

## 10 hurt as rival

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Tuesday night cancelled the permission of five leaders of the rival faction to join the meeting with Hasina.

The five leaders are Sirajul Islam, Farid Uddin, Abul Kalam, Mobarak Hossain and Bikas Chowdhury Raju.

They along with around 100 AL activists took position at the entrance of the Dhanmondi AL office yesterday and chanted slogans demanding Suranjit's immediate expulsion from the party.

As supporters loyal to Suranjit came to the party office and tried to defend their leader, the leaders and activists of the Samad Azad faction began beating them.

The grassroots level meeting was in progress inside the party office at that time.

Police and Hasina's personal security staff brought the situation under control.

At the closed-door meeting with Hasina, pro-Samad Azad leaders severely criticised Suranjit. Acting General Secretary of district AL Nurul Huda Mukut told Hasina that Suranjit cancelled their permission to attend the meeting out of rivalry.

Mukut also complained that they cannot carry out political activities and hold council meetings in different upazilas because of Suranjit, who always interferes and demands for selecting leaders loyal to him as the president and general secretaries.

Many presidents and general secretaries of different upazila AL

units also brought the same allegations against Suranjit at the meeting while some favoured him.

As Suranjit shouted at the meeting calling Mukut "stupid and liar", Hasina forced him out of the meeting, sources said.

Later, AL Presidium Member Tofail Ahmed brought him back to the meeting.

Sources said Hasina told Suranjit that she will control the district level activities from now and directed him not to interfere.

## Bigots block

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convince the demonstrators to stage their protest elsewhere, but they refused to leave.

"We shall not tolerate any television screen near our mosque and madrasa, we shall resist it at any cost," said Abdul Qaiyum, who identified himself as the cashier of the madrasa.

Lutfur Rahman, another protester said that they had filed a complaint with the Tejjano police earlier this month asking them to stop the construction along their perimeter fence.

When asked whether they were aware that they were causing suffering to thousands of people stuck on one of the busiest streets in Dhaka, the protesters said that they blocked the road so that the authorities listen to their demand.

## Charge-framing

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plots to 49 people when Ershad was president.

Hearing of a gold smuggling case against him will be held at this court on the same day.

The ruling BNP's move to bring Ershad in the four-party alliance triggered controversy in the political arena. Even the ex-president's party has locked horn with BNP's partner Jamaat-e-Islami over its inclusion in the BNP-led alliance.

A high level delegation of Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday in an exclusive meeting with Khaleda Zia strongly opposed the JP's inclusion in the alliance.

The JP chief however on Tuesday said his joining the four-party alliance is not final yet. "Negotiations are on and I'm doing that alone," he said.

Ershad, now facing pressure from the BNP to formally announce his joining the alliance by this month, is scheduled to leave for Saudi Arabia on August 28 on a week-long visit.

**TWO CASES FOR CHARGE-FRAMING OR NOT**

The court on August 17 fixed today for delivery its decision whether charges would be framed against Ershad and five others in two graft cases.

In the first case, Ershad and former energy and mineral resources minister Anwar Hossain Manju are accused of causing a loss of \$79,000 to public exchequer.

The case, filed with the Tejjano Police Station, alleged that the then president Ershad and his minister Manju awarded a contract to Scimitar Oils for drilling and exploring 1,650 square kilometres of area in Haripur oil field in 1987, which

## Rajuk moves

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built on an earthen platform raised from the lake.

The security guards were deployed in the area also to watch out for land grabbers who had been trying to fill up the lake in the dark of the night with earth and garbage being carried in by boats.

Siddiqur Rahman, a Rajuk security official, said that it is getting impossible to stop the land grabbers with only eleven men in his squad covering a vast area.

"Every night these small boats come from the Karail sum across the lake to fill it up and it is becoming harder for us to detect them," he added.

## Shahjahan brings gold

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the first time at the 10th South Asian Games here on Wednesday.

And as the familiar tune of Tagore blared from the electronic sound system tears of joy was pouring down the cheeks of the 19-year-old BKSP swimmer, who not only clinched a gold medal in the 50m breaststroke but also confirmed that Bangladesh will not return home empty-handed for the first time in the regional 'Olympic' extravaganza.

Shahjahan, who settled for silver in the 100m three days earlier, started well and held steady with only a handful of Bangladeshi supporters cheering him.

India's Sandeep Sejwal, who won the 100m event, had broken the Games record in the heats earlier in the morning in 30.43s while Shahjahan had finished on 30.63s.

