



MUNICIPAL POLLS BNP shares its concern with envoys

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday told foreign envoys that deployment of the army during the December 30 municipal polls could ease people's "fear and concern" over holding the elections in a free and fair manner.

Briefing diplomats of 12 countries and representatives of United Nations and European Union, BNP leaders alleged the government is plotting to manipulate the polls.

Party's standing committee member Moyeen Khan led the BNP delegation at the meeting.

He informed the diplomats about the Election Commission's "subservient attitude" towards the government and its helplessness in taking action against the ministers, ruling party lawmakers and leaders, said meeting sources.

The party also provided the envoys with some documents, CDs and paper

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GOLD IN BANGLADESH

Annual DEMAND is around **16** Tonnes

The annual market for gold jewellery is worth around

TK 7,000 cr



There are **30,000** jewellery shops across the country

No legal import of gold in the last **30** Years

Without **IMPORT**? **THE 3** sources of gold for Bangladesh

- Travellers & Migrant Workers
- Smuggling
- Recycling

Source: World Gold Council, The Daily Star Reports

More than **1,000kg** of gold worth **Tk 450 cr** was seized by Customs Intelligence and other agencies in 2014.



Some gold also enters the local market via illegal channels while being smuggled out.



Gold that is seized is kept in the vault of Bangladesh Bank and later auctioned when necessary.



Travellers can bring up to **100gm** of gold from abroad free of tax and duty under baggage rules. An additional **100gm** can be brought by paying a tax of **Tk 3,000** per bhoiri (11.66gm).

Countries with Highest Gold Holdings in the World In 2014 (Tonnes)

USA	8133.46
Germany	3384.19
Italy	2451.84
France	2435.38
China	1054.09
Bangladesh	13.78 [Ranked 59th]

TOP 5

Done by: Star Research

20.5kg gold seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs Intelligence officials seized 20.5kgs of gold worth around Tk 10 crore and detained six people, including two Malaysians, in two separate incidents at

Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday.

Of the gold, 14.5kgs were seized from the possession of two female passengers who travelled from Chittagong to Dhaka

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SMS threats continue

Christians anxious but won't cave in to fear; home boss says police vigilant

STAR REPORT

Just two days before Christmas, Bishop Bejoy D'Cruze, a top spiritual leader of Christians in the country, received a death threat via text message on Tuesday night, a continuation of acts of terrorising the community leaders since early October.

Six others, including Bangladesh Christian Association (BCA) Secretary General Nirmal Rozario, also got similar threats the same day.

The BCA says with the latest incidents, 37 religious and community leaders of Christians across the country have been threatened with life since October -- all via SMS, except for one who received a threat letter in Rangpur.

However, guardians of the religious minority say they will not give in to threats.

"Some Christians appear to be very afraid. But one needs to remember that we are the children of this land and cannot give in to threats. The majority of people are with us," said Pastor Aniruddha Das, general secretary of National Council of Churches, Bangladesh.

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TERROR-LINK ALLEGATION Pak diplomat 'withdrawn'

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A Pakistani female diplomat was withdrawn from Bangladesh yesterday, weeks after allegations of her involvement in terror financing surfaced in the judicial statement of an Islamist militant.



Fareena Arshad

Fareena Arshad, second secretary (political) at Pakistan High Commission in Dhaka, left the capital by a PIA flight in the afternoon after Dhaka asked Islamabad to recall her in 72 hours, said diplomatic sources.

Bangladesh foreign ministry, instead of going for harsher measures such as deportation, opted to have her withdrawn, added the sources.

Contacted, the foreign ministry and the high commission declined to comment on the matter.

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PHOTO: STAR

Sohag with his father at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital yesterday after the youth was released.

Ruet student freed 14 days after 'kidnap'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Chhatra League leader Saifuzzaman Sohag, who allegedly was picked up from his Rajshahi home 14 days ago, has been found in Chittagong.

His "abductors" released him blindfolded near a roadside restaurant in Mirsarai in the early hours yesterday, Sohag's family said.

"Sohag phoned me around 4:00am from a call shop and said he had been freed," his father Akkas-uz-Zaman told The Daily Star yesterday afternoon.

"I am overwhelmed with joy and now eagerly am waiting to see him," he said over the phone.

Akkas rushed to Dhaka from Rajshahi as Sohag, a fourth year student of mechanical engineering at Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology (Ruet), had told him that he was going there from Chittagong.

On December 10, Sohag was kidnapped from his home

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