

Jailed leaders head BCL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Liakat Sikdar and Nazrul Islam Babu, both in jail custody now, have been elected president and general secretary respectively of Awami League's student wing Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) at its council here.

This is for the first time in the organisation's 54-year history that leaders in the two posts have been elected by direct vote of councillors.

Out of 2025 councillors, 1551 from BCL units across the country cast their vote in the election held on Wednesday night at the Mohanagar Nailya Mancha.

A fresh list of 201 members of BCL central committee has been selected as per directives of Awami League high-ups and former BCL leaders, party sources said. The list is yet to be announced.

The election was held from 8:00 pm (April 3) to 3:00 am (April 4) and the results were announced at 6:00 am yesterday.

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Reformists rule rare BCL council

Many see it beginning of party democratisation

REAZ AHMAD

Election of a new leadership in Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) is considered as a 'big win' for reformists in Awami League.

The election of the president and the general secretary, first time in the organisation's 55-year history, is seen as the beginning of a democratisation process, sources in AL said.

Next comes Dhaka city unit of Awami League, they hinted.

Reformists in AL, including party president Sheikh Hasina, are determined to do away with the 'selection business' and go for election of new leadership in every tier of the party and its front organisations, they said.

"Sheikh Hasina is committed and determined to modernise and democratise the party and all its front organisations. She succeeded in this mission (election

in BCL) despite opposition from the lobby which does not want change," a leader involved in the reform process told The Daily Star yesterday on condition of anonymity.

After the debacle in the last general election, the AL leadership realised the need for energising the party by infusing young leadership, he said.

In a major departure from the practice of having 'pocket committee' coming from AL, the councillors in BCL's 27th council on Wednesday took the responsibility to elect their leaders. Councillors from 81 units from across the country cast their vote.

Interestingly, this is for the first time in Chhatra League's history that two leaders were elected to top posts, remaining in jail custody.

Sources told The Daily Star that voting was held only for the two vital posts as a test case. Other office bearers will be selected from among dedicated student leaders.

Saifur terms Bangladesh "milking cow" for investors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman said Bangladesh is a 'milking cow for foreign investors' despite its infrastructure bottlenecks and governance problems.

"Despite infrastructure bottlenecks, politics of hartal and other problems, Bangladesh is a milking cow for foreign investors. It is difficult to find any other country like Bangladesh in the world, where there is no restriction on repatriation of capital and profits, including capital gains and other incentives," Saifur Rahman said.

The minister was addressing the inaugural session of the 12th meeting of the Japan-Bangladesh Joint Committee for Commercial and Economic Cooperation (JBCEC) in the city yesterday.

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PDB short of power for summer

RAZIUR RAHMAN

Despite all-out efforts by the Power Development Board (PDB) to keep loadshedding as low as possible during this summer, there would be an average outage of 150 megawatt across the country over at least the next two months.

Power shortage may even cross the 200MW-mark, should there be tripping of any of the country's major power generation units, fear sources in the PDB.

PDB officials attributed the possible power shortage to suspension of power generation from the fourth unit of the Ghorashal plant and the 360MW AES Haripur plant for maintenance work.

Maintenance work at the 210MW unit of the Ghorashal plant has been on since mid-November last year and the unit is expected to resume power generation from the first week of May.

Average power shortfall will shoot up to 175MW during peak hours from mid-April. The demand, according to PDB officials, will be more than 3,375MW when the irrigation season starts.

The PDB has more or less met the countrywide power demand so far, said officials concerned. Since the

arrival of sultry weather in mid-February, the demand has ranged between 3,000 and 3,100 MW, they added.

Power generation scenario may improve to some extent in May, provided that the fourth unit of the Ghorashal plant resumes operation on time.

However, the PDB will have to settle for an average outage of at least 128MW in May, when the AES Haripur plant suspends generation for routine maintenance.

In case of a delay in restoration of power generation from the Ghorashal unit or the AES Haripur plant or forced shutdown of any major unit might lead to severe power crisis during this time, sources fear.

Although the PDB is increasing its power generation capacity every year, it has not been able to meet the peak demand over the last few years in absence of any reserve margin, said PDB Chairman Syed Abdul Mueed yesterday.

