

Coalition has a blueprint to kill popular leaders
Habiganj rally told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,
from Habiganj

Ruling BNP-Jamaat-led coalition has drawn a blueprint for eliminating popular and progressive political leaders one by one, said the central leaders of the 14-party alliance led by the Awami League at a conclave meeting in Habiganj yesterday.

The leaders were addressing the condolence meeting to commemorate the deaths of AL lawmaker SAMS Kibria and four others in a grenade attack on January 27.

Chaired by the president of district unit AL, Mushfiq Hossain Chowdhury, the meet took place at Shirishtala.

The speakers emphasised a political alliance of the like-minded parties to launch a vigorous out-government movement and said in absence of it, such killings will continue.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil said the government has failed to provide security for the public to the

Bangladesh economy posts strong growth

States ADB quarterly update

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite floods and oil price shock on international market, Bangladesh economy continued recording a strong growth in the last quarter of 2004, said Asian Development Bank.

The country was also able to maintain a positive balance of payments during the period, thanks to steady growth in export-led manufacturing and increased remittance flow, said ADB in its 'Bangladesh Quarterly Economic Update-December 2004' released yesterday.

However, the bank said the government has to improve law and order situation and ensure more robust financial market institutions to continue this performance.

The bank estimated the GDP (gross domestic product) growth at 5.3 percent in FY 2005, slightly lower than 5.5 percent in the preceding year, due to flood related

setback in farm production. Overall agriculture growth during FY 2005 is estimated at only 0.4 percent from 2.7 percent in preceding year, reflecting a setback in food grain production.

According to the economic update, on a point-to-point basis inflation increased to 6.4 percent in November 2004 from 5.7 percent in July 2004. The higher inflation is caused by the increase in food prices due to the flood-related impact and rise in international commodity prices.

The stock market demonstrated notable improvement in terms of market index, market capitalisation and turnover. The Dhaka Stock Exchange General Index steadily increased by 104 percent in 2004, the report stated.

In the first five months of FY 2005, exports increased by 15.3 percent over the same period of the previous year. Imports also registered a high growth of 25.4 percent

during the past four months of FY 2005, driven by higher imports of capital machinery, intermediate and consumer goods.

Despite a widening trade deficit, the current account still generated a surplus of \$75 million in the first four months FY 2005, due to the rising trend in workers remittances.

During the first half of FY 2005 revenue increased by only 9 percent compared with the corresponding period of the previous year. Despite a shortfall in revenue the government borrowed less from the banking and non-banking sources, which was Tk10.7 billion during first five months of FY 2005 as against Tk24.5 billion in the corresponding period of FY 2004.

In FY 2005, the growth in services sector is likely to increase to 6 percent from 5.7 percent in the preceding year, ADB hoped.

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97 former top govt officials slate Kibria's killing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ninety-seven retired government officials including secretaries and envoys have condemned the killing of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria.

The killers of Kibria have been trying to divide the society and cripple the political system to destroy the country, they said in a joint statement on Tuesday.

"We are shocked and speechless at the planned killing of Shah AMS Kibria," they said.

The retired officials expressed grave concern over various types of violent incidents, including the killing of Kibria, and said people are losing faith in law and justice.

It is the government's responsibility to check a continued slide in law and order but it has failed to do so, the statement said.

They expressed concern about the country's future if the government fails to reign in fundamentalists.

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PHOTO: AKM MOHSIN

Traders at Khilgaon kitchen market in Dhaka do not care about the risk of accident, as they run their business on the rail tracks.

