

New president

Reaction of the new President

Talking to newsmen later, the new President said, "I want to protect the Constitution and work within its framework for the welfare of the people."

He said Bangladesh is a small country and it is necessary for all to work for its development, forgetting all differences and conflicts.

"Let's work together for welfare of the people and development of the country," he said and sought co-operation of all to discharge his responsibility with "utmost sincerity and dedication".

Prof Ahmed said he worked for the country in limited scales as advisor to the caretaker government in 1991 and as chairman of the Public Service Commission and the University Grants Commission.

He said the scope to serve the people has expanded now. "I want to work with all and I hope I will get all to work unitedly. I want to prove through my work."

He sought doa (blessings) from all, including journalists, and said he will sit with all in phases and discuss different issues.

Reaction of the Prime Minister

Giving her reaction, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia said her government has fulfilled the expectation of the opposition through electing a non-party and neutral person as President.

"I am very much happy to elect an eminent personality as President of the country. The new President is a neutral and non-party man. Not only that, he also served as a teachers of Dhaka University for a long time," she said.

Prof Iajuddin Ahmed also discharged constitutional responsibilities as chairman of the Public Service Commission and the University Grants Commission and an Advisor to a caretaker government.

Most importantly, the new President actively participated in democratic movements and contributed a lot to establishment of democracy, the prime minister added.

She said people of the country have become happy with election of Prof Iajuddin Ahmed as President.

Former president Prof AQM

College girl abducted in Feni

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Feni

A college girl was kidnapped by a gang of miscreants from Fazlipur village in sadar upazila on Thursday night.

According to local people, a gang of ten led by local JCD cadre Akram abducted Hasina Akhter Shimul, a second year student of South East College at Fazlipur, from her uncle's house at gunpoint at about 9.30 pm. The gang took away the girl in a microbus.

Victim's father Obaidul Haque filed a case with sadar police station yesterday.

Police could not rescue Hasina till filing of this report at 7 pm yesterday.

Hasina

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not attentive to the BUET situation. "The government would be held responsible for any situation at BUET. Police are harassing those who are protesting Sony's murder instead of taking action against the real culprits."

About Dhaka University, she said the university is going to remain for an indefinite period and many other universities would also be shut down. This government, she said, is destroying academic atmosphere, thereby damaging the country's image abroad.

The AL chief alleged that during its ten-month rule, the BNP-Jamaat regime could not give anything to the nation other than terrorism, rape, wheat and jet-fuel scandals.

Portraying an anarchic situation everywhere, she questioned the justification of "playing" with the country. "We will have to think once again how the people could be freed from this frustrating situation."

She said without taking any alternative arrangement, the government banned the two-stroke three-wheelers, causing immense sufferings to the people.

"They are doing everything by force -- signs of mastani are everywhere," she said, complaining that this government does not follow any rules and regulations in running the country.

"People have become helpless due to the misuse of the BNP-Jamaat government; they are suffering from a sense of total insecurity due to rise of terrorism, snatching, extortion, rape and killing."

Hasina alleged that people are stunned by the misdeeds of the ruling alliance and called upon the leaders and workers of her party to stand beside the people for ensuring a better environment for them.

Dhaka City Awami League President and former Mayor of Dhaka City Mohammad Hanif presided over the meeting.

Badruddoza Chowdhury entered the Darbar Hall at about 7:15pm, which surprised all dignitaries.

He was seen exchanging pleasantries with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, ministers and dignitaries.

Reaction of Prof B Chowdhury

Prof Chowdhury said he congratulated Prof Ahmed on his election as President.

"I am really happy with election of Prof Iajuddin Ahmed. He is a son of Bikrampur and you will find him in Bikrampur. He came from an educated family and he is highly educated. He is against terrorism and corruption."

The oath-taking over, Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury stood along with President Prof Iajuddin Ahmed, First Lady Dr Anwara Begum, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar when other dignitaries congratulated the new President.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia entered the Darbar Hall at 7:35pm.

Immediately after the PM, Acting President Jamiruddin Sircar and Chief Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury along with the president-elect entered the Darbar Hall as bugle was played. They were then taken to the dais while the National Anthem was played.

Earlier, the President-elect attired in a grey suit entered the Bangabhaban at 7:05pm.

