

JSD splits

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), a left leaning political party of the country, faced a split yesterday with two rival factions holding the party's 'National Committee' meeting separately in the city.

While a faction led by party general secretary Hasanul Haq Inu made a strong plea to the rank and file of the party to keep it united, the other faction led by its executive president Nure Alam Ziku replaced Inu by Abdul Malek Ratan as the new general secretary.

The Inu-led faction held its meeting at the JSD central office at 35/36, Bangabandhu Avenue while Ziku's faction met at another office of the party at 65, Bangabandhu Avenue.

The split came just a day after JSD President ASM Abdur Rob held a press conference in the city ending a prolonged political hibernation. Rob attended neither of these meetings yesterday.

Talking to The Daily Star last night, Hasanul Haq Inu termed the

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Bangladeshi shot by BSF in Rajshahi

BSS, Rajshahi

A Bangladeshi national was shot by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) at Zaminpur frontier under Shibganj upazila in Chapainawabganj district yesterday morning, local BDR sources said.

The person was identified as Monirul Islam, 22, son of Imtiaz Uddin of village Zaminpur.

BDR quoting witnesses said a BSF team from Churi Anantapur outpost entered about 200 yards inside the Bangladesh territory near the Zaminpur frontline and opened fire on Monirul while he was working in the field at about 9.20 am.

He was rushed to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) in a critical condition.

Local BDR personnel immediately went to the spot and sent a protest letter to their Indian counterparts.

Commanding Officer of the Sixth Battalion also sent a protest letter and urged his counterpart to hold a flag meeting in this regard.

Wife burned to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A husband burnt to death his wife in the city.

Abdur Rouf poured kerosene on his wife Sharifa Khatun, 30, and torched her at their Azampur residence in Uttara on Thursday night.

Fatally injured Sharifa was taken to a local clinic and then shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where she died at about 2:30 yesterday.

Uttara police arrested the husband, a garments employee. He confessed to police that he poured kerosene on his wife from a stove and torched her that caused her death. Police said the incident could be a sequel to an altercation.

The couple has two sons Bonny and Ronny. The boys stay in the city with their uncle who is a police sub-inspector. A case was filed with Uttara police in connection with the killing.

Acting on the statement of Rouf's relatives, police earlier arrested two persons -- Mosharraf Hossain and Nannu Miah -- for their alleged involvement in the incident but released them following Rouf's confession.

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Expression of regrets by President Musharraf

What does it actually mean?

Column: Bottom Line Harun ur Rashid

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Making 'sattranji' more sophisticated

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Aug 3		6-41 pm
Aug 4	5-29 am	

Prayer Timings

August 3

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-30	4-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-45	6-50
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

No more silk on public loom

REAZ AHMAD

The closure of two state-run silk factories on Wednesday has put an end to the public sector's silk production.

The decision by the government to shut down the Rajshahi Silk Factory and the Thakurgaon Silk Factory came in the wake of staggering financial losses for over two decades.

With the closure, around 600 staff of the two mills under the Bangladesh Sericulture Board (BSB) and some 10,000 families involved in cultivating mulberry trees that host cocoons have become jobless.

The BSB incurred a loss of Tk 2.63 crore during 1999-2000. More updates on the loss are not available.

The finance ministry in consultation with the textiles ministry decided on the closure, turning down repeated pleas for giving the public sector silk industry the last chance to thrive.

Sources in the textiles ministry said that increasing mismanagement, corruption, unruly trade unionism, a steep fall in quality of silk and rusting of machines only in two years of the Tk 8 crore BMRE (balancing, modernising, rehabilitation and expansion) triggered the shutdown.

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PHOTO: STAR

People travel by rickshaw and boat on the same road at Swarighat in the city yesterday. The sudden flooding has cut off the area from others and left residents marooned.

City areas flooded

Knee-deep water at Swarighat: Buriganga, Turag swell

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A number of low-lying areas in and around the capital have been inundated by flood waters in the last couple of days and fresh areas would be submerged as the rivers Buriganga, Turag and Tongi Khal continued to be in spate.

In the old part of the city, Swarighat and its adjacent areas went under water yesterday. Boats carrying people and cargo were seen plying side by side with rickshaws on roads where motorised vehicles plied on the previous day.

Besides, Badda, Meradia, Madartek, Mugdapara, Kadamtali, Manda and many other areas in the new part of the city have gone under water with a large number of people marooned. The worst-affected are the slum dwellers and many of them have taken shelter on nearby roads

and high lands. Meanwhile, the government has already suspended its drive for removal of slums and other unauthorised establishments on public lands and at roadside in view of the flood situation.

According to a bulletin of the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC), the Turag at Mirpur crossed the danger level yesterday morning while the Tongi Khal at Tongi was approaching the danger level. Both the rivers as well as the Buriganga would swell further, submerging more areas.

Elsewhere in the country, the flood situation in Kishoreganj, Narsingdi, Brahmanbaria and Narayanjanj is likely to deteriorate further as the rivers Meghna and the Shitalakhyia continued to rise, the FFWC said.

As floodwaters receded in the

northern districts of Kurigram, Rangpur, Bogra, Gaibandha and Sirajganj and in Jamalpur and Sherpur, the situation would start improving also in Pabna, Tangail, Mymensingh, Manikganj, Munshiganj, Rajbari, Faridpur, Madaripur and Shariatpur. The FFWC attributed this to recession of waters of the Brahmaputra, the Jamuna and the Ganges in those areas.