The Indian pushed hard halfway through the mark in the finals but the man at Lane 5, Shahjahan, stretched in the final metres to have the last laugh. He touched the block just 0.03 seconds ahead of Sejwal, also emulating the Games record of 30.43s. The previous record was 31.00s by India's Puneet Rana, who won the inaugural event in Islamabad two years ago.

Breaststroke has been Bangladesh's net event in the Games' history and in the victory stands, Niazi Ali stood beside Shahjahan to collect a bronze medal, finishing on 51.52s for his third medal in the swimming competition, which concluded yesterday.

Shahjahan fought hard to hold back his tears while talking to the

caused the loss to the state.

The investigation officer (IO) of the case pressed charges against them on May 2, 2003.

In the other case, Ershad, former education minister Sheikh Shahidul Islam and three others are accused of purchasing two ships from Pakistan during 1988-1991 causing a huge wastage of public money.

It is alleged that Ershad, Sheikh Shahid, two high officials of Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) and a businessman in collusion with others bought the ships by forging documents. This caused a loss of Tk 2.95,698,000 to the public exchequer.

The IO pressed charges against Ershad and four others on August 27, 2003.

## 9 JCD men

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Metropolitan Magistrate Mir Ali Reza of the Speedy Trial Court-6 passed the order following separate bail petitions filed by the defence lawyers.

The court also directed the authorities concerned to publish an advertisement in a national daily asking two fugitives - Asaduzzaman Asad and AKM Azad Swadhin -- to appear before it for trial.

Earlier, the same court had rejected the bail petitions of the accused thrice saying that the arrestees were caught red-handed from the spot while they were creating obstacles for the tender bidders from buying schedules.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on August 10 pressed charges against 11 Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leaders and activists.

The investigation officer (IO) later dropped names of five others, including a fugitive from the charge sheet, as their names and addresses, given by four accused in their confessional statements, were not correct.

They told a metropolitan magistrate on August 20 that Shaikot and Asad, two JCD leaders of Fazlul Haq Muslim Hall of Dhaka University, engaged them to obstruct buying and dropping of tender schedules for jobs worth around Tk 400 crore.

The last date for buying the schedules for the three projects under the development budget was August 1, while the next day was the deadline for dropping the tender schedules, which were being sold at 36 places across the country, sources said.

reporters after heroic effort.

"I am very happy to win. The whole nation was looking forward to me and my teammates kept inspiring me," said Shahjahan, a first-year HSC student at the Savar sports institute.

"I am happy that I have given the nation something to cheer about," said the boy from Chapainawabganj, who has been training under BKSP's Chinese coach for the past three years after switching over to breaststroke from freestyle in 2000.

"I did not feel any pressure after a perfect start but actually I am happier with the finishing."

Shahjahan lost his father about five years ago and since then, his mother's job in Kuwait has been running the family of two sons and a daughter.

"She came home last year and my elder brother and I would not let her go again. I thank my family for supporting me," said the only sportsman in the family.

Shahjahan felt that to maintain the success he achieved in his first international meet, he would need more facilities at home.

"If I want to do better in 100m, I will need more support from the authorities. Swimming has been ignored often although it always brings laurels. The situation must be changed if we have to succeed in the next SA Games in Dhaka," he added.

## Islam being used for political

**FROM PAGE 1**  
name of Islam, Bangalee culture and society thrived in its own way. And then finally the birth of Bangladesh came with the state standing on the pillar of secularism where fundamentalism, use of religion in politics and using religion as a part of state ideology had no place through constitutional guarantee.

Then came the 1975 coup that saw the dismissal of the Awami League rule and military dictatorship began. It was also from then that the secular fundamentals of Bangladesh started getting the knocks, the latest of which came with the prime minister's announcement Monday.

For the military rulers, it was necessary to use religion to get cheap popularity and yield political dividends.

Religion-based political parties such as Jamaat-e-Islami and Nezam-e-Islami that were banned because of their anti-Bangladesh role during the Liberation War were allowed to operate again.

In 1977 a martial law proclamation deleted secular face of the constitution and inserted a phrase that a fundamental state principle is "absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah". The phrase "Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim" (in the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful) was inserted before the preamble of the constitution.

Another clause was added that the government should "preserve and strengthen fraternal relations among Muslim countries based on Islamic solidarity". The changes were later legitimised through the 5th amendment in 1979.

Another coup happened, another military dictatorship came in 1982. General Ershad in his fervent wish to get cheap popularity and woo the fundamentalist political parties (and also to bash Awami League), made the 8th amendment to the constitution in 1988, recognising Islam as the state religion.

And all this happened as if Bangladeshis were less Muslims before the fifth and eighth amend-

ments or as if the mere insertions of the phrases made Bangladeshis more passionate devotees.

