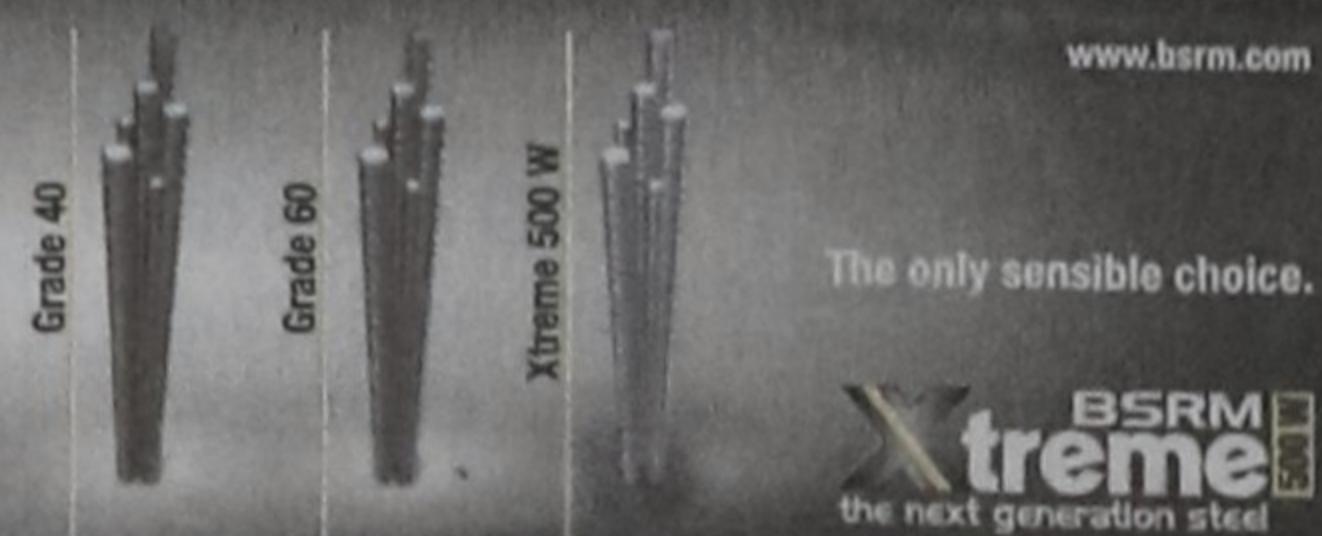


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Internal strife due to 'wrong decisions' puts BNP in trouble

Khaleda faces tough task of reuniting party

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is faced with the difficult task of reuniting the party, as the rank and file says the organisation is racked by internal strife due to some 'wrong decisions' taken by the current leadership.

The party workers are saying some controversial leaders, who are known as corruptionists and many of whom were even convicted of crimes during the two-year emergency regime, are trying to steer the party according to their own interests, misguiding the party chief.

They allege that those top leaders persuaded Khaleda to take the 'wrong decisions'.

The chairperson's move to pick a number of controversial leaders as district level conveners across the country, and nomination of some non-students for leadership positions in the party's student wing Jatiyatabadi Chatra Dal, are being considered as 'sending a wrong mes-

sage' by a large section of party workers.

Moreover, the tussle between the government and BNP regarding Khaleda's Dhaka Cantonment house, and the mounting pressure on the party for holding its national council by the 25th of this month, also put the chairperson in a tight spot.

"It's right that there is instability in the party over different issues, and we don't know where it is going. But we, the members of the standing committee, are very concerned about the issues," Lt Gen (retd) Mahbubur Rahman told The Daily Star.

Asked about the 'wrong decisions' that supposedly gave rise to the fissures in the party, he said, "Some decisions did give rise to animosities among people within the party, which has been reported to the chairperson, and she will take necessary steps."

According to a section of leaders, a group of traditional big honchos of the party, against

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JULY 24 NATIONAL COUNCIL

AL likely to introduce new posts including executive president's

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Awami League may introduce some new posts including that of an executive president at the national council on July 24.

Currently, its 73-member central committee has a president, a general secretary, a 13-member presidium, three joint general secretaries, seven organisational secretaries, 19 departmental secretaries, a treasurer, two deputy secretaries and 26 general members.

AL President Sheikh Hasina is considering some changes in the party constitution to increase the size of the committee and restructure it, said a source close to her.

An executive president's post may be created to allow her to devote herself entirely to the prime ministerial job.

