

## Few more rebel leaders

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Meanwhile, Bhuiyan and his followers may make a counter announcement of actions including expulsion or release of suspected corrupt leaders. These leaders even include detained party chief Khaleda Zia.

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday rejected Bhuiyan's claim that they are the mainstream BNP.

Delwar claimed that they are the mainstream BNP and said, "People will decide who are the mainstream BNP and who are outsiders...Politics cannot be pursued unlawfully, it requires people's support."

"Have patience for a few more days...You will see who have the majority support," he told reporters at his NAM apartment residence.

Delwar described Bhuiyan's reform proposal as a "package deal" and said Bhuiyan announced the proposal on "special interest".

He expressed surprise at Bhuiyan's claim that the BNP will win the next election under his leadership. "Has he [Bhuiyan] got the magic lamp? How can he say this before the election?" he said.

He also rejected Bhuiyan's claim that many wrong deeds were done in the last five years which have destroyed the party's image. "Everything was right when he [Bhuiyan] was in power, but now everything is wrong as he is no longer in power!" Delwar said.

On party reforms, he said it would be done in accordance with the party constitution when the ban on politics is lifted. "We will call party council when the time comes," he said.

Expelled BNP joint secretary general Ashraf Hossain meanwhile said, "We represent the main BNP as Khaleda Zia did not follow the party constitution in expelling us. The

decision [of expulsion] is not acceptable to us."

"BNP will be organised under our leadership and we are working according to the party constitution," Ashraf told reporters after a meeting with Bhuiyan at the latter's Gulshan residence yesterday.

He said they will continue their efforts to implement the reforms to make the party democratic.

ZA Khan, an adviser to the BNP chairperson, also said, "We are the main BNP and we will implement the ideology of president Zia."

### HANNAH SHAH VISITS MUNSHIGANJ

ASM Hannan Shah, adviser to the BNP chairperson, yesterday trashed Bhuiyan's claim of having 100 leaders with him and said Bhuiyan only has 17 former MPs with him.

There are five lakh registered leaders and activists of BNP and only about 150 people were present at Bhuiyan's meeting on Thursday. Hannan told reporters after distributing relief materials in Madhyapara union of Sirajdikhan upazila in Munshiganj.

"Now the main duty of the mainstream BNP is to organise the party under the leadership of Khaleda Zia," he said.

Asked why Bhuiyan, who was the minister of the "most corrupt" ministry, has not been arrested yet, he said Bhuiyan is being patronised by a special quarter.

The CU will resume its academic activities after Ramadan on October 24 and the dormitories of the university will open on October 23, a press release said.

The decision about the CU admission process will be taken after a meeting of the admission committee on September 9, the release added.

On the dialogue with the Election Commission he said no dialogue will be held keeping the party chairperson behind bars.

Hannan Shah said he is now performing the duty of a coordinator in the absence of Khaleda.

## Bangladesh faces

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Bangladesh could not immediately be reached for comment.

The area Cummins studied is a section of the Sunda Megathrust known as the Arakan Subduction Zone where the Indian and Southeast Asia plates meet. The Sunda Megathrust stretches all the way from Western Australia to the Himalayas, and ruptures along that fault line were blamed for the Sumatra earthquake in 2004.

Examining historical records, Cummins found evidence that an earthquake estimated at magnitude 8.5 to 9.0 struck off the western Myanmar coast in April 1762 the most recent large quake found in the records.

He said it probably produced a tsunami, citing eyewitness accounts of waves washing over nearby Cheduba Island, submerged coasts near Chittagong and causing river levels as far inland as the Bangladeshi capital Dhaka about 62 miles.

He said future quakes and tsunamis were likely, given the historical accounts and more recent surveys of the area, which determined a magnitude 8.5 quake would hit the area every 100 years and a 9.0 every 500 years.

"I would hope this spurs further work in confirming these past events," he said. "It should be possible to answer how big was this event, how often do these events occur and what kind of tsunamis are generated through further geological investigation."

He said it was difficult for local authorities to take action to prevent the

disaster, since it was not likely an immediate threat and any tsunami would probably inundate threatened regions from within 10 minutes to two hours.

The reaction to Cummins' findings has been mixed, with some tsunami experts saying they shed important light on a section of Sunda Megathrust that has received little attention in the past.

"The main value of the paper is in advertising the danger of the section of the megathrust that no one has worried about," said California Institute of Technology's Kerry Sieh, who has used coral records and GPS networks to predict that a big quake and tsunami are likely to hit parts of Sumatra Island in the coming decades.

"The effects on the west coast of Myanmar and more importantly Bangladesh would be awful," he said.

But Costas Synolakis, director of the Tsunami Research Center at the University of Southern California, insisted he and others presented findings at earlier seminars showing there was a threat of a quake-generated tsunami in the Bay of Bengal but that the worst impact would be in Sri Lanka.

