

# Dialogue offer & blueprint for murder can't go together: AL

UNB, Dhaka

Key leaders of the Awami League yesterday slammed the government for what they said offering dialogue on one hand and preparing a blueprint for killing the opposition leaders on the other.

"It's ominous and the consequences will be bad," presidium member Abdul Samad Azad told a press briefing at the party central office. Azad condemned the May 25 armed attack on Mohammad Nasim in Sirajganj that killed a party leader on the spot.

He said Prime Minister Khaleda Zia would not be able to make parliament effective this way by unleashing attacks on the opposition leaders.

"Khaleda will remain responsible for making the parliament inoperative," Azad added.

Former home minister and AL organising secretary Mohammad Nasim, who narrated how the "identified criminals of BNP-Jamaat launched the attack" on his car at Mukundagati Bazar in Belkuchi thana, claimed that it was an well-thought-out plan to kill him.

"I survived the ambush by the grace of Allah, but my party colleague Abdul Quddus, a member of Sirajganj district Awami League and freedom fighter, was killed during the attack," he said.

Nasim said some 50 to 60 armed criminals launched the attack at around 5:30 pm when he and Sirajganj district AL leaders were returning to the district town after holding a peaceful public meeting at Daulatpur High School ground in Belkuchi.

He said the BNP first wanted to disrupt the scheduled meeting by calling another meeting at the same venue, but they could not do so. Later, they drew up a second plan and took position near the house of the local BNP president and the police station and swooped on him (Nasim) and other party leaders.

Accusing police of protecting the criminals, the former home minister said that even the police personnel who on duty behind his car, did not

## Newsman

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and mobile phone set from him. Local people rushed him to Kushtia Sadar Hospital in a critical condition.

The motive behind the attack could not be known till last night.

DC Kushtia and police superintendent visited the injured newsman at the hospital.

Meanwhile, local journalists held a protest rally in the town yesterday demanding immediate arrest of the culprits responsible.

No case was filed in connection with the attack.

## North-South rift

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chance of reaching a solid agreement, citing persistent differences among the participating countries.

"What I am dealing with here are efforts to jettison the time commitments," said Emil Salim, the chairman of the fourth PrepCom on the WSSD, who drafted the statement based on the results of three previous preparatory committee meetings in New York.

Incorporating timetables and targets into the chairman's statement requires greater commitments from governments to implement the action plan.

This has been an unresolved issue throughout the past three rounds of talks. Seen as most opposed to such commitments are the developed countries, especially the United States.

"I told them, here guys, were talking here about getting results in ten years time. We can't have something that's going to be realised in 2040," Emil Salim said. "But putting it under a ten-year timeframe requires resources, commitments and priorities. That's where the tug of war lies," he added.

Delegates have agreed on most of the contents of the 38-page draft, but several paragraphs have been in bold -- meaning they require further negotiations before a consensus is reached.

Emil Salim said that it was no longer acceptable that 20 per cent of the world's population advanced in prosperity at the expense of the environment. "That's why we need resources efficiencies. That's why subsidies on agriculture must be abolished," he added.

The PrepCom chairman said that as the chairman of the meeting, he could not interfere in the negotiations, but he lamented the absence of agreements from developing countries.

A senior government official participating in the meeting said the developed countries brought with them hundreds of delegates "to

take any action whatsoever against the attackers.

If the police had fired blank shots and clubbed, the attackers would not have been able to kill Abdul Quddus who was in a microbus behind his car, Nasim told reporters.

He also referred to repeated "assassination bids" on party chief Sheikh Hasina and said her security was withdrawn with an 'evil' motive.

Whatever their conspiracy may be, the BNP-Jamaat would not be able to turn Bangladesh into an Awami League-free country, Nasim warned. "We'll never surrender to this fascist government, we'll not allow it to implement its evil plan. People want an immediate end to this people-isolated government," he said.

Presidium members Abdur Razzak MP, Tofail Ahmed, Abdul Jalil MP and publicity secretary Abdul Mannan also spoke at the briefing.

Abdur Razzak questioned the sincerity of the government in seeing the opposition in parliament. "We want to go to parliament, but the government violates the atmosphere," he said.

Tofail Ahmed said an abnormal situation now prevails in the country, where the BDR is conducting operation in different places, including Narayanganj, without the knowledge of the police administration.

