

# Alternative Stream unveils its student wing plan

Names 21-member organising body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The alternative political stream initiated by A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday named a 21-member committee to organise its student wing, styled Bikalpa Chhara Dhara (BCD), and set forth a guideline for formulating the BCD's manifesto.

"Unlike the student fronts of other political parties, the BCD will be an independent democratic body acting on its own rather than to the tune of Bikalpa Dhara (the alternative stream)," Mahi B Chowdhury said while reading out the guideline at a press conference in Baridhara.

Professor Mujibur Rahman, Dr Abdus Zahir and Dr Jahangir of Dhaka University will act as advisors to the BCD organising committee, which is assigned to formulate and publish a comprehensive manifesto of the organisation within 30 days. Mahi, who quit the BNP and parliament in support of his father's political drive, will coordinate the manifesto-drafting process.

He said the BCD was conceived in line with the political outlook of former president Badruddoza

Chowdhury and would work to groom future leaders in every field. Mahi told the newsmen that the student body would offer membership only to meritorious, democratic, tolerant, peace-loving and patriotic students who would form BCD units in their respective educational institutions.

With its motto of education, tolerance and patriotism, the organisation hopes to form units soon in most of the educational institutes in the country, said Monwar Ali Rousseau, convener of the BCD.

A 'central senate' will supervise the college- and university-level units of the new organisation, he added.

Any student up to the age of 29 is eligible for its primary membership. But to be a BCD office bearer, one will have to get permission from their guardians and produce at least two character certificates from the teachers of their educational institute, the organisers said.

They also plan to arrange computer and international language learning facilities at every BCD unit to keep pace with the global technological progress.

# JS body for law to control TV channels

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary standing committee has recommended introduction of a law to deal with the satellite television channels and observed that problems cropped up in absence of such a law.

The standing committee on information ministry at a meeting yesterday also asked the ministry to explain at its next meeting why Bangladeshi satellite television channels are not allowed to broadcast in India.

The members of the committee said all Indian TV channels should be stopped to broadcast in Bangladesh if Bangladeshi channels are not allowed to broadcast in India.

"India does not allow our channels to broadcast there -- but why? All Indian channels should not be allowed to broadcast in Bangladesh if our channels are not allowed there," said Alamgir Kabir, committee member and state minister for housing.

Ebadur Rahman Chowdhury, chairman of the committee, told The Daily Star, "We discussed the matter and asked the ministry to inform the committee of the reasons. We have also asked the ministry to go for a new law to deal with the satellite channels."

The committee also asked the ministry to amend the censor board act in accordance with the demands of film producers and distributors but in keeping with the government policy. The present board has failed to improve the situation in the film industry, it thought.

Chaired by Ebadur, the meeting held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban was attended by the committee members and officials concerned.

# JCD oust student from CU hall, house tutor confined

CU CORRESPONDENT

Agitating female students of Chittagong University kept confined a house tutor of Shamsunahar Hall for seven hours on Sunday night after two Jatiyatadabi Chhara Dal (JCD) leaders ousted a fourth-year student from her room.

Students locked Shaiful Islam, the house tutor, inside his office at 7:00pm as JCD leaders Jebun Nesa Runa and Mamun threw out the luggage of Monsura Shimu from room No. 310 and forced her out.

Earlier this month, the hall authority allocated the political science department student a seat at the room, but both JCD leaders barred her entrance there.

Being informed, hall Provost Prof Siddique Ahmed Chowdhury freed the house tutor at 2:00am and left the hall locking the main gate.

About 400 female students went on a rampage at Shamsunahar Hall early yesterday and broke open the main gate and took to the street.

Protesting the incident, they also announced their four-point demand including resignation of the provost and house tutor and expulsion of the JCD leaders.

The agitating students continued their demonstration in front of Registrar's office till the writing of this report at 8:30 last night.

Meanwhile, the CU authorities yesterday formed a three-member committee headed by Prof Nuruddin Mahmud of marine science department to probe the matter and asked it to submit a report within three days.

# CNG scam

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in importing double-decker buses and taxicabs. But the subcommittee still didn't come through with the report in time.

Advocate Nadeem Mostafa, ruling BNP lawmaker and a member of the subcommittee, told The Daily Star that the delay in submitting the probe report is due to the members' busy schedule because they also serve as members of other committees. "We will submit our probe report by April 10," he said.