Average power shortfall in peak hours during summer was nearly 200MW last year, according to sources.

The situation was at its worst in the previous year when power shortage in peak hours during summer shot

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4 killed as bus, truck collide in Feni

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Feni

Four people were killed and 30 others injured in a bus-truck collision on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway near Feni town on Wednesday night.

Police and witnesses said, the accident occurred at Doulatpur at about 8:30 pm when a Chittagong bound bus collided head on with cement loaded truck coming from opposite direction, killing one of the bus passengers, Abul Kashem, on the spot.

Twenty of the injured were admitted to Feni Sadar Hospital and other clinics. Of them, three identified as Monwara Begum, 5, Fazilatunnessa, 34, and Kabbu Mia, 50, succumbed to their injuries at Feni sadar hospital.

The bus passengers were going to Chittagong to join the annual urs of Majibhandar Sharif.

In another accident at Rampura on the same highway, an unidentified youth was killed when a watermelon-loaded truck collided with a covered van early yesterday.

The identity of the youth could not be known.

Oil spill scare for Sundarbans

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the absence of an effective oil spill management programme, oil spills could threaten the ecosystem and marine life in Bangladesh as it has an oil refinery and two seaports.

The Sundarbans Reserved Forest (SRF) which has been declared a World Heritage Site is at risk because Mongla port is only three km from it.

Experts sounded this caution at a workshop at a city hotel yesterday, organised by Mongla Port Authority (MPA).

Aquatic life in vast areas adjacent to Chittagong port is always under the risk of oil spills due to presence of the oil refinery, where large oil tankers berth at the outer anchorage and use transhipment services through smaller ships that shuttle between the anchorage and the refinery, said Hideyuki Ishie, consultant team leader the ADB aided oil spill impact and response management programme.

"There are frequent minor spills during the handling of those cargo. Large quantities of oil are carried as fuel by domestic general cargo vessels and international general and container cargo vessels, which operate on the main river and coastal ports," said Y Uemura, an expert on water quality and biodiversity.

The experts pointed out that Mongla port is reached mainly through a 100 km-long navigation channel that runs through the SRF.

"Without proper management, monitoring and risk assessment, the movement of oil and chemical products through the SRF represents a major threat to the area since the extensive mangrove areas of the SRF are highly sensitive to pollutants," one expert observed.

Oil pollution not only means an immediate destruction of a large number of species and destruction of the habitat, but also deterioration of the mangroves which may lead to major changes in the sediment transport and erosion. It may also

bring changes in navigational conditions and reduce the scope of rehabilitation of the area, he said.

The ADB would provide US dollars one million as technical assistance for preparing a programme to combat problems arising from oil spills, an official of MPA said.

Under the programme, manuals will be prepared on port environmental management, oil spill impact assessment and monitoring and related training.

He also said the programme envisages a structured approach to developing disaster response mechanisms and initiating a sustainable environmental management system in the ports and shipping sector.

Presided over by MPA Chairman Commodore Md Khurshed Alam, the technical session was also addressed by, among others, S Sugioka K Tsuruda, Y Miyabuchi and Syed Mansur-ul-Haq.

Motia, Nasim granted fresh bail in case under PSA

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The second special tribunal for prevention of public safety disturbances and crimes, Dhaka, yesterday granted fresh bail to former home minister Mohammad Nasim, former agriculture minister Motia Chowdhury and two others, accused in a case filed under Public Safety Act (PSA).

Judge Mohammad Abdur Razzak passed the order upon a bond of Tk 50,000 cash with two guarantors.

The two other accused are Awami League central leader Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin and city Sramik League general secretary Israfil Alam.

The poor accused along with their lawyers -- Advocate SS Halder, SM Altaf Hossain, Sahara Khatun, Quamrul Islam, Abdullah Abu, Abdur Rahman Halder and Montazuddin Ahmad Mehed -- appeared before the court and prayed for fresh bail.

The prosecution side opposed

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PHOTO: STAR

The Bangladesh Mohila Parishad holds a rally in the city on its founding anniversary.