Hasina, the source added, wants a group of leaders to manage the organisation and another to run the administration.

Keeping it in mind, she may choose some dedicated leaders, mostly out of the council of ministers, for key party positions.

The AL constitution prescribes that councilors elect a president, presidium members, a general secretary, departmental secretaries and a treasurer at a national council every three years.

But in practice, the councilors leave the election to the posts to the AL president's discretion.

Some sources said the party may opt for a spokesperson's post along with two general secretaries.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Total Eclipse 2009 Jul 22



The Nasa image shows parts of the globe that will be able to see the total solar eclipse on July 22.

IMAGE: NASA

Panchagarh village to witness total solar eclipse July 22

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinajpur

A village in Panchagarh is going to witness the first total solar eclipse of the 21st century on July 22, albeit briefly.

Panchagarh district administration and Bangladesh Astronomical Society are all geared up for a fair on that morning as thousands of enthusiasts and scientists, including foreigners, are expected to gather at Madhupara village to watch the longest solar eclipse until June 13, 2132.

The rare eclipse with a magnitude of 1.080 will be visible from a narrow corridor that includes northern India, eastern Nepal, Bhutan, the northern tip of Myanmar, central China, and the Ryukyu Islands, Marshall Islands and Kiribati.

The totality of the eclipse will be visible in cities such as Surat, Varanasi, Patna, Thimphu, Chengdu, Wuhan, Hangzhou, and Shanghai, and the Three Gorges Dam.

The whole eclipse will last for six minutes and 39 seconds.

From Bangladesh it can be seen from 6:59:46am for three minutes and 59 seconds, according to Bangladesh Astronomical Society.

Speakers at a preparatory meeting at the office of the Panchagarh deputy commissioner on July 15 termed the event a great opportunity for the people of Bangladesh and also for introducing the Panchagarh village to the world.

FR Sarker, general secretary of SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN
This damp and dingy room at Detective Branch headquarters in Dhaka is home to around 100 policemen although it was designed for only 30. Cops sleep in turns depending on their duty times. The messy camp has only three toilets, one of which is unusable, and no bathrooms.

Police protection for panel mayor, AL leader in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Ajmol Ahmed Tapan, panel mayor of Khulna City Corporation and Mizanur Rahman Mizan, general secretary of Khulna city Awami League, who are in fear of their lives, were provided with police protection yesterday.

The two applied in writing to the Khulna Metropolitan Police commissioner on Thursday seeking police protection following the murder of KCC ward councillor and Jabo League leader Shahid Iqbal Bithar.

Bithar was shot dead early Monday in front of his residence at Musalmanpara in the city.

When contacted, Tapan said he needed police protection as he replaced Bithar as the new convener of the KCC-formed committee for conducting eviction drives against encroachers of 22 canals in the city.

"I have been feeling insecure since taking the charge," said Tapan, also president of Sadar thana AL.

City AL General Secretary Mizanur Rahman Mizan said he had been receiving threats from unidentified miscreants who demanded money over mobile phone since Monday.

He survived a bomb attack in front of party office on September 6 in 2006.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Swine flu could tip world into deflation

Reveals British study

AFP, London

The global swine flu pandemic could tip the world into deflation, stalling economies just as they struggle to recover from the financial crisis, a British study said yesterday.

Recovery could be delayed by a couple of years in a country like Britain, the worst hit in Europe and is quickly spreading around the world, said the study.

Comparing swine flu to major health crisis including SARS in 2003, the Oxford Economics study said much depends on how many people are infected by the A(H1N1) virus.

"Although so far the social and economic impacts have been very small, if infection rates were to rise much further, significant costs could be expected," it said.

The SARS economic shock proved short-lived. Asian economies were growing very strongly when SARS broke out. As soon as the epidemic was perceived to be under control, consumption resumed and very strong growth returned.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Time extension without any ordinance will be illegal

Sajeda on BNP's appeal to EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Any extension for submission of amended party charters the Election Commission will be illegal if given without an ordinance proclaimed to that effect, Deputy Leader of Parliament Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury observed yesterday.

"Only the president can promulgate an ordinance to extend the time limit," she added.

Sajeda, also presidium member of ruling Awami League, was talking to reporters after a discussion organised by Bangladesh Jatiya

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Miru's eyes were not gouged out

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

The eyes of 14-year-old boy Miru Khan were not gouged out at an arbitration for stealing a mobile phone set at Bhanga upazila as mentioned in some national dailies on July 17.

