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AL joins Sangsad after 11 months

JS adopts obituary reference on Ahsanullah Master

UNB, Dhaka

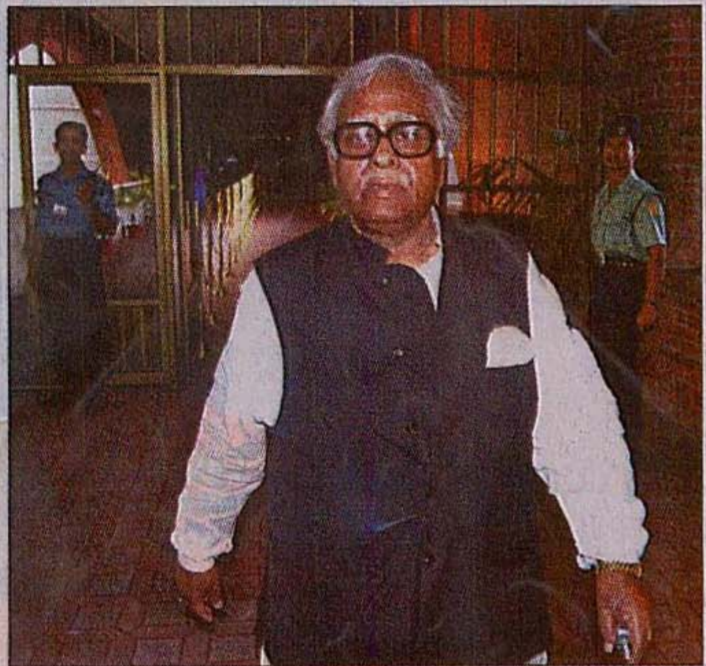
The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday mourned the assassination of Awami League lawmaker, freedom fighter, trade unionist and popular leader Ahsanullah Master as members stood in solemn silence.

Burying all their political differences, members of both the treasury and opposition benches have unanimously expressed their profound shock at the tragic killing of Ahsan Ullah Master by criminals on May 7.

Terming him a symbol of truth, honesty and dedication to the cause of the commonman, the lawmakers demanded impartial investigation into the killing and punishment to the killers whoever they might be and whatever party they belong to.

As his parliamentary colleagues recalled one after another their long association with Ahsan Ullah Master since the days of the country's War of Independence, others were seen sitting in solemn silence along with Leader of the House and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

Ending their 11-month boycott, SEE PAGE 11 COL 6



Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil walks out of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhawan after attending parliament yesterday, ending an 11-month boycott by the main opposition.

MP KILLING PM assures neutral inquiry

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday made a categorical assurance that a neutral inquiry must be made to track down the killers of Ahsanullah Master MP.

"We're shocked and aggrieved at this tragic assassination," she said in parliament wrapping up a long discussion on the slain Awami League lawmaker, freedom fighter and trade unionist, gunned down by criminals on May 7.

Welcoming the boycotting Awami League MPs' return to parliament, the prime minister sought their cooperation in finding out the real killers and punish them by holding quick trial.

"We want your cooperation; let's give up accusation and counter-accusation, let's make joint effort to arrest those who killed him," Khaleda told the aggrieved opposition lawmakers.

The prime minister also requested the opposition to work together for the welfare of the nation, sinking individual interest. "We have fought war together, let's work together for the cause of the people and the nation."

Bangla Bhai active for 6 yrs

His outfit spreads tentacles to establish Taliban-like rule

JULEFIKAR ALI MANIK, back from Rajshahi

Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMB) of so-called Bangla Bhai has been active underground for the last six years to establish a Taliban-like rule, although the Islamic militant outfit has grabbed the limelight only recently.

The JMB idealises extremist Islamic leaders and scholars, follows the militant ideals of the routed Taliban of Afghanistan and spearheads a movement based on jihad, JMB leaders and other people in the northwest told The Daily Star.

To reach their goal, the JMB with three tiers of workers trained about 10,000 full-time activists across the country and spends up to Tk 7 lakh on them a month.