Cabinet Secretary Dr Saadat Husain conducted the oath-taking ceremony which started with recitation from the Holy Quran.

After the oath-taking and signing on the document, the new President shook hands with Acting President and Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar and Chief Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury.

They stood on the dais for a photo session. The Speaker then welcomed Prof Iajuddin Ahmed to the Presidential chair and he took the chair.

Then the new President, Prime Minister, former president, Speaker and top dignitaries exchanged pleasantries over tea in another room.

5 Indians held with arms in Cox's Bazar

BSS, Cox's Bazar

Five Indian nationals were arrested and two US made Sub Machine Guns (SMGs) recovered from two remote places under Ramu upazila of the district during a joint raid by army and BDR personnel yesterday.

All the arrested Indians are tribal insurgents, Army and BDR sources said.

They said the joint patrol team from Bandarban arrested three Indian citizens with two SMGs from Baught and under Eidgarh union. The joint team later arrested two other from Charghat in the same union.

The arrested persons were taken into Army custody. The OC of Ramu thana has confirmed the arrest of the Indian insurgents but could not give details.

Iajuddin

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party's highest policymaking body, according to sources.

The BNP realised that majority of the people did not like the way Prof. AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury departed from office. So, the need to have a suitable person become the constitutional figurehead was unanimously felt.

The party policymakers preferred a non-partisan educationist with a good image.

Sources said the policymakers observed that both Prof. Moniruzzaman Miah and Prof. Emajuddin Ahmed were directly linked with the BNP and actively participating in various party programmes.

With the deadline for presidential nomination fast approaching, the prime minister suddenly called Prof. Iajuddin Ahmed at her office about a week ago and asked him whether he was ready to accept an important responsibility. However, she did not give him any clue as to what the job is. And Iajuddin readily agreed, the sources said.

Khaleda however did not disclose the matter even to her close aides. After three to four days since meeting with Prof. Ahmed, she asked one of her close aides to get the bio-data of the former University Grants Commission chairman.

Sources at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said only BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Political Secretary to the Prime Minister Haris Chowdhury could guess that she was going to pick Prof. Ahmed for presidency. However, they too preferred to keep the matter to themselves.

On Tuesday evening, the prime minister again called Prof. Ahmed in to her office and asked him to run for presidency. With Prof. Ahmed agreeing, she then disclosed his name at the Standing Committee meeting held on the same evening. And, the meeting unanimously accepted the nomination.



There are many roads in the city but a few in a good shape. Ironwork grids, rods and rainwater-filled potholes have narrowed the Khilgaon Road down to a small stretch that vehicles almost stopped plying.

Opposition crowded out on BTV

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The stateowned Bangladesh Television (BTV) gave the highest news coverage to the ruling party and a little by comparison to the opposition last month, said a report by Democracy Watch on Wednesday.

The Media Watch cell of the organisation based the report on the news coverage from August 1 to 31 by four electronic media -- BTV, Ekushey Television (ETV), Channel i and ATN Bangla.

The coverage on the ruling party was 50.13 per cent, with 13.23 per cent on the prime minister, whereas the opposition was covered only 0.41 per cent, with 0.21 per cent on the leader of the opposition, of the news broadcast by the BTV at 8.00pm.

The political news coverage on the prime minister was 26.17 per cent, while 0.41 per cent was on the opposition leader.

The ETV news at 7.30pm covered the ruling party at 87 per cent against 13 per cent on the opposition.

The political news coverage by the ETV was 28.31 per cent on the prime minister against 5.04 per cent on the opposition leader.

The Channel i broadcast human rights affairs at 7.29 per cent -- the highest coverage among the channels in August, the report said.

The Channel i gave the highest importance to national news in its broadcast at 7.15pm. Coverage on the prime minister was 6.53 per cent and 1.78 per cent was on the opposition leader in parliament.

The coverage on the ruling party by ATN Bangla was 82 per cent against 18 per cent on the opposition. The broadcast of human rights affairs was 4.56 per cent in its news at 7.00pm.

BUET VC

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report for their involvement in ransacking BUET property, acts of arson and clashes on the campus following the killing of Sony.

Of them, 20 were suspended for different terms and three were warned.

The Academic Council at its meeting on September 9 will consider their applications, they said.

Work to build a monument in memory of Sony is underway and naming of hall after Sony would be considered in future.

