

State security, not state protocol

AL delegation briefs President about the proposed law

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Under a planned new law, the outgoing Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina would be entitled to state security but not state protocol after she leaves office on July 13.

A ruling party delegation comprising eight ministers of the government apprised this to President Shahabuddin Ahmad when it met the latter at Bangabhaban last night.

Disclosing the essence of the hour-long meeting with the President, the members on the AL delegation told journalists at a briefing later that the President had given them a patient hearing.

Despite repeated queries, the AL leaders

declined to disclose any provisions of the planned law, saying that the briefing was arranged only to inform the press of their meeting with the President and not to say anything on the law itself.

The press briefing was held at the party's Bangabandhu Avenue headquarters at 8:30pm.

The AL delegation, led by party general secretary Zillur Rahman, met the President just two days after a similar delegation from the opposition BNP had met him. The BNP had then requested the President not to assent to any bill for enactment of such law.

Yesterday's AL delegation included head of the AL Election Steering Committee and Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria, party presidium mem-

bers Amir Hossain Amu, Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Abdul Jalil, and organising secretary Mohammad Nasim.

Zillur Rahman told newsmen that the AL delegation had met President to dispel misgivings about the planned law.

"The law is meant for her (Sheikh Hasina) security. It is not meant for providing her with the state protocol after she leaves office," clarified Rahman.

Replies to a question on the President's reaction, Kibria said, "President gave us a patient hearing and he appreciated the explanation that

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Tributes paid to Zia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several thousand BNP activists and supporters thronged the mazaar of late President Ziaur Rahman to pay tribute to the slain president on his 20th death anniversary yesterday.

BNP leaders and supporters wearing black badges started pouring into the mazaar premises from 8am, turning it into a massive gathering within an hour.

They offered *fateha* and *Qurankhwani*, and placed floral wreaths at his tomb and prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul, as well as peace, progress and prosperity of the nation.

A blood donation programme was also held at the mazaar premises.

The mourners recalled the significant contributions of Zia, including his vital roles in the War of Liberation, withdrawal of martial law, restoration of multi-party democracy and revolutionary changes in the country.

Late President Ziaur Rahman's relentless efforts placed Bangladesh in a dignified position among the

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First ever in country
Test-tube triplets born

AFP, Dhaka

A 32-year-old woman yesterday gave birth to Bangladesh's first test-tube babies, a set of triplet girls, a fertility specialist told the wire service.

"The babies are fine, but premature as we were expecting them at the end of July or in August," said the doctor who was in charge of the process, Parveen Fatema.

"I feel so happy after waiting for 16 years," said the mother, Feroza Begum, after the in vitro fertilisation (IVF) birth.

She has not seen her new-born daughters since the birth as they were taken to a special care unit at a different hospital.

They were born by normal delivery within forty minutes of each other in the early hours of the morning.

"I have been waiting with great hope ... I have yet to think what names I will give them," Begum said.

Fatema, who trained in Singapore and India, said a number of doctors had been trying to successfully complete IVF treatment in Bangladesh.

The father of the triplets, Mohammad Abu Hanif, is employed in the government's revenue office and had gone to the

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S Q Chowdhury granted bail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Expelled BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury MP was released on bail by the CMM's Court here yesterday afternoon.

After his release, BNP faction loyal to him, withdrew its today's hartal in the port city.

Magistrate Atahar Ali granted the bail to facilitate S Q Chowdhury's participation in the next parliament session beginning on June 6.

However, Salauddin Quader Chowdhury had to give Tk one lakh as bond for obtaining the bail.

Police detained S Q Chowdhury and his 12 supporters from his hilltop residence at Goods Shaheb's Road under Kotwali thana in the city on Tuesday afternoon.

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SQ Chy's men attack BNP mourners in Rangunia: 30 hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

At least 30 people were injured when supporters of Salauddin Quader Chowdhury attacked BNP leaders and activists at Mariannagar in Rangunia yesterday morning.

Over 3000 BNP men aboard 50 vehicles went to Mariannagar to place wreaths at the first grave of Ziaur Rahman in observance of his 20th anniversary of death.

Police and witnesses said the supporters of Salauddin Quader Chowdhury hurled brickbats at BNP leaders and activists, and attacked them with lethal weapons when they reached near the grave of Ziaur Rahman at about 11am.

They also damaged 15 vehicles carrying BNP leaders including party's central leader Abdullah Al Noman and local leaders Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin, Dostagir Chowdhury and Chittagong North District BNP president Golam Akbar Khondakar, police said.

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UP chairman shot, Tk 5 lakh mugged at Ashulia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Muggers shot the chairman of Ashulia Union Parishad and snatched Tk 5 lakh from him at Ashulia in Savar at about 12:15pm yesterday.

Also organising secretary of Savar thana BNP, Humayun Kabir Mondal, 45, was returning to his residence by his car after drawing the money from ANZ Bank at sector-4, Uttara. When his car was stuck in traffic jam at Ashulia bus stand on the west end of Ashulia Road, five armed muggers riding two motorbikes came close to the car. The muggers pulled Kabir by the collar and ordered him to give the valuables.

Kabir, son of Wajid Uddin Mondal, refused to give in to them and started scuffling with them. At one stage, one of the muggers fired on Kabir. A bullet pierced his chest.

One of the muggers was also

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Indo-Bangla border talks in Delhi June 12-13

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and India will hold a meeting in New Delhi on June 12 and 13 to work out demarcation of the remaining 6.5 km of borders and take up unresolved issues like 'adverse possessions' and exchange of enclaves that remain as impediments to full implementation of the Mujib-Indira accord.

This will be the first meeting of officials of the two countries at joint working group level after the recent border skirmishes and the second meeting is likely in Dhaka late next month, Foreign Secretary Syed Muazzem Ali told newsmen yesterday.

A 12-member delegation led by a joint secretary of the Home Ministry will leave Dhaka for Delhi on June 11. The Delhi meet will set the terms of reference of the

boundary working group set up after a meeting of foreign secretaries of the two countries in December last year. The Dhaka meet will deal with exchange of enclaves and adverse possessions in line with the Mujib-Indira accord.

"They will take up the unfinished task that remained to be sorted out", Ali said. The meetings taking place against the backdrop of "unfortunate skirmishes in April are important to complete the unfinished tasks under the Mujib-Indira treaty, which are likely to be completed within one year".

Of the 6.5 km undemarcated borders, 3 km are in Lathitilla in Maulvibazar, 1.5 km in Daikhatia in north-western region of the country and Two km in Muhurchar in Feni.

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Construction of bridge over Rupsha begins

QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna

The much-awaited Rupsha Bridge project on the Khulna-Mongla Highway took off yesterday with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina unveiling the plaque of the bridge at a ground-breaking ceremony at Labonchora here.

The 1360-metre long and 16.65-metre wide bridge with a 360-metre viaduct at either end will be completed at a cost of Tk 491 crore, bulk of which is being provided by the Japanese government. The construction of the bridge is scheduled to complete by December 2004.

Provision for four lanes and sidewalk on either side has also been planned for the bridge, which will have a navigational clearance of 60 feet above the highest flood level, Roads and Highways Division

(RHD) sources said. A 17-kilometre long and 15.55 metre wide Khulna by-pass road would also be constructed at a cost of Tk 92 crore to be funded by Bangladesh government.

The project also plans to construct 8.68-kilometre long approach roads, RHD sources said and added that the bridge will have seven spans.

The prime minister said the bridge, once completed, will create a new era of communication by linking Mongla sea port, capital Dhaka and the northwestern region with southwestern districts.

It will also facilitate transportation of goods from the second largest sea port at Mongla to other parts of the country, contributing to the socio-economic development and

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Punish terrorists without fear or favour: PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has directed members of law enforcing agencies to punish terrorists at any cost and without fear or favour.

Crush the terrorists because they do not belong to any political party, she told police officials while addressing a big public meeting at the Circuit House Maidan here yesterday afternoon.

Without naming anyone as her party candidate from the prestigious Khulna-2 (Sadar-Sonadanga) constituency, the Prime Minister appealed to the voters to elect AL nominee for this seat whoever he may be.

She called upon the people to elect her party candidates in Khulna and Bagerhat districts in the next general elections.

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Column: Just Another View

SH Imam

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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G-15 lashes out at IMF, lopsided globalisation

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Sun Rises

Sun Sets

May 31

6.42 pm

June 1

5-11 am

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Prayer Timings

May 31

1

Azan

Jamaat

Fazr

4-20

4-50

Zohr

12-45

1-20

Asr

5-00

5-15

Magrib

6-46

6-50

Esha

8-00

8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

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