The activists have orchestrated over 100 operations in different regions, which came to be known as vigilante activities of different hues, including murders and attacks on people who they believe have committed crime. The outfit is blamed for killing at least five people and torturing several others since April.

Although the local administration is apparently in the dark about their activities, their 'crusade' against underground outlaws, popularly known as Sarbahaars, in Rajshahi, Natore, Naogaon and Bogra hit sharp

media attention in April.

The revelation of both their presence and locations has annoyed the JMB leaders. The leaders, talking to The Daily Star at the office of the Kachari Koalpara union parishad chairman in Bagmara upazila in Rajshahi, apparently hid a lot of information about their organisation.

They say their organisation is headquartered in Dhaka but declined to give the address. "We don't want to disclose where our head office is. When the time comes, we will inform you," Bangla Bhai said.

The leaders, who declined to name other top leaders and give their addresses, identified themselves with different names and designations to different people.

Bangla Bhai who leads the outlaw cleansing gave conflicting information about himself to different people. In April, he introduced himself as "Azizur Rahman" to journalists. Later it was said his real name is Omar Ali Litu. When the correspondent of The Daily Star asked him his name, he suggested he read newspapers to know it. On insistence, he said: "I am Siddiqui Islam."

On why he assumed different names, he said: "Siddiqui Islam is my real name. Journalists fabricated SEE PAGE 11 COL 4



Amir Mowlana Abdur Rahman, centre, chief of Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh, talks to The Daily Star at the office of a local union parishad chairman in Rajshahi, while Bangla Bhai, left, and Salahuddin, another member, right, of the extremist Islamic outfit look on.

Paper mill owner, 4 others die in road crash

UNB, Dhaka

Five people, including an industrialist of Chittagong, were killed and another was injured in a road accident at Anarupul in Gazaria upazila of Munshiganj district yesterday.

Hospital sources said the accident occurred at about 2:00pm when a private car plunged into a roadside ditch while it was trying to save a passerby.

The dead are Shamsul Islam, 55, owner of Meghla Paper Mill and Hardboard Company in Chittagong, his father-in-law Ahmed Hossain, 70, mother-in-law Umme Kulsum, 60, brother-in-law Bulbul, 25, and the passerby, aged about 24.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Planners want ADP free of MPs' silly demands

Tk 19,000cr revised dev programme finalised

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Shaking off the practice of humouring lawmakers' goffy development commitments, the country's Annual Development Programme (ADP) from now on should be designed on the basis of national priorities, with main focus on poverty alleviation, the planning ministry prescribed in

a meeting yesterday.

The meeting, an extended one, of the Planning Commission was held at the National Economic Council (NEC), with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the chair. It finalised the revision of the current fiscal year's ADP, which now amounts to Tk 19,000 crore instead of the initial sum of Tk 20,300 crore. The meeting also set

the next fiscal year's ADP at Tk 21,500 crore.

The NEC will approve this year's revised ADP in a meeting on May 19 and the next year's ADP on May 29.

At the meeting, the planning ministry observed that lawmakers were wont to make unrealistic public promises which if added up

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Army arrests top criminal, seizes AK-47

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Army men in a predawn raid yesterday arrested the boss of infamous Aziz gang of Raozan along with two of his bodyguards at rubber plantation hideout near Kaokali in Rangamati hill district and seized modern firearms from them.

They seized one AK-47, one AK-22 and two other rifles, two shotguns, ammunition of M-16 rifle and other firearms and some magazines from Azizul Huq and his bodyguards.

Acting on a tip-off, a patrol team of army from Ghagra in Rangamati raided the hideout perched on a hillcock and handed over the arrestees to Raozan police.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

It's a foreign policy challenge for US

Thomas tells The Daily Star on Iraq prisoner abuse

INAM AHMED

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Harry K Thomas observes that the recent prisoner abuse scandal in Iraq will pose a foreign policy challenge for the US and it is "going to take time" to solve the problem.