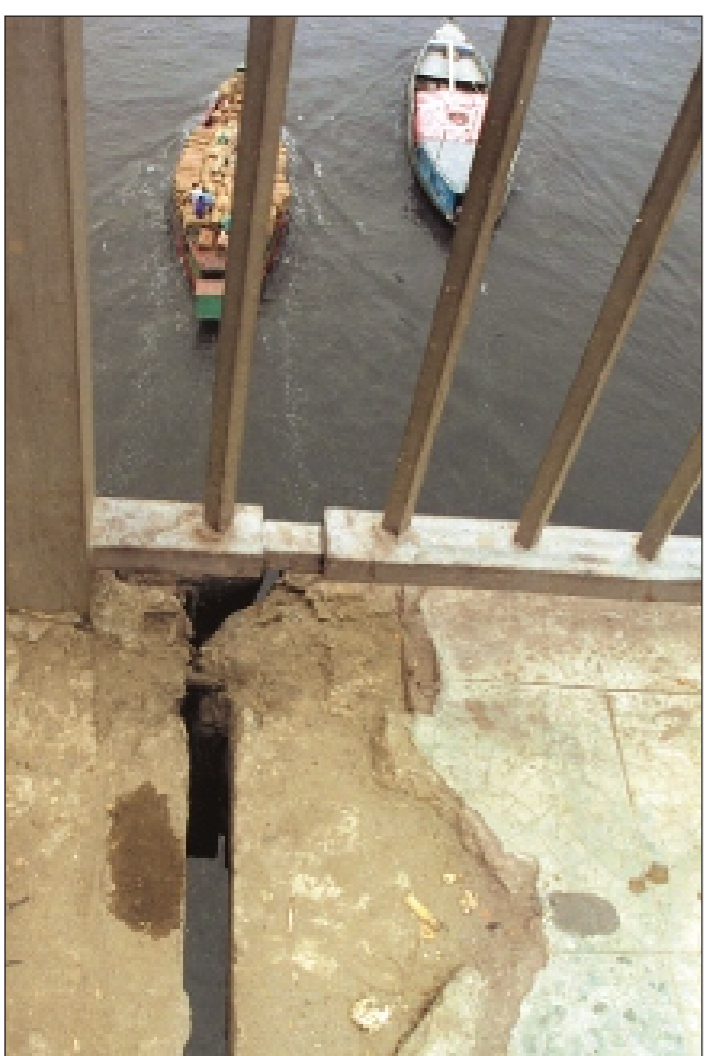


PHOTO: STAR

The first Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge over the Buriganga river in the capital remains in a shabby condition due to lack of regular maintenance.

12 Natore militants linked with Jamaat Say investigators

ROVING CORRESPONDENT,
Natore

Twelve activists of militant Islamist outfit Jama'atul Mujahidin Bangladesh arrested in Natore early Tuesday have links with Jamaat-e-Islami and its student front, investigators said yesterday.

One of the arrestees, Forman Ali who is suspected to be leader of the group, will be sent to the Joint Interrogation Cell in Dhaka today.

Sources in law enforcing agencies said the arrestees confessed during primary interrogation that a Jamaat worker and teacher at Natore City College had asked them to gather at Shadhupara Ahle Hadith Jame Masjid (mosque) in Natore for physical training.

Police nabbed them from the mosque.

Of the militants, madrasa teacher Alauddin is a ward unit president of Jamaat in Halsha union, whose father Hasan Ali Mondol was the union 'peace committee' president during the liberation war, sources said.

Peace committees collaborated with Pakistani occupation army during the war.

Another arrestee, Alauddin's student Saiful Islam, is an activist of Islami Chhatra Shibir, and his father Moslem Mondol was Bipro

Belgharia union peace committee general secretary.

Four other arrestees -- Forman Ali, Shahidul Islam, Anwarul Islam and Mokhesur Rahman -- are Jamaat members while Ahsan Habib, a student of Dastanabad Dakhil Madrasa, is a Shibir activist.

Earlier, Magistrate Mehdi Hasan had placed Forman Ali of Dastanabad in Natore on a four-day remand and sent 11 others to jail custody rejecting their bail prayers.

Forman told police he had organised the physical training at the dictate of one Abdul Quyyum.

