

Grisly tales of fortune seekers

FROM PAGE 20
appear to stretch from Bangladesh to Africa.

"Four of our group were not asked any questions at Zia International Airport before boarding a plane for Dubai en route to Casablanca. Instead, we were taken to an Emirates flight and shown a great deal of respect. Our broker, Roman, escorted us up to the boarding lounge," said Sohrab, one of the victims, who comes from Shonagazi of Feni district.

Sohrab told The Daily Star that as they were transit passengers, they did not have to face any immigration during the journey.

"But when we reached our last leg of air travel at Bamako, the capital of Mali, a Pakistani broker named Jaman Khan received us at the tarmac of the plane. He just asked us whether we were from Bangladesh and people sent by Roman," Sohrab said.

"Our identification confirmed, Jaman led us to a car parked outside the airport without proceeding through

immigration. Interestingly, an official of the airport exchanged a few words with Jaman and signalled us to proceed," Sohrab described.

Although transit to Africa was easy, the true ordeal of the journey began when the group crossed the Sahara desert from a small city called Gao. "By now our group had 48 people including citizens of India and Pakistan," Sohrab said.

"We crossed miles after miles in two small cars through the desert, ignoring a scorching desert with a temperature of over 54 degrees Celsius. The journey was extremely arduous, as there was virtually no road."

The Bangladeshi job seekers spent night after night in the desert, almost eight days with virtually no food and water. "We passed day after day with just a few drops of water to drink," Nazrul said.

It was the Mauritanian police who probably saved their lives. The police arrested the group and charged them

with illegally entering the country. They were later sentenced to five and a half months of imprisonment.

During their incarceration, the workers contacted Roman, the broker, several times, informing him of their situation. Although he promised to help them, he never did, according to Sohrab. He also threatened them that they would never return home if they disclosed his name.

The young men pleaded with the Mauritania police for their release and repatriation, but had to serve the entirety of their sentence. They finally returned to Dhaka on March 17 of this year with the help of the International Organisation for Migrants (IOM), which helped secure their release.

Since returning home, the young victims have given details about the broker to the police. The Special Branch of police has now been asked to submit an investigative report and take punitive action against the racket. Police are now interrogating eleven people in connection with the case.

Main political parties

FROM PAGE 1
decided to issue registration to six parties. It is considering the applications of another 27 parties. But it could not issue the registration certificate to the six and settle the cases of the other parties.

Officials at the EC said the EC is now in a dilemma about whether or not to provide the 33 parties with the registration certificates. If they are provided with the certificate, they can claim any symbol for the next general elections.

If any minor political party claims the popular electoral symbol like 'sheaf of paddy' or 'boat', it will put the EC in trouble, as the symbols are used by the two major parties, BNP and Awami League, both are still unregistered.

According to the rules, any registered political party has the privilege of choosing any electoral symbol. Besides, the rules permit the registered parties to use the state-owned media to broadcast their electoral pledges.

Around 70 to 80 political parties contested the previous parliamentary elections but most of them failed to secure any seat.

The EC had wanted to make registration compulsory for all parties but the major parties opposed the provision forcing the EC to make it optional before the 2001 elections, EC officials said.

"If we could have made the rule mandatory for all parties, then the scenario would have been different," Election Commissioner AK Mohammad Ali told The Daily Star, referring to the rules introduced in India.

In India, political parties are registered with the EC under a law. Registered parties are granted recognition at the state and national levels by the EC on the basis of their poll performance at general elections.

"We have nothing to do if the major parties do not show interest in the process of registration with the Election Commission," Mohammad Ali said.

A total of 35 political parties have so far applied to the EC for registration, most of them are known as minor political parties. Awami League, BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami and other leading parties did not even apply.

However, all the three factions of Jatiya Party had applied for registration before the last parliamentary polls aiming to get the electoral symbol 'plough'. As the issue was later settled by the High Court, they lost interest in the registration process.

The EC has formally granted registration to six political parties, three factions of Jatiya Party, Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (Baksal), Bangladesh Islami Front (Jaifi), and Bangladesh Kheiat Andolan.

