

Faction of Naziur-led Jatiya Party joins Ershad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A faction of Naziur Rahman Manjur-led Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP), a component of the ruling four-party coalition, is joining former president HM Ershad-led Jatiya Party on April 27.

Learning their move, the BJP expelled four of its presidium members yesterday on charge of keeping clandestine contact with 'anti-organisation quarters.'

The expelled BJP leaders are Sunil Gupta, Mustafa Jamal Haider, Moinuddin Bhuiyan and Fakir Ashraf. They will formally join the Jatiya Party at its grand conference at Paltan Maidan on April 27.

Four other BJP presidium members are learnt to have held 'final talks' with Ershad to join his party at the conference.

A BJP announcement, however, said yesterday the four leaders had been inactive in respect of party activity for last one year.

The joining of the four with Ershad has been taken as the beginning of the merger of three factions of the Jatiya Party under Ershad's leadership.

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A student sets fire to a bus at the Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University gate after a youth was pushed out of a running bus to his death on Begum Rokeya Sarani yesterday.

MANPOWER EXPORT

20-day deadline to recruiting agents to cut cost

RAFIQ HASAN

The government yesterday gave the recruiting agencies a 20-day ultimatum to cut migration cost of workers to Saudi Arabia or face suspension of their manpower recruiting permission from next month.

The Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment called on a group of leading recruiting agencies at the ministry and issued the ultimatum.

The migration cost to Saudi Arabia went up abnormally to Tk 1.50 to 1.70 lakh recently mainly because of stiff competition among the recruiters, giving rise to an unofficial visa advice market in the Arabian kingdom.

The government asked the recruiters to bring down the migration cost below Tk 1 lakh. The rate of a visa advice in the unofficial market went up to 5,500-6,000 Saudi riyals (one Saudi riyal is equivalent to around Tk 16). The government

asked the recruiters not to buy advice at more than 3,500 riyals.

State Minister for Expatriates Welfare Mohammad Quamrul Islam addressed the recruiters while Secretary Dalil Uddin Mondal was present. President of Bangladesh Agencies of International Recruiting Agents (Baira) Mosharraf Hossain MP and other leaders of the association also attended the meeting.

The Baira president urged the minister to give them two months' time to cut down on the migration cost, a request the minister turned down on the ground that the recruiters were given enough time in the past, meeting sources said.

The minister also reminded the recruiters of his previous warning and said this time the deadline would not be relaxed as he has come under criticism on several occasions at the cabinet meeting and in parliament on the issue, the sources added.

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Two die in building wall collapse

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two cousins aged around 25 years died when a wall of a building at old Dhaka's Kashaituli collapsed on them in the pouring rain of early yesterday.

Arman alias Kala, a plain-sheet trader and his cousin Maksud, a hide trader, were the residents of 29 and 27 Kashaituli.

As they were going to a shop to

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Ex-BDR chief Fazlur Rahman to form alliance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former director general of the Bangladesh Rifles Fazlur Rahman will announce a non-party alliance on April 16 from the Jatiya Press Club premises.

Known for his bravery in the bordering area of Padua in 2001, the retired major general told The Daily Star his platform will ensure representation of grassroots people. He, however, declined to disclose agenda of the latest platform.

6 die as nor'wester lashes 8 districts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least six people were killed and over 200 injured as nor'wester lashed eight districts yesterday and the day before.

The storm also damaged standing crops, a large number of houses and uprooted trees and electric poles, causing serious disruption in power supply and road communications.

In Faridpur, two people were killed and 100 others were injured when nor'wester swept 15 villages in Nagarkanda and Bhangna upazilas early yesterday, official sources said.

The dead are Rezaul Sheikh, 35, of village Delbaria and Abdul Mollah, 16, of village Baro Paikkandi in Nagarkanda upazila. Both died in house collapse.

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ARMS HAUL US sent them for Indian rebels at CHT camps, claims Ctg mayor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The injured were admitted to Nagarkanda Upazila Health Complex and Faridpur Medical College Hospital. The badly affected areas are Delbaria, Collegebadia, Chhoto Kajali, Boro Kajali, Boro Paikkandi, Jagdibaria, Majharkandi, Lashkardia, Nagarkanda and Pourasabha in Nagarkanda upazila and Kharo Khandi, Hazra Hali, Majheekanda, Khapura, Munsurabad, Hamirdi and Bhangna Pourasabha in Bhangna upazila.

In a melodramatic statement, Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury alleged yesterday the arms and ammunition seized on April 2 were sent by the USA and Pakistan to arm Indian rebels camped in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). The mayor of Chittagong City Corporation claimed Indian secessionists were running at least 50 to 60 training camps in the CHT and the weapons were brought in to arm them under a sinister conspiracy to create unrest in the subcontinent.

"I've information that members

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who was in the chair, however said a committee headed by Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain was formed to save the river but it could not achieve its goal due to local influence.

He also said that in consultation with the prime minister, an integrated monitoring cell comprising representatives of various agencies concerned and non-governmental organisations will now be formed.

Participants expressed this view at a roundtable in the capital yesterday, organised by the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC).

Last year, the government demolished 1,308 illegal structures on the Buriganga and its banks but most of them reappeared due to lack of political support and absence of a permanent watchdog for the city's lifeline, the participants pointed out.

Mayor Sadek Hossain Khoka,

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SAVE BURIGANGA Local political factor fails movement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The save Buriganga movement has not attained the desired success due to local political influence, and an integrated monitoring body must be formed to save the river from encroachment and rising pollution.

Participants expressed this view at a roundtable in the capital yesterday, organised by the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC).

DCC sources said the authorities will demolish 420 illegal structures on both banks of the river next week.

Known for his bravery in the bordering area of Padua in 2001, the retired major general told The Daily Star his platform will ensure representation of grassroots people. He, however, declined to disclose agenda of the latest platform.

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Two tiny-tots display empty milk feeder bottles during a token hunger strike at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday to protest the spiraling prices of baby foods. (Story on page 2)

Home secretary not competent to probe

Kamal says govt trying to conceal origin of arms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Jatiya Oikya Mancha President Dr Kamal Hossain has reiterated his demand for the formation of a neutral and independent commission headed by a former chief justice to probe the recent arms haul in Chittagong.

The proposed commission to investigate the biggest ever arms cache seizure in the country should include honest people from the ruling and opposition parties, lawmakers, retired judges and arms experts from the armed forces as its members, he suggested.

Addressing a public meeting at Laldighi Maidan here yesterday, Dr

Kamal rejected the committee headed by the home secretary to probe the arms haul. "The home secretary is a controversial person and also not competent to do the

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Prayer Timings

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-35	5-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-24	6-28
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation