

## Several Rangpur JP bigwigs may quit party to join Qureshi

RAFIQUE SARKER, RANGPUR

Leaders and activists of Jatiya Party have fallen apart after HM Ershad's decision to quit the post of party chairman. Many of them including some former lawmakers may quit the party to join the initiative taken by Ferdous Ahmed Qureshi to float a new party.

A good number of leaders at upazila level said they would quit politics for good while some others want to observe the situation till a party council, which is uncertain.

A section of the leaders are frustrated and annoyed with Ershad for what they called his 'whimsical' and 'unwise' decision to relinquish the post of party chairman. But they also criticised Roushan Ershad's recent move.

A front ranking leader seeking anonymity claimed that majority of the former party lawmakers would quit the party and join Ferdous Alam Quraishi to form a new political party.

Former lawmakers Karim Uddin Bharsa and GM Quader of Rangpur, Mojibor Rahman of

Lalmonirhat and Mostafizur Rahman Mostaque of Kurigram hailed Ershad's decision.

Talking to this correspondent, Karim Uddin Bharsa said, "We never differed on Ershad's decision in the past. This time also we won't disregard him but we will request him at a party council to retain the post of chairman."

Mostaque said, "There is no alternative to reforming in the party. Ershad did what he thought best for it. We are with him and we will be with him."

Former MP Tajul Islam Chowdhury of Kurigram however said he is frustrated with recent developments in the party. "I am very frustrated about future of the party. It was fully dependent on Ershad. As Ershad declared to quit his post, there is none in the party who can lead it for a single day. Therefore majority of the former MPs have decided to join Quraishi's move," Tajul said.

Asked to specify, Tajul claimed that former MPs Moshirur Rahman Ranga, Mohammad Ali, Sha Solaiman Alam and Noor

Mohammad Mondol may quit the party to join Quraishi.

However, when asked, Ranga, Noor Mondol, and Solaiman declined to make any comment on Tajul's claim.

A former JP MP preferring not to be named said, "Tajul and a few former MPs are accused in a number of corruption cases. They will be expelled from the party through council when ban on indoor politics will be withdrawn". Another former party lawmaker said, "Tajul and Ranga along with a few former MPs are joining a new political platform to keep themselves safe"

District, upazila and union level leaders of the party are also frustrated. Kurigram district president of JP Shafiqul Islam Choudhury said, "Ershad is very inconsistent in his decisions. He may change his recent stand any moment. Let me see what he finally does."

Several leaders of Kurigram district unit of the party claimed that Shafiqul Islam, younger brother of Tajul Islam, is 'doing ground work in Kurigram in favour

of a new political platform'.

Jatiya Party's Jattrapur unit leader in Kurigram Ayub Ali said, "I will no longer remain in JP. I will join Quraishi's party."

Lalmonirhat JP secretary Mahbubar Rahman however claimed that none of the district level leaders will quit the party. Rather, the leaders and activists hailed Ershad's decision to relinquish the post to give scope for young leaders.

A section of grassroots JP leaders and activists in Rangpur are frustrated with Ershad's decision. They have decided to quit politics forever.

Rangpur Sadar upazila JP secretary Mostafizur Rahman Mostafa said, "I will quit politics for ever if Ershad does not return to his post."

Yasir, Rangpur district president of Jubo Sanghota, youth front of JP, said, he will request Ershad to reconsider his decision.

## Passport issuing system to be simplified

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Advisor for Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) Anwarul Iqbal has said the system of issuing passport will undergo a 'big change very soon' to end sufferings of passport seekers.

Commercial banks will be involved in the process under new arrangement, he said. Applicants will file petitions with a bank, which will deliver passport after a certain period.

He was addressing as chief guest at a view exchange meeting after inaugurating a newly built auditorium of Bangladesh Rural Development Training Institute (BRDTI) in the city yesterday.

Anwarul Iqbal said local government bodies will be strengthened and a commission is working on it. Its report will be available in about three months, he said.

Local governments will be made self-reliant and given grants and development assistance considering their performance in different sectors like tax collection, sanitation coverage etc, he said. Bureaucratic tangles on the way will be removed.

In the first phase, 1000 out of total 4500 Union Parishads will be selected for development assistance considering their performance stage.

Sylhet Divisional Commissioner -Aziz Hasan chaired the function while Rural Development and Co-operatives secretary -Muhammad Nazrul Islam, BRDB Director General Abdus

Sobhan Sikder, Sylhet BRDTI Director AKM Enayetullah Chowdhury, DIG of police in Sylhet Syed Shah Zaman Raj, Deputy Commissioner Harun ur Rashid Khan and Sylhet DMP Deputy Commissioner Manzur Ahmed also spoke. Local body leaders were also present at the meeting.