"There is nothing new here," Synolakis said in an e-mail interview.

Synolakis also said the scenario presented by Cummins "could lead to a massive panic south of Chennai (India) and possibly a sense of reassurance in Sri Lanka," where he said the threat of another tsunami was worse.

## Asteroid breakup

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US and Czech researchers believe.

Mixing skills in time travel, jigsaw-making and carbon chemistry, the trio carried out a computer simulation of the jostling among orbital rubble left from the building of the Solar System.

The sleuths were guided by an intriguing clue — a large asteroid called (298) Baptistina, which shares the same orbital track as a group of smaller rocks.

Turning the clock back, the simulation found that the Baptistina did not only fit together, they were also remnants of a giant parent asteroid, around 170 kilometers (105 miles) across, that once cruised the innermost region of the asteroid belt.

Around 160 million years ago — the best bet in a range of 140-190 million years — this behemoth was whacked by another giant some 60 kms (37 miles) across.

From this soundless collision was born a huge cluster of rocks, including 300 bodies larger than 10 kms (six miles) and 140,000 bodies larger than one kilometer (0.6 of a mile).

Over aeons, the fragments found new orbits with the help of something called the Yarkovsky effect, in which thermal photons from the Sun give a tiny yet inexorable push to orbiting rocks.

As the family gradually split up, a large number of chunks — perhaps one in five of the bigger ones — crept their way out of the asteroid belt and became ensnared by the gravitational pull of the inner planets.

Around 65 million years ago, a 10-km (six miles) piece cracked into Earth, unleashing a firestorm and kicking up clouds of dust that filtered out sunlight.

In this enduring winter, much vegetation was wiped out and the species that depended on them also became extinct. Only those animals that could cope with the new challenge, or could exploit an environmental niche, survived.

The trace of the great event,

called the Cretaceous/Tertiary Mass Extinction, can be seen today in the shape of a 180-km (112-mile) -diameter impact crater at modern-day Chicxulub, in Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula.

The trio of researchers — William Bottke, David Vokrouhlicky and David Nesvorný of Southwest Research Institute in Colorado — took their theory a stage further and checked out sediment samples from the Chicxulub site.

They found traces of a mineral called carbonaceous chondrite, which is only found in a tiny minority of meteorites, as the earthly remains of plummeting asteroids are called. Most asteroids can be excluded from the Chicxulub event, but not Baptistina-era ones, they contend.

Putting simulation and chemical evidence together, the team rule out theories that a comet was to blame rather than an asteroid, and say there is "more than 90 percent" probability that the killer rock was a refugee from the Baptistina family.

The investigators also put a 70-percent probability that a four-km (2.5-mile) Baptistina asteroid hit the Moon some around 108 million years ago, forming the 85-km (52-mile) crater Tycho.

The probability is lower than for Chicxulub because it is based only on a simulation.

The peak of "Baptistina bombardment" was probably around 100 million years ago but is not over yet, the paper cautions.

Many of the asteroids that skim dangerously close to Earth today owe their orbits to that great collision in the deep past, according to the authors.

"We are in the tail end of this shower now," says Bottke. "Our simulations suggest that about 20 percent of the present-day near-Earth asteroid population can be traced back to the Baptistina family."

## Universities

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On September 3, Education Adviser Ayub Quadri and vice chancellors of 26 public universities held a meeting at the education ministry. Following the meeting, the government lifted restrictions on reopening the public universities and said that the syndicates concerned would decide on resuming academic activities at the institutions.

Following the government decision, the NU authorities yesterday directed the principals of all the colleges under it to resume academic activities from tomorrow, a press release said.

The authorities of the channel were not allowed to make any announcement to its viewers prior to going off the air, a high official of CSB told The Daily Star last night.

CSB News was the country's first 24-hour Bangla news channel that began transmission on 21 February this year.

The probe committee of the information ministry earlier recommended turning off the broadcast of CSB as the channel had committed forgery to obtain frequency allocation.

On last Sunday, decision to shut down the channel gained grounds as the CSB officials during an hour-long meeting with the BTRC officials failed to produce any convincing document on frequency allocation, said sources.

Moreover, the government high-ups were also unhappy over CSB's transmission of the recent unrest on Dhaka University campus and elsewhere in the country. The government was convinced that the news channel played a provocative role in transmitting the violence that forced the government to impose curfew to pacify the unrest, added the sources.

The probe body headed by Kamal Uddin, joint secretary (development) of information ministry, found that CSB

## CSB News silenced

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Zakir, company secretary of Focus Multimedia Company Ltd.

The BTRC officials also issued a show cause notice to CSB asking it to explain within seven days why the frequency allocated to CSB would not be cancelled permanently. CSB was also asked to remain off the air during the seven days, the release added.

Under the Telecommunications Act, 2001, committing forgery to acquire frequency allocation is a punishable offence, which can lead to cancellation of the allocation.