They said, all students except the hunger-striking ones are taking part in classes, quiz tests and class tests. Classes of the current term will be completed within three weeks and students will seat for examinations from October 21 following preparatory leave.

AL probe bodies

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termed the government's non-cooperation unfortunate. "The directive for non-cooperation reflects government's weakness and gives rise to suspicions of huge irregularities in wheat procurement."

However, the AL teams are collecting facts and figures from available sources, which will help expose the scam, Hamid said. He hopes the reports would be submitted in a day or two.

The committee convenors are Shamsur Rahman Sharif (Pabna-4), Mirza Azam (Jamalpur-3) and Col. (ret'd) Faruq Khan (Gopalganj-1). Six members of the committees are Dr Md Abdur Razzak (Tangail-1), Md Motahar Hossain (Lalmoinirhat-1), Rezaul Karim Hira (Jamalpur-5), Abdul Matin Sarkar (Mymensingh-7), Panchanan Biswas (Khulna-1) and Md Mahbubur Rahman (Patuakhali-4).

US, British jets pound

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ment by a military spokesman who said Thursday's raid targeted civilian installations southwest of Baghdad.

Britain yesterday confirmed the raid but refused to reveal its scope. "I'm afraid we are not giving out particular details on the size of the package," a ministry of defense spokesman told AFP in London.

"But coalition aircraft did use precision-guided weapons to hit at an air defense and control facility," he said, adding that it had been carried out "in response to threats to coalition aircraft."

Reuters adds: The US Army recently moved heavy weapons and supplies from Qatar to Kuwait near Iraq to test required mobility if President George W Bush ordered preparations for war, Army Secretary Thomas White said in Washington on Thursday.

White stressing that the Army had not begun any military buildup in the region and that Bush, who has promised to consult the US

Congress and American allies, has made no decision on how to proceed with his stated aim of removing Iraq's President Saddam Hussein.

"We have done nothing specifically against any particular scenario" for battle, White told reporters.

He said the temporary July shift to Camp Doha outside of Kuwait City was a periodic training exercise designed to check the condition of heavy M-1A2 Abrams tanks and other US equipment stored in the region since the 1991 Gulf War. "It was an efficient operation," White said.

However, the Army's top civilian official made clear that the service, with equipment enough for three brigades or up to 15,000 troops already stationed in the Gulf region had vastly improved its ability to build up forces near Iraq since the Gulf War.

"We have done a lot with pre-positioned stocks in the Gulf,

making sure they're accessible and that they are in the right spot to support whatever the president wants to do," White said.

He told reporters that railroad and other transportation facilities around Army bases in the United States such as Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and Fort Drum, New York, has also been significantly improved since 1991.

Pentagon officials, responding to reports from shipping sources, said on Wednesday that at least three shiploads of military equipment that have been sent to the Gulf recently were for exercises with Jordanian and Kuwaiti forces and not part of any buildup in the region.

But Army officials said that pre-positioned battle equipment in Kuwait, Qatar and aboard ships in the region could be quickly gotten to US troops flown to the Gulf on any orders from Bush.

18 detained, Taliban blamed

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missing him by inches.

Karzai showed his calm resolve in the immediate aftermath of the assassination attempt, saying he was prepared for such events.

"I am fine. I expect things like that to come across the way," he told a BBC journalist travelling with him as he returned to Kabul.

World leaders led by US President George W. Bush expressed relief that Karzai emerged unhurt, and condemned the explosion in Kabul.

The attacks come just days before the September 9 anniversary of the assassination of anti-Taliban Northern Alliance commander Ahmed Shah Masood and the anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States.

A Pentagon official said the would-be assassin was shot dead by Karzai's Special Forces bodyguards.

Just hours before the shooting, a busy shopping street in central Kabul was rocked by a massive blast when a car bomb exploded yards from a

government ministry close to a crowded market.

Commander Simon Ryan, spokesman for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kabul, told reporters yesterday that more than two dozen people died.

"We have been informed by the Afghan authorities that 26 people have been killed and 150 injured," he said.

The blast was the deadliest of a series of explosions in recent weeks.

Security had already been stepped up in Kabul in the lead-up to the anniversaries of the September 11 attacks and the assassination of Masood.

