

BNP to reveal new list

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January 5 parliamentary polls, which was boycotted by the then BNP-led 18-party alliance as it was not held under a non-party caretaker government.

A team led by BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir has been working on the preparation of the list at Khaleda's Gulshan office for the last two weeks.

The team gathered information from different sources, including four investigation teams of the party that visited the affected areas, said chief of an investigation team.

Earlier on January 22, Fakhrul at a press conference in the capital's Naya Paltan office claimed that 294 activists of the 18-party alliance had been killed in the last three months by law enforcers.

He also alleged that 187 others also disappeared during the period.

Later, BNP sent a list of victims to reporters through email. But the list had a lot of inconsistencies that created confusion among the newsmen.

BNP-LED ALLIANCE'S DEMONSTRATIONS TODAY
BNP-led 19-party combine will hold demonstra-

tions at every thana in the capital today, as police did not give them permission to hold a rally at Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday.

BNP Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi announced this at a press briefing at the party's central office in the capital's Naya Paltan yesterday.

The combine was scheduled to stage demonstrations and processions in every thana of the capital yesterday, but deferred this without showing any reason.

Earlier, the alliance deferred the Saturday's protest rally at Suhrawardy Udyan for Ekushey Book Fair's inaugural ceremony, and Sunday's rally for Akheri Munajat of Biswa Ijtema.

The BNP-led combine announced that it would bring out countrywide black-flag processions protesting the convening of "illegal parliament" on January 29.

Failing to hold the programme, Mirza Fakhrul on the same day announced the countrywide rallies, including one in the capital, for Saturday last.

At yesterday's press conference, Rizvi also condemned the attack on general students by Bangladesh Chhatra League men and police at Rajshahi University.

Indigenous diets

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relationship with the Earth and restore human and environmental health.

"The rise of the industrial model of agriculture has contributed greatly to people being disconnected from the food on their plates," says Sarah Somian, a France-based nutritionist.

Many traditional and non-processed foods consumed by rural communities, such as millet and caribou, are nutrient-dense and offer healthy fatty acids, micronutrients and cleansing properties, say experts.

"For many tribal and indigenous peoples, their food systems are complex, self-sufficient and deliver a very broad-based, nutritionally diverse diet," says Jo Woodman, a senior researcher and campaigner at Survival International.

But the disruption of traditional lifestyles due to environmental degradation, and the intro-

duction of processed foods contribute to worsening health in indigenous populations.

Native American elders historically planned seven generations ahead when creating food systems, teaching each generation that it was their responsibility to ensure the survival of the seventh, says Dr Martin Reinhardt, assistant professor of Native American studies at Northern Michigan University.

But when Native Americans were forced to assimilate, historical access to this nutritional knowledge was lost, he points out.

Deforestation worldwide, often to make way for large-scale agricultural production, curtails the nutrients that can be gathered from forests.

"Humans can, and need to, reconnect with nature in such an intimate way as to depend on it for survival," says Reinhardt. "I hope we have not yet passed the thresholds [of what the earth can tolerate]."

Paresh Barua in China

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His wife and two sons live in Bangladesh, the report added.

All the information was unearthed after Barua made a call last week from his China hideout to one of his key deputies, Jyotirmoy Barali, who looks after a camp in Myanmar for the Indian separatist group United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), sources said.

The call was made following uncertainty over a bag containing several sensitive documents including a phone directory.

A Chittagong court on Thursday awarded death penalty to 14 people including the ULFA chief for smuggling in 10-truck arms in Bangladesh in 2004.

According to intelligence sources, the bag was in the custody of Partha Gogoi, assistant finance secretary of ULFA who was executed by the Barua faction in mid-January after being accused of betrayal.

ULFA (Independent), the faction led by Barua, has executed almost a dozen cadres in last three

months, accusing them of being traitors.

The bag containing several SIM cards, a few lakh rupees, some ammunition, and a phone directory is now believed to be safely in the custody of Barua loyalists in Myanmar.

There were indications that both ULFA factions were at least enjoying free access into China, and recently seemed to be working together with some others for strategic reasons.

However, they said the Chinese did not officially seem to provide any overt support to these groups.

For long there were indications that Indian insurgent groups in the northeast were getting some of their weapons from China.

Anthony Shimray, who is in Indian custody, was among those agents who provide these arms.