The sub-committee will also sit with the agents of yellow and black cabs and with the BRTA (Bangladesh Road Transport Authority) to investigate issue of licences. "We have asked the BRTA to provide documents related to registration of the 10,000 CNG autorickshaws. The BRTA requested 20 days to do that," said Mahmudul Haq Rubel, another member of the subcommittee.

Syed Manzur Hossain, chairman of the standing committee, was unhappy with the delay. "I will again ask the subcommittee to submit its probe report in three days. If they fail, I will explore other options," he told The Daily Star on Sunday.

A meeting of the standing committee scheduled for March 21 was postponed due to a BNP parliamentary party meeting on the same day. Now, the committee has decided to meet on April 15 after two months.

Another sub-committee formed on February 14 to probe alleged irregularities in allocation of land for setting up CNG filling stations could not start its work even a month after its formation.

Ruling coalition lawmaker SA Khaleque alleged that the state minister for communication received Tk 25 lakh as bribe for allocation of land in Mirpur for a CNG filling station.

# Haq, Son Murders

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protesting Sadarghat business-people on today's strike. The demonstrators will send a petition for a speedy trial of the killers to the home ministry.

The remains of the father and the son, brought to light in a macabre morning find on Sunday in Gazipur two days after their driver was found hacked to death in a car, were driven to their home village in Louhajang in Munsiganj for burial.

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina visited Haq's wife and daughters to offer her condolences. Hasina, also Awami League president, briefly addressed a crowd in the shell-shocked neighbourhood and demanded justice. "The ruling party (BNP) patronises the killers and police turn a blind eye to them," she alleged.

Hasina urged people living next door to the slain fabrics trader home to come forward to take care of the family and stressed that she was ready to fight crime at risk to her own life, if necessary.

Later in the day, Dr Kamal Hossain, convener of the National Platform for Unity, also visited Haq's family to convey his condolences.

"Killings have become commonplace. It's time we united to fight crime. We demand trial of the killers," he said.

"Please inform us if there is any discrepancy in investigation and

legal steps," Dr Kamal, a renowned lawyer, asked the bereaved.

A three-member committee headed by Assistant Professor Habibuzzaman Chowdhury carried out an autopsy at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). Palash Khan, brother-in-law of Haq, received the bodies from the hospital at 3:30pm.

Sekander Ali, a DMCH morgue assistant, said the killings were exceptional for their brutality. "I have never ever seen such gore in 23 years of my work."

# FRIENDS OR KILLERS

Police are yet to arrest Kajal, accused as the prime suspect in a case filed with Sutrapur Police Station, but a man popularly known as Guddu arrested with potential links to the killings was taken on a five-day remand. A police forwarding report links Guddu as an associate of Kajal.

Kajal allegedly led an armed gang that unleashed a reign of terror in Sadarghat area by running extortion rackets and carrying out murders and other crimes. Haq and his family friend Kajal co-owned SH Mansion in Sadarghat.

Haq's family says Tk 2 lakh he took with him when left home on Friday was meant for defending Kajal in court in a murder case.

"They were so close ... it is hard to believe Kajal could be the man to kill him," one of Haq's family friends said.

# Diarrhoea breaks out

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more prone to the attack," explained Dr Md Shahadat Hossain, a senior medical officer at the ICDDR,B, yesterday.

Dr Hossain said diarrhoeal attacks will be on the rise until June and then decline only to pick up in mid-September.

Early this month, the daily number of patients admitted to the centre with diarrhoea was around 200, but from mid-March it picked up and 333 patients were admitted yesterday. The centre has made special arrangements to accommodate the increasing number of patients.

In January this year, 5,857 patients were admitted to the centre and 4,881 were admitted in February, while the figure for March stands at 6,995 already.

Doctors at the centre said diarrhoea caused by the Rotavirus usually affects child between 6 and 18 months, while E coli bacteria, responsible for severe dehydration, feast on mostly adults. The rest are 'non-specific' cases. Diarrhoea caused by cholera bacteria is less than one percent of the

# PM's failed trip

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In a desperate bid to ensure the trip, her staff called a police station on the route to Louhajang to look out for the car and send back the family to the capital for the prime minister's programme.

But the police station did not find the car.

Khaleda is likely to visit the family today.

The bodies of Haq and Russell were retrieved in more than 250 pieces from Gazipur on Monday after they went missing on Friday.

