

BANGLA BHAI

Arrest order wrapped in confusion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Confusion wraps the order to arrest dreaded operations commander Bangla Bhai of Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB), as police stations did not get any instruction what the deputy inspector general (DIG) in Rajshahi yesterday said was issued.

In the wake of the Islamic outfit's militant activities, the home ministry on Sunday said it ordered police to arrest Bangla Bhai, blamed for killing five underground outlaws in the northwest in vigilante action

since April 1.

Rajshahi DIG Noor Muhammad told The Daily Star that he got the arrest order, but refused to give further details.

Asked if the order was in writing or verbal, Muhammad instructed the correspondent: "Write we received the order."

On whether the police stations were informed about it, the DIG ducked the question but said, "We will arrest him (Bangla Bhai) as soon as we get him. No-one is allowed to take the law into his own hands."

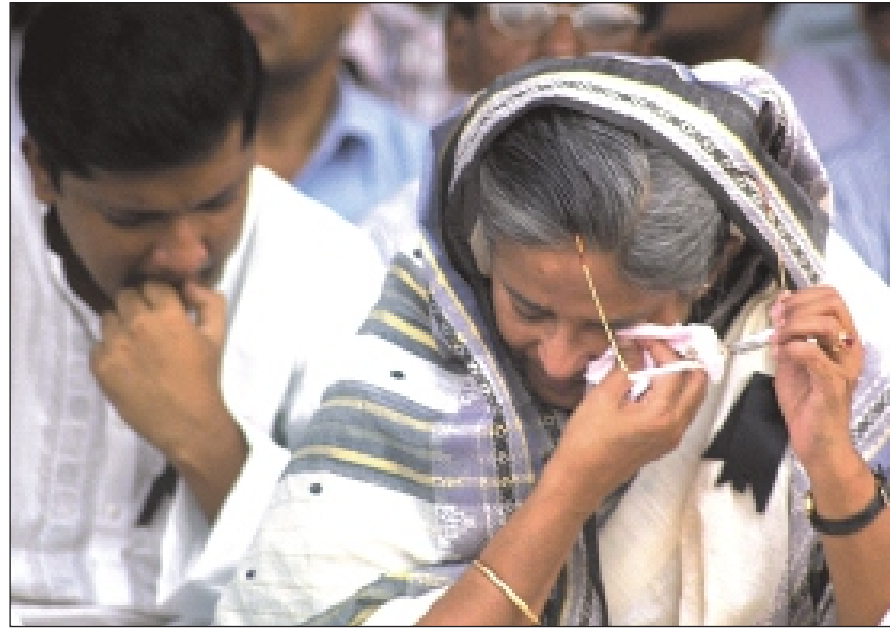
But Rajshahi Superintendent of

Police Masud Mia told reporters yesterday evening that he was yet to get the arrest order, adding: "We will arrest him once we are instructed."

Muhammad believes Bangla Bhai, who gave his real name as Siddiqui Islam, is no longer in Bagmara or other parts of the north-western district. "Our intelligence agencies reported he left Rajshahi."

Sources said Bangla Bhai returned to Rajshahi Saturday night from Pabna after villagers caught 19 operatives of his outfit in Kalupara on Friday night.

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Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina, left, wipes her tears while identifying with the grief of Jabid Ahsan Sohel, as the son of slain AL lawmaker Ahsanullah Master spoke at a Tongi rally yesterday; a section of the audience, right, also fights tears during Sohel's emotional speech.



PHOTO: STAR

BNP keeps an eye on AL's alliance bid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling BNP is closely watching the latest opposition move to forge an alliance of the Awami League (AL) and Left-leaning parties to unseat the coalition government.

Highly placed sources said several policymakers of the ruling coalition leader BNP and intelligence agencies inquired about Sunday's meeting of 10 Left-leaning parties with opposition AL chief Sheikh Hasina.

BNP insiders said some top-ranking BNP leaders rang up leaders of the pro-Left parties immediately after

the meeting and had an update on the outcome of the discussion.

A key BNP policymaker said on condition of anonymity that though the top leaders of the 10 Left-leaning parties had a meeting with the AL chief, he is convinced that not all of them are keen to forge an anti-government alliance.

He claimed only two to three pro-Left leaders are serious about forming such an alliance, some are averse to the idea and a few are undecided about whether to team up with the AL or perk up the existing Left alliance as an alternative force.

Two key Left parties may decide

otherwise in the event of a unilateral decision to forge an alliance with the AL, he said.

The government policymakers, meanwhile, are planning ways to keep smaller political parties away from forging an alliance with the AL, according to sources.

They believe AL's forming an alliance with the smaller parties ahead of the general elections may not affect the ruling alliance since these parties do not have a vote bank. Still, the policymakers do not want to see an anti-government platform, which may lead to agitation.

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Morshed to visit Delhi soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan is likely to visit New Delhi tomorrow, immediately after the new Congress-led government takes office.

He is likely to hold talks on bilateral and regional issues with the new government and carry a letter of felicitation from Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to the new Indian premier, sources said.

His visit will possibly seek ways to initiate a process to establish friendly relations with the new government of India, Bangladesh's biggest neighbour, sources added.

"The foreign minister hopes to visit New Delhi very soon, but the

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PHOTO: STAR

Authorities early yesterday felled over 100 such trees in Chittagong's Bandar Residential Area to make way for transportation of goods to a private container terminal there.

Governance a real worry

New British high commissioner says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The new British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury has said the current state of governance, lack of political consensus and law and order situation are all 'continual worries' that 'hinder Bangladesh from achieving its potential.'

Choudhury, who was born in Bangladesh, was speaking at a press conference at Hotel Sheraton yesterday, two days after presenting his credentials to the president.



Anwar Choudhury

Noting that political situation is blamed for many of these problems, he said, "Only politicians themselves can improve matters and provide the vision and framework for a Bangladesh that is prosperous, stable and strongly democratic."

"For me it is the fulfilment of a rather unlikely dream," he said on serving his country United Kingdom in the country of his birth.

Choudhury spoke a few words in Bangla to satisfy newsmen's curiosity.

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Saifur for e-vote

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday said all political parties and civil society members should unite in favour of introducing electronic voting system to ensure a smooth, sharp and reliable electoral system.

Apparently encouraged by the

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Prayer Timing

May 18		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-10	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-36	6-40
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

Women kick off lobbying to be BNP legislators

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women leaders of the ruling BNP have set off hectic lobbying to get parliamentary berth from 45 seats reserved for women in the Jatiya Sangsad by the 14th constitutional amendment passed on Sunday.

Top BNP officials said the wives and daughters of some deceased

leaders and leaders who did not get party nomination in the last general elections were visiting them with the plea to become lawmakers.

The 14th amendment provides for proportionate distribution of the reserved seats among parties with representation in parliament.

The lobbying to fill BNP's quota

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£40m robbery at Heathrow thwarted

AGENCIES, London

Armed police have arrested six men at Heathrow airport after foiling what they say would have been one of Britain's biggest-ever robberies.

The men in their 30s were arrested at a cargo warehouse in an operation involving over 100 officers,

some armed, acting on a tip-off.

Police say they men were trying to steal gold bullion valued at £40m and a considerable amount of cash.

The gang threatened staff with at least one firearm and other weapons, including knives and cudgels, after reversing through the warehouse

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