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BNP UNITY MOVE  
Saifur faction meets today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Saifur Rahman-led faction of BNP meet today to discuss reconciliation with pro-Khaleda faction and intra-party reforms.

Meanwhile, Khandaker Delwar Hossain, secretary general appointed by Khaleda Zia, yesterday said unity with Saifur faction could only be possible if they cancel the decisions taken at the October 29 standing committee meeting.

Party sources said leaders and former lawmakers will take part in the meeting at Saifur's residence in the capital.

Though detained Chairperson Khaleda Zia wants the party to be united at any cost, the move to that end is facing roadblocks as many of the leaders loyal to her are opposing it fearing loss of their positions in the party.

They agree to reconciliation on condition that those expelled including Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Ashraf Hossain will not be brought back into the fold.

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DRAFT VOTER LIST  
EC unable to start publishing as rules not ready

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Election Commission (EC) is not being able to start publishing draft voter lists with photographs since the law ministry has yet to clear the way for promulgating the electoral rolls rules.

The EC on January 21 sent a draft of the rules to the law ministry for vetting, requesting the ministry to take necessary steps as soon as possible, but the ministry had yet to return the draft to the commission till yesterday, sources said.

Officials in the EC Secretariat said they communicated with the law ministry last week to know the status of the draft that had been

with the ministry for over a week, prompting responses from the ministry officials that they would complete the vetting this week.

Once the contents of the draft electoral rolls rules is thoroughly scrutinised, the EC will make it into a law, exercising a power which was vested upon it in August last.

After promulgating the rules, the EC will initiate the process of publishing area wise drafts of voter lists seeking claims and objections from registered and prospective voters.

According to the EC's electoral roadmap announced on July 15 of last year, publication of draft electoral rolls was supposed to begin in

October of the same year, two months into the beginning of the field level work of preparing the voter lists with photographs, but the commission could not maintain the self declared timeline. Now, the EC wants to start the publication of draft lists quickly for four city corporations and seven municipalities to start holding long over due polls to local government bodies.

The army, which has been working at field levels to prepare the voter lists with photographs, handed over to the EC on February 5 the draft voter lists for the four city corporations and seven municipalities to start holding long over due polls to local government bodies.

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War heroes vow to make list of war criminals, victims of '71

RASHIDUL HASAN and AMINUL ISLAM, from Mymensingh

Leaders of Sector Commanders Forum, a platform of the sector commanders of the liberation war, yesterday vowed to prepare lists of the war criminals and the victims during the liberation war.

They were speaking at a view exchange meeting with freedom fighters, civil society members, teachers and students on the Mukul Fouz School premises in Mymensingh.

Scores of people from all walks of life from Netrokona, Sherpur, Kishoreganj, Jamalpur, and Tangail thronged the school premises to express their solidarity with the forum leaders.

The forum leaders said the

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Manju wants to return home, surrender to court

UNB, Dhaka

Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman Anwar Hossain Manju, now in the USA, wants to return home soon, surrender to the court and join politics.

"I was not supposed to come to US. I've come to take refuge here. Insha-Allah, I will return home soon," he told the news agency over phone from Washington.

Replying to a question about his five-year conviction for possessing wine, Manju said he will surrender to the court, seek bail and move petition for quashing the case.

He left the country after the imposition of the state of emergency on January 11 last year and was tried in absentia.

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Probe body formed on DCC commissioner Qayum's death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jail authorities yesterday formed a three-member committee to investigate the death of Dhaka City Corporation ward commissioner and BNP leader Abdul Qayum Khan who died in custody on Friday.

The committee has been asked to submit its report by tomorrow.

Deputy Inspector General (Prisons) Maj Shamsul Haider Siddique will head the committee while Superintendent of Narayanganj jail Tipu Sultan and Deputy Jailer of Dhaka Central jail Abu Tahar are the members.

The deceased's family members however rejected the probe committee and demanded a judicial inquiry committee.

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The Department of Archaeology during excavation at the northern part of Lalbagh Fort in the capital discovered a few Mughal structures. The photo shows an underground wall.

Polls, elected Sangsad govt's only exit option

Roundtable told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is no alternative to democracy for overcoming the crises that are plaguing the country, and holding of a free, fair and credible election will be the first step in that direction, said former advisers to caretaker governments, political leaders, renowned jurists, journalists and eminent citizens yesterday.

Emphasising on dialogues among political parties for finding

a common ground for leading the country following the upcoming election, they said an elected parliament is the only exit the present government can hope for.

The opinions were expressed by discussants at a roundtable titled 'the future of democracy in Bangladesh' organised by the Daily Manabjamin in the National Press Club marking one year of publication of weekly magazine Janatar Chokh, the daily's subsidiary.

