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BNP STANDING COMMITTEE MEETS

Saifur acting chief, Hafiz secretary gen

Expulsion of Bhuiyan, Ashraf not approved

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

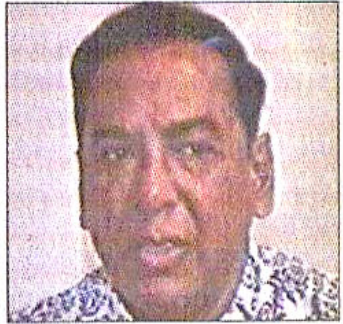
In a dramatic turn of events, the BNP standing committee in a marathon meeting last night appointed former finance minister M Saifur Rahman as the party's acting chairperson, replaced Khandaker Delwar Hossain with Major (ret'd) Hafizuddin Ahmed as acting secretary general.

The meeting of the highest decision making body of BNP also disapproved the expulsion of former secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

Whether detained chairperson of the party, Khaleda Zia, approved the decisions could not be known, with Khaleda appointed secretary



M Saifur Rahman



Major (ret'd) Hafizuddin Ahmed

general Delwar being absent at the meeting due to unknown reasons.

But, briefing reporters in his house after the five-hour long meeting there, Saifur said the BNP

top brass agreed that they have faith in Khaleda, and her decision will be unanimously accepted once she is released. He added that the

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How BNP-led alliance moved to twist probe

SHARIFUL ISLAM

The Rab's claim that Huji boss Mufti Hannan and his men were behind the August 21 grenade attack suggests how the BNP-led alliance government had attempted to alter the course of investigation to serve partisan purpose.

A number of police officials, who had remained tight-lipped about the investigation till the caretaker government took over in January, recently said the then government influenced the investigators to concoct a story involving a ward level Awami League (AL) leader named Mokhelesur Rahman.

Pandering to the government's

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Justify judiciary separation

CJ asks judges UNB, Dhaka

Chief Justice M Ruhul Amin yesterday urged the judges to justify separation of the judiciary from the executive control through candid dispensation of justice.

"Otherwise, we all have to face serious question of accountability from the people," he told an orientation programme for the magistrates.

The programme was organised for the additional chief judicial magistrates, additional chief metropolitan magistrates, and judicial and metropolitan magistrates who are to man the lower judiciary in an independent domain.

The chief justice said the judges must devote their hard labour with

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Another militant shocker

9 extremists held for link with Aug 21 attack; grenades, arms, ammo seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested nine people with suspected links to Harkat ul-Jihad-Islami (Huji) and recovered a good number of grenades, firearms and explosives in different districts in last two days.

Of those netted, two took part in staging the August 21 grenade blasts at an Awami League (AL) rally in 2004 while the rest were

involved indirectly, said Rab officials.

The firearms and explosives seized include 16 Arges-84 grenades, four firearms and 60 kilograms of explosives. Rab officials said the grenades are from the same lot that had been smuggled in for the August 21 attack.

The arrestees are Hossain Ahmed alias Tamim, Abul Kalam Azad alias Bulbul, Jahangir Alam, Abdul Kuddus, Omar Faruq, Amirul

Islam, Ali Ahmed, Mokaddas Billah and Mohammad Baki Billah.

The Rab however did not specify the two who they said had a direct role in the grisly attack that left 24 AL leaders and workers dead and over 300 injured.

All those detained were paraded during a press briefing at the Rab headquarters yesterday afternoon. But only three of them—Ali Ahmed, Tamim and Baki Billah—were allowed to talk to the media.

Huji leaders Mufti Abdul Hannan, Mohibullah alias Mafizur Rahman alias Ovi, Moulana Abu Sayeed alias Zafar and Sharif Shahedul Alam alias Bipul, who are now on a 10-day remand in connection with the grenade blast case, were also produced before the journalists.

Hannan looked dejected throughout the press briefing.

Rab Director General Hasan

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Nine suspected militants and 60kg of explosives, 16 grenades, rifles, handguns, various equipment and ammunition at the Rapid Action Battalion-1 Headquarters in the capital yesterday. Rab recovered these during a countrywide drive.

Law doesn't allow Jamaat politics

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The existing laws do not allow Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh and other Islamic political parties, to run their activities in the name of or on the basis of religion but the parties have been doing these for the last three decades due to non-enforcement of the laws.

The 1972 constitution banned formation and functioning of any association or union or political parties on the basis of religion. The

provision for ban was later repealed.

But the Special Powers Act (SPA) 1974, still in force, provides for such ban and punishment for violation of the provision.

All successive governments since the August 1975 changeover used the SPA to suppress opponents but turned a blind eye to the ban on political activities in the name of or based on religion.

Legal experts say the government does not need to enact new

laws to ban use of religion for political purposes. It can enforce the SPA provision in this regard, if it wants.

Activities of Jamaat-e-Islami and such other Islamic parties were banned under the constitution of 1972 but they resumed their activities on a large scale following repeal of the constitutional restriction in 1976 during military rule.

"Every citizen shall have the right to form associations or unions, subject to any reasonable

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NO ACC PRIOR NOTICE

Hasina refuses to answer queries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday declined to answer investigators' queries about the power-plant graft case as the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) did not put out a prior notice.