Bush, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and French President Jacques Chirac led condemnation of the attacks, and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said he was "profoundly shocked".

Lieutenant Colonel Roger King, spokesman for the US-led military operation in Afghanistan, said the latest attacks would not affect the

hunt for al-Qaeda and Taliban extremists.

"The mission of the coalition forces here remains to seek out al-Qaeda and the people who support them," he told reporters at Bagram air base north of Kabul.

Afghanistan's former king, Mohammed Zahir Shah, accused the perpetrators of trying to prevent Afghanistan "coming out of the darkness of the last 23 years" of conflict.

The assassination attempt on Karzai comes around two months after his Vice President Haji Abdul Qadir was shot dead by still unidentified assassins.

Another vice president, defence minister Mohammad Qasim Fahim, was the target of an assassination attempt in April in the eastern city of Jalalabad but survived.

The incidents have underlined fears that extremists remain a potent force in Afghanistan and are building up to further attacks over the coming days.

Reopen DU

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Alam also called upon the authorities including the government to meet the demands of the BUET students, and threatened to go for a greater movement by the general students to realise their demands including reopening of the university.

Meanwhile, four hunger-striking students of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) as their condition deteriorated on the fifth day of their 'fast unto death' program yesterday.

They are Dev Kanti Barua of the Computer Science department, Subrata Sarker of the Architecture department, Tamal Pal of Mechanical Engineering department and Mohammad Salehin of Civil Engineering department.

A group of BUET students under the banner 'BUET students Unity against Atrocities' began hunger strike on Monday to press their seven-point demand.

The demands include trial of the killers of BUET student Sahebun Nahar Sony, withdrawal of expulsion order on 12 students, cancella-

tion of BUET ordinance of 1961, naming of the women's hostels after Sahebun Nahar Sony and withdrawal of police from the campus.

JCD activist stabbed to death in Ctg

BSS, Ctg

An activist of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal was stabbed to death by a gang of miscreants at Shershah Colony in the city in the early hour of yesterday, police said.

Nur Mohamad Khokon, 24, son of Shah Alam of Shershah Colony, came under attack while he was returning home from a Bazar at around 12.30 am.

The unidentified miscreant, stabbing Khokon indiscriminately, leaving him seriously injured, police said.

Local people rushed him to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where he died at 1.30 am.

Police arrested two persons -- Liton, 22, and Bahar 24, -- in connection with the murder.

RU probe body

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Former RU vice-chancellor Professor Abdul Khaleque, the RU Theatre, Gano Shilpi Shangsha, Udichi Shilpi Gosthi, the Association of Cultural Education, Samakal Natya Chakra, Anushlon Theatre and Rajshahi Nagorik Committee (RNC) expressed their solidarity with demonstrating students.

Meanwhile, the Rajshahi Metropolitan Police foiled a rally the RNC held to protest the attacks on the students.

The pro-BNP-Jamaat teachers' attempts to save the ICS cadres and the general students' movement have made the situation panicky.

On September 3, the pro-BNP-Jamaat teachers brought out a silent procession on the campus under the banner of "Shacheton Shikkhak Samaj".

At a rally, Professor Azharul Islam said the ICS cadres were not involved in attacks and newspapers published 'fabricated' reports.

The same day, the Shibir workers brought out a procession on the campus, shouting slogans against leftist students.

Later at a rally, Shafiqul Islam Masud, president of the RU unit of the ICS, termed the August 27 and 28 incidents insignificant.

Earlier, the RU unit of the ICS in a press statement denied their involvement. The proctor also denied all allegations against him.

On August 27, the RU proctor rebuked the PSJ female workers, who gathered in front of the administrative building on the hartal day, the agitating students claimed.

The students quoted the proctor as saying to the female workers, "Why are you here? You should have been home...you should wear burqa, when you are out."

Proctor Nurul Absar and Assistant Proctor Shariful Islam were not far away when the ICS cadres beat them up, said the injured students.

When the PSJ workers and students brought out a procession on the campus on August 28, Nurul Absar, Shariful Islam and Belal Hossain, an assistant proctor, rushed

Submarine cable

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the entry of Bangladesh to the consortium of Submarine cable as a very big achievement. In fact, a new door has just been opened for all of us in Bangladesh, he observed.