Barrister Rafique ul Huq, Dr Akbar Ali Khan, Dr Kamal Hossain, Amir Hossain Amu, Col (ret'd) Oli Ahmed, Matia Chowdhury, Barrister Anisul Islam Mahmud, Mujahidul Islam Selim, Rashed Khan Menon, Ferdous Ahmed Quarishi, Hasanul Haque Inu, Dilip Barua, Nurul Kabir, Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Barrister Abdur Razzak, Mahfuz Ullah, and Anisul Haque took part in the discussion

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PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

A jet lands in dense fog at Zia International Airport around noon yesterday with the runway fully lit.

Outlaw killed in 'shootout'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A member of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-ML), an outlawed outfit, was killed yesterday in a shootout between law enforcers and his cohorts at Bijanagar village in Kushtia.

The dead was identified as Akbar Ali, 51, son of late Mafizur Rahman of Naodapara in Mirpur upazila.

Police said acting on a tip-off, they cordoned off a banana orchard at Bijanagar village of Mirpur upazila where members of the outlawed outfit were holding a secret meeting at about 10:30am.

Sensing the presence of the law enforcers, the outlaws fired on the policemen, prompting them to retaliate.

Akbar was killed in the shootout

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Prayer Timing		
February 10		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-25	6-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	5-57	6-01
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

KIBRIA KILLING  
8 accused still behind bars though CID finds Huji link

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Demanding unconditional release of eight detained accused in former finance minister SAMS Kibria murder case, families of the detainees yesterday alleged that law enforcers including the investigation officer (IO) implicated 10 people in the case on instructions from those involved in the heinous incident.

Of the 10 accused, eight are in detention for the last three years and two others are absconding.

The detainees are innocent and investigators have found no proof of their involvement in the murder, members of their families said at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity in the city.

Quoting media reports, they mentioned that the chief of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) last month said the eight accused on the charge sheet of the case were not involved in Kibria murder, rather Harkatul Jihad carried out the attack.

"It is now clear to all that the

accused are innocent and it has also been proved that the accused are victims of conspiracy of the then four-party alliance government," detained main accused AKM Abdul Quayum's son Ruhul Quayum Durbar said in a written statement on behalf of families of the eight.

They also demanded that the government take legal actions against all those persons in the four-party alliance, police and administration who, they said, had conspired against the accused and are responsible for their detention.

Witnesses in the case used to get money on a monthly basis from the then government, the family members alleged citing media reports.

"Some of the 61 witnesses in the case received Tk 5,000 per month," said Jasim Uddin, brother of another accused Momin Ali.

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Laden, Mullah Omar hiding in Pakistan

Says US official

AFP, Washington

al-Qaeda and Taliban leaders Osama bin Laden and Mullah Mohammad Omar are hiding in Pakistan with their top commanders, a senior US administration official says -- a charge vehemently denied by Pakistani officials.

The US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Friday that their presence poses a "huge challenge" to the security of both Pakistan and neighbouring Afghanistan.

"There is no question that the iconic leaders of al-Qaeda -- (Ayman al-) Zawahiri, bin Laden ... are in the tribal areas of Pakistan," the senior official told reporters at a media briefing in Washington.

"We believe that the Taliban's shura (consultation) council leaders led by Mullah Omar reside in Quetta in Pakistan," he said, referring to the capital of rugged Baluchistan province bordering Afghanistan.

The sanctuaries were not only helping Taliban fight the insurgency against Afghan President Hamid Karzai's administration, which is backed by US and Nato

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PHOTO: STAR

Eggs stack up at this wholesale store on Tejgaon Station Road in the capital yesterday as egg sales dropped to 3,000-5,000 from 80,000 a day at the store due to bird flu scare.

Submarine cable restored in Egypt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After nine days of disruption, Submarine Cable SEA-ME-WE4 that was severed on the Egyptian coast was restored yesterday, completely restoring the country's heart-line of international telecom and internet communications.

According to Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTB), the cable was fully restored at 6 am yesterday -- enabling all types of data transfer.

Since the cable snapped on January 3 -- digital data transmission with the westward countries via Italy and France has been disrupted. However digital communication with Singapore and Malaysia was fully operational.

As bulk of the data transmission from the country relies on connectivity with Italy and France, BTB was providing an alternative satellite support for telecom services while the Internet Service Providers were giving backup services using VSATs.

As a result, data communication was very slow.

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Polls must by December

Says home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Home Affairs Adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) Abdul Matin yesterday said the government is determined to hold the national elections by December this year as per the announced electoral roadmap.

"There is no doubt that the government has given it top priority," he said while speaking as the chief guest at a meeting of the Law and Order Committee at the Khulna Circuit House conference room.

The home affairs adviser asked the government officials to perform their duties sincerely and neutrally.

He also directed the officials concerned to ensure uninterrupted supply of diesel, fertilizer and electricity in the area during the current Boro season.

Matin said the police must work as friends of the people and not intimidators. He also asked the members of the law enforcement

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