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5 advisers sworn in

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday appointed five advisers to the reconstituted non-party caretaker government (CG).

The advisers are Barrister Mainul Hossain, Major Gen (retd) MA Matin, Geeti Ara Safiya Chowdhury, Dr Mirza Azizul Islam and Tapan Chowdhury.

The president administered the oath of the advisers at a ceremony at the Bangabhaban last night, a day after Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed, a former governor of Bangladesh (CA) to the caretaker government.

The first meeting of the seemingly half-reconstituted council of advisers will be held today at 11:30am at the Chief Adviser's office at Tejgaon.

Asked when five other advisers would be appointed to complete the reconstitution, Cabinet Secretary Ali Imam Majumdar told reporters at Bangabhaban that it was not clear. However, he cited article 58C (1) of the constitution that says the non-party caretaker government shall consist of the chief adviser at its head and "not more than ten other advisers."

President Iajuddin Ahmed stepped down from the chief adviser's post on January 11 and all

his advisers resigned, in a changed political situation following the promulgation of a state of emergency in the country amid political squabbles over polls.

President Iajuddin Ahmed took over the charge of CA to the caretaker government as the country's two major political alliances had failed to reach a

consensus on a candidate for the post.

FAKHRUDDIN JOINS OFFICE

Newly appointed Chief Adviser to the Caretaker Government Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed joined office yesterday, a day after he took oath as the chief adviser, BSS reports.

He was welcomed at his office

by the senior officials of the office as he arrived there around 12:55pm.

Principal Secretary to the CA Ali Imam Majumdar, Secretary in-charge Kazi M Aminul Islam, Director General of Special Security Forces (SSF) Major Gen Syed Fatmy Ahmed Roomy and

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FROM LEFT... Geeti Ara Safiya Chowdhury, Tapan Chowdhury, Major Gen (retd) MA Matin, Dr Mirza Azizul Islam and Barrister Mainul Hossain being sworn in as advisers to the caretaker government at the Bangabhaban last night.

Emergency ordinance promulgated

BSS, Dhaka

The president has promulgated the Emergency Power Ordinance-2007 aimed at ensuring security of the state and its people, protecting law and order and keeping economic activities unhindered.

The other objectives of the ordinance are to ensure uninterrupted supply of essentials and ascertain all service-oriented activities in social life.

The ordinance proclaimed on January 12 will remain effective during the whole period of the emergency declared by the president on January 11 in pursuance of power conferred on him by Article 141A(1) of the Constitution.

Under the ordinance, power has been given to the relevant authorities for promulgation of ordinances to restrict all activities subversive to the state or that which may create panic in public life.

The activities hampering the relations of Bangladesh with foreign countries, disrupting peace in any part of the country or creating enmity, hatred, or confrontations among different sections of society can also be restricted under this ordinance.

Under the ordinance, the government may suspend the activities of all political parties, trade

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Rules underway to ban political activities during emergency

Censorship may be imposed

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The government is formulating rules to impose a ban on the activities of political parties during the period of state of emergency, following an Emergency Power Ordinance promulgated by President Iajuddin Ahmed on Friday.

The ministries of law and home affairs, which are preparing rules to enforce the state of emergency, have also started preparing rules to impose censorship on the media including newspapers, said highly placed sources.

The censorship on the media is destined to have a drastic quashing effect on the freedom of speech and thought just like during a period of martial law, many said.

The Emergency Power Ordinance has already empowered the government to slap a ban on publication and broadcast of news that "harms public security, law and order, supply of essentials and

services".

Any such publications may be proscribed and the broadcasting electronic gadgets seized, the ordinance promulgated the day after the declaration of state of emergency said, adding that transgressors may be subject to up to 14 years' rigorous imprisonment or death sentence as the maximum punishment.

The emergency ordinance has already barred persons affected by the provisions of the ordinance from seeking redress in any court of law.

The ordinance, which was given a retrospective effect from January 11—the day the president declared the state of emergency, also empowered the government to formulate necessary rules to enforce the emergency.

Sources said the rules are proposing to impose a ban on political parties' activities, including meetings, gatherings, rallies, processions, blockades and strikes, under

the provision of the emergency ordinance.

The rules will also slap bans on activities of trade unions, clubs and associations.

When contacted, Home Secretary Abdul Karim told The Daily Star last night that they are working to formulate the rules in accordance with the ordinance.