The dictator in his last ditch attempt to cling to power did not even blink to incite a riot in which the Hindus were attacked, their houses and temples torched and looted.

When democracy finally returned in 1990, it was thought that use of religion for political gain would end. But it did not. The BNP immediately formed an unofficial electoral alliance with Jamaat and religion was dragged to election campaigns with slogans like "If you vote for the scale (election symbol of Jamaat), Allah will be happy." Finally, the BNP formed the government with Jamaat's support.

But then Jamaat broke ties with BNP on the point of condemning Israeli attack on Hebron mosque. Awami League, still regarded by many as a secular party, threw off its veil and jumped at the opportunity. It formed another unwritten alliance with Jamaat and drummed up movement against the ruling BNP. Of course, it was election time again and the hunger for power made the AL forget the constitution the party had written in 1972. Sheikh Hasina also learnt the trick fast and her picture with a headgear beamed from posters on the wall. She won the race this time.

In its effort to put the ante against the BNP and win hearts of the fundamentalists, the AL government kept on increasing funds channelled to the madrasas while the general education level dipped. And it played the most devious role when the religious extremists attacked an Independence Day programme at Brahmanbaria. The police remained silent and took no action.

Election time came again and body politic took another beating as the BNP formed the four-party alliance with Jamaat and another fundamentalist party Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) as the major partners. The formation of the 'Islamic' axis yielded dividends again and the alliance came to power with an overwhelming majority. This opened the door for Jamaat, for the first time

ever, to enter into the government. Now a part of the state mechanism was in control of the religious forces.

'Islamisation of the society' gathered steam. Militant organisations crept up and thrived under the blind eye of the government and Bangladesh saw an unprecedented level of militant activities. To send the society back even further, demands for declaring the Ahmadiyyas non-Muslims were echoed freely and the government even went to the extent of banning the religious book of the Ahmadiyyas.

Now comes another election time and another dose of 'Islamisation' was shot in the arm of the body politic on Monday when Prime Minister Khaleda Zia equated the Qawami madrasa's Dawra degree with master's. She only made the announcement, leaving the onus of implementing it on the next government, whichever party may form it, or even on the caretaker government, which for many a reason will be under intense pressure unknown before. And what makes it distressing that all this 'Islamisation' was not done for the purpose of glorifying Islam as a great religion but for populism and bagging votes in elections.

In a few years time, these Qawami students, whose curriculum are never under the government's control and of dubious quality due to lack of modern syllabus, will sit for civil service exams and qualify in greater numbers than the general students because of higher marks obtained in Arabic and Islamic studies. They will get into the police and armed forces. It is anybody's guess about the quality and direction of their policy decisions once they are in policymaking positions.

Societies march ahead, on Monday afternoon Bangladesh walked backward.

## PM tells rally

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works in different sectors, starting from infrastructure development to women education, saying that the government has worked for all.

She said the government gave subsidy to agriculture sector and supplied fuel at lower prices despite price hike in the international market.

The prime minister announced that if returned to power, her government would make female education free up to degree level.

## Pak-born

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Australian public knows how much I am opposed to terrorism.

"And the Australian public knows how determined I am to maintain and strengthen where necessary our anti-terrorism laws."

The indictment said Lodhi had "the intent of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause, namely violent jihad (holy war)."

Prosecutors linked Lodhi, also known as Abu Hamza, to Frenchman Willie Brigitte, who was deported in late 2003 after being accused of plotting a major attack in Sydney.

## Jamaat must follow

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Industries (BCI) organised the discussion presided over by BCI President AK Azad.

The ruling BNP has taken initiatives to expand the existing four-party alliance by having JP-Ershad in a bid to ensure victory in the upcoming general elections. But BNP's main ally Jamaat has been opposing the move, fearing it might cut its influence on the ruling party.

Ershad said the JP will take part in the next election but did not mention in how many constituencies his party will contest.

"We have discussed the matter with the four-party alliance, but the distribution of parliamentary seats among the parties is yet to be finalised," he said.

"We have our own strategy for the next election. The distribution of seats between Jatiya Party and the four-party coalition will be declared after discussions and reaching an agreement with the alliance." Asked how many seats the JP will demand to the alliance, Ershad smiled and said, "We may take part in all the 300 constituencies."

He criticised the government for failing to ensure uninterrupted supply of gas, power and other facilities to the country's industries.

The overthrown president said the country's overall infrastructure has been destroyed after his rule.

JP Secretary General Ruhul Amin Howladar, industry and commerce adviser Golam Sarwar Milon, Presidium members Abdus Sattar, Aminul Islam and MA Gaffar were present at the briefing.