"As she [Hasina] did not get any prior notice about the quizzing, she did not say anything significant," Hasina's counsel Advocate Tawfique Newaz told reporters after the query at the special jail on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhavan premises.

Emerging from the jail around 1:45pm, Newaz told reporters Hasina was in the dark as to what kind of allegations were brought against her. He said the AL chief could not give any answer until the ACC informed her about the allega-

tions. When the investigators wanted to know about the graft charge against her, she categorically denied taking any bribe from anyone and said, "I never committed corruption."

"Rather I did a number of development work during the tenure of Awami League government. There are several renowned economists in the country and they could review my claims on development," Hasina was quoted by Newaz as saying.

She also said corruption and development could not go together. She told the investigators she governed during her five-year-long tenure on the basis of principles.

Over her denial, Hasina told the investigators she will first get the

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Ex-Jamaat MP Shahjahan Chy sent to jail on surrender

CU CORRESPONDENT

Former Jamaat-e-Islami lawmaker Shahjahan Chowdhury was sent to jail after he surrendered before a Chittagong court yesterday in a case filed in connection with concealing his actual wealth in his

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BDR hands BSF list of 1,591 criminals

Wants their deportation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) has handed over a list of 1,591 criminals and fugitives hiding in India to Indian Border Security Force (BSF) during the director general-level talks requesting their deportation.

The BSF, meantime, gave a list of 141 camps of Indian insurgents in Bangladesh territory, a claim the BDR officials dubbed unfounded.

The border forces of the two neighbouring countries concluded the five-day conference in Dhaka yesterday agreeing to show utmost restraint and not to open fire on trespassers in daytime.

"It's not right to open fire and kill anyone if he crosses the border. Rather he can be arrested and brought under due legal process," BDR Chief Maj Gen Shakil Ahmed said while addressing a press brief-

ing at BDR Headquarters on conclusion of the conference.

Echoing him, BSF DG Ashish Kumar Mitra said, "On my return, I will issue very clear instructions in this regard."

The conference, the second and last this year, also reached a consensus about exchanging information and handing over criminals hiding in each other's country.

Asked about BSF shooting and killing of Bangladeshi civilians, the BDR chief said that 52 civilians were killed by the BSF in the last eight months. He, however, disagreed to term them innocent.

"Only two of them were killed inside Bangladesh territory and the rest on Indian soil. I cannot call those innocent, who cross the international border in the dark of the night."

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Huji emerged with open declaration

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Terrorist organisation Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami, Bangladesh (Huji) emerged through an open declaration of its Jihad agenda at a press conference in early 1992. But the then BNP government did not pay heed to the outfit's dramatic appearance.

The Huji got nourished almost

unchallenged for years until Hasina-led Awami League (AL) government began chasing the Islamist fanatic group in January 1998 as it made an attack on late poet Shamsur Rahman.

Even after the extremist organisation made an assassination attempt on the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina in 2000, the AL

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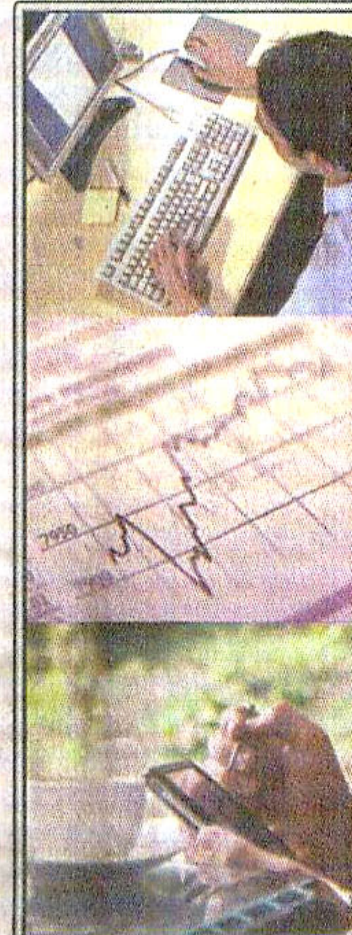
GATCO CASE Remand plea for Koko denied for poor health

Arrest warrant against Maya, family

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected the seven-day remand prayer for interrogating former premier Khaleda Zia's younger son Arafat Rahman Koko in the Gatco

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TRUTH COMMISSION Corrupt politicians cannot contest polls even if they confess guilt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law and Information Adviser Mainul Hossain yesterday said corrupt politicians will not be allowed to contest elections even if they confess their guilt before the proposed Truth Commission, and pay fines.

Moving away from his previous position that only businessmen would have access to the commission, he said it will be formed not

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AUG 17 BLASTS 3 JMB men jailed for life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A Khulna court yesterday sentenced three JMB members to life imprisonment for blasting bombs at two places in Kushtia on August 17, 2005.

Khulna Speedy Trial Tribunal Judge Abdus Salam Shikder also fined them Tk 20,000 each, in default of which they have to suffer three years more of rigorous imprisonment (RI).

The convicts are Hafez Mahmud, Shamsul Alam and Akbar Ali.

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Celebrating

8th

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