Asked if the government is going to enforce this provision, he said he cannot tell anything on any specific issue without going through the details of the rules being prepared.

The rules will be finalised after the chief adviser and the law adviser to the interim caretaker government approve the draft of the rules, sources said.

Media personalities have already condemned the provision for imposing censorship on the media. They feared misunderstanding might arise between the caretaker government and the

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VANDALISM AT SC Court decision today on charge sheet

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court will decide today whether the charge sheet of the case filed against prominent lawyers Dr Kamal Hossain, barristers Amir Ul Islam, Rokonuddin Mahmud and 10 others for vandalising on the Supreme Court (SC) premises on November 30 last year would be accepted or not.

After scrutinising the case docket (CD) and other relevant documents, the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court will give decision on the issue.

Earlier on December 22 last year, Detective Branch (DB) Inspector Naimur Rahman, who is also the investigation officer (IO), pressed charges against 13 including Dr Kamal, Amir and Rokon, showing 28 people as prosecution witnesses.

The other chargesheeted defendants are former Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) secretary advocate Enayetur Rahim, former SCBA vice president advocate Subrata Chowdhury, barrister Tania Amir and advocates Sheikh Awasfur Rahman, Subrata Saha.

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More raids made to catch 'godfathers'

Drive temporarily suspended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcers raided the Banani residence of Babul Kazi, a business partner of Giasuddin Al Mamun, on Friday night as part of a crackdown on 'corruptionists and godfathers of criminals' which started on Thursday night.

Mamun is a close friend and business partner of BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members arrested Commissioner of Ward No 16 of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Quayum Khan from Kachukhet area in the capital on Friday night. Earlier, law enforcers arrested Commissioner of Ward No 25 ABM Enamul Haque Quayum.

Meanwhile, sources in law enforcement agencies said the crackdown was suspended yesterday as neither the home ministry nor the police high ups had issued any directive regarding what steps should be taken in dealing with the influential arrestees.

The sources said law enforcers are waiting for directives, which are

expected to come after the new advisers to the caretaker government are sworn in.

Following the crackdown, around 50 influential BNP and Awami League (AL) leaders and ward commissioners have gone into hiding to evade arrests. Sources said Rab members raided the residences of seven to eight ward commissioners of DCC on Friday night.

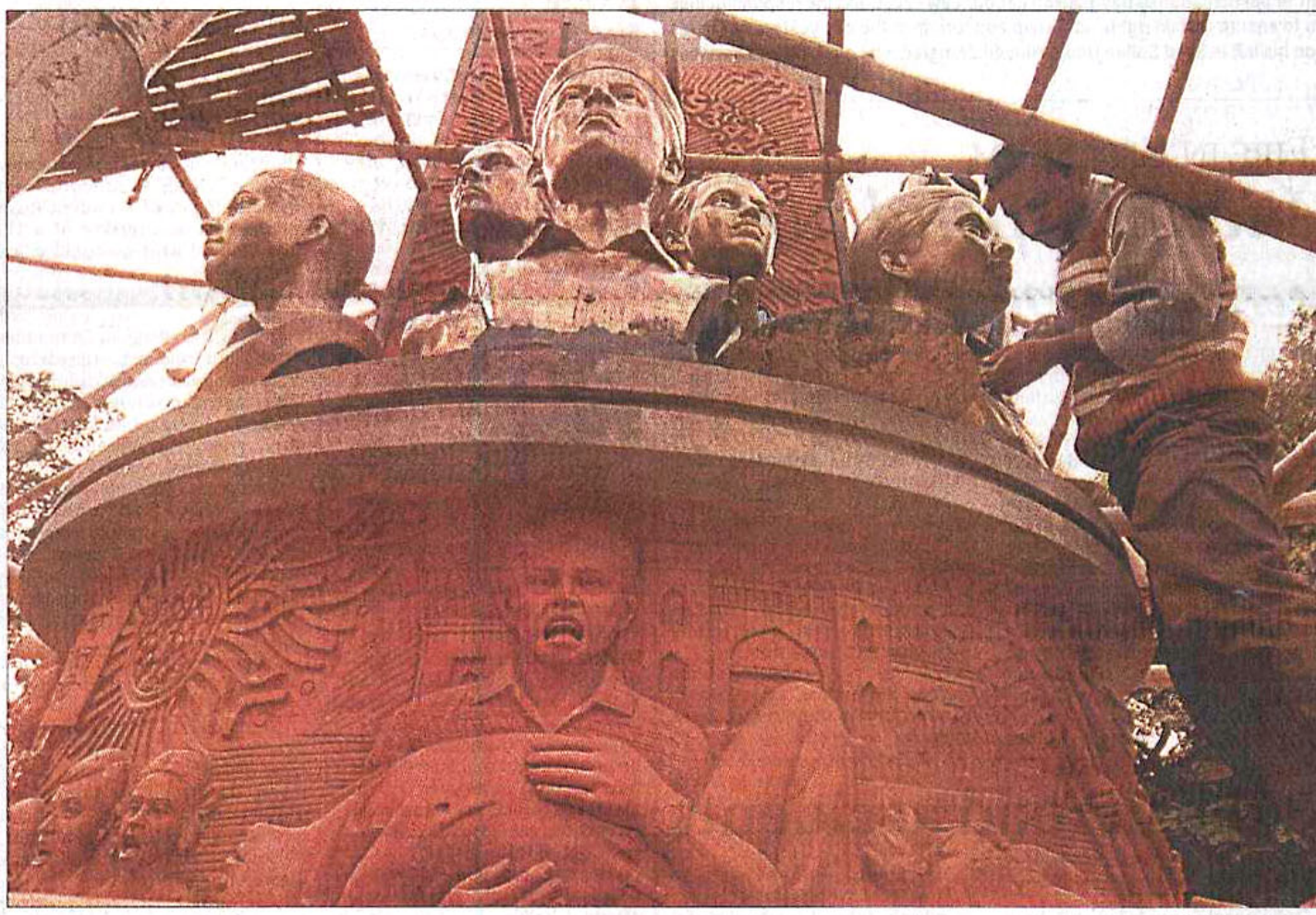
An official of Rab-4 said they arrested Quayum Khan from his Kachukhet Pura Bazar house on Friday night on charge of 'patronising criminal activities'. He was later handed over to Cantonment police.