Bangladesh, Turkey sign defence cooperation agreement

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh and Turkey have signed an agreement on defence cooperation in training, science and technology transfer.

"The umbrella agreement will provide wider cooperation" between the armed forces of the two countries which will further strengthen the friendly relations between Bangladesh and Turkey, an official announcement said here yesterday.

Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General M Harun-Ar-Rashid, BP, who is now paying a visit to Turkey and general Huseyin Kivrikoglu, Chief of Turkish General Staff, signed the agreement.

Apart from holding talks and signing the accord, General Harun called on Turkey's Minister for Defence Sabhattin Cakmakoglu. He also met the Commanders of Turkish Land, Naval and Air Forces.

The Army Chief and his delegation also called on President Ahmet Necder Sezer and conveyed him greetings of President AQM Badrudoza Chowdhury. Bangladesh Ambassador to Turkey Nazimullah Chowdhury was present.

Police-public ratio 1:1350, JS informed

UNB, Dhaka

Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury yesterday told parliament that five thousand police will be recruited in the first phase of an attempt to increase the strength of police force.

To a question from Prof Joynal Abedin (BNP), the minister said with 103,801 police personnel, the police-public ratio is 1:1350, which he said is too inadequate to maintain law and order.

For the inadequate police force, he said the administration takes help of Ansar, VDP and BDR to make an operation a success.

Altaf Chowdhury said at present the total number of police stations is 567. Besides, there are 104 investigating centres (IC) and river police

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PHOTO: STAR

Businessmen of Bangabazar, Gullistan and Fulbaria brought out a procession in the city yesterday, demanding death sentence to Babul, an alleged terrorist.

CDA 'base station' sits idle

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD, Ctg

A highly specialised computer 'base station' is lying idle at Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) office for the last seven years, hindering collection, analysis and preservation of facts and figures for development of the port city.

If operated, the station could identify illegal constructions also, sources in CDA said.

Immediately after installation of the station, four CDA officials were trained abroad to run it. Two of them are still working in CDA.

But CDA authorities say the centre can not run for lack of trained manpower.

The sources said, if used, the station meant for collection of geographical information system (GIS), could analyse the changes in

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Shihab's killing Police yet to nab masterminds

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police till yesterday were unable to arrest the alleged masterminds behind the abduction and killing of schoolboy Khandaker Shihab Ahmed.

Investigators have so far arrested six people including two women in connection with the gruesome murder of the Motijheel Model High School student, but the main suspects are still at large.

Detectives said they had launched a massive manhunt for Raju and Rubel, the suspected masterminds of the abduction and murder of Shihab.

Shihab's decomposed body parts were recovered on April 1 from three different places in Bashabo

and North Goran areas in the city.

Detectives believe that Shihab was killed and the body cut into pieces within an hour of his abduction on February 7.

Meanwhile, detectives yesterday recovered the bicycle that was used to lure Shihab to the election campaign club at North Goran in the city's Khilgaon on February 7 where, according to police, the 13-year-old boy was strangled.

After interrogating the arrested, they also recovered a gold chain, which was used as collateral by one of the absconding accused for borrowing Tk. 3000 for purchasing the bicycle a month before the horrific murder.

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Uneasy calm at BSS over sacking of 9 journalists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An uneasy calm is prevailing at the state-run Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) following termination of the jobs of nine journalists.

Journalists of the news agency staged a noisy sit-in at their office on Wednesday in protest against the termination of jobs recently. Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) jointly organised the demonstration.

The BSS management yesterday transferred two of its senior journalists-- Akhtar Ahmed Khan, Secretary General of BFUJ, to Sylhet and Ajit Kumar Sarker, Unit Chief of DUJ's BSS unit, to Rajshahi.

The management also served show cause notices on five others-- Shahjahan Miah, Chief News Editor and a former BFUJ leader; Kazi Maksudul Hassan and Azizul Islam Bhuiyan, both news editors; Nazmul Islam and Amirul Momenin.

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Apr 5		6-16 pm
Apr 6	4-46 am	

Prayer Timings		
Apr 5		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-00	5-28
Juma	12-15	1-20
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-20	6-25
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation

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