The registration process of 27 parties is underway. These are People Action Party, Bangladesh Labour Party, Bangladesh Jalali Front, Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh, Liberal Party Bangladesh,

Bangladesh Green Party, Bangladesh Congress Party, Bangladesh Muslim League (Jamir), Islami Shasantanra Andolon, Forward Party, People's Freedom Party, Bangladesh Gano Congress, Bangladesh Janakalyan Party, Quran O Sunnah Bastabayan Party, Bangladesh, Social Democratic Party of Bangladesh, Ganotantri Party, Samridhdha Bangladesh Andolon, Jatiya Janata Party, Bangladesh Muslim League (Yousuf), Krishak Sramik Janata League, Liberal Democratic Party and Zaker Party.

Among these parties, only the three factions of Jatiya Party led by HM Ershad, Anwar Hossain Manju and Nazir Rahman, Krishak Sramik Janata League and Bikalpa Dhara have representation in the current parliament.

All the candidates of the other parties have lost their deposits in the last parliamentary election.

The EC has rejected applications of two political parties, Bangladesh Islami Front (Bahadur Shah) and Islami Shikkhatanrik Dal, Bangladesh on the plea of loopholes in their party constitution, sources said.

DC, sergeant of traffic sued for bribery

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A deputy commissioner (DC) and a traffic police sergeant were accused of demanding a bribe in a criminal case filed with a Dhaka court yesterday.

The accused are Firoz Al Muijaheed Khan, DC of Traffic (North) of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), and Sergeant Al Renwaz Arifin.

Mohammad Hafizur Rahman of AG Novel (Bangladesh) Ltd in Motijheel filed the case with the Court of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka.

Metropolitan Magistrate AJM Abdullah Baqui recorded the complainant's statement and ordered the officer-in-charge (OC) of Tejgaon Police Station to submit a report after probing the matter.

Hafiz said in his complaint that the two officers stopped a car of his company at the Nabisco crossing on December 23 of last year, demanding a bribe to let it go on.

As the driver refused to bribe them, the accused fined him Tk 1,200, although he had all the legal documents, Hafiz added.

Hafiz further said the accused again stopped the car at Chakpara check post on March 19 to demand a bribe and seized the car's documents when the bribe was refused.

They also gave the driver a receipt and asked him to appear before the traffic office (North) on March 29, said Hafiz.

Rab robbery

FROM PAGE 20
State Minister for Home Lutfuzzaman Babar has meanwhile termed the Rab men's involvement in the robbery an embarrassment to the government.

The law enforcers were hunting for the absconders -- Rab Constable Khorshed Alam and two informants Masud and Babul late into the evening yesterday.

Meanwhile, each of the three Rab members arrested in connection with the robbery on Wednesday was placed on a three-day remand yesterday.

Mirpur police produced Sergeant Atiqur Rahman, Sergeant Waliullah and Assistant Sub-Inspector Rafiqul Islam before the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka with a petition for five-day remand for each.

Investigation Officer (IO) Sub-Inspector Shahjahan Kabir in the petition mentioned that Sergeant Atiq and five others went to the house of Ratan Ali, complainant of the case, at 32, Courtbari in Mirpur at about 12:20pm. Identifying themselves as Rab-4 members, they wanted to know how much money he had with him. As he replied that he had Tk 7.8 lakh in an almirah, the Rab members threatening to kill him in 'crossfire' took the almirah's key, and got hold of Tk 7.8 lakh. Of the six, five managed to escape by two CNG-run three-wheelers waiting outside for them, but Sergeant Atiq was nabbed by the locals.

Later following leads obtained from Atiq, a joint team of police and Rab arrested Wali and Rafiq. They recovered Tk 2,45,500 from Wali and Tk 10,000 from Rafiq.

In the forwarding, the IO said that the arrestees need to be quizzed for prosecution of the others involved in the robbery and recovery of the money.

Ratan Ali filed a case with Mirpur Police Station under the Speedy Trial (Law and Disruption) Act on Wednesday night accusing six people.

Commanding Officer of Rab-4 Saber Sharif said Rab teams have launched a manhunt for the absconding accused. He also said that Rab would assist police to ensure quick and proper investigation and exemplary punishment to the culprits.

BSS adds: Embarrassed at the robbery involving Rab men, the government has decided to punish those responsible for tarnishing the image of the elite force, State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar said yesterday.

The incident has embarrassed the government as well as Rab, he said adding that if necessary, summary trial would be arranged to mete out punishment to the culprits.

The trial would be held to uphold the image of Rab which, otherwise is adding feathers to its cap with its performance against the criminals since the formation last year, Babar told reporters after a two-and-half-an-hour unscheduled meeting at Rab headquarters at Kurmitola yesterday.

In reply to a question, the state minister said that the meeting decided to amend the existing rules of Rab to ensure speedy punishment of its members for failure to keep discipline.

Chinese PM

FROM PAGE 1
beginning of next month for exchange of views with your excellency on further developing the friendship and deepening the cooperation between China and Bangladesh, to make joint efforts to push forward the friendly cooperation between our two countries," he said in a message to Khaleda Zia.

In the message marking the 34th anniversary of Bangladesh's independence, Jiabao said, "China pursues a foreign policy of seeking friendship and partnership with our neighbouring countries, sharing security with them and helping them prosper."

Referring to the establishment of the 30th anniversary of diplomatic ties between the two countries, he said, "We attach great importance to the traditional friendly cooperation with Bangladesh."

PM visits

FROM PAGE 1
Braving inclement weather and drizzles, she distributed cash, CI sheets, lungis and saris among the tornado-hit people at Umesh Chandra High School ground in Naldanga Union of Sadullapur upazila and at Khademul Dakhl Madrasa ground at Anandabazar in Sarbananda Union of Sundarganj upazila.

Addressing a rally at Naldanga, the prime minister said as soon as she had heard about this disaster from Singapore, she ordered the administration and the leaders and workers of the BNP to stand by the people and start rescue and relief operations.

"I have come here to share your sorrows and express my heartfelt sympathy," Khaleda said, adding that BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman visited the affected places and distributed relief.

State Minister for Culture Selima Rahman and Jatiya Party leaders Roushan Ershad MP and TIM Fazle Rabbi MP also addressed the rally at Naldanga. The two JP lawmakers urged the prime minister to start rehabilitation of the homeless people.

At least 50 people were killed and 1200 injured in last Sunday's tornado that left a trail of devastation. According to an initial estimate, the inhabitants of the area suffered a financial loss of about Tk1.20 crore in damaged crops and property.

Newspapers will bring out special supplements.

Touts make ME

FROM PAGE 20
however claimed they charge Tk 25-30 thousand as there are procedural problems. "You know due to some technical matters, files in the offices do not move without money."

The discussion on Safe Migration and Women Workers' Rights was organised by Bangladesh Obhimbashi Mohila Sramik Association (BOMSA) in collaboration with Action Aid Bangladesh at Bangladesh Association for International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA) auditorium.

Mohammad Enam Hossain, manpower representative of Royal Associates, one of the seven government-authorised agencies to recruit women workers for jobs in the Middle East, said migration cost goes up as these agencies maintain offices in Saudi Arabia and a service centre with staff, fax and telephone facilities to attend to any problems of the women workers.

BOMSA Project Coordinator Sumayya Islam demanded the government increase the number of authorised recruiting agencies to stop the fraudulent practices.

Some speakers alleged that women below 35 with proper documents including BMET (Bureau of Manpower, Employment and

Training) clearance are also migrating. According to the 2003 regulation, a woman migrant must be at least 35 years of age.

On the multiplied cost of migration, Abdus Sobhan Sikder, deputy secretary (employment) of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, said "We will look into the matter. We are also thinking of increasing the charge."

He also said the BMET is issuing clearance for overseas employment of women only after physical presence of the aspirant migrants at its office for checking their age since January this year.

"Some fraudulent agencies might forge BMET seals and signatures to send women abroad," he admitted.

"Women who migrate bypassing clearance of BMET mainly become victims of oppression and even fail to take legal aid from Bangladesh missions abroad," he said.

In 1997, the government banned expatriation of all unskilled and semi-skilled female workers in the wake of reports of increasing exploitation and abuse of them in foreign countries. But the ban was later repealed in 2003.

Action Aid's TIM Zahid Hossain, BOMSA President Lily Jahan and General Secretary Sheikh Romana also spoke on the occasion.