## Export-import thru' Benapole suspended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Export-import activities between Bangladesh and India through Benapole land port remained suspended since Monday due to an indefinite strike by Bongaon Truck Sramik Union.

The truckers went on the strike protesting assault on a truck driver by BSF personnel on the no man's land along Petrapole border of India on May 23.

According to sources, truck driver Ratan Halder was beaten up by BSF men while entering Bangladesh territory with goods.

Truckers at Petrapole put up barricade on all roads, halting export-import between the two countries.

Several rounds of talks between BSF and Bongaon Truck Workers' Union failed to resolve the dispute till 4 pm yesterday, sources said.

Meanwhile, hundreds of truck loaded with exportable goods have been moved from no man's land to warehouse areas to save them from being looted as learnt from Benapole land port sources.

ensure that they have representatives to every corner of meetings so that the outcomes reflect their interests".

Non-governmental organisations lambasted the negotiations on the chairman's statement as representing the interests of developed countries in the North.

Meanwhile, the developing countries had been unable to resist the pressures from the developed countries resulting in the current-week chairman's statement.

Greenpeace, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Friends of Earth, Third World Network and several NGOs from different countries in a joint statement said that the chairman's statement lacked action and was designed to reflect the interests of the countries of the north.

"It (chairman's statement) appears more suitable as a core document for a Northern government summit for unsustainable development," the statement added.

## Sr lawyers

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the recommendations of the chief justice.

On Monday, Moudud told the press that during the AL rule there were instances where judges were appointed ignoring the chief justice's advice.

Khasru found the instance as a clear case of interference into the freedom of the judiciary as only one out of four judges recommended by the chief justice has been confirmed. Any move to politicise the judiciary must be avoided, Khasru added.

The lone judge to have been confirmed, Nazmun Ara Sultana, took oath yesterday at the judges' lounge of the Supreme Court. The chief justice administered the oath.

## Gold smuggling Hearing in case against Ershad adjourned till June 25

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Former president Hussain Mohammad Ershad, an accused in a gold smuggling case, appeared before the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka yesterday.

Judge Mohammad Sirajul Islam adjourned the hearing in the case till June 25 following a time petition by the prosecution lawyers.

It was alleged that Ershad, while in office, made an attempt to smuggle 3000 tolas of gold bars worth about Tk 2.5 crore into Bangladesh.

Later, a smuggling case was filed against Ershad and five others. Earlier, three prosecution witnesses were cross-examined.

Advocate Sheikh Sirajul Islam appeared in the court on behalf of Ershad.

## GF rally at Paltan today

BSS, Dhaka

Gano Forum will hold a public meeting at Paltan Maidan in the city today.

The Chief of Gano Forum Dr Kamal Hossain will preside over the meeting to be held at 4 pm, the party said in a press release yesterday.

Party leaders and guest speakers will address the meeting, the release added.

## Malaysia

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be routed through a cell of the data bank.

So, there would be no exchange of money in excess of the fixed amount between the agents and workers.

Speaking at the EGM, BAIRA President MAH Salim said the migration cost to Malaysia has shot to a disproportionate level because of unhealthy competition among the recruiting agents.

According to sources, the agents earlier collected each visa advice for between 4,000 and 5,000 ringgit.

Employment in Malaysia is very important because other labour markets have already squeezed, said Golam Mostafa general secretary of BAIRA, while talking to The Daily Star.

According to agents, employment scope in Malaysia is still huge.

The average salary of a factory worker in Malaysia is between Tk 10,000 and Tk 15,000 a month with over-time work scope.

Malaysia recruited around five lakh workers from Bangladesh during 1996-97. Thousands of them however returned home in the last few years and many others are awaiting deportation after Malaysia declined to extend their job contracts.

## New navy chief

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establishment of Bangladesh. Navy. Commodore Mujtaba was the main architect behind recruitment of Women Cadets in Bangladesh Navy while serving as assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Personnel).

Commodore Mujtaba was Defence Adviser in Bangladesh mission in Malaysia. He was also the Deputy Commandant at the Defence Services Command and Staff College.

Prior to his appointment as Navy Chief he was serving as Director General of Bangladesh Coast Guard.

## Morientes

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added. Morientes looked in severe pain on the ground after he fell awkwardly during training. Initially, it appeared he had collided with fellow Madrid teammate Fernando Hierro. His foot was immediately wrapped in a bandage and the player was helped walking off the pitch.