The LGRD advisor said remittances by non-resident Bangladeshis are on the rise and may reach 6 billion US dollars next financial year. The government is contemplating honouring high level NRB remitters by offering special treatment at airports on their arrival, he said.

## Cop punished for taking bribe

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A Sub-Inspector (SI) of Kushtia Sadar police station has been suspended allegedly for taking bribe from both the complainant and the accused in a case.

Kushtia Police Superintendent Jasim Uddin also ordered departmental action against SI Monirul Islam after preliminary investigation proved the allegation. Monirul was closed to the police lines on Thursday.

According to police sources, Asad Khondokar of Ailchara village went to Kushtia Sadar police station to file a case in connection with alleged snatching of his motorcycle on June 12. SI Monirul Islam demanded Tk 2,000 from Asad for filing a case.

The police official recorded a case after the complainant paid him the money.

SI Munir arrested the alleged snatcher--Masudul Haq Anu-- of Ailchara village in Sadar upazila and took him to Kushtia Sadar police station on June 16.

The SI took Tk 7,000 from Anu when he was on remand.

Later, SI Munir asked complainant Asad to withdraw the case, saying Anu was not involved in snatching his motorcycle.

Complainant Asad then submitted a written allegation to Kushtia Police Superintendent against SI Munir on June 25 narrating the incidents.

## UP chairman jailed for extortion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Four people including the chairman of Joychandi Union Parishad (UP) in Kulaura upazila have been sentenced to five years rigorous imprisonment (RI) in an extortion case.

The District and Sessions Judge of Moulvibazar Md Jahurul Haque announced the verdict and awarded the punishment to Joychandi UP chairman Qamar Uddin Ahmed and three others.

The UP chairman along with Moti Lal Rajbhor, Monir Uddin and Bhadr Karia of Joychandi union had demanded Tk 10,000 from Laxmi Narayan Parshi of Panch-Peer Jalai village as extortion in exchange of settlement of a feud through arbitration at the village. On refusal, they forcibly took away one of his cows from his house at Klibdon Tea Garden on July 16, 2004.

Laxmi Narayan filed a case with Kulaura Police station on March 28 against them. Later, police framed charges against them.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Children joined processionists who paraded different lanes and areas in Keraniganj in Dhaka district yesterday to protest drug abuse, land grabbing, dowry and other social crimes. The programme was organised by local elite under the slogan 'save village'.

## No fertiliser crisis, says advisor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Agriculture Advisor Dr C S Karim yesterday said there was no crisis of fertiliser in the country.

He said that government purchases fertiliser at the rate of Tk 1000 per bag (50 kg) and sells it to farmers at Tk 300.

Stern action will be taken if any body tries to create an artificial crisis of fertiliser to reap extra profit, the advisor said while inaugurating a fortnight long tree fair at Shahid Hadis Park.

Karim said honest officials of forest department are not supposed to be scared in the ongoing drive against corrupt officials.

Presided over by Khulna Deputy Commissioner S M Feroze Alam, the function was attended by Divisional Commissioner Yunusur Rahman

## Tk 5cr shrimps washed away in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Shrimp worth Tk 5 crore and fish worth over Tk 2 crore were washed away by flood caused by incessant rains in Kaliganj and Shamnagar upazilas in last four days, district administration sources said.

Several hundred people were marooned during the period, they said.

Over 2,000 shrimp enclosures and 200 ponds were overflowed in the two upazilas. More than 157 kutcha houses collapsed and standing aman crop, aus seedbeds and vegetables on over 1,235 acres of land were also damaged.

In Kaliganj upazila, shrimps worth Tk 20 lakh were damaged

following overflowing of 65 shrimp enclosures, district administration sources said.

Aman and aus seedbeds and vegetables on 350 acres of land were damaged causing loss of Tk 24 lakh 25,000, they said.

As many as 14,300 families were affected during the period, they said.

In Shyamnagar upazila, 450 metric tonnes (MT) of shrimps worth Tk 2 cr 25 lakh were damaged following overflowing of 1,770 enclosures.

About 600 MT of fish worth Tk 2 crore 40 lakh were damaged following overflowing of 150 ponds in the area, district administration sources said.

Aman and aus seedbeds and

vegetable on 1,025 acres of land were damaged incurring loss of Tk 46,60,000, they said.

Rains affected over 8,135 people of 1,627 families in eight out of 12 unions in the upazila, they said.

The extent of damage is likely to increase if water does not recede within one or two days, local people said.

Affected people have urged the authorities concerned to take immediate measures to drain out rainwater.

On contact, both Kaliganj Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Md Samsul Arefin and Shyamnagar UNO Dilip Kumar Banik confirmed the reports of crop and shrimp damage.

10X4

4X3

7X3