Several dailies reported that influential locals at an arbitration forced Sultan Khan to gouge out his son Miru's eyes as punishment for stealing a mobile phone set.

He said they would take necessary actions against the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

JCD convening committee of DU unit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP's student wing Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal yesterday announced a convening committee of its Dhaka University unit with Abdul Matin as the convener.

JCD central committee president Sultan Salauddin Ahmed Tukur and general secretary Amirul Islam Khan Alim announced the committee at the party's central office at Naya Paltan.

JCD sources said so far names of 21 leaders have been declared.

Talking to The Daily Star, a number of JCD leaders alleged

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

No dialogue with Pakistan until Mumbai justice

Manmohan tells parliament

AFP, New Delhi

India's premier reassured parliament yesterday that there would be no resumption of formal peace talks with Pakistan until Islamabad brings those behind last year's Mumbai's attacks to justice.

"The starting point of any meaningful dialogue with Pakistan is a fulfillment of their commitment... not to allow their territory to be used in any manner for terrorist activities against India," Singh told parliament.

"Sustained effective and credible action needs to be taken not only to bring the perpetrators of the Mumbai attacks to justice, but also to shut down the operations of terrorist groups so as to prevent any future attacks," he said.

Despite his assurances that the pre-conditions set by New Delhi for a formal resumption of talks remained in force, the immediate response of opposition MPs was a mass walkout.

The opposition had demanded that Singh clarify a joint statement he had issued the day before with his Pakistani counterpart Yousuf Raza Gilani which stated that action on terrorism "should not be linked" to peace talks.

Sections of the Indian media had labelled the statement a major climbdown, with The Mail Today running the frontpage

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

2nd Test update

Bangladesh won the toss and elected to field first after wet pitch delayed the start. West Indies were 130/4 in their first innings after lunch (Richards 69, Phillips 23, Hinds 2, Reifer 1, Dowlin 30 not out, Bernard 4 not out, Shakib 1wkt, Mahmudullah 3 wkt)

Clarification

The army in a clarification on The Daily Star news headlined "Army officer manhandled by police SI" published on July 17 explained the incident.

It said Cap Arif and Lt Sharif were on their way to Sylhet from School of Infantry and Tactics (SI&T) at Jalalabad Cantonment by their motorbike.

As they reached Daspara check post on the Sylhet-Tamabil highway patrol police signalled them to stop but they took time to pull over the bike because of its speed and by the time they went beyond the check post, the clarification said.

It said while on-duty constable Akkas was inquiring

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Pak court clears Sharif in plane hijacking case

AP, ANI, Islamabad

Pakistan's top court acquitted opposition leader Nawaz Sharif yesterday of hijacking charges stemming from the 1999 coup against his government, clearing the last obstacle to his running for office.

Sharif was banned from office after being found guilty of hijacking Gen. Pervez Musharraf's plane in 1999. Sharif was prime minister at the time, while Musharraf was the head of Pakistan's army. Sharif has insisted the ban was politically motivated.

In its ruling on Friday, the Supreme Court said there was no evidence to support the hijacking charge and acquitted Sharif of all charges. Prosecutor Shahadat Awan said the court's decision was unanimous.

Sharif spokesman Sadique Farooq hailed the ruling, and said it brought a close to the final criminal case against the two-time prime minister, paving the way for his return to public office.

"We knew that Nawaz Sharif is innocent, but today's court order also proved that he had been wrongly convicted," Farooq said.

Expressing satisfaction over the Supreme Court's verdict acquitting him in the plane hijacking case, former Pakistan

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Online Poll

Do you feel assured by Indian PM Manmohan Singh's promise to Sheikh Hasina of taking no anti-bilateral steps in Tipaimukh Dam?

Yes (38.9%)

No (60.4%)

No Comments (1.7%)

Total votes: 1205

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think the political parties should be given 6 more months to bring changes to party constitutions?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net

Prayer Timing

July 18

Azan Jamaat

Fajr 5-15 5-50

Zohr 1-45 2-15

Asr 6-00 6-15

Magrib 7-54 7-58

Esha 9-15 9-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

World's cheapest car hits streets

AFP, Mumbai

The world's cheapest car, the Tata Nano, hits the streets on Friday, as the first customer gets the keys to a vehicle that its makers hope will transform travel for millions of Indians.