Morientes has scored an impressive 14 goals in 19 matches for Spain. He finished second in the Spanish league's scoring table with 18, three behind top scorer and fellow international Diego Tristán.

Ramos said Spain's other injury concern, midfielder David Abelda, was on the point of being given the all-clear.

Abelda, who has been suffering from a groin injury for several weeks, took part in the morning practice, the first time he has joined his teammates in full training since arriving in South Korea a week ago.

"I'm happy today. After several days out, it's good to be back," the Valencia midfielder said, adding he was optimistic he'd be fit for the opening game.

Abelda and fellow international Ruben Baraja formed one of the best midfield combinations in the Spanish Primera Division this season.



PHOTO: STAR

A woman crosses a dug-out, mud-covered road in front of the Sonali Bank at Motijheel yesterday. The digging of roads in the city persists even after the DCC's ban on it in monsoon.

# Bad news zap

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coal-mining project. "It is still uncertain if the Barapukuria project can actually come on stream in 2004," said a PDB source.

The Bholu 20 MW project has been totally scrapped for price irregularities. Instead, the PDB has placed a 150 MW project there. But this scheme lacks financial and technical viability and remains uncertain.

The Khulna 210 MW project was suspended as there was only a single bidder. But this project under suppliers' credit is being considered for implementation because of its comparative pricing advantage, sources added.

The fate of the other projects remains totally uncertain.

"The government is now discouraging both private and suppliers' credit power projects and encouraging joint ventures between the PDB and private power companies," said a source.

Some private companies have already shown interest in power schemes and a Singapore-based company has proposed setting up of a 2000 MW plant.

"However, a lot of paper works need to be done for joint venture schemes since we do not have such experience," said a PDB source.

The country's present power demand is estimated at around 3600 MW, which is projected to go up by another 350 MW to 400 MW next year. On the other hand, the PDB is currently supplying around 3200 MW. And so, the early operation of the 450 MW Meghnaghat plant would not bring any great relief as generation capacity of some old power plants would decrease by this time, leaving a shortfall of around

600 MW power.

US power company AES had earlier intended to begin the test operation of the plant in December, provide the PDB free electricity worth US\$ 34.74 million as per contract and go into commercial operation in June 2003.

But because of faster work progress, the commercial operation will be advanced to October.

A source close to the AES said instead of giving free electricity to the PDB worth \$34 million, the US company is now planning to pay PDB the equivalent amount in cash. This will enable the company to go into commercial operation right from the beginning.

The AES launched its other large-scale power plant scheme in Bangladesh, the 360 MW Haripur Power Plant late last year.

"The plant faced various technical glitches during the last eight months of operation, and the AES believes that it has learned a lot from its Haripur experience," said a company source.

The 360 MW Haripur plant is running at 90 per cent capacity. The plant charges the PDB around Tk 22 crore to Tk 23 crore a month while it pays Tk 6 crore to Tk 8 crore to the board for purchase of gas. In contrast, the PDB pays around Tk 40 crore to purchase power from the three 100 MW barge-mounted plants.

The Meghnaghat plant's early operation would benefit the PDB because of its power price structure. Power from the plant would cost the PDB 2.79 cents or Tk 1.67 per kilowatt hour, a cost nearly half of that of the barge-mounted power plants and less than that of the PDB's own plants.

## Next-hearing in Jail Killing Case June 13

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka yesterday adjourned the hearing in the Jail Killing Case till June 13.

Judge Ahmed Jamil Mastafa adjourned the hearing following a time petition by the prosecution lawyers.

Special public prosecutor Anisul Haq and Mosarraf Hossain Kjol stated that the 11th prosecution witness Mohammad Mocklesur Rahman could not appear in the court due to his illness. So, they prayed for adjournment of the hearing.

The defence lawyers, were ready for hearing on the issue.

After hearing both sides, the court granted the petition and adjourned the hearing.

Four national leaders -- Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, M Mansur Ali and AHM Quamruzzaman -- were killed in Dhaka Central Jail on November 3, 1975.

Kazi Abdul Awal, the then DIG (prison) filed a case with Lalbagh police station in this connection the following day.

Advocate Mahbulul Rahman MP, Khondakar Mahub Hossain, Hazi Nazrul Islam, ABM Sharfuddin Khan Mukul and Arshadul Haque appeared in the court on behalf of the accused.

