



Toughest time for BNP

Party observes 40th founding anniversary today, first time with its chief in jail

RASHIDUL HASAN

Since its inception four decades ago, the BNP formed government four times -- once under the leadership of its founder Ziaur Rahman and thrice under the leadership of his widow Khaleda Zia.

Arguably the second largest political party in the country after the ruling Awami League, it ruled the country for 14 years.

But as it observes its 40th founding anniversary today, the BNP faces the "toughest time" yet since its formation in 1978.

Party chief Khaleda, 73, is in jail for seven months now after being convicted in a corruption case, and faces at least 34 more lawsuits. It's not clear when she will be able to walk out of prison.

Her son Tarique Rahman, 50, the second-in-command of the party, has also been convicted in two graft cases in absentia. A fugitive facing several arrest warrants, he has been living in London in self-exile since 2008.

With Khaleda in jail, Tarique has been instructing the party leaders about their course of action.

Apart from its own organisational weakness,

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From left, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Chief Adviser of the interim government of Bhutan DASHO Tshering Wangchuk, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Myanmar President Win Myint, Nepali Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli, Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena, and Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha pose for a photo during the closing ceremony of Bimstec Summit in Kathmandu yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

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BIMSTEC SUMMIT Leaders agree on regional power grid

18-pt Kathmandu declaration focuses on joint efforts to combat terrorism

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The fourth Bimstec Summit concluded in Kathmandu yesterday with the member states inking a deal for cross-country energy grid inter-connection and reaffirming strong commitment to working out a comprehensive approach to combat terrorism.

In the two-day summit, Bimstec leaders agreed to turn the Bay of Bengal region peaceful and prosperous by building common strengths through collective efforts.

They also agreed to make the organisation a dynamic, effective and result-oriented body for intensifying regional cooperation, alleviating poverty and promoting connectivity, energy and free trade.



INFANT AKIFA'S DEATH Father sues bus owner, driver, helper

No arrest so far

OUR CORRESPONDENT, KUSHTIA

Three people, including the driver, were sued yesterday in connection with the death of 13-month-old Akifa Yasmin who was hit by a bus.

Harunur Rashid, Akifa's father, filed the case with Kustia Police Station, said Nasir Uddin, officer-in-charge of the police station.

The other two accused are the owner of the bus and the driver's helper.

"Police are trying to arrest the accused," he said.

Akifa died of head injuries on Thursday at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. She was critically injured after she fell from her

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Of lies and deception

Fake pictures appear in Myanmar military's 'True News' book on Rohingya crisis; Liberation War photo of Bangladesh used as 'ethnic killing by Bengalis'



REUTERS, Yangon

The grainy black-and-white photo, printed in a new book on the Rohingya crisis authored by Myanmar's army, shows a man standing over two bodies, wielding a farming tool. "Bengalis killed local ethnics brutally", reads the caption.

The photo appears in a section of the book covering ethnic riots in Myanmar in the 1940s. The text says the image shows Buddhists murdered by Rohingyas -- members of a Muslim minority the book refers to as "Bengalis" to imply they are illegal immigrants.

But a Reuters examination of



An image depicting the bodies of Bangalees being retrieved following their massacre in Dhaka in 1971 is described in "True News" book as the photo of brutal killing of local ethnic people in Myanmar.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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the photograph shows it was actually taken during Bangladesh's 1971 Liberation War, when hundreds of thousands of Bangladeshis were killed by Pakistani troops.

It is one of three images that appear in the book, published in July by the army's department of public relations and psychological warfare, that have been misrepresented as archival pictures from the western state of Rakhine.

In fact, Reuters found that two of the photos originally were taken in Bangladesh and Tanzania. A third was falsely labelled as depicting Rohingyas

entering Myanmar from Bangladesh, when in reality it showed migrants leaving the country.

Government spokesman Zaw Htay and a military spokesman could not be reached for comment on the authenticity of the images. U Myo Myint Maung, permanent secretary at the Ministry of Information, declined to comment, saying he had not read the book.

The 117-page "Myanmar Politics and the Tatmadaw: Part I" relates the army's narrative of August last year, when some 700,000 Rohingyas fled Rakhine

to Bangladesh, according to United Nations agencies, triggering reports of mass killings, rape, and arson. Tatmadaw is the official name of Myanmar's military.

Much of the content is sourced to the military's "True News" information unit, which since the start of the crisis has distributed news giving the army's perspective, mostly via Facebook.

The book is on sale at book-stores across the commercial capital of Yangon. A member of staff at Innwa, one of the biggest bookshops in the city, said the 50 copies the store ordered had sold

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Several salt factories go up in flames in Chittagong city's Majhir Ghat area yesterday afternoon. Thirteen fire engines fought the fire and doused the flames around 6:30pm.

PHOTO: STAR

One held over abduction of small trader

Victim's father sues him for fraudulence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday arrested an alleged source of a law enforcement agency over the abduction of small trader Mohan Miah from the capital's Mirpur in June.

The arrest came hours after Mohan's father Jamsher Ali filed a fraudulence case with Mirpur Police Station against the alleged source, Babu, 40, who runs a small garment shop in Mirpur-2.

Babu took Tk 2 lakh from Jamsher on July 12, saying he knew the whereabouts of Mohan and would help Jamsher have his son released. But instead of helping Mohan's family, Babu kept wasting time, according to the case

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Malaysia set to start crackdown

Around 5 lakh undocumented Bangladeshi workers may face trouble

PORIMOL PALMA

Thousands of Bangladeshi and other expatriate workers in Malaysia are in fear as the country's immigration department is set to begin a major crackdown on undocumented migrants after an amnesty programme ended on Thursday.

"I went to Cyberjaya where there are a lot of construction sites. Undocumented Bangladeshis, Nepalese and Indonesian workers were seriously afraid. They are not even leaving their rooms," said Abu Hayat, a migration researcher based in Kuala Lumpur.

Even the ones who have work permits are scared as there are instances of documented workers being arrested, he told The Daily Star over phone yesterday. The situation is similar across Malaysia, he added.

The amnesty programme that began a year ago allowed undocumented migrants in Malaysia to pay a fine of RM300 (about Tk 6,000) and another RM100 fee for a special pass to return home.

Mustafar Ali, Malaysian immigration director-general, on the Facebook page of his department, on Thursday said, "The amnesty deadline will not be extended. We will intensify our operations against illegal immigrants starting on Friday. We have given them ample time to sign up for the programme."

Abu Hayat said yesterday was Malaysia's Independence Day and the crackdown was likely to begin early today.

The immigration DG said syndicates that treat workers like "modern-day slaves" would be busted in the operation

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