## Judges killing

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Jhalakathi judges killing case.

The death reference bench of the HC yesterday fixed the date after the completion of hearing.

Jhalakathi District Additional Sessions Judge had sentenced the seven JMB militants to death by hanging on May 29. The hearing against the verdict began on August 1.

The JMB killed judges Shahid Sohel Ahmed, 35, senior assistant judge of Nalchhiti upazila, and Jagannath Pandey, 38, senior assistant judge of Jhalakathi sadar upazila, in a bomb attack on the judges' vehicles at Chandkathi in Jhalakathi on November 14 last year.

## Govt not interested

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core rehabilitation of the 50 mw third unit of Kaptai hydro-power plant. This unit uses a US made turbine and a generator. While Power Development Board (PDB) feels that this plant does not need rehabilitation before 2016, the Italian loan has to be taken within this year.

About both these loans, the state minister expressed his reservations. The Czech loan contradicts the government's open tender policy plus the ministry feels that although these plants are under-performing now, they do not need massive overhauling.

"Both the Czech plants are old. But we spent a lot of money for their overhauling and rehabilitation in the past. It's a rule of thumb for any power plant that in its lifetime, the overhauling cost of the plant should not exceed 20 percent of the original installation cost. When a plant has been overhauled five times, it should go into retirement," the state minister said.

Both the Khulna units have recently undergone overhauling. The repair job for the Khulna 110 mw plant has been completed only recently while the repair works for the 60 mw plant is still in progress.

"Therefore, there is no reason to spend 22 million dollars of conditional loan for these plants," he added.

Regarding the Italian loan, the state minister noted that before initiating a power rehabilitation project, there should be a survey or a study to identify the problems of the plant. "But there has been no study on the unit 3 of the Kaptai plant," he said.

The Kaptai units 1 and 2, built with Italian generators and American turbines, are currently being overhauled for the first time. Both of them are 34 years old and have run for 8400 mega-kilowatt

## New burst of agitation

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There is no lack of sincerity among the owners for implementing the tripartite agreement, BGMEA President Fazlul Haque said, adding, "But we need some more time for a viable solution."

"The sector would not survive if any new formula is imposed on us without considering the overall aspects in the sector," said Fazlul Haque, president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA). Talking on the matter of workers' hardship due to price hike of essentials, the BKMEA president suggested that the government start rationing system for the poorer section of the people.

"If the anger of the workers burst out again, the owners would be responsible for that," Dr Wajedul Islam, a leader of Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad said, adding that although the owners committed to implement 9 of the 10 clauses under tripartite agreement within one month, they are yet to be implemented even after two months.

He said the garment owners, who were very anxious during the workers' movement, changed immediately after signing the agreement with the workers.

The workers' anger can lead to a total lockout any time. We should not let the owners keep the agreement unimplemented after two months of signing the agreement," said Shafiqur Rahman Mojmuder, president of Jatiya Sramik Federation.

Insisting on implementation of Tk 3,000 as the minimum wage, workers' leader China Rahman said

## Ivy

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She had been critically injured and her two legs were blown off in the gruesome grenade attack on AL rally at Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21, 2004.

Ivy Rahman's family will commemorate the day with elaborate programmes including a milad mahfil at her residence, Ivy Concord at House # 22, Road # 108, Gulshan after the Asr prayer. All well wishers, admirers, relatives, political colleagues, and friends are requested to attend the milad.

Ivy was born on July 7, 1944 in 'Baro Bari' in Bhairab, Kishoreganj, a graduate from Dhaka University, Ivy was an active worker of AL's student wing Bangladeshi Chhatra League during her university years and took part in numerous political movements under the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. She was trained in guerrilla warfare as a freedom fighter in 1971 and had numerous contributions in the war against the Pakistani occupation forces.

Wife of the frontline AL leader and former local government, rural development and co-operatives minister Zillur Rahman, Ivy served as the women's affairs secretary of AL till the day she died.

Ivy Rahman dedicated her whole life for establishing the rights of women and their empowerment in all aspects in the country. She was also the president of Bangladesh Mohila Samity. She also played a noteworthy role in the women community as the area president of Associated Country Women of the World.

She is survived by two daughters and a son.

## AL settles

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party decision, Hasina directed all the grassroots leaders to work together forgetting all feuds and differences in opinion.

She urged the grass-roots level leaders to initiate ground works for the next elections alongside the ongoing movement.

The AL president also instructed the grassroots level leaders about the strategies in the next elections that include forming vote protection committees and arrange training to resist vote stealing by the BNP-Jamaat men, sources said.