The groups are already active in Tirap and Changlang districts of Arunachal Pradesh, where they are exhibiting interest in political issues.

The two districts are strategically located, next to or with easy access to Myanmar, Assam, Nagaland, China etc.

Govt asked to engage Rab

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The home secretary, inspector general of police (IGP), DG of Rab, DMP commissioner, SP of Kishoreganj and OC of Kishoreganj Model Police Station have been made respondents to the rule.

Robbers made away with Tk 16.40 crore from a Sonali Bank branch in Kishoreganj by digging a tunnel into the bank's vault on January 25.

On January 28, Rab arrested Yusuf Munshi alias Habib alias Sohel and his brother Idris in the capital's Shyampur area with Tk 16.19 crore they had robbed from the bank.

The HC bench of Justice Quazi Reza-Ul Hoque and Justice ABM Altaf Hossain came up with the rule and the order following a writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB).

In the petition, the HRPB sought directions on the government to unearth the reasons behind the sensational burglary.

The home secretary and IGP have been asked to hand over the case to Rab from police so that the elite force could investigate any militancy link in the robbery, petitioner's counsel Manzill Murshid told The Daily Star.

HRPB submitted the petition as public interest litigation to the HC on Sunday say-

ing it was reported in some newspapers that there is a possibility of having militancy link with the robbery.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel have recovered the looted money. The charge of investigation should be given to Rab as they are competent to investigate such incident of offence, the petition said.

Otherwise, frustration may arise from the investigation, it added.

During the hearing yesterday, Murshid told the court that the interests of common people were involved with the issue of heist and they had been affected in the incident.

The decision to investigate such a big burglary by police may frustrate the whole investigation effort and finally may hamper the process in finding out the real culprits, he said.

Drainage system

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to come up with a solution soon, they added.

Contacted, Shahidur Rahman Khan Mukti, mayor of Tangail municipality, said a project financed by the World Bank had been underway to improve the drainage system and roads in the areas. "We hope to get the fund by the next month," he added.

Boost for army

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Hasina told them that the southern part has become very important for many reasons, especially after Bangladesh secured an area of 111,000 square kilometres in the Bay of Bengal through a victory over Myanmar in a maritime boundary case at the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) in March 2012.

The country expects to win another case over a maritime boundary dispute with India at the ITLOS this year, said the PM.

Hasina told her colleagues that if no cantonment is built in the southern part, the region will remain unprotected, said sources.

Two islets - Char Ashia and Carring Char in Noakhali have already been given to the army for its winter exercise, she said.

Char Ashia covers an area of 40,000 acres and Carring Char an area of 12,000 acres, according to the Deputy Commissioner's Office in Noakhali.

Matia said the government has also taken initiatives to modernise the navy with state of the art equipment to guard the country's maritime boundary.

Serving and retired army officers have welcomed the government move to build a cantonment in the South.

Former chief of army staff Lt Gen Harun-ar Rashid told The Daily Star that there had been a long-standing demand from the army for setting up a cantonment in the Barisal region.

"We appreciate that the government is thinking about it."

"Since there is no military establishment between Jessor and Comilla, it takes time for the army to move to the south. If the cantonment is built in the South, the army will be able to respond quickly in case of any natural disaster or for maintaining law and order," he said.

The Bangladesh Army has 28 cantonments across the country, according to one of its websites. Among those, nine are located in the Chittagong region.

Assuming power in 2009, the Awami League government built a cantonment in Ramu in the wake of tensions with Myanmar.

A sum of Tk 14,564 crore has been allocated for the defence forces in the current fiscal year.

Labourer dies in cop custody

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

Mystery shrouds the death of a day labourer in police custody in Narsingdi early yesterday, as relatives of the dead claim he was tortured to death and police say he took his own life.

Following the death of Mohsin Mian, 25, son of Sultan Uddin of Baroigaon village in Shibpur, locals besieged the Shibpur Police Station yesterday morning.

Md Monir Hossain, elder brother of Mohsin, said a team of police had taken his brother to the police station and tortured him to death.

Kazi Mizanur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Shibpur Police Station, said they had picked up Mohsin from his home on Sunday night for interrogating him in a robbery case.

Monir said his brother was a supporter of the Awami League and rival group in the party might have implicated him in the robbery case.