US telco evades

FROM PAGE 1
payments with the BTBT at \$0.145 a minute by the 15th day of every month.

The BTBT receives eight times more calls than what it sends to overseas and gets paid for the balance incoming minutes.

The IGC operated from June to October last year until the BTBT snapped the link, as the US carrier kept defaulting on payments of the bills.

The IGC owes the BTBT no less than \$75,690 a month, according to the agreement, but the IGC never cared to pay the bills.

Sources said a mid-ranking BTBT official alerted his superiors about IGC's unscrupulous activities a couple of months into the operations. But the authorities transferred the whistle-blower and allowed the IGC to send more calls without its having to make any payments.

The move created rancour among BTBT's mid-level managers, forcing the authorities to snap links with the IGC on October 30 last year. By then the American firm owed the BTBT nearly \$400,000.

BTBT's earnings from overseas carriers, in foreign currency, constitute nearly half its annual revenue that goes directly to the treasury. The BTBT always chooses 'Tier-1' carriers as its overseas traffic partners to protect this highly strategic revenue stream.

"The IGC is certainly not a Tier-1 carrier but merely a traffic reseller," says Joe Scattareggia, vice president of Global Strategic Accounts in Arbinet, the New Jersey-based world's largest electronic clearinghouse of international calls.

"Tier-1 carrier primarily sends the calls from own network and optionally handles other networks' calls subject to mutual agreement with the cus-

tomers like the BTBT," he explained to The Daily Star at a recent meeting at the Carriers World Asia 2005 in Hong Kong.

The BTBT should have sued the IGC, Scattareggia said.

BTBT Chairman Nurul Islam, when reached, would not comment on the absence of moves to realise the IGC dues. He also did not say why he had approved the engagement of the IGC despite its not being a Tier-1 carrier in the first place.

He refused to explain why the BTBT waited five long months to disconnect the IGC, which had been violating the contract by paying BTBT nothing. Islam also would not comment on the allegations that a section of BTBT high officials aided and abetted the IGC in the act of cheating, which had allowed the US company to get away leaving \$400,000 debt on Bangladesh's government.

Sources said the BTBT chairman has also engaged a number of traffic resellers as BTBT's international carrier and a few of them have been irregular in payments. "The government has to be stringent in its dealing with these obscure companies," says a BTBT insider. "Otherwise, they may also abruptly discontinue sending the overseas calls keeping huge outstanding bills like the IGC."

The telecoms ministry is running an enquiry on the chairman on charges of his tampering with BTBT's mobile phone contracts that have provisioned overpayments in excess of \$37 million. The Prime Minister's Office has also asked the ministry to probe the chairman's converting an official trip to the US into a pleasure trip at state expense last year.

8 more dead in twisters

FROM PAGE 20
village in Maheshpur, and Sarwar, 40, of Basudevpur in Harinakundu, died as their houses collapsed during the norwester on Wednesday. Another victim, Russel, 18, of Iswarbah village in Kaliganj, died the previous night after a tree collapsed on him.

According to the district administration and local sources, at least 700 thatched houses in the three upazilas were razed to the ground during the 11-minute storm that began at 6:05pm on Wednesday.

Of the injured, 25 were admitted to the Sadar hospital and upazila health centres.

Electricity poles were uprooted in different areas, plunging Jhenidah district into darkness for about six hours until the power supply was restored at 1am.

According to Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) sources, standing crops, including wheat, banana and tobacco, on vast areas of land in the district were damaged during the norwester.

UNB sources in Madaripur said five people were killed by lightning and electrocution, as well as a trawler capsized, when the norwester swept the district Tuesday evening.

Abdus Sobahan, 35, Shahadat, 30, and Yusuf Ali, 28, drowned as a trawler sank in the river Ariakhan in sadar upazila.

Firoza Khatun, 35, wife of Shukur Khalifa of Charkamlapur village in Shibchar upazila, was killed in a lightning strike while a young man, Nepal, 32, was electrocuted at Shibchar Bazar under Shibchar upazila when he came in contact with a live electrical wire.

Meanwhile, the power supply in the district resumed yesterday, three days after the norwester sent Madaripur into a blackout.

Over 2,000 thatched houses collapsed and thousands of trees were uprooted in the district during the severe storms.

