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JMJB waits for
patrons' signal
to re-emerge
under new name

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

The banned Islamist militant group Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) will turn underground and carry on its operations undaunted by the absence of its operations commander Bangla Bhai, who slipped into India Thursday night.

Sources said, before fleeing the country, Siddique Rahman, alias Bangla Bhai gave minute instructions to leaders and operatives of his outfit on how to continue working to bring about an Islamic revolution.

The JMJB men are now awaiting the nod of certain political figures in the government to resume their activities, said a top JMJB leader of Naogaon region.

He said in line with its past

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FAILURE TO DISPEL 'ANTI-BANGLADESH PROPAGANDA' Govt mulls recast of foreign ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is contemplating steps to recast the foreign ministry for its diplomatic failure to handle the 'propaganda' against Bangladesh and the ruling coalition, highly placed sources said.

Top policymakers believe the ministry has miserably failed to uphold Bangladesh's image abroad when an anti-Bangladesh campaign is being carried out globally.

Moreover, the existing set-up of the foreign ministry has proved to be ineffective in pursuing economic

diplomacy and presenting Bangladesh and its causes properly to the international communities, the sources said.

The policymakers are also unhappy with the performance of the foreign minister. 'He (FM) is busy with his own business, rather than leading the foreign ministry,' a government high-up told The Daily Star yesterday, wishing anonymity.

A number of senior ministers who so far have backed M Morshed Khan are unlikely to support him in his continuing office as the FM,

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sources said. 'But everything depends on the prime minister. And she will take the final decision,' said a policymaker.

He said the government has already started the process of recasting the ministry by sending Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury to Washington as Bangladesh ambassador and appointing Hemayet Uddin the new foreign secretary.

A few more changes are on the cards, he told The Daily Star.

It has already been reported that most of the Bangladesh missions

PM calls for farm
revolution

Gives away nat'l
agriculture awards

UNB, Joydebpur, Gazipur

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday called for creating a 'new awakening' and 'silent revolution' in agriculture with the united efforts of government, farmers and agriculturists.

Addressing the Conference of Agricultural Workers 2005 on the premises of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI), she said that in the modern world biotechnology, genetic engineering and geographical information management technology have revolutionised agriculture.

The PM said farming system would have to be developed, appropriate and technology-based, to cut poverty to half by 2015 as per the UN Millennium Development Goals.

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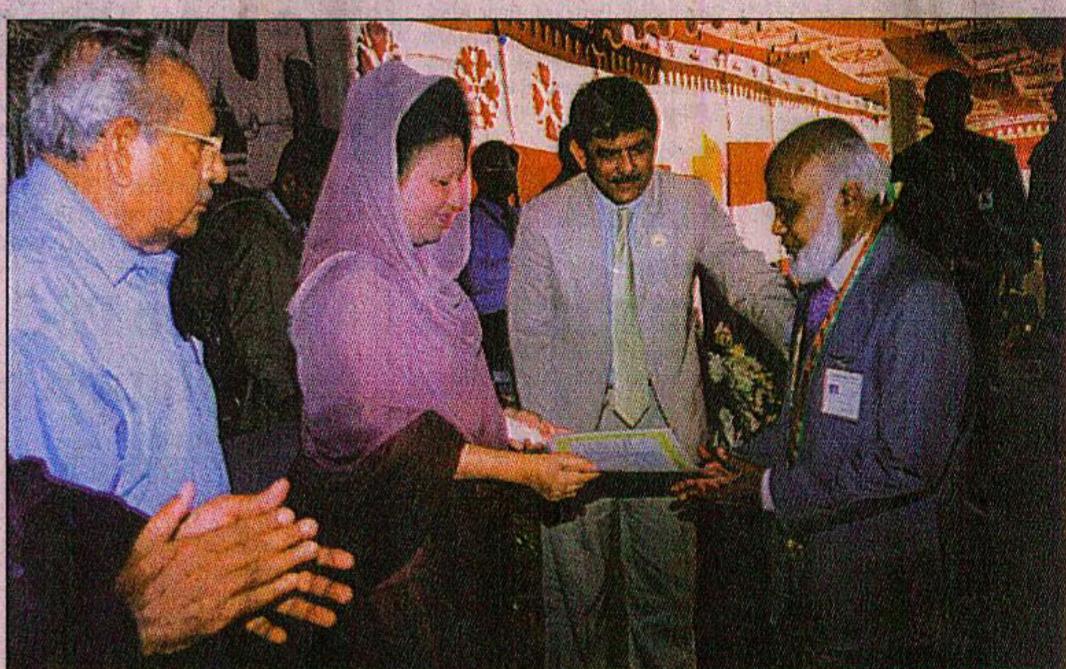


PHOTO: PID
Prime Minister Khaleda Zia hands over this year's National Agriculture Award to one of the 32 winners at Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute in Gazipur yesterday.

Borders remain tense over fencing

BDR-BSF meet ends in stalemate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Situation in bordering Ramgarh of Khagrachari remained tense as a meeting between Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) at Subrampur in India ended inconclusively yesterday.