Mohsin was kept in the police custody where he hanged himself around 3:00am, the OC said, adding that he [Mohsin] had confessed his involvement in the robbery at a cable factory in Baroigaon of the upazila.

The body was sent to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

BCL men clash

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two rival factions of BCL started chanting slogans and counter slogans when the AL rally was continuing around 12:00 noon.

At one stage, supporters of city unit vice-president of BCL Ruhel Tarafder and party activist Ali Hossain locked in a scuffle, centring issues on local party politics, reports our staff correspondent in Sylhet.

Feeling annoyed as Obaidul Quader attempted to leave the place, senior party leaders intervened and calmed the situation, sources at the rally said.

Later, addressing the rally, Quader said the trouble-makers were the enemies of the party and it had to pay dearly in the recent past for these "unruly elements".

"There is no room for them [trouble-makers] in the AL or its front organisations," he said.

"Lists are being prepared and there will be a drive soon against these culprits, extortionists and terrors, and they will be expelled from the party," he added.

District AL president and Zilla Parishad Administrator Abdur Jahir Chowdhury Sufian chaired the programme.

At Bangladesh University of Textiles campus in the capital, more than 100 BCL activists of MAG Osmani Hall and Shaheed Aziz Hall chased each other with sticks and iron rods around 2:30pm.

At one stage, activists of both halls locked in a clash that left five students and a TV journalist injured, campus sources said, adding that clash occurred over establishing supremacy in the campus.

The unruly activists vandalised furniture of seven to eight classrooms and damaged the camera of Rakibul Hasan of Independent Television.

Sakirul Islam Piyash, secretary to the university unit of BCL, however, denied any involvement of BCL activists in the clash.

The clash ensued between two groups of first year students over attending classes, he told The Daily Star.

Dr Nitai Chandra Sutradhar, vice-chancellor of the university, said they would investigate the incident.

Spain police seize 900 kg of cocaine in floating rucksacks

AFP, Madrid

Spanish police seized 900 kilograms (nearly 2,000 pounds) of cocaine in rucksacks found floating in the sea and fitted with tracking devices, officials said yesterday.

"The cocaine was hidden inside 37 rucksacks that had been anchored with a sophisticated flotation and tracking system so that they could later be picked up from the sea," a police statement said.

Officers arrested five Spaniards in raids on a gang suspected of trafficking the drugs and money-laundering in the cities of Valencia and Malaga, the statement added.

Police believe the drugs were destined for the Costa del Sol, a southern region of beaches around Malaga that is popular with foreign tourists.

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RU authorities' role questioned

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named and 150 unnamed students.

Tommoyananda Ovi, vice-president of the university unit Chhatra League, filed two cases with the same police station against 12 named and 60 unnamed people. All the 12 accused are Shibir men, he told The Daily Star.

Police filed the other two cases.

None of the cases accused any Chhatra League activists even though several newspapers printed photos of Chhatra League activists brandishing fire arms and attacking the demonstrators.

The students, who have been staging the demonstration since January 16, said the university unit of Chhatra League had been with them until Saturday, when the authorities decided not to go ahead with the fee hike for the time being.

The students said they were demonstrating for cancellation of the fee hike, not its postponement, and against evening masters' courses.

The university syndicate on December 23 had decided on the fee increase and evening masters' courses in Social Science faculty.

The course development fee was increased to Tk 500 from Tk 100, fine for poor class attendance to Tk 1,000 from Tk 500, masters' examination fee to Tk 500 from Tk 200, emergency certificate withdrawal fee to Tk 1,000 from Tk 200, and certificate fee was increased to Tk 500 from Tk 200 among other fees that had been hiked.

Prof Salim Reza Newton said, "The fee-hike postponement was just a tactic to thwart the demonstrators."

He said all teachers were to get monetary benefits from the evening masters' courses and the fee hike. "The attacks on the students were deliberate and without any provocation," he added.

Assistant Prof Bakhtiar Ahmed said the "commercial" masters' courses would create disparity. Some students would be paying more than others to study the same course. "The teachers will be

more interested in the evening courses since they would get monetary benefits from those," he said.

"How can the teachers get involved in such courses when they cannot do their academic work regularly and release results on time?" he said.

A number of teachers and students said the authorities introduced the evening masters' courses with fees similar to that of private universities.

Abu Sufian Bakshi, a student, said the university would become a private university if the evening masters'