In addition, the Meghnaghat plant would consume over 100 million cubic feet of per day (mmcf) of gas at the rate of \$2.4 per thousand cubic feet (or an unit). This means that the PDB would be able to adjust a good portion of the AES' power bill just by selling gas.

For PDB plants and the Rural Power Company plant, the bulk gas rate is around only \$1.1 per unit, while the PDB heavily subsidises imported fuel for barge-mounted plants. As a result, it pays higher price for power and indirectly subsidises the barge-mounted plants.

## Cloning

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had also been found in the museum's collection.

As a result, it would now be theoretically possible to achieve within a decade what has not so far been done anywhere in the world -- resurrect an extinct species, Archer told a news conference here.

"What was once nothing more than an impossible dream has just taken another giant step closer to becoming a biological reality," he said.

Discovery of the tissue sources had resolved questions about where to source DNA for males and females in order to bring back what he termed "a genetically varied population of thylacines."

He said if the cloning of the tiger was successful, it could generate attempts to revive other extinct species.

The thylacine, also known as the "Tasmanian Wolf" because of its superficial canine resemblance, was distinguished by a series of 15-20 dark brown vertical stripes down its back to its long tail.

# Musharraf's speech dangerous

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"India has not ever spoken about nuclear weapons. Its policy is clear, unambiguous and explicit," he told reporters. "It's no first use that remains the country's policy."

Pakistan has declined to rule out first use of nuclear weapons in response to a conventional attack.

Jaswant Singh also said he did not expect talks between Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and President Musharraf at a regional summit in Kazakhstan next month.

"There is no possibility of third party talks between India and Pakistan," he said.

Indian defence minister yesterday contested claims by Pak President that the two nuclear nations were poised for full-scale conflict.

## Salvage of Subha remains suspended

AROOP TALUKDAR from Barisal

Work to salvage MV Subha from Baleswar river remained suspended for the third day yesterday.

Salvage vessel BNS Shahjalal returned here after going half way to the spot where the launch sank on Thursday.

BNS Shahjalal reached Barisal from Chittagong on Sunday. On the next day, it went up to Bamna in Barguna, almost half way to the disaster spot.

None of the crew of Shahjalal could say anything about their return to Barisal. They said they were told to stay here till further order.

No more dead body was recovered yesterday. On Monday, four bodies, presumably victims of the launch capsized, were seen being carried by the strong current of Baleswar river, local people said.

Hundreds of anxious people are still waiting on the banks of Baleswar for bodies of their near and dear ones.

"We are not on the brink," George Fernandes said. "The fact is that troops are on the border, but to say that they are on the brink of war would not be proper."

"The danger of war is not yet over," he said in a toughly worded national address.

India says its patience with Pakistan is running out after an attack on its parliament in December and another attack on an army base in disputed Kashmir on May 14 which it blames on Pakistan-backed militants.

But it has been sending conflicting signals since Prime Minister Vajpayee told his troops last week to prepare for a "decisive fight", but then told a news conference he saw clear skies rather than war clouds.

Musharraf's speech also sent conflicting messages for different audiences, balancing a hawkish condemnation of Indian "atrocities" in Kashmir with a repeat of an appeal for dialogue.

Analysts say much of the rhetoric from both sides -- as well as the Pakistani missile tests -- is sabre-rattling by leaders aimed at satisfying domestic hawks and shoring up their shaky political bases.

But fears have risen that with a million troops facing each other on the border, another strike by Muslim militants in India could push the two countries towards a war neither side wants.

## "Epicentre of terrorism"

Musharraf condemned the attacks on India as acts of terrorism, but said there was no infiltration taking place by militants across the line that divides the two armies in Kashmir. He did, however, express support for Kashmiri "liberation struggle."

Musharraf, responding to New Delhi's charge that Islamabad sponsored the militants slipping across the border to attack India, said there were no cross-border infiltrations.

But Singh said Musharraf had failed to address the issue of what

India calls cross-border terrorism, describing Pakistan as "the epicentre of international terrorism".

## Clear message

Although Pakistan has insisted its missile tests were routine, observers say they were clearly aimed at sending a message that Islamabad could meet any Indian attack with massive retaliation. Pakistan said in its final test it had successfully fired a 160-km range missile.

Musharraf said on Monday he wanted peace with honour, adding that neither side would win an easy victory in a war.

In comments to Reuters before leaving for Pakistan, British Foreign Minister Jack Straw said there was an urgent need to resolve tension to avoid a nuclear conflict, but he admitted his mission would be difficult.