Talking to reporters while in custody, the militants said they were working to establish Islam. "Every one should follow us", one of them said.

The Mosque

The one storied Jame Masjid situated in Jamaat-dominated Shadhupara, seven km off the district town, was constructed in 2002 by Bangladesh office of the Revival of Islamic Heritage Society of Kuwait.

Emaj Uddin, 'imam' of the mosque said Ishaq, Forman and two others were at the mosque when he left it at 8:00 pm on Monday.



STAR FILE PHOTO

Bangladeshis may have to continue to fight frequent flooding and one-sixth of the Ganges delta could be permanently lost to sea level rise in a few decades.

Global warming sends grave warning

Refugees, disease, water, food shortages predicted as climate change pushes up sea levels

AFF, Exeter, England

Global warming will boost outbreaks of infectious disease, worsen shortages of water and food in vulnerable countries and

create an army of climate refugees fleeing uninhabitable regions, a conference here was told yesterday.

The scale of these impacts -- the theme of the second day of

the major scientific forum on global warming -- varies according to how quickly fossil fuel pollution is tackled, how fast the world's population grows and

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'THREAT' TO PM Another case filed against Mansur of AL

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

Another case was filed yesterday against Awami League (AL) Organising Secretary Sultan Mohammad Mansur and four others for their alleged threat on the life of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

District unit Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal General Secretary Abu Bakar Siddique filed the case with a magistrate's court in Jhenidah. He also accused Sylhet Mayor Badruddin Ahmed Kamran and three Sylhet AL leaders of the charge.

The plaintiff said the accused AL leaders at a rally in Sylhet Sunday threatened the prime minister that she would meet the fate of Ziaur Rahman if killers of SAMS Kibria are not tried properly.

Magistrate Shaila Farjana ordered a police investigation into the case.

Siddique told The Daily Star over cellphone that they have already called a meeting for chalking out protest programmes against the threat.

Prayer Timing		
February 3		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-52	5-56
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSIONER Telcoms ministry at fault again

ABU SAEED KHAN

The telecoms ministry is again found guilty of violating another law. A commissioner of the Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC) resigned in February last year. Section 13 of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Act, 2001 stipulates that the government has to fill up such a vacancy

within 30 days. The ministry is, however, yet to show any respect to this explicit legal provision.

Then Awami League government had passed the telecoms law on April 16, 2001. According to the law, the BNP-lead coalition government, after assuming power through October 2001 elections, formed the

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HC declares illegal removal order of judge Shahidur UNB, Dhaka

The High Court (HC) yesterday declared illegal the president's order removing additional judge Syed Shahidur Rahman in April last year.

"The President's order removing Syed Shahidur Rahman from his office is beyond the mandate of Article 96 of the Constitution and he (President) has failed to apply his mind to it in passing the order," observed the court.

Division bench comprising Justice Shah Abu Nayem Mominur Rahman and Justice Mainul Islam

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6,000 acres gobbled up in Dhaka, N'ganj, Gazipur

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The district administrations of Dhaka, Narayanganj and Gazipur have identified about 6,000 acres of illegally occupied government land and recovered only 306 acres.

Sources quoting reports of the district authorities said they have named 17 developers grabbing 276 acres of government land.

The Dhaka district administration in its report said it has identified 261 acres of public land to be recovered from grabbers. It also accused nine developers of grabbing 238 acres.

In its report, the district administration of Narayanganj said it has identified 4,207 acres of land to be recovered. It accused three developers of grabbing over 20 acres.

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Rapist jailed for 30 years

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced a rapist to 30-year rigorous imprisonment.

The convict, Kala Guddu, raped a five-year-old girl in Mohammadpur in the city on February 18, 2003.

Judge Kaniz Akhter Nasrina Khanam of the Fourth Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression gave the verdict in presence of Guddu of Geneva Camp in Mohammadpur.

After cross-examination of 10 prosecution witnesses, the judge pronounced the judgement at

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