"I don't think these events (prisoner abuse) have damaged US effectiveness in Iraq," Thomas told The Daily Star in an exclusive interview yesterday. "I think they pose

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Harry K Thomas

Blast kills six Israeli troops

AP, Gaza City

An explosion ripped apart an Israeli armored personnel carrier yesterday on the Gaza-Egypt border, and Arabic-language TV stations broadcasting in Beirut said six soldiers were killed.

The military said the vehicle was patrolling an Israeli-controlled road on the border when the bomb went off. The road runs along the Palestinian refugee camp of Rafah, scene of almost daily battles. Israel repeatedly targets Rafah, trying to destroy weapons smuggling tunnels.

It was the second such bombing in two days. On Tuesday, six Israeli soldiers were killed when their armored personnel carrier was

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Now shrine turtles poisoned

800 kg fish die at Bayezed Bostami Mazaar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

At least 400 turtles at Hazrat Bayezed Bostami shrine fell sick as unidentified brutes on Tuesday night poisoned the pond hosting the rare species.

The poison killed all the fishes of about 39 species and weighing about 800kg.

Sources said some unidentified men came to the shrine at around 10:00 that night with a five-litre plastic jar, poured poison onto the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5



A truck carries turtles of a rare species to safety after 400 of the reptiles fell sick from poison in a pond at Hazrat Bayezed Bostami in Chittagong.

29 submit papers for JS by-polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 29 people have submitted nomination papers for running the June 6 parliamentary by-polls in Dhaka-10 and Munshiganj-1 constituencies.

Yesterday was the last day for submission of nominations and 24 people filed their papers for Dhaka-10 (Ramna-Tejgaon) while five for Munshiganj-1 (Sreenagar), according to a press release of the Election Commission (EC).

The two seats fell vacant as Abdul Mannan, elected from Dhaka-10, and former president Badruddoza Chowdhury's son Mahi Chowdhury, elected from Munshiganj-1, resigned from their respective constituencies on March 10 to join the former president's newly floated political party Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB).

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Tigers on top

RABEED IMAM from St Vincent

After relaxing under the St Vincent sun for three days, Bangladesh started off their Caribbean tour in grand fashion when they took eight wickets in quick time to send a

strong West Indies Board XI reeling in the practice match here on Wednesday.

By the 37th over, the home team boasting four Test caps, were struggling at 116 for eight after opting to

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Cops mount watch on Proshika, frisk staff

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday kept a watchful eye on the Proshika headquarters in Mirpur and frisked the non-governmental organisation's staff and visitors before letting them in following Tuesday's incident which left four rebel employees injured.

Some 10 policemen deployed at the entrance to the head office frisked the Proshika staffers and visitors willing to go in. They also interrogated the employees when they came out of the office, according to the staff.

Law-enforcers arrested two and picked up 11 other Proshika employees in a raid on the NGO

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

PRISONER ABUSE American beheaded 20 killed in Karbala clash; Sadr offers conditional truce

AGENCIES, Baghdad

A video showing the beheading of an American in Iraq was posted on an Al-Qaeda-linked web site, a gruesome killing which Islamic militants claimed was carried out to avenge the abuse of Iraqi detainees by US troops.

A senior State Department official identified the slain American in the video as Nicholas Berg, a businessman from Pennsylvania who had been missing in Iraq since mid-April.

Berg was decapitated with a large knife, according to US networks which did not show his death but described it as horrific. Berg's body

was found by the side of a road near Baghdad at the weekend.

The tape on the Islamic militant web site with links to al-Qaeda was reportedly titled "Abu Mussab al-Zarqawi slaughtering an American", referring to the wanted al-Qaeda agent.

The Bush administration has vowed to catch the killers of American hostage Nick Berg who filmed himself cutting off his head after seizing him in Iraq. Nick Berg's distraught family have partly blamed the coalition for creating the circumstances in which he was abducted while seeking work there.

His captors said they were avenging

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7



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