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Jalil, Babar, Hashem detained

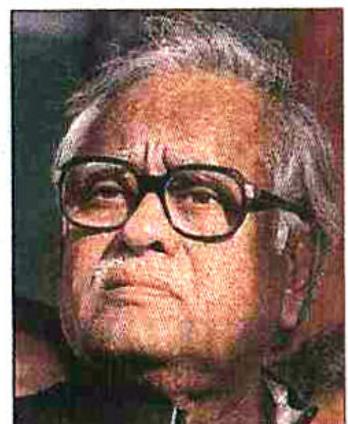
Joint forces search AL general secretary's house for two hours, seize his passport, documents of bank, land

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The army-led joint forces yesterday in a sudden move took into custody Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil, former state minister for home affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar, and ex-BNP lawmaker and Partex Group Chairman MA Hashem.

It could not be ascertained immediately where the detainees were taken and on what charges they had been taken into the custody of the joint forces.

All three were picked up in his Mercantile Bank office in Motijheel around 3:45pm while he was pre-



Abdul Jalil



Lutfuzzaman Babar



MA Hashem

siding over an internal meeting of the bank. Babar was picked up from his Gulshan residence around 4:00pm, and Hashem from his office in the same area around 3:00pm.

The joint forces also searched through Jalil's residence in Gulshan for two hours yesterday evening taking away four passports and documents related to properties and bank transactions, said Jalil's chauffeur Faruq.

Politicians of the country found the crackdown quite puzzling as the move was taken at a time when both the major political parties were discussing bringing reforms

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Jalil's arrest surprises politicians

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Arrest of Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil, who had just taken initiative for reforms in the party, has come as a surprise to the political leaders.

The political leaders think the veteran politician's arrest is linked with his recent statements calling for withdrawal of the ban on indoor politics but most of them declined to make any comment on the record, fearing that it might create difficulties for them.

"Arrest of Abdul Jalil has made us worried as he is working for positive changes in politics as well as for holding a free and fair election. Such arrest of political leaders will not bring positive result in future," Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon told The Daily

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Polls by end of 2008

Reiterates CA

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhrudin Ahmed yesterday said the general election will be held by the end of 2008 in accordance with the timetable set by the Election Commission.

The CA stated this when visiting former US ambassador to Bangladesh William B Milam called on him at his office.

During the meeting, they held candid discussion on the reform measures being undertaken by the present caretaker government for ensuring a level playing field prior to holding the next general election, according to an official.

The CA told the former US ambassador that the government is doing everything in a transparent manner as per law of the land.

He elaborated on institutional,

legal and policy reforms undertaken in various sectors, especially in administrative, electoral and anti-corruption areas.

Milam, senior policy scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars in Washington, lauded the reform measures taken by the caretaker government.

The CA said the present government is directly accountable to the people and taking into account the views and opinions of the grassroots people as well as the media on a day-to-day basis.

He said the armed forces are also assisting the government in specific areas like maintaining law and order and drive against corruption as per the country's legal provisions.

Milam observed that he found tremendous support for the

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Hasina lashes out at government

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday strongly condemned the detention of her party's General Secretary Abdul Jalil and said the government's ongoing drive seems to be against politics, not corruption.

The people want to see a democratic environment followed by a free and fair election and their patience is wearing thin with every passing day, she observed.

Speaking to reporters at her Dhanmondi residence last night, the former prime minister demanded immediate release of the AL leaders including Jalil.



She said, "Public want a relief from this suffocating situation."

She said the real corrupts might break free if the government does

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Cracks develop in yet another DCC building

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A five-storey building in the Dayaganj sweeper colony has developed cracks due to the forced vibration following the subsidence of the adjacent under-construction building, putting more than 500 residents at risk.

Cracks were found at several places from the ground floor to the fourth floor and in and outside the rooms, in the beams and sunshades.

Rubit Lal Das, a city corporation employee living at room number two on the ground floor, showed this correspondent that cracks have formed in the beams at the front and rear side of his room.