According to BDNWS sources, authorities barred movement of small launches (below 65 feet) due to inclement weather, officials said yesterday.

An official at the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) said they are not allowing any small launches less than 65 feet to leave terminals as the warning signal No. 2 forecast by met office continues.

Earlier on Wednesday, the government suspended launch communications from launch terminals for safety reasons in the wake of the harsh weather.

As the situation improved after 10pm Wednesday night, we allowed some big launches to move toward their destinations," the official said, requesting anonymity. Yesterday morning, some 11 launches of lengths

more than 65 feet left the Sadarghat terminal.

He said the authorities are checking the big launches and have kept an eye on weather forecasts round the clock. "It's a risky time and nobody knows when the situation may deteriorate. So, we request all concerned to be alert," said another BIWTA official.

Criminal killed in crossfire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kusthia

A top criminal was killed and two police personnel including a sub-inspector (SI) were injured in a 'shooting' between the law enforcers and criminals at village Mochainagar of Alamdanga upazila in Chuadanga district on Wednesday night.

The dead was identified as Sahara Ali alias Gurn, 36, of village Hardi of the upazila.

Police said they raided a house of the village on information that a gang of criminals was holding secret meeting there about 10pm.

Sensing that police cordoned off the house, the criminals opened fire. The hour-long gun battle ensued as police returned fire.

Sahara was killed during the shootout, said a duty officer of Alamdanga Police Station.

Two policemen including SI Kazi Jalal Uddin and Constable Ailm were injured during the firefight, police said.

Two shutter guns and fifteen rounds of bullets were recovered from the spot.

Police said a listed criminal, Sahara was accused in 13 cases including 6 for murder.

Kyrgyz president

FROM PAGE 20
His whereabouts had been unknown since demonstrations, armed with rocks and clubs, stormed the Soviet-era structure housing the government and presidency in the capital Bishkek and took over the main television station.

They also freed Felix Kulov, a key opposition leader who had been in prison since 2000.

Kulov immediately went on television urging Akayev to "meet with opposition leaders in order to peacefully and constitutionally transfer power."

Thursday's developments were a dramatic escalation of mounting protests over a disputed March 13 parliamentary election that had until now largely been in the volatile south of the country.

IMF starts annual

FROM PAGE 20
The IMF also wants to know the government's plans for implementing the recommendations of the sixth National Pay Commission (NPC) and for changing the size of the administration including staff recruitment in a number of areas.

Sources said the government plans to implement the NPC recommendations to increase the staff wage by a maximum of 90 percent in three phases in three years. But, it will not raise the wage structure fully as was recommended.

A six-member IMF Action 4 mission lead by Nissanke Veerasinghe, adviser to IMF Asia Pacific Department, will be visiting Dhaka on March 28 to April 9 to gather the answers to these 50 queries this month.

The answers will be incorporated in the IMF mission's financial evaluation report on Bangladesh, which will then be used as an updated annual international reference on the country.

The IMF in particular wants to know the government's gas export policy. The issue that had been hammered by US oil company Unocal, specially after it had struck gas in Bibiyana field, died down following a national committee

Cops get 15 more days to probe Galib

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A Rajshahi metropolitan magistrate court yesterday granted police 15 more days to complete their investigation of militant lynchpin Dr Asadullah Al Galib and his three associates.

Magistrate Yusuf Ali granted the time after Aslam Iqbal, officer-in-charge of Shah Mokhdum police station, pleaded that police need to perform additional interrogations in other districts to learn more about the militants' suspected involvement in seven anti-state activities.

Shah Mokhdum police arrested Islamic outfit Ahab chief Dr Asadullah Al Galib and his three associates Abdus Samad Salafi, Nurul Islam and ASM Azizullah - on early February 23 under Section 54. Police were granted the first 15-day period to investigate Galib on March 10.

Gang shoots at cops, takes away leader

BDNEWS, N'ganj

Hoodlums yesterday snatched away a listed top criminal after shooting a police team, leaving four law-enforcers injured in Araihaazar upazila in Narayanganj.

The injured are ASI Amir Hossain, constables Monir and Kabir and another policeman, whose name could not be known immediately.