## Matir Moina

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Canada, Russia, Sweden, Australia and Egypt.

Jury Chairman Ronald Bergan of Britain handed over the award to Tareque Masud at the ceremony on Saturday.

According to the citation on the award, Matir Moina was awarded for 'authenticity and moving sensitivity with which the film portrayed a country's struggle for its democratic rights'.

Earlier, Matir Moina was disqualified from the Camera d'Or competition for the first feature on the grounds that the director had previously made a documentary longer than 60 minutes in duration. This newly introduced rule considers long documentaries to be feature films.

Two other films awarded at the festival are Divine Intervention by Elia Sulaيمان of Palestine and Heremakono by Abdur Rahman Sissako of Mauritania.

For the first time, the three prizes have been awarded to the films of three predominantly Muslim countries.

# 9 more shown arrested in Bina murder case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Nine more people, held on suspicion, were shown arrested in the ward commissioner Binoy Krishna Sarkar Bina murder case yesterday.

The arrested are -- Ahmed Awaranga Kabir, Ahmed Gahar Kabir, Mohammad Ashraf Uddin, Farooq, Romen, Tanin, Sohrab Hossain, Najib Uddin and Abdul Halim Laby.

They were arrested on May 25 under Section 54 of the CrPC.

The arrested were produced before the chief metropolitan magistrate's court, Dhaka at 3 pm yesterday after a two-day remand.

The Detective Branch (DB) of police later submitted a petition to the court seeking permission to show them (nine) arrested in connection with the Bina murder case. DB also prayed for a 7-day remand

## BDR nab 9

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They are Jewel, 30, Mamun Khan, 25, Jahid Hassan Rajib, Majid, 21, Mohammed Rana, 21, Mohammed Hassan, Anwarul Karim Bhuiyan, 32, Kabir Ahmed Mithu, 34, and Abul Hossain Ripon, 24.

BDR men also recovered a gun from Ripon.

When contacted SP Shafiqul Islam said all the arrested persons are listed criminals and accused in several cases.

Meanwhile, the arrested and their families alleged that BDR personnel ransacked their houses and beat up all of them during the raid.

Arrested Jewel and two others alleged that BDR took them to Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium and beat up with wooden sticks.

All the nine arrested JCD men were handed over to police in the morning.

## AL meet soon

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long.

Five months after show-causing over 500 partymen including seven central leaders on charge of acting against party interests in the last parliamentary polls, a report on the merit of their cases was submitted to party President Sheikh Hasina yesterday.

AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman along with some other senior party leaders met Hasina at her Dhanmondi residence yesterday and submitted the report, which might come up for discussion in the ensuing ALWC meeting.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, a party presidium member told The Daily Star last night that the general secretary's report recommended expulsion of some leaders, suspension of some others and warnings to the rest.

A month after the last year's poll debacle, the AL expelled 24 party leaders including one of the party's presidium member Dr Mohammad Selim for contesting the national elections defying the party's instruction.

Selim and his followers, mostly expelled AL leaders, meanwhile formed a new party styled Bangladesher Awami League.

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Court gave the government one month time to explain why it did not protect Hindus. The government promised investigation into the atrocities, but no information was provided in this regard, the AI said.

On November 22, writer and journalist Shahriar Kabir was arrested on his return from India where he investigated the condition of Hindus who had crossed the border after the election.

Police seized his passport, five video cassettes, 13 audio cassettes, three CDs, several unprocessed films and his camera.

"In December, he was charged with sedition but the authorities did not make public the evidence to support the charge. His detention appeared to be solely because he had been investigating the condition of Hindus who fled persecution", the report said.

The report also said that people of other minority communities also suffered attacks. In June, ten people were killed and more than 20 wounded in a bomb explosion in a Church in Baniarchar, Gopalganj last year.

Clashes between tribesmen and Bengali settlers were also reported from the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). Army personnel allegedly raped three tribal women in May but no one is known to have been brought to justice for this, the AI report said.

On women's rights, it said women continued to be subjected to violent attacks including rape.

Dozens reportedly died in dowry-related murders. Acid attacks left many severely scarred. The authorities rarely provided protection or means of redress. The failure of police to investigate and take action against the perpetrators somehow established a climate of impunity.

In an appeal to the Supreme Court, religious groups sought to overturn a landmark High Court

of the nine in the same case.

The defence lawyers