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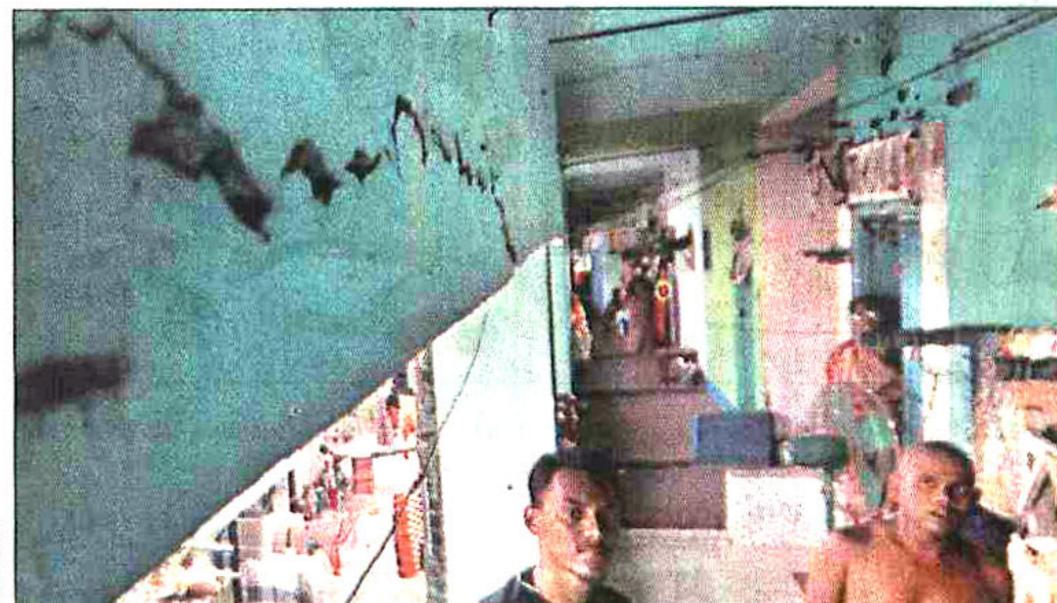
PHOTO STAR

"We are poor and do not have any other place to move to. The government should ensure our safety," said a distressed Rubit, who lives there with six other family members.

Meanwhile, the chief engineer of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) thinks that the occupants of the building are not in any danger. "I have told them just to check if the cracks are developing in length further," he said.

He, however, refused to make any more comments before the investigation is complete.

Meanwhile, the inquiry team comprising members of DCC, Buet civil engineering and army



Cracks developed in another DCC building adjacent to the under-construction building that subsided at Dayaganj in the capital four days ago. The photo was taken yesterday.

All photos within polls timeframe not possible
Says CEC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday said the Election Commission (EC) is trying not to be rigid on the issue of having photographs on the voter list as it is impossible to compile the photographs of all voters within the stipulated timeframe.

He reiterated that the names of eligible citizens will be put on the voter list even if their photographs are not available instantaneously.

If photographs of all voters are not on the electoral roll it will not

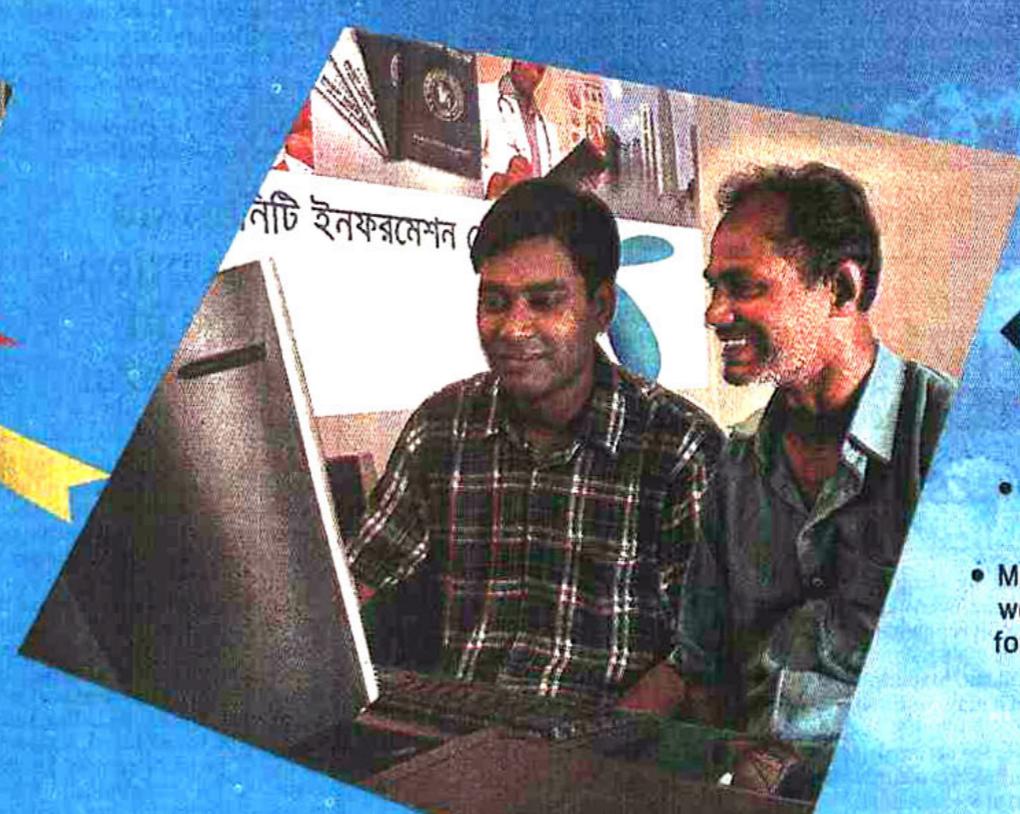
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