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# City BNP embroiled in Khoka-Abbas row

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

Internal disputes among BNP top leaders intensify over formation of the party's Dhaka city unit committee set to be announced soon.

The rift in party leadership over a choice between Sadeque Hossain Khoka and Mirza Abbas for the unit committee's top position has reached such a level that they both might be left out of the post.

Most party leaders are in favour of Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka while some influential leaders including the BNP secretary general are lobbying for ex-mayor Mirza Abbas.

Party Chairperson Khaleda Zia on Thursday night held one-to-one meetings with both Khoka and Abbas. The party chief told them that she would announce the city committee soon and

all have to work together in the greater interest of the party.

"We met her to exchange Eid greetings," Khoka told The Daily Star yesterday. But he refused to give any details about the meeting.

BNP leaders said the party high command now considers opting for new leadership but it largely depends on the party chairperson.

"It might be a good idea to choose a fresh leader as city convener for strengthening the party. I believe everyone will accept the party chairperson's decision whatever it may be," a senior party leader told The Daily Star yesterday wishing anonymity.

Party leaders said the matter is now at the final stage as the chairperson on August 31 received opinions from senior leaders including the standing committee members.

The party decided to finalise the matter on September 5 but it was not possible due to the sudden death of party's senior leader and former finance minister Saifur Rahman.

They said most party leaders gave opinion in favour of making Khoka city committee convener but Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain vehemently opposed the proposal.

A number of senior leaders including Salauddin Quader Chowdhury later went against Khoka saying the party should pick a new leader to lead BNP in the capital.

"We have already given our opinion and empowered our chairperson to make final decision regarding the Dhaka city unit," standing committee member Lt Gen (ret'd) Mahbubur Rahman told The Daily Star yesterday.

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People are rushing back to Dhaka taking risky rides as offices and factories start to open after Eid holidays. This photo taken at Kamalapur Railway Station yesterday shows passengers getting down from the roof of a train.

## Jalil assaulted in UK

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former Awami League general secretary Abdul Jalil has reportedly been assaulted by some party men in Birmingham, UK, for making statements that go against party interest.

In an interview with the London-based Bangla TV, Jalil said the party's sweeping victory in the ninth parliamentary elections came through an "understanding". He, however, did not make it clear with whom the party negotiated.

Bangla TV broadcast part of the interview at 4:00am Bangladesh time on Wednesday.

In the interview, Jalil, a

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## 2 murdered in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered two bodies from Khejurbagh area of South Keraniganj and Shershah Shuri road of Mohammadpur in the city yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Mohammad Sohel, 32, of Keraniganj and Nishu, 34, of Mohammadia Housing at Mohammadpur.

Police said Sohel's body was left by a road while the body of Nishu was found at his friend Sayeed's house on Shershah Shuri road.

Talking to The Daily Star Officer-in-charge of South Keraniganj Police Station Nilotpal Dey said Sohel

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## DURGA PUJA Mahaastami today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thousands of Hindu devotees will celebrate today the Mahaastami on the third day of Durga puja.

Durga puja is the biggest festival of the Bangalee Hindus, and the main attraction of this great day (Mahaastami) is the worship of pre-pubescent girls (Kumari Puja) as the "Mother Goddess."

After a day long fasting, devotees will throng marquee (puja pandals) to offer prayers for the blessings of Durga, the idol for divine power against all evils. They will recite hymns while offering Anjali before her, the saviour of mankind against all dangers.

The Mahaastami Puja will begin at 8:30am across the

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# HAIJ FLIGHTS Biman's aircraft lease venture stumbles

SOHEL PARVEZ

Biman's aircraft leasing venture to operate hajj flights faces difficulty as one of its expected lessors has declined to provide aircraft for such a short period of time.

Nigeria-based Kabo Air, which was supposed to lease out a Boeing 747-200 for Biman's hajj flight operation, recently informed the state-run carrier that it would not provide the aircraft unless the lease period is one year, insiders said.

The situation has arisen at a time when Biman Bangladesh Airlines has less than a month in hand to begin hajj flights.

Officials said Biman planned to carry about 40,000 hajj pilgrims from October 21 through two hired Boeing 747 aircraft--one from Kabo Air and another from Orient Thai Airlines.

Biman now plans to hire both the aircraft from Orient.

"We have already signed an agreement with

Orient Thai for leasing one aircraft. The agreement with Kabo Air was just on the table but it backtracked at the last moment," said Muhammad Zakiul Islam, managing director and chief executive of Biman.

"The withdrawal by the lessor has left us in an odd situation," he said.

Insiders said the management of Biman's fleet of less than a dozen aircraft was relatively good in the last couple of months as the authorities had received rental commitments from Kabo and Orient Thai.

Orient Thai is expected to provide a 518-seater Boeing 747-300 on a wet lease basis--where the lessor provides aircraft, crew maintenance and insurance--with the lease amount standing at \$7,800 per block hour.

A block hour is the service hour of an aircraft from leaving one airport to parking at the destination airport.

