

Dhaka seeks
Afghan help
for release
of Brac staff

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury has sought support of the Afghan authorities in securing the release of abducted Brac employee Nurul Islam.

The adviser yesterday sent a letter to his Afghan counterpart Rangin Dadfar Spanta in this regard.

In his letter, the foreign adviser stated, "Brac is a Bangladeshi NGO reputed worldwide for its social services. Nurul Islam's mission was purely of a peaceful and humanitarian nature. His family understandably deeply distraught."

"Here, I would like to add that the people of Bangladesh have always stood by their Afghan brethren at all times under all circumstances."

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CARTOON INCIDENT
Prothom Alo
takes action
against persons
responsible

Cartoonist held, Alpin
issue confiscated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcement agencies yesterday arrested daily Prothom Alo cartoonist Arifur Rahman for a cartoon "hurting religious sentiments" published in the daily's satire magazine "Alpin" on Monday.

The government has also confiscated all copies of the Alpin's 431st issue containing the cartoon titled "Naam" (name) on page six, a government press release said.

The press release also said Prothom Alo has already apologised and withdrawn the cartoon and dismissed an Alpin sub-editor in this connection.

The government hopes everyone concerned with this unwarranted incident will exercise

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**24 promoted
as secretary**

UNB, Dhaka

The caretaker government yesterday promoted 24 additional secretaries and appointed them as secretaries in various key posts.

According to an official announcement, Foreign Secretary-in-charge Touhid Hossain was promoted to secretary, Acting Secretary of the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management Dhiraj Malakar has been made secretary of the ministry while LGRD and Cooperatives Division Acting Secretary M Nazrul Islam made secretary of the division and Land Appeal Board Acting Chairman Dewan Jakir Hossain made chairman of the board.

Acting Secretary of the Chief Adviser's Office Kazi M Aminul Islam has been made secretary of the CA's Office while Acting Secretary of the Primary and Mass

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US expects extra steps to restore democracy

Gastright talks steps for elections

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The US government expects Bangladesh to take additional steps for restoring democracy as soon as possible.

Visiting US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State John Gastright said this at a meeting with Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday.

The US embassy in Dhaka later issued a press statement on the around one-hour talks held at the CEC's office.

Gastright said the US government looked forward to additional steps by Bangladesh to restore democracy as soon as possible, and

the two discussed the steps underway to prepare for elections by the end of 2008," the statement said.

"He reiterated the US government's willingness to provide support to the Election Commission. Full democracy is vital to the country. Full participation in the electoral process is vital to democracy," it added.

The press statement said Gastright also welcomed the recent relaxation on internal politics and emphasised the important role that political parties, NGOs and civil society can play in the electoral process.

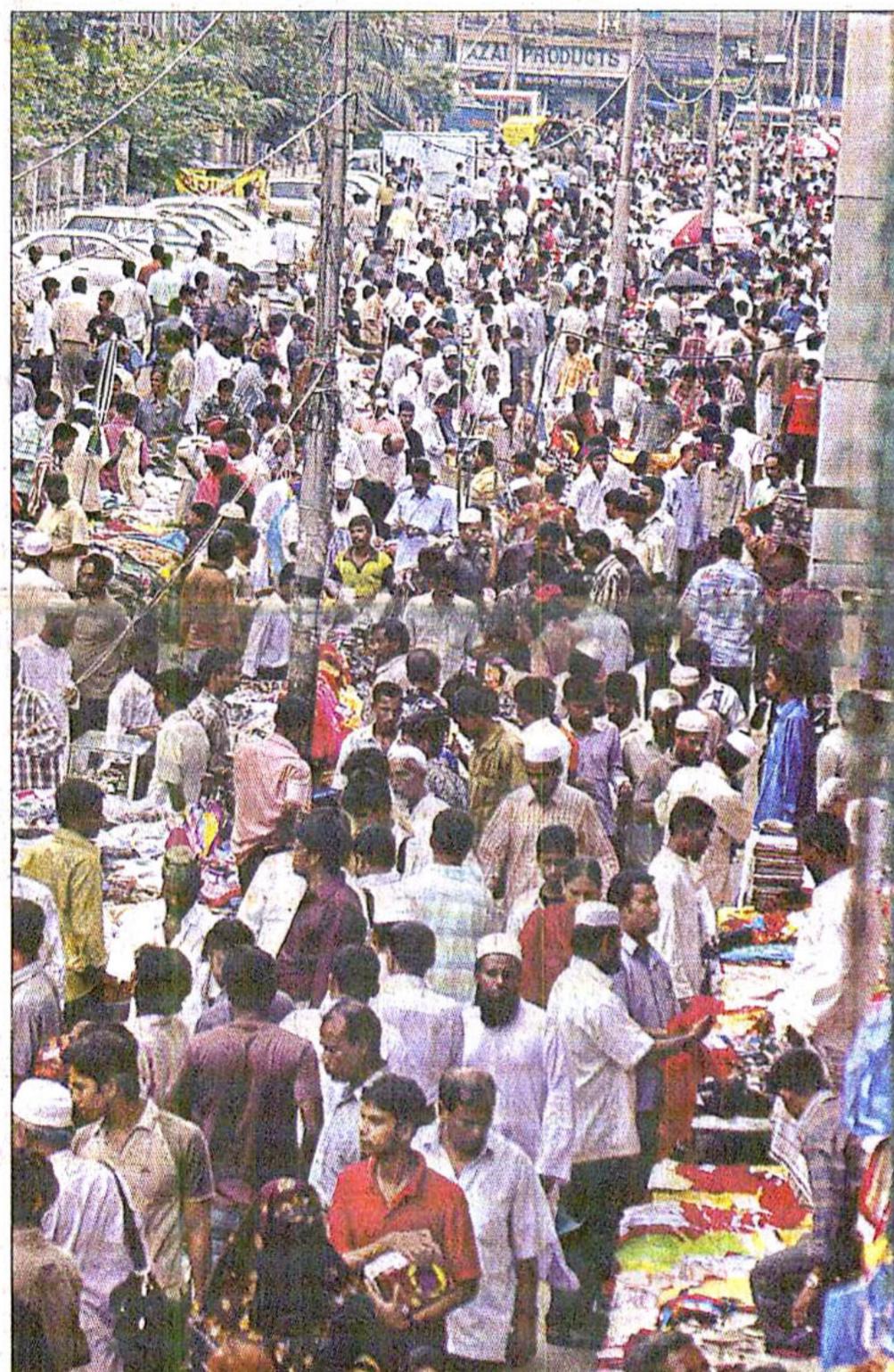
John Gastright had a "positive and productive" meeting with the