A six-member police team arrested notorious criminal AK Khan, accused of about two dozen criminal charges, including several killings and robberies, in Panchrukhi Bazar, said police.

When the team was taking Khan to Araihaazar Police Station, his accomplices opened fire on it, they added.

The law-enforcers returned fire but could not resist the onslaught, the police claimed.

Most of the males in the locality have fled the area fearing police reprisal. Additional police have been deployed.

Privatisation

FROM PAGE 20
To fulfil the IMF's condition for the \$70 million fourth tranche of Poverty Reduction Growth Facility (PRGF) loan, the government last year started its homework for privatising the 33-year-old nationalised firm by hiring a British consultant firm, GBRW.

In December, the GBRW concluded that this bank, due to its strong brand name and a large nation-wide network of branches, would be able to attract private investors. The GBRW suggested the bank needs a Tk 3,000 crore capital to cover its existing losses.

But, the government's move was stalled, as it is not in a position to pump in so much money to privatise the bank, sources said. And this position was argued by an IMF mission in February. The IMF also suspended the \$70 million tranche for this reason.

Anti-smoking law effective from Mar 26

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The law restricting smoking at public places and in means of transport takes effect from tomorrow as the government yesterday issued gazette notification of the "Smoking and Tobacco Products Usage (Control) Act 2005".

The law was passed in parliament on March 13. Violators of the law will be liable to a fine of Tk 50.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare set the date through the gazette notification as per sub-clause 1(2) of the Act after the president's consent to the bill, an official announcement said yesterday.

The law defines as public places educational institutions, offices of the government, semi-government and autonomous bodies, libraries, elevators, hospitals and clinics, court buildings, airport buildings, sea and river port buildings, railway station buildings, bus terminal buildings, ferries, cinema halls, covered exhibition centres, theatres, shopping centres, public toilets, and government and private-owned children parks.

Under the law, public transport refers to motor vehicles, buses, trains, trams, ships, launches, and all mechanised vehicles and aeroplanes.

The health ministry officials said that the law has clearly identified the places to be restricted for smoking. It does not however prohibit smoking in open space, hotels and restaurants and parks.

The law suggests that the owner, caretaker, controlling authorities and management of public places and public modes of transport could have an area within designated as smoking zone.

Reporter's jail

FROM PAGE 20
handed down to a Bangladeshi reporter posed a threat to press freedom.

The Paris-based organisation said in a statement received yesterday it was voicing "concern that a two-month jail term imposed on a reporter for contempt of court over published allegations that a high court judge had fake qualifications constitutes a serious threat to press freedom".

The reporter, Samarash Boidya of the Bengali-language daily Bhoror Kagoj, was one of seven journalists including two editors convicted of contempt of court earlier this week by the High Court. The other six defendants were given fines.

The charges arose out of newspaper reports questioning the educational qualifications of a high court judge.

The reports said the judge had tampered with the results of his law examinations.

"Judges should be able to defend themselves like any other individual in cases of defamation but they should not hide behind archaic laws that prevent the press from informing the public," the statement quoted the organisation as saying in a letter to Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed.

Centurion Inzy

FROM PAGE 20
His 263-ball knock, including 100 in fours, was the highest score by a batsman in his centennial Test, surpassing Greenidge's 149.

"It is up to the captain to lead from the front and I'm happy I could do it on a special day in my career," Inzamam said.

India lead the three-match series 1-0.

Earlier paceman Lakshminipathy Balaji struck with his opening delivery, having Shahid Afridi caught at slip for a duck with a ball that moved sharply off the seam.

Left-arm seamer Irfan Pathan then had Yasir Hameed caught behind for six while reaching for a ball that angled away.

There was no respite for the bowlers after that, on a flat track on which Inzamam had chosen to bat first.

BNP leaders

FROM PAGE 1
the ongoing councils of union level representatives about a yawning gap between the ministers and grassroots-level workers.

Most local leaders at the councils alleged that ministers and MPs have distanced themselves from party leaders and activists since the 2001 elections. Their staying aloof from the lower-rung leaders and workers has given rise to conflicts within the party and frustration among the workers.

Senior leaders told The Daily Star the BNP began mass contact programmes immediately after the August 21 grenade attack on Sheikh Hasina's rally