For Kabo Air's 542-seater Boeing 747-200

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## Rally behind Pakistan Obama urges world

AFP, New York

US President Barack Obama urged "sustained and expanded" support for Pakistan at an international summit Thursday aimed at helping Washington's nuclear-armed ally defeat extremism.

Obama, seated next to Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari, told the meeting of the 26-member Friends of Democratic Pakistan that a US Senate vote for billions of dollars in aid for Islamabad was proof of US support.

All member nations, he said, shared an interest in the South Asian country's future.

"We also face a common threat. The violent extremists within Pakistan pose a threat to the region, to the United States, and to the world. Above all, they threaten the security of the Pakistani people," Obama told the summit, which he chaired with Zardari

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# G20 leaders push for global reforms

Call for tougher regulations, guarding against 'risky imbalances' that contributed to financial meltdown

AP, Pittsburgh

Leaders of the world's major economies are coming together on reforms to rein in huge bank bonuses, toughen financial regulations and guard against the dangerous imbalances that contributed to the worst global downturn since the 1930s.

In the process, the Group of 20 countries decided they will serve as the board of directors on decisions for the global economy, taking over a role performed for more than three decades by a smaller group of wealthy nations.

President Barack Obama initiated the move to transfer the responsibilities of economic coordination from the Group of Eight major developed countries--the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Britain, Canada, Italy and Russia to the bigger G-20.

The G-20 also includes major emerging economies such as China, Brazil and India and underscores how much the world has changed since a small club of wealthy, industrial coun-

tries began meeting in the mid-1970s in an effort to respond to oil shocks, stagflation and other economic crises of that period.

The decision was to be announced Friday as Obama and the other leaders prepared a joint action plan to address regulatory overhaul and efforts to achieve more balanced growth.

The Pittsburgh G-20 meeting did have one thing in common with recent G-8 meetings: protesters seeking to demonstrate unhappiness with global capitalism. Police fired canisters of pepper spray and rubber bullets at several hundred demonstrators who had tried to march toward the convention center.

Police reported that about 20 protesters were arrested after demonstrators threw rocks and broke windows.

In another development, a senior White House official said that Obama and the leaders of France and Britain will accuse Iran at the opening of the summit of building a secret facility to produce nuclear fuel.

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## 1 killed as wedding ceremony attacked

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

One person was killed and ten others were injured--three critically--as a rival group of villagers attacked a wedding ceremony Thursday afternoon at Ghoshpur in Mohammadpur upazila of the district.

Police and locals said villagers led by Abdul Qaiyum Miah attacked Imanuddin's son's wedding around 3:00pm, as they were not invited.

The attackers stabbed and beat up the guests with iron rods and sticks leaving at least 10 people injured.

In a critical condition four of the injured were admitted to Magura Sadar Hospital while others to

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## EU regulators okay new swine flu vaccines

AFP, London

European regulators recommended yesterday that two new vaccines to fight a swine flu pandemic be granted a marketing licence across Europe amid growing fears of a deadly second wave of the virus.

"The European Medicines Agency has recommended to the European Commission that two vaccines against influenza A(H1N1) be granted a marketing authorisation," the London-based EMEA said in a statement.

The assessment of the two vaccines -- Pandemrix and Focetria -- was pushed through by EMEA amid mounting concern about the upcoming winter influenza season and an upturn in British cases of swine flu.

A decision from the European Commission would be due "shortly" on their use across the 27-nation European Union, the EMEA added.

The British Department of Health said that the news was a "step forward" in tackling swine flu, adding that vaccinations were scheduled to begin next month in Britain, which is the hardest-hit country in Europe by the virus.

"This is a welcome step forward in our plans for tackling swine flu -- but we are still dependant on production and

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# Dhaka Zoo's rare feat in animal breeding

After vulture, zoo officials bred emu in captivity

PINAKI ROY

Struggling with a limited budget, technological inadequacy and shortage of manpower, officials of Dhaka Zoo successfully bred vultures and emus, which is not an easy task, especially when the zoo is plagued with mismanagement and frequent deaths of rare animals.

"We bred a vulture in August last year and two emus this January. Success in either of the cases is very rare for zoos," said Nurul Aziz who is in charge of taking care of birds at the zoo. The hatching was done naturally since Dhaka Zoo does not have artificial incubation facilities.

Now there are five vultures in Dhaka Zoo. "The hatching takes 55 days and in most cases the chicks do not survive. But we made it happen," said the zoo officer.

Monogamous vultures never break their pair and lay only one egg a year. "So, if the egg is not hatched, it is another year's wait," he said.

This white backed vulture species is now almost extinct in the sub-continent with 98 percent of the species having already disappeared.

Use of the diclofenac drug for cattle is blamed for the extinction as carcasses of diclofenac fed cattle causes severe kidney failure in vultures that eat them.

A survey of Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) says

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PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Dhaka Zoo was successful in breeding this rare White Back vulture, top, and these peacocks, bottom, in captivity.