# Criminalisation

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Editor of the News Today Rezauddin Ahmed said political vengeance exposed journalists to risks.

"Why killers of journalists in the southwestern region are yet to be brought to justice?" he asked.

Daily Manab Jamin Editor Motiur Rahman Chowdhury said unity of journalists was needed to stop violence on them.

Editor of the New Age Enayetullah Khan said developing skills among journalists could promote their professionalism.

Journalists have to be more respectful to their professional ethics for maintaining professional credibility, said The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam.

"Why will journalists be attacked if they write against the government and the opposition in a democratic country?" he asked.

"The risks to journalism has increased because of

total cases and it is not a major threat.

Doctors examining cholera patients however said this attack forces the body to lose water rapidly, sending the host to shock.

The simple and first line treatment at home for any diarrhoea patient is taking oral saline to regain body fluid and nutrients lost, advised Dr Hossain. "If the patients' bowels run and they vomits, they should immediately be hospitalised."

"Avoid stale, open food and contaminated water and always wash hands before meals and drink boiled water for safety," Dr Hossain continued.

Meanwhile, the weather forecast yesterday said the temperature and humidity are set to rise over the next few days.

# Huda terms

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CIRDAP auditorium.

"We have been voted to power for five years term, and as per the constitution it is the people who will decide whether we will remain in power or not after five years," he added.

Criticising media role in portraying Jalil as a 'hero' by highlighting his statement, he said newspapers should rather denounce the unconstitutional remarks.

Jalil's threat to unseat the government proves that the AL wants to create anarchy in the country in the name of oust government agitation, the communications minister said.

Huda alleged AL chief Sheikh Hasina, dissatisfied with Jalil's performance, made him say such words to 'undermine his political credibility', as part of her plan to remove him from the AL general secretary post.

# It's Sehwaq show

FROM PAGE 1

celebrated by raising his arms and hugging Sachin Tendulkar, who added an unbeaten 194.

India's previous individual best score was 281 by Vangipurapu Laxman against Australia at Calcutta in 2001.

Pakistan, in reply, were 42 for no loss at close of the second day's play with Indian pacemen Irfan Pathan and Zaheer Khan also failing to make an impression on a flat wicket, devoid of grass.

Sehwaq, on 228 overnight, started the day on-driving Mohammad Sami to the mid-wicket fence for four. He played more sedately after raising his 250 that included 32 fours and five sixes.

Sehwaq survived a half-chance on 274 when Taufeeq Umar at first slip got his fingertips on an edgy steer off paceman Shabbir Ahmed but was unable to hold. He was lucky again later in the same over when wicketkeeper Moin Khan

dropped a difficult catch diving to his right.

The explosive right-hander finally fell edging Sami to Umar in the slips.

Sehwaq and Tendulkar put on 336 for the third wicket, India's highest-ever partnership against Pakistan. The previous record of 200 was jointly held by Sunil Gavaskar and Krishnamachari Srikkanth, for the first wicket at Madras in 1986-87, and by Ravi Shastri and Sandeep Patil, for the fifth at Faisalabad in 1984-85.

The 30-year-old Tendulkar, playing his 112th match, moved to within a century of former India captain Gavaskar's world record of 34 when he clipped Abdul Razaq for three runs to raise his 100 off 209 balls.

But Tendulkar, who faced 348 balls and cracked 21 boundaries, was stranded just six short of a double hundred when stand-in skipper Rahul Dravid declared after Yuvraj Singh fell for 59.

# 3 tribunals dissolved

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The government has dissolved three tribunals in Dhaka by an official order from the Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Ministry on March 23.

Tribunals that have been dissolved are Tribunal for Prevention of Public Safety Disturbances and Crimes, Dhaka 2,3 and 4.

The order will be effective from April 1, 2004.

During the last Awami League rule, four tribunals were set up in Dhaka for quick disposal of the cases under the Public Safety Act (PSA).

All the cases, pending with the dissolved tribunals, were transferred to the Tribunal-1, Dhaka for disposal, while three nazirs and bench assistants, posted at those tribunals, were transferred to Mymensingh, Gazipur, Manikganj, Pabna, Narayanganj and Natore.

# Bac presses charges against 14

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bureau of Anti-corruption (Bac) yesterday pressed charges of nepotism and misuse of power against 14 people including a former lawmaker and a former chairman of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (Caab).