Although CSB received the frequency allocation, its authorities did not submit the original application to the BTRC, sources in the probe body told The Daily Star.

CSB submitted an approval letter of the information ministry before the BTRC on October 17 and got the frequency allocation. The probe body found that the signature on the approval letter was forged, as the information ministry had not issued any approval letter to CSB on that particular day.

The probe committee, formed on July 31, is of the opinion that CSB News might have acquired the frequency allocation with worst intentions. It also observed that a number of officials at the information ministry were involved in the unrest.

Chowdhury Mahmud Hussain, Manager (administration) of CSB, said the frequency allocation approval letters were issued by the information ministry on October 17 and 19.

## Koko sent to jail

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So, he should be confined to jail, the IO added.

The defence lawyers submitted three petitions, first for granting bail, second for providing Koko with first class division in jail and the third for his treatment.

Moving the petitions, the lawyers argued that Koko was brought to the court before completion of his remand due to his illness.

He should be provided with first class division in jail, as he is the son of a former prime minister and his elder brother detained Tarique Rahman was given division as per direction of the High Court (HC), his counsel added.

After hearing both sides, Metropolitan Magistrate Muhammad Salih Uddin directed the jail authorities to take necessary steps for providing Koko with division in jail under section 910 of the Jail Code and arranging his treatment if necessary.

On September 2, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed a graft case against Khaleda, Koko and 11 others with Tejgaon Police Station.

They have been charged with breaching tender conditions in appointing Global Agro Trade (Private) Company Ltd (GATCO), an indenting house, for container handling at the Dhaka Inland Container Depot (ICD) and the restricted area at the Chittagong Port ICD despite its lack of experience and skills.

Following the case, the joint forces arrested Khaleda and Koko from their Cantonment residence in the early hours of Monday and they were taken to the court the same day.

## EC faces BNP test

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To register with the EC as the BNP, the other one will have to take a new name and meet certain criteria for registration that is set to be mandatory for a political party seeking to contest the next polls.

The EC's draft proposals say a party lacking representation in any of the previous parliaments must have committees in at least 32 districts with 1,000 members each. Besides, each of those districts will have to have a committee at all its upazilas with at least 200 members.

According to the BNP constitution, Khandaker Delwar-led camp claims, they are still the main BNP in that the party chief has the authority to expel any of its members or take any punitive actions without even issuing a show-cause notice.

Khaleda Zia, now detained on graft charges, expelled Bhuiyan and joint secretary general Ashraf Hossain and appointed Delwar as the new secretary general on September 2, citing the authority vested upon her by the party constitution.

The BNP on Wednesday formally informed the EC about the latest changes in the party's line-up. The commission was told that Bhuiyan does not belong to the party anymore and cannot represent it at any level.

On the other hand, those loyal to Bhuiyan plan to send a letter to the EC, claiming that they are the ones who lead the mainstream. To be signed by Bhuiyan, the letter will interpret the BNP chairperson's decision as unilateral and unconstitutional, said sources close to the probe committee.

"But in this case we will have to take a decision if we are to invite the BNP to the talks," said the EC official in return for anonymity.

In the wake of the crisis, the commission is now considering including new provisions in its proposals for electoral reforms so that it can deal with similar situations in the future.

It, however, believes it has enough time as the scheduled date for talks with the BNP is November 22 and as per the plan, an invitation will be sent two weeks before the day.

"By this time, the dispute may take a new turn," he added.

**BNP'S LETTER QUESTIONED**

Election Commissioner Sakhawat yesterday questioned authenticity of the BNP letter informing the EC about the changes in the posts of secretary general and joint secretary general as it was signed by Assistant Office Secretary Rizvi Ahmed.

"We will inform the Election Commission that we are the original BNP, and we believe they won't ignore us," BNP Standing Committee Member Lt Gen (retd) Mahbubur Rahman, who has been working with Bhuiyan for intra-party reforms, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Officials at the EC Secretariat said the commission will have to bite the bullet and resolve the dispute with prudence and care. It never faced such a critical situation before. If it ends up making a controversial

## Mainul

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to allay fears among the business community and general people alike.

Asked if there would be a new list of graft suspects, he replied in the negative, and said, "The government will keep dealing with the 230 people who have so far been listed as graft suspects."

He observed that the Anti-Corruption Commission and the existing laws will determine the measures regarding corruption and fresh graft suspects in future.

"We cannot take on all responsibilities...the law will decide who'll get released and who'll not," he added.

Queried if expelled BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and his allies have violated the emergency rules by holding the meeting Wednesday, the law adviser said it rests with the home ministry.

ERSHAD ACCUSED

Asked if the abscunding accused persons include RU Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) general secretary Ayenuddin, BCL workers Dipayan Sarker, Mizanur Rahman Mithu, Sarker Ajoy, SM Fakhrul Islam Sumon, Abu Sayem,