CEC and he congratulated the CEC on the great progress the commission has made over the last nine months in course of its preparatory work, it noted.

Emerging from the meeting, Gastright told reporters on the EC Secretariat premises that he was impressed with the EC's plans and ongoing activities for holding the next parliamentary election to move toward democracy.

"They [EC] outlined how they are going ahead with the process of preparing a voter list and also the process of working with the political parties to register those to

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Low-income buyers crowd hawkers' stalls on the west side of Baitul Mukarram mosque in the capital yesterday before the Eid-shopping frenzy begins.

GOLD SMUGGLING CASE
Ershad gets
acquitted

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday relieved former president and Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad of the gold smuggling case.

The judgement of the case had been adjourned seven times before for different reasons.

Former president Ershad faced numerous charges after he was deposed in a popular uprising in 1990. In August and September last year, he was acquitted of four graft cases following his announcement of joining the BNP-led four-party alliance.

The gold smuggling case was filed 16 years ago on July 17, 1990 while president Ershad was in office. Primarily, the persons accused in the charge sheet were

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Saifur's son Naser gets 9yrs for extortion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A Sylhet court yesterday sentenced detained BNP lawmaker M Naser Rahman to nine years in prison in an extortion case.

Three others - Roads and Highways executive engineers Shafiqul Islam and Abdul Khaleque, and district BNP leader Moulavi Wali Siddique - each were given five years' imprisonment. They have been on the run since filing of the case.

Naser, son of former finance minister Saifur Rahman, copped jail terms of seven years and two years on separate counts. He will have to serve out both the sentences concurrently.

The Third Additional District

and Sessions Judge's Court, Sylhet, however, acquitted Moulvibazar municipality Chairman and district BNP

General Secretary Fazul Karim and Roads and Highways Sub-Divisional Engineer Monwar Sadique on the charges brought against them.

It did not pass any order on Sylhet city BNP chief Arif Haque Chowdhury, another accused in the case, since a High Court (HC) bench on July 25 stayed the proceedings against him for six months.

The joint forces arrested Naser on February 4 in the beginning of the army-backed caretaker government's drive against corruption that also saw many other political and business bigwigs detained.

Contractor Nuruzzaman filed the case on February 17 this year.

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Sri Lanka blow Tigers away

STAR SPORT MONITOR

Bangladesh crashed to a 64-run defeat against Sri Lanka in their second Super Eights match of the ICC World Twenty20 Championship at the Wanderers in Johannesburg yesterday.

Chasing Sri Lanka's 147-5 in 20 overs, a modest total given the high standard set in the ball-bashing tournament, Bangladesh were bowled out for 83 in 15.5 overs mainly due to some reckless batting by the top-order.

Sri Lanka's win however ensures Pakistan's progress in the semifinal from the group. The Lankans on the other hand will take on Australia in Cape Town on Thursday and the winners will take the other spot.