Mohammad Zahirul Huda, officer of the Bac Task Force-2, submitted the charge sheet, which said the accused in 2001 with connivance of others halted tender process of the calibration work at different airports, violating the terms of the purchase manual of the Caab.

They also paid Tk 74.71 lakh by a repeat order under a project and revenue head for the calibration work at Shah Amanat International Airport in Chittagang.

The chargesheeted are former lawmaker MA Sattar, former Caab chairman Air Commodore Mohammad Iqbal Hossain, former joint secretary Syed Mohammad Hossain, Group Captain (ret'd) of Bangladesh Air Force Mohammad Murad Hossain, former director of Biman Bangladesh Airlines Ahsan Quadir, and Caab officials Director (relations) Asaduzzaman, Chief Engineer (ret'd) Asaduzzaman Chowdhury, Deputy Director Jalal Uddin Nazir, Acting Director Md Masud Imam, Assistant Directors Saif Ahmed Khan, Abdur Rahim and AKM Ataul Islam, Assistant Communication Engineer Md Abdullah Kawser and Group Captain (ret'd) Mohammad Salimullah.

# SC Bar polls close

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two-day election of the executive committee of Supreme Court Bar Association closed yesterday afternoon.

As many as 1,370 out of 1,439 voters applied their franchise in a festive atmosphere on the second day to elect the 14-member committee at the Bar Association Auditorium on premises of the highest court.

The counting of the ballots started at 7:30pm and continued till filing of this report at 10:00 last night.

Lawyers, political parties and citizens of the country are closely watching the election, which carries much importance in the context of the present political heat. The bar association always performed a significant role in political crises in the past.

The election is expected to be contested mainly by two panels -- Jatyatadabi Oikya Panel's Zahir Mamun panel, which has ruling four-party alliance as its patron, and Ainijib Samannay Parishad's Rakan- Bashir panel, which is backed by Awami League and some left-leaning political parties.

# Ctg businessman

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businessman Farukul Islam 35, at gunpoint from his residence at Surson Road under Kotwali Police Station at around 9:00pm on Sunday.

They took Farukul to a building of the Department of Labour Welfare in the city's Nasirabad area in an autorickshaw, contacted his father-in-law over phone and demanded Tk 2 lakh in ransom for his (Farukul) release. They also threatened to kill Farukul if their demand was not met, sources said.

"The miscreants shifted me to the Forest College hostel at Sholoshahar at around 11:00PM," Farukul told newsmen after his release.

However, being noticed of the incident early yesterday, some students of the hostel informed police over phone.

On information, Panchlaish police rushed to Sholoshahar and raided the Forest College hostel. They rescued the businessman and nabbed six people from room no 201 at about 8:00am.

Police could not arrest Rinku Das, Didarul and Imran till the filing of this report at 6:30pm yesterday.

Panchlaish police handed over the arrestees to Kotwali police where a case was filed in this connection.

# Etv Graft Cases

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was charged with helping ETV evade royalty for telecast causing the Bangladesh Television (BTV) to count financial losses.

According to the charge sheet, 17 aspiring organisations submitted their bids after the information ministry floated tender for setting up and running of a private television channel in 1998.

A six-member technical committee convened by Anisur Rahman scrutinised the bids and submitted a report categorising three organisations as 'most responsive', which are Multimode Transport Consultant Ltd., Independent Media Service and Beximco Media Ltd. It also put Bangladesh News Service, Bangladesh Sky Network Ltd. and Prochar Biggaponi Sangstha on the list of companies marked 'responsive'.

The technical committee report rejected the proposals of 11 organisations including ETV and Minard (Bangladesh) Ltd as 'non-responsive'.

After Anisur submitted the report to Akmal on July 9, 1998, the information secretary asked him to include 'non-responsive' ETV on the 'responsive' list, saying 'the higher authorities' wished so.

In the fresh report, the committee recommended for eight organisations placing ETV at the top. Multimode Transport Consultant Ltd was kept at the bottom, another 'non-responsive' organisation Minard was placed second while Beximco Media Ltd. was marked 'non-responsive'.

The joint secretary (development) of the information ministry signed a contract with AS Mahmud

on March 9, 1999 and Mahmud, claiming himself as the ETV chairman, asked the information ministry on March 18 to hand over licence to ETV, to which the government responded.

Although the ministry did not invite any bid from any person, Sayeed and Akmal arranged the signing of the deed knowing fully well of the matter, said the charge sheet.