The AL high-ups supplied copies of a four-page questionnaire to all the presidents and general secretaries, conveners and joint conveners of the units of 72 organisational districts, upazilas, thanas and municipalities and the grassroots level leaders returned the questionnaire with answers to the AL chief.

The questionnaire included queries concerning AL party position at the local levels, names of the aspirants for nominations in the next elections, their popularity, party portfolios, position in anti-government movements and reasons for considering them fit for contesting the next polls from their constituencies.

The grassroots leaders also submitted lists of local BNP-Jamaat leaders who "looted people's wealth, occupied lands, politicised local administration, tortured opposition men and minorities, filed false cases against the party workers and leaders and used administration against the party in last four and a half years".

## FDI dipped 15pc

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reinvested their earnings, but such reinvestment declined in the last fiscal year resulting in an increase in profit repatriation," he explained.

He said foreign investors are also in a dilemma about fresh investment as the country is now passing through a transition period and a general election is approaching.

"Investors will prefer to observe the situation and wait until the election is over before fresh investment," he said.

Moazzem referred to the negotiation process with the Indian industrial giant Tata and said such an approach of the government sent a negative signal to other prospective foreign investors.

Bangladesh Bank data show the investors repatriated \$175m in profit in 2001, while figure was \$195m in 2002, \$355m in 2003, \$338m in 2004 and \$418m in 2005. Between January and May this year, investors repatriated \$180 million.

According to the Board of Investment (BOI), investment in telecommunications sector claim 36 percent of the total FDI, textiles 18 percent, chemical industries 7 percent, oil companies 18 percent, banks 10 percent and power companies 2 percent.

## Jamaat says

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Asked if Jamaat shifted from its position after the meeting with the PM, Mujahid said, "We remain on our previous stand."

The Jamaat leaders told the PM that the inclusion of JP is not necessary to win the elections. "We are confident that our four-party alliance will win the next election," he told the reporters.

On the issue of sharing seats for the next election, he said they did not discuss the matter at the meeting. He said Jamaat is not raising the Ershad issue as a point for bargaining.

Muhammad Qamaruzzaman told The Daily Star, "The PM said Jatiya Party Ershad's inclusion is necessary to strengthen the coalition, but we told her that JP is not at all inevitable for winning the election."

Jamaat's highest decision-making body Majlis-e-Shura will decide on the Ershad issue soon, he said. "We will also discuss the matter at the party executive committee meeting prior to the Shura decision," he added.

## Judges' confirmation

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have been ignored.

But the practice of ignoring the chief justice's recommendations on appointment of judges continued unabated over the last four years that made the SCBA claim that incompetent people have been made judges.

Before the controversy over confirmation of the judges, the government had also created a controversy centring appointment of the 19 additional judges two years ago. It was alleged that most of the appointments were based on political proximity to the ruling alliance.

Staging a demonstration protesting this at the same time, the SCBA said the alliance government is making such politicised appointments to protect itself from the consequences of its misdeeds and corruption. The demonstration was led by SCBA President Barrister Amir-Ul Islam while former presidents Abdul Baset Majumder and Mahbubul Alam, former secretary Enayetur Rahim, among others, addressed the demonstrators.

SCBA Secretary AM Aminuddin told newsmen, "We have decided to refrain from attending Faizee's court."

Later, the SCBA brought out a procession that marched to the Jatiya Press Club and then ended at the Bar building.

On the other hand, pro-government lawyers under the banner of Jatiyatabadi Lawyers' Forum (JLF) hailed confirmation of the new judges at a meeting yesterday. The JLF leaders said these judges were confirmed as per the constitution. Those who are creating controversy over this are actually violating the constitution and committing contempt of court.

The JLF meeting was addressed by Habibul Islam Bhuiyan, Jainul Abedin, Sajidur Rahman, Humayun Kabir Bulbul and some other leaders.

**POLITICISATION OF THE JUDICIARY**

Since coming to power in 2001, the BNP-led alliance government has appointed 45 additional high court judges in the last five years. Of them, the government confirmed the services of 37.

In all of these appointments there had been allegations of politicisation and nepotism. There are allegations that some of these judges had been active leader of the BNP.

When the four-party alliance came to power, it did not confirm the services of 15 additional judges appointed during the previous Awami League rule. Yet most of the judges among these 15 had the chief justice's recommendations in favour of them.

The present government's first instance of ignoring the chief justice's recommendation came in May 2002 when the chief justice recommended confirmation of three judges who were appointed during the Awami League rule. None of them were confirmed.

In February 2003 when the chief justice again recommended confirmation of eight additional judges appointed during the Awami League rule, the government confirmed only two of them.