The Submarine Cable Network called as South-East Asia, Middle-East and West Europe-4 (SEA-ME-WE) will connect the countries including Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Italy and France.

Boy killed

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Police arrested Khokon and sent the body to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue for autopsy. Police said Khokon confessed the killing.

Police are investigating whether any other person was involved in the incident. A case has been filed in this connection.

Police said Khokon had proposed to Sani's parents to marry his sister Shaheen. But they refused. A family feud developed over the matter. A few days ago, Khokon had threatened Shaheen's family of dire consequence.

Khokon's mother is a housemaid and his father is a guard at private airline office in Rajshahi.

Incidents of abduction and killing of children have increased in the city and elsewhere in the country.

Sani's killing is the fifth such sensational incident in the city since February.

On August 19, five-year-old Don was abducted and strangled by his brother-in-law for dowry.

Killings of Khandaker Shihab Ahmed and Rubayet Ahmed Bappi for ransom and of Ranta following a family feud created panic among parents in the city.

Public health

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gasoline in our country, which can also receive global funding for the sake of public health and health environment.

There is also the issue of safe drinking water supply in Dhaka City where much of the water is drawn from underground reservoirs through deep tube-wells. The water is siphoned off to overhead storage tanks from where it is distributed through a network of mains and service pipes to households or street taps or hydrants. In this arrangement, pollution can simply occur at every level of the distribution network. Although it is possible to kill bacteria and toxins by applying chlorine, the purification process is subject to setbacks for many reasons, which call for lengthy elaboration.

In one study on water supply by WASA to 12 areas of Dhaka City, none of the water samples examined were pollution-free. Grossly polluted samples were detected in Iskaton road, Old Dhaka, Kazipara, Mohakhali quarters and Kalabanga areas. Among the five areas where water samples were drawn from

to the spot with police and threatened the students with cancellation of studentship.

Few minutes later, about 50 ICS cadres assaulted some female students.

The proctor snatched a cellular phone from RU Correspondent Zamiul Ahsan Shipon and verbally abused him. However, Assistant Proctor Belal Hossain returned the cellular phone, said sources.

Police arrested Mahfujul Hasnain Hikal, the district unit convener of the Chhatra Moltr, on an order by the proctor.

Photojournalists -- Selim Zahangir of the Daily Janakantha and Nazrul Islam Zulu of the Aiker Kagoj, and Jote workers -- Tuli, Jhumur, Nupur -- were seriously injured in the attacks.

BMA polls

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in the 63 districts. Vote count in Dhaka continued till writing of this report last night with more than half the votes cast in favour of the Hadi-Zahid panel.

Unofficial results so far show that Prof MA Hadi, running for BMA president from the pro-BNP panel, got 6,494 votes while his opponent Prof Ruhul Hoq from the pro-AL panel got 2,302 votes from all 65 centres.

Dr AZM Zahid of the pro-BNP panel running for secretary general got 6,750 votes while his opponent associate professor Kamrul Hasan Khan from the pro-AL panel got 2063 votes.

Reports said candidates of the Hadi-Zahid panel won by a margin of at least 1500 votes in most districts.

In Chandpur district, independent candidate Dr SM Shahidullah unofficially won the post of president while another independent candidate Dr Azharul Islam won the post of secretary general. Their nearest contestants were from the Hadi-Zahid panel.

More than 70 per cent of the 20,283 BMA members registered as voters in all the 65 centres across the country voted to elect a 14-member body of office bearers, an 18-member executive committee and a 76-member central council of BMA, sources in the election commission said.

Meanwhile, the election commission office in BMA Bhaban yesterday refused to make any official comments till the official announcement, which is expected anytime today.

Leaders of the neither panel were available for comments. Sources said Dr Zahid along with his supporters was already celebrating a massive win in the election.

Khulna radio

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far as people's entrance and exit is concerned.

Another high official of the station's programme section said two unidentified men were present at a secret meeting of a group of officials and employees held at the station a few days ago after office hours. The two men reportedly entered the station showing gate passes without being challenged by the security personnel.

Most officials and employees of the station are passing their days in panic. Some artistes and newscasters said there are agent saboteurs in the administration conspiring to create a deadly political issue by hook or by crook.

Meanwhile, the OC of Sonadanga thana has filed a general diary in connection with the letter threatening grenade attack on the broadcasting station.

Satkania murder