The talks took place in the wake of Friday's exchange of gunfire between the two sides in Ramgarh. The incident occurred when the Indian side made an abortive attempt to fence the border 150 yards off the zero point.

BDR sources said the battalion commander level flag meeting held at Subrampur ended fruitlessly with

both sides making allegations against each other. BDR could not elicit any assurance from its counterpart that they (BSF) would cease fencing that has been stalled for the last few days.

Meanwhile, a tense situation was prevailing at Singimari of Lalmonirhat, Chakpara of Chapainawabganj and at Chaudanga border over fencing and push-in bids by India.

A top official at the BDR headquarters said BDR personnel have been kept on alert. They are patrolling the bordering areas round the clock. He, however, said that the situation has not deteriorated further.

Grafts deter Dhaka's drug control bid

Says US State Deptt

UNB, Dhaka

US State Department has said corruption at all levels in the government, particularly in law enforcement agencies, hampers narcotics interdiction efforts in Bangladesh, used by traffickers as a 'transit point' because of its location in the midst of major drug producing and exporting countries.

In its annual International Narcotics Control Strategy report 2005 released in Washington, the State Department said seizures of heroin, phencyclidine and pethidine point to growing narcotics abuse in Bangladesh.

There were unsubstantiated allegations of opium and cannabis production in the Bandarban

India starts
probing Galib's
links in West
Bengal

BDNEWS, Kolkata

Indian intelligence started enquiry into the connection of Aahle Hadith leader Asadullah Al Galib with some of the madrasas in West Bengal.

A senior official of the State Intelligence Branch (SIB) said primary investigation found that Galib visited some madrasas of North 24 Paraganas, Murshidabad and Malda

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Corruption charge against PM's APS shelved

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Highly placed sources at the PMO said the issue has been permanently covered up and instruction given to authorities concerned not to proceed with the matter anymore as it might embarrass the government further.

Principal Secretary to the Prime
Minister, SECRETA

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PHOTO: STAR

They are trying to repair a tubewell yesterday amid a severe water crisis in this dry season that leaves the residents, specially the poor, in the Mohammadpur embankment area literally high and dry.

SECOND LARGEST FDI OFFER Dhabi team happy with scouting result

Applies for cellphone operating
licence, 5-star hotel in Cox's Bazar

STAR REPORT

The largest business conglomerate of United Arab Emirates (UAE), Dhabi Group, has conveyed to the government its real keen and specific investment plans in a range of sectors including banking, telecoms, tourism and power.

"We'll take part in the privatisation process of the country's nationalised commercial banks. To begin with, we want to invest in one of the banks the government plans to privatisate," Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Bashir Ahmad Tahir told reporters at the end of his five-day visit to Bangladesh yesterday.

Tahir arrived here on Tuesday leading a five-member high-profile delegation comprising top executives of telecoms and banking concerns of the Abu Dhabi-based group owned by the royal family of Al

Nahayan.

He said, "We've had talks with the government on where they [the government] would allow us to invest."

He also indicated an aggressive expansion target of his group into other areas of business, saying, "Once we're here, we'll explore further opportunities. Lots of investment potentials are there in the country."

Dhabi has already lodged a proposal with Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC) to obtain a cellphone operating licence under the name of Wardi Bangladesh Limited. Its initial invest target in telecoms is \$750 to \$800 million, the group CEO said.

Tahir also announced, "Not only in cellular sector, we're also interested in fixed line phone and other

4 cops hurt in bomb attack

BDNEWS, Chittagong

Four policemen were injured as criminals hurled a bomb when they were conducting a check near Belachchi rail crossing in the town at about 8.30pm yesterday.

Locals rushed injured Habildar Moniruzzaman, constables Mofizul Haq, Abdur Razzaq and Khasrul Islam to Chittagong Sadar Hospital.

The deputy commissioner and police officials visited the injured.

Tamabil land port opens after 8 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Imports of coal and other goods through Tamabil resumed yesterday afternoon after eight days' suspension that caused Bangladesh huge revenue losses.

Work at Tamabil Land Port stopped when Indian exporters went on a strike on February 24. The strike action was taken after Indian Border Security Force (BSF) had allegedly harassed some Indian

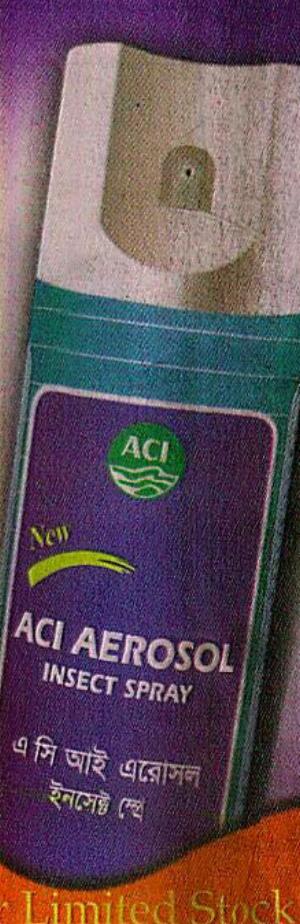
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