has only two Border Outposts (BOP) about 10 kilometres from Amolshid to Manikpur BOPs in the Jakiganj thana whereas the BSF has seven permanent camps namely Sarisha, Alongjuri, Jobainpur, Abedabad, Lamajuar, Sheralipur and Bhanga, all on the other bank of the river Kushiara. Moreover, there are at least four to five observation points between two camps. Armed sentry is kept on duty round the clock at all the points.

The number of BSF personnel deployed as additional force following the Padua and Roumari incidents is yet to be reduced, said a BDR official.

A number of villagers at Uttarkul near the Uttarkul Border Outpost of BDR told the Daily Star recently that the BSF very often try to create panic without any cause. "They focus the search light on our territory almost every night and sometimes blank-fire at midnight or early hours," said Alauddin, a 50-year old man. "That's why we are now more alert. We'll try to face any attack from the other side of the border."

A number of BDR officials and personnel said that they are trying to keep the morale of the people high and have assured them of extending all help to face any situation.

## BSF on red alert at Murshidabad point

SAKYASEN MITTRA, Kolkata

The Border Security Force (BSF) has sounded a red alert along the 100-kilometre border stretch between India and Bangladesh in Murshidabad. This has been done after senior officers complained of 'suspicious' Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) behaviour in the last few days.

The officers informed that the BDR had brought in extra troops in the border areas of Jalangi in Murshidabad. They also said that several new check posts had been set up on the Bangladesh side last week. The BSF has already posted an extra battalion of troops in the area.

"We are on alert after the death of the 16 BSF Jawans at Mankachar in Assam," said P.P. Gupta, the commandant of the 26th Battalion of the BSF. "We have found the behaviour of the BDR very suspicious and we are not taking any chances."

## Roumari incident Case against BSF chief, IG ,300 BSF men

BSS, Kurigram

Roumari police recorded a regular case on last month's frontier skirmishes, accusing Border Security Force (BSF) chief and 300 other BSF personnel for intrusion, arson and killing inside the Bangladesh territory.

Police said they turned the general diary (GD) lodged by Roumari Sadar UP chairman Suruzzaman Bakul into case on directives from higher authorities on Thursday against BSF chief Gurubachan Jagat, Inspector General VK Gour and 300 BSF men.

They were charged under sections 147, 148, 149, 447, 448, 326, 302, 436, 300 and 109 of Penal Code involving intrusion, arson, assault, killing and looting.

"We have launched the investigation on Tuesday and according to

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## Tk 7.75 lakh snatched from cattle trader at Mirpur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Muggers snatched Tk 7.75 lakh from a cattle trader in front of the Beauty Cinema Hall at Mirpur in the city yesterday afternoon.

Three muggers snatched a bag containing the money when Sultan Bepari of Keraniganj tried to catch a bus.

Sultan went to Gabtali to realise dues from local traders. Collecting the money from local buyers he was returning home.

Mirpur police confirmed the incident but said the victim is yet to file a case in this regard.

Meanwhile, a gang of muggers snatched Tk 20,000 from one Asish Biswas, 30, while he was returning to his Mohammadpur residence on Tuesday.

A gang stopped rickshaw of Asish at the West End of Sher Shah Suri road and snatched Tk 20,000 from him at dagger point at about 3:30 pm.

A case was filed with Mohammadpur police. Police arrested one Mohammad Sumon for

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A senior BDR official said the BSF had been imposing curfew in most of the border areas at night.

Inhabitants of Keuwa, Manikpur, Mominpur, Senapatirchak, Lalgram, Sultanpur, Imampur, Ajagram, Khadiman, Gangajal, Shahidabad, Baktiarpur, Pillakandi, Rahimpur and Isabpur villages are passing their days in great anxiety as they have to keep vigil almost every night. "We went for the vigil on our own, apprehending BSF attacks any time," said Rafiquddin of Sultanpur.

The BSF had also asked the Bangladeshi fishermen to stop fishing in the river Kushiara, midstream of which marks the border. Fishermen of the villages on the riverbank are going through hardship as they have no other way to earn livelihood. The BSF had also asked the Bangladeshi labourers on May 6 to stop collecting sand from the small sand quarry at Isabpur. "These people are fully dependent on the profession," said Nooruddin, a poor man engaged in sand collection.

"The BSF men even threatened our people who go to the riverside that they would have to face dire consequences," said Moniruddin of village Manikmpur and added the unwanted behaviour is getting worse for the last two weeks with the additional deployment of BSF men.

Meanwhile, the report of killing of a Bangladeshi named Amin has been found 'incorrect'. The report carried by a number of national dailies last week is not true, said the person in question. A number of government offi

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## A Joypurhat border village still empty

NAIMUL HAQ, from Joypurhat

People in bordering East Ushna village, 20 km off Joypurhat, did not return home yet, fearing fresh attacks by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF).

Inhabitants of at least 700 homes have fled the village, as seven houses were burnt to ashes and four houses partially damaged on April 25 by BSF. The village has since remained almost empty. This is the IRRi harvesting season, but hundreds of acres of land along the border here is yet to be touched.

During a visit to the spot under Paanch Bibi thana near the zero line on Tuesday, only a few people were found rebuilding their houses under close vigilance of the villagers.

Villagers complained that they could not return home, as the Indian border security guards patrolling in the area did not let them come back.

"My house is only 50 yards away from the zero line and I have been living there for more than forty years. But since the incident of blaze, the first ever in the area, I have been living with my three children and wife in the open 10 km away from my house," said Md. Mannan.

Mannan's neighbour said, "The BSF men don't let us even come near our

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