Meanwhile, Enamul Haque Quayum, commissioner of ward 25, was sent to jail yesterday in detention for 30 days.

Rab-10 said they raided the Wari Complex in the capital on Friday night to arrest Commissioner of Ward No 74 of DCC Abul Bashir. The Rab members did not find Bashir, but arrested his three aides Jilil, Abu Mian and Rahmat.

Besides, law enforcers

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A sculptor busy curving out the bust of a Language Movement martyr on the Bangla Academy premises in the capital.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

CPB office raided for 'violating' emergency

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police in their first action against the violation of state of emergency provisions raided the office of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) yesterday and arrested three members of its student wing in connection with holding a rally and bringing out a procession.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Paltan Police Station Mahfuz Alam told

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DU academic activities resume after 2 months

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) authorities resumed its academic activities yesterday after more than two months of students' strike. The DU authorities also announced fresh schedule for exams at different departments and the admission tests.

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Toxic ships again head for Ctg

TAWFIQUE ALI

Two ocean liners, blacklisted as contaminated with toxic substances, are sailing towards Bangladesh with the environmentalists expressing grave concern over the move.

The ships, Apsheron and Gudermes, are on the Greenpeace watch list of ships with the environmentalist watchdog's spotlight on them as being known to be contaminated and slated for scrapping. Greenpeace is fighting against potential threats to the world's biodiversity and environment.

Hazardous wastes such as asbestos, PCB, toxic paint and fuel residues are usually found on old

ships which are regularly sent to countries like Bangladesh, India, Turkey and China for scrapping, posing severe threat to the environment, ecology and the human health.

Ingvald Jenssen, coordinator of Global NGO Platform on Ship Breaking based in Brussels, told The Daily Star on Thursday over the telephone, "Apsheron is blacklisted by the Greenpeace and its name will be posted on the website list by today."

The website at www.greenpeaceweb.org/shipbreak/50-ships.asp shows both the ships listed as contaminated with the possibility of being scrapped soon.

Gudermes, a sistership of Apsheron, was supposed to go to

Alang in India.

"But we have learnt that Gudermes too is now heading for Bangladesh," Ingvald said.

Although the government of Bangladesh is supposed to refuse entry of such vessels for scrapping, the Department of Shipping issued an NOC (no objection certificate) allowing Messrs Pakjia Enterprise to import the Apsheron for dismantling on Bangladesh's beach.

"The ships in question have not been decontaminated in compliance with the Basel Convention as per available information and research," said Programme Officer Mohammed Ali Shahin of YPSA, an NGO working on ship breaking industry in regard to labour rights and environment conservation.