However, the flood situation in north-eastern region of the country would remain unchanged till this evening as the Surma at Kanaighat, the Kushiara at Amalshid and the Shewla were flowing above danger level and marked further rise yesterday.

Of the 46 FFWC monitoring stations, 17 recorded rise of water level and 24 recorded fall yesterday.

The meteorologists described

the monsoon as active over the country with very light to moderate rainfall at many places over the Brahmaputra basin during the last 24 hours ended at 9 am yesterday.

Moderate to moderately heavy rainfall was also recorded at various places over the Ganges, Meghna and the south-eastern hill basins during the period, a weather bulletin said.

ADB presses again for gas export

Threat to discontinue aid

UNB, Dhaka

Donors continue to coax the government to take a positive decision to go for gas export to India from the existing reserves to qualify for further investment and funding in energy sector.

A delegation of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) that left Dhaka yesterday concluding a visit to Bangladesh tried to make the government realise that future grants and loans depend on gas export, competent sources said.

The ADB delegation from its headquarters in Manila met with a number of ministers concerned and handed down their condition of gas export. S Chandar led the delegation.

The delegation had meetings with Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources AKM Mosharraf Hossain and State Minister for Power Iqbal Hasan Mahmud.

Sources concerned said the donor agency team categorically told minister Mosharraf that ADB "would

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DU incidents Statements of six more recorded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The judicial commission investigating the police atrocities on female students of Shamsunnar Hall of Dhaka University yesterday recorded written statements of six resident students of the hall.

The six students who witnessed the police raid in the early hour of July 24 described the atrocities and how some resident students of the hall were arrested.

Sitting judge Justice M Tafazzal Islam who heads the one-member commission also asked them questions.

The commission recorded statement of another witness on Thursday.

Meanwhile, the Dhaka University campus was kept sealed off by law enforcers yesterday. A large number of armed policemen and BDR personnel were seen patrolling the campus. They put up barricades at the entry points and allowed students into the campus

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First class privilege

NAZRUL ISLAM

Contrary to normal practice, the ministry of forest and environment in a notification asked its five directorates not to go for any investigation into alleged corruption by 'first class officers' without the ministry's prior permission.

According to sources in the ministry, the top office of the minister asked the subordinates to circulate the office order although they tried to make the office understand that such a notification has no logical ground.

Minister of Forest and Environment Shahjahan Siraj, however, sees it logical for two reasons. Firstly, to avoid duplication in investigation into such irregularities and secondly, to stop fake investigation.

"In many cases, during departmental investigation, officials demand money from the officials charged with corruption," the minister told The Daily Star when contacted last night.

Asked whether the notification was made under coverage of any law, the minister replied in the negative.

The office order came at a time when many of the officials have been charged with corruption, venality and mismanagement in the forestry and their alleged misdeeds have been exposed through departmental investigations. The ministry has brought into being an unprecedented action by reinstating an officer within two months of his suspension for misdeeds.

Officials in the ministry termed the notification a bid to save some

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Death threats to witnesses

Students demand steps for security of life

STAR REPORT

As the judicial commission continues its probe into the July 24 police atrocities at the Shamsunnar Hall of Dhaka University (DU), resident students of the hall who are witnesses to the incident received death threats from anonymous callers over mobile phones.

Besides, students of the hall who were actively involved in the agitation protesting the atrocities and forcing the vice chancellor and the proctor to quit were also getting

such threats. Anonymous mobile phone callers are also threatening these students with acid attack or physical assault if they appear before the probe commission and give statements regarding the incident.

"This must not go on... The authorities concerned must take steps to ensure security of the witnesses for the sake of proper and impartial investigation," one student said.

"If our security is not ensured, we cannot risk our lives by turning up

before the judicial commission," said another student.

The one-member probe commission headed by Justice M Tafazzal Islam started recording statements of students of the hall at the National Academy of Education Management (NAEM) on Thursday. A total of 24 students registered their names with the commission.

The authorities must ensure security of the witnesses in the interest of proper investigation and justice, commission sources said.

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Two-stroke ban firm on track

RAZIUR RAHMAN

The government is firm on its decision to enforce a ban on two-stroke three-wheelers in the capital from the first of next month, despite fears that the vacuum that the move will create could last for at least a couple of months.

"The ban will be in effect from September 1," Communication Minister Nazmul Huda told The Daily Star. "If there is a vacuum in the public transport system, we would try to fill it up as soon as possible."

Both the Ministry of Communication and the Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) claim that necessary steps have been taken to offset the immediate effect of the ban on two-stroke three-wheelers.

Plans are on to add 30 Volvo double-deckers and 100 buses to the BRTC fleet next month.

The state-run body has also signed an agreement with a Singapore-based company to launch its own taxicab service within the next couple of months.

"The taxicabs will hit the road within two months or so," Taimur Alam Khondokar told The Daily on Wednesday.

Besides, a large number of privately-owned buses are likely to start operation within the next couple of months.

However, officials in the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) believe the measures fall "way short of the requirement".

A taskforce, commissioned by the communication ministry which submitted its report last month, estimated that additional 460 buses and minibuses, 500 human haulers, 3,000 taxicabs and 6,000-7,000 CNG-run autorickshaws will be required to offset the shortage the ban on two-stroke three-wheelers will create.

But, "it would take several months to fulfil the vacuum with the CNG-run three-wheelers and taxi cabs", said a BRTA official, who would not be named.

While most residents of the city support the ban, they feel that the government must arrange alternatives to the two-stroke autorickshaws, which contribute heavily to pollution of the city air.

According to the taskforce, some 21,000 two-stroke

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