Bac also accused the former information secretary of destroying necessary documents including the changed evaluation report of the committee.

In the other case, Bac charged Kibria and AS Mahmud with using their influence and abusing power to cause the BTV loss of Tk 1.24 crore.

Bac said an inter-ministerial meeting held on January 27, 1999 fixed the royalty at Tk 1,200 an hour for the ETV programmes within the telecast time of the BTV and Tk 1,800 an hour beyond BTV telecast time and sent a letter to AS Mahmud.

The ETV chairman later sent a letter to Kibria citing ETV's objection to pay the royalty, said the charge sheet.

As per the Kibria's directives, a certain portion of the letter sent after the inter-ministerial committee meeting was deleted and a fresh letter carrying the same date and memo number was issued. The deletion enabled ETV not to pay over Tk 1.24 crore in telecast royalty from March 8, 2000 to August 29, 2002.

Both investigations found AS Mahmud guilty, but the Bac official asked the court to drop his name from the list as he died on January 22 this year.

# Politicisation goes on

FROM PAGE 1

Kajal--who is a midlevel leader of the BNP--will be tried in court for the murders.

Local AL leader Sayeed Khokon also visited the bereaved family. Saber and Khokon then led a procession from the house with the participants chanting party slogans, which visibly shocked the family members, relatives and friends of the deceased.

Leader of the Opposition and AL President Sheikh Hasina yesterday directly accused a BNP gangster of killing them. The culprit is one of those against whom cases were withdrawn by this government, she said, referring to the withdrawal of 70,000 criminal cases.

"The BNP government is patronising murderers. How can murderers be spared just because they are members of this party?" Hasina asked while addressing a gathering in front of the victims' house yesterday morning.

Prime Minister and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia was also scheduled to visit Shamsul Haq's residence yesterday evening. But she later cancelled the schedule and planned to visit the family today.

Meanwhile, businessmen of Old Dhaka have declared repeatedly that immediate and fair trial of the murderers of Shamsul Haq and Russell as

criminal matters regardless of the murderers' political identity.

A number of business leaders from Sadarghat area complained that they were receiving orders from high-level leaders of the ruling coalition to give up any protest programmes to avoid political instability in the area.

They continued to assert at rallies that they are above politics and that the matters have to be resolved by ensuring their security.

Accusations and counter-accusations by political hiphugs are, of course, not a new phenomenon.

The brutal attack on eminent writer and linguist Humayun Azad recently was blamed on the AL by the prime minister. The government even prevented Hasina and other political leaders from visiting Azad at hospital.

During the past AL rule also, the opposition was blamed for bomb blasts and other incidents of violence in Dhaka and elsewhere and the present rulers are now doing the same, shifting the blame on the opposition.

# Bikalpa Dhara

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on his back when we met him yesterday noon after police produced him before the court," Fatema said.

The officer-in-charge of Ramna Police Station refuted the allegations, saying police arrested him as he is accused in a case filed in 2000 under the Narcotics Control Act.

Mahi B Chowdhury, member of the National Committee of Bikalpa Dhara, called the incident a 'terrorist activity' of the government. He told reporters that "The government has no right to harass anyone for supporting Bikalpa Dhara. If he really committed a crime, they could take legal action."

# 2 die in Uzbek 'terrorist' blast

REUTERS, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

At least two people were killed and about 20 people injured in an explosion, which authorities called a terrorist act, in the largest bazaar in Uzbekistan's capital Tashkent yesterday, police said.

A government official told the news agency a policeman had also been killed as he tried to detain a suspicious person who may have been linked to the blast outside a large children's store.

"The terrorist act struck Chorsu bazaar in the Old City," a police official said.

# Tk 490cr interest

FROM PAGE 1

On the waiver-decision, Finance Minister Saifur Rahman says, "We've prioritised agriculture. To make this sector more dynamic, we're taking a number of decisions. The interest waiver is one of them."

He argues that the defaulting farmers have got stuck in a vicious circle of interest burden. "By accumulation, the interest exceeded the actual amount they borrowed. So, they couldn't pay back. This is affecting the agricultural production."

The waiver will reopen the opportunity for taking new loans for the farmers and thus increase agricultural activities, Saifur says.

In December 2003, the total outstanding farm loan was Tk 10,943 crore, of which 61 per cent or Tk 6,683 crore remains overdue.

About five lakh certificate cases are now pending against farmers for defaulting on loans up to Tk 10,000.