The Basel Convention affirmed in Geneva on 29 October 2004 that ships can be considered toxic waste under international laws and 163 signatories of the convention must control export of ships in line with it.

In 1995 the Basel Convention banned export of hazardous wastes, including materials for recycling from developed to developing countries.

"Our concern emanates mainly from the necessity to enforce the Basel Convention," said Shahin.

Chief Chemist of the Department of Shipping Mosharrar Ashraf said, "We issued the NOC on December 26 in favour of Messrs Pakjia Enterprise to

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Create conditions for holding credible polls

EU urges new CA

UNB, Dhaka

The European Union (EU) called upon the newly appointed chief adviser and his caretaker government to concentrate their efforts to create the conditions conducive to the holding of a credible democratic election in the country as soon as possible.

The EU made the call through a EU presidency declaration issued in Berlin and Brussels on Friday.

"The European Union is monitoring events in Bangladesh closely following the latest developments, including the decision by President Iajuddin Ahmed to impose a state of emergency and to relinquish his post as chief adviser in the caretaker government," the EU press release said.

The EU also urged all election stakeholders to carry out their

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Oriental Bank asked to take legal actions against swindlers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Bank has asked Oriental Bank to take legal actions against people who had plundered the bank's money.

"We received the central bank report last week. Based on the report, we will discuss the issue with our lawyer for taking appropriate actions against the siphoning of money," said Assaduzzaman Khan, chief executive officer (CEO) of Oriental Bank.

The Oriental Bank authority will also seek the central bank's law department's assistance for taking

actions against the swindlers, he said.

The central bank investigation report shows that Obaedul Karim, the chief of Orion Group also a major shareholder of the bank, misappropriated Tk 596.60 crore in collusion with the bank's high officials.

One of the top beneficiaries of the immediate past BNP-led alliance government's rule, Obaedul had been siphoning off the amount of money since 2003 through a unique 'Adjustable Block Account' (ABA) created by the bank.

Documents show that Orion

officials also illegally received pay orders issued for One Denim Mills, One Entertainment and Agroboards. One Entertainment runs Channel 1 with Giasuddin Al Mamun as its managing director, who a close friend and business partner of BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman.

The central bank report recommended taking legal and administrative actions against both the beneficiaries of the scam and the bank officials who helped them.

Oriental Bank sources said not

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Greenpeace (an environment watchdog) blacklisted Apsheron, left, and Gudermes as the two ships are contaminated with toxic substances. The vessels are now in the Indian Ocean on their way to Bangladesh to be scrapped.

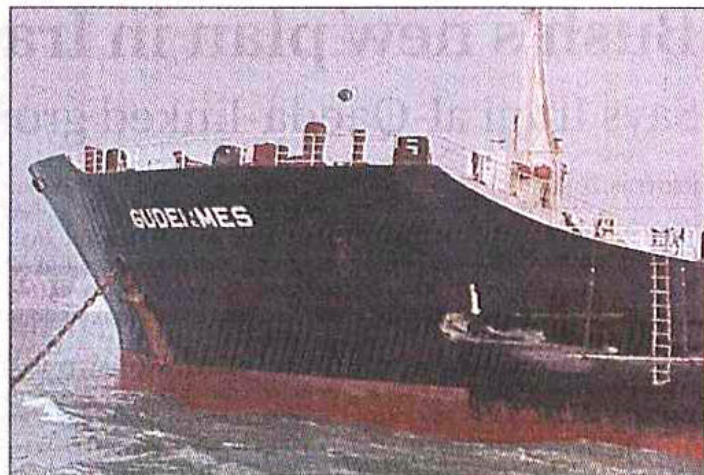


PHOTO: INTERNET

BSF guns down 3

STAR REPORT

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) shot dead three Bangladeshis—two cattle traders and a farmer—and injured another near Satkhira and Jhenidah borders on Friday night and early yesterday.

The dead were identified as Abul Hossain, 35, of village Mahmudpur, Arshad Ali, 28, of village Bazargam

Rahimpur in Satkhira Sadar and Kaligonj upazilas; and Momin Mondol, 35, of Baghdadanga village under Moheshpur upazila, Jhenidah.

Of them, Abul Hossain and Arshad Ali were killed in Indian territory under 24 Parganas district, while Momin Mondol was killed at his frontier Baghdadanga village.

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