With two defeats in as many games, the Tigers will now play for pride when they take on Pakistan in their final Super Eights match at Newlands in Cape Town tomorrow.

Sri Lanka's progress to 147 for 5 was often tortuous and ragged, but

the value of perseverance was amply illustrated as the bowlers made short work of Bangladesh on a sluggish pitch where batsmen rarely felt at ease. While it was the slow bowlers that starred for Bangladesh, the fast men did the damage for Sri Lanka, with the new-ball duo of Chaminda Vaas and Dilhara Fernando once again were outstanding. Bangladesh were left to reflect on both some ordinary shot selection and the final phase of the Sri Lankan innings, when Jehan Mubarak and Tillakaratne Dilshan hustled the runs that had been at a premium as the batsmen struggled in the middle overs. Their own reply started poorly, with Nazimuddin tripped leg before in Vaas's opening over.

And after the spirited Afib Ahmed clattered three fours in Fernando's opening over, the bowler exacted retribution, having Tamim Iqbal caught at third man before ripping the ball through the middle. Sri Lanka's win however ensures Pakistan's progress in the semifinal from the group. The Lankans on the other hand will take on Australia in Cape Town on Thursday and the winners will take the other spot.

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VOTER LISTING

EC to get 4,000 laptops by Oct 25

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday said the Election Commission (EC) will get 4,000 laptops in the next month for expediting the ongoing task of preparing a voter list with photographs.

"We have a secret plan. We will not say how we are going to get the laptops. There are many people who might try to foil the plan," CEC Huda told reporters yesterday afternoon adding, "We will get 2,000 laptops by October 10 and 2,000 more by October 25."

The CEC also claimed that procurement of all equipment for voter listing will be completed next month, but the procurement procedure adopted by the EC Secretariat seemingly does not corroborate the optimism of the CEC.

Collection of equipment for voter listing will be completed in October and the field level task of preparing the voter list will begin at full throttle the same month," the CEC said.

Asked whether the EC will re-invite tenders for the 8,000 laptops in line with the government review panel's decision, the CEC seemingly avoided a direct answer by disclosing the existence of the 'secret plan'.

After receiving 2,000 laptops by

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বাংলাদেশ সিমেন্ট ম্যানুফ্যাকচারাস এসোসিয়েশন এর ২০০৭-০৮ ও ২০০৮-০৯ সন এর
নবনির্বাচিত কার্যনির্বাহী পরিষদকে আমাদের প্রাণঢালা অভিনন্দন।



মোঃ হাইদার আলি (বিপ্লবী, এসোসিয়েশন
নবনির্বাচিত কার্যনির্বাহী
পরিষদের প্রিসিএমএ)



মোতাফাক কামাল
চোরাকীয়া পরিষদের
মেমোর মুস আইমানু
সেন্টেরেট (প্রিসিএমএ)



মোহাম্মদ আমিনুল হক
বাংলাদেশ পরিষদে, প্রিসিএমএ^র
মেমোর আইমানু সেন্টেরেট (প্রিসিএমএ)



মোঃ ফাতেফুল রহমান
বাংলাদেশ পরিষদের
মেমোর মুস আইমানু
সেন্টেরেট (প্রিসিএমএ)



ইঞ্জিনিয়ার মীর জহির হোসেন
বাংলাদেশ পরিষদে, মেমোর
মুস আইমানু সেন্টেরেট (প্রিসিএমএ)



মোঃ আলী পাশা
বাংলাদেশ পরিষদে, মেমোর
মুস আইমানু সেন্টেরেট (প্রিসিএমএ)



রমাকান্ত ঝোঁকাৰ
পরিষদে, মাইন্ডেল সিমেন্ট বাংলাদেশ সি.
মেমোর আইমানু সেন্টেরেট (প্রিসিএমএ)



QUALITY ASSURED

সকল সদস্যবন্দ
বাংলাদেশ সিমেন্ট ম্যানুফ্যাকচারাস এসোসিয়েশন

Delwar moves to
bury differences
with Hannan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain last night met Brig Gen (retd) Hannan Shah, an adviser to the chairperson, apparently to patch up their "differences".

After the meeting at Hannan's Mohakhali residence, both however denied having any misunderstanding between them. They said they would soon resume the party's activities on full throttle.

"We will get back into the swing of things, but there would be no council keeping the chairperson in jail," Hannan Shah told the reporters. He said leaders from each of the districts have congratulated the newly appointed secretary general and applauded the chairperson's decision.

Asked if Khaleda Zia has really appointed Hannan Shah as the party's chief coordinator, Khandaker Delwar avoided giving a direct answer. He said, "We always welcome anyone volunteering to coordinate the party's activities."

Different newspapers reported

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CAMPUS VIOLENCE Prof Neem sent to jail