



Aurangzeb new navy chief

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Coast Guard Director General Rear Admiral AMMM Aurangzeb Chowdhury has been appointed as the new chief of naval staff.

The defence ministry issued a gazette notification in this regard yesterday.

According to the gazette, the appointment will come into effect in the afternoon of January 26 when Aurangzeb will be promoted to the rank of vice admiral.

He has been made the navy chief for one and a half years until July 25, 2020.

He will replace incumbent chief of naval staff Admiral Nizamuddin Ahmed, who is scheduled to go into retirement on January 26.



The burned remains of a house owned by an indigenous Khasi person. Unidentified miscreants yesterday burned three homes and destroyed 400 betel leaf plants -- the sole income source of the Khasi people in the area -- in an alleged attempt to grab Khasi land in Moulivibazar's Barelekha upazila. PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

Five demining experts killed in Yemen blast

AFP, Dubai

An explosion killed five demining specialists in war-torn Yemen's central province of Maarib yesterday, security and medical sources said.

A pro-government security official, who spoke to AFP on condition of anonymity, said the five were foreign experts working on the Saudi-backed Masam landmine clearance project.

AFP could not independently confirm which countries they came from.

The official said the blast occurred as landmines were being transported to be destroyed.

A medic at a Maarib hospital confirmed five bodies were brought to the hospital, adding that a number of other people were injured in the incident.

The Saudi-led coalition fighting alongside the government could not immediately be reached for comment.

The Yemen conflict has killed some 10,000 people since the coalition intervened in support of the beleaguered authorities in March 2015.

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2 jailed for producing poultry feed with waste

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two persons were handed one-year jail terms for producing poultry feed using leather waste treated with toxic chemicals.

A total of 42 tonnes of the toxic poultry feed was also seized during a joint drive conducted by Rab and the Department Of Livestock Services (DLS) in Boubazar area of Hazaribagh in Dhaka, said Rab Executive Magistrate Sarwoer Alam.

The two sentenced to jail are Jahirul Islam, 28, and Fazal Haque, 32.

Sarwoer said they destroyed the poultry feed by burning some and burying the remaining.

They had collected samples of the feed from Hazaribagh in December, which were then sent to the DLS lab

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Protein for poultry found harmful

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ILLEGAL IMPORTS?

The feed is currently imported from European and Latin American countries, including Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay, officials said.

The Import Policy 2015-2018 had provisions for its import, but under certain conditions: it has to be free of antibiotics, chromium (which is linked to cancer), radiation, virus and bacteria.

But last year, authorities unearthed imports of low-quality MBM through Chittagong Port, ministry officials said.

The ministry then formed an expert committee, which recommended the ban.

"As we are almost self-sufficient in poultry ... we are in the process of exporting it. So we need to be more careful about poultry feed," Kazi Wasi told The Daily Star yesterday.

Dr ABM Khaleduzzaman, an assistant director at the Department of Livestock Services, said MBM met the required nutrition need of poultry. It is also comparatively cheaper.

The Tk 25,000-crore poultry industry

in the country has a demand for 2.5 lakh tonnes of MBM a year. MBMs now cost about \$600 a tonne, he added.

Officially, only 500 tonnes of the feed were imported in the last three years, said Debashish Nag, an adviser to Bangladesh Poultry Industries Coordination Council.

"But the product is available in the market," he said.

This means traders have been importing MBM in the name of other fish meal or other materials, Debashish told The Daily Star yesterday.

The government could have better monitored and ensured the quality of MBM instead of banning its import altogether, he added.

But Dr Khaleduzzaman said it was difficult to monitor the quality and that the government made the appropriate decision.

The UK was first to identify in 1986 that MBM was linked to a viral disease called "Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy" or mad cow, a transmissible, neuro-degenerative fatal brain

disease of cattle, he said.

THE ALTERNATIVE?

Fish meal can be a major alternative to MBM. Besides, there are vegetable sources like soya bean and maize that can meet the protein need of poultry, said Kazi Wasi, the additional secretary at fisheries ministry.

Fish meal, made of dry sea fish, is already being used in the country as a source of nutrition for poultry, and there is nothing to be worried about it, the official added.

However, Debashish said the price of fish meal was higher than that of MBM and the ban would affect the local poultry market.

But Kazi Wasi said they already consulted the sector people before making the decision and that there were no major disagreements.

"A rise in poultry prices by a taka or two is not a big deal if it is safe. Public health is our main concern. And if we export poultry, importers are not going to compromise with the quality of the feed," he said.

Ershad flies abroad

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League-led grand alliance government.

Just a day after the Parliamentary Party made the decision, Ershad on January 4 announced JP will be the main opposition in parliament with no representation in the new cabinet.

He also said he would act as the leader of the opposition while Quader as deputy leader of the opposition.

Talking to The Daily Star later, a number of senior JP MPs termed Ershad's decision "funny and violation of the party charter."

Moreover, several senior presidium members were not comfortable with Quader being appointed deputy leader of the opposition and acting party chief, said another leader.

Wishing anonymity, the leader also said a section of presidium members wanted Senior Co-Chairperson Raushan Ershad as the party chief in the absence of Ershad.

"There are several top leaders who have distanced themselves from GM Quader. Quader Bhai might face challenges from them about his leadership in the party," a JP lawmaker said.

"Ershad and Quader are not the same. Almost all leaders and activists are loyal to Ershad, but not to Quader."

Talking to this correspondent, GM Quader yesterday said different leaders might have "different expectations" over the party leadership.

"But HM Ershad has appointed me acting chairman following the party charter and almost all in the party accepted his decision."

Replying to a question, he further said there could be dissidents in any party regarding any decision. "But we have to consider whether their number is significant."

Earlier in December, discords emerged in the party following Ershad's bringing change in the position of second-in-command.

In a sudden move on December 3, the JP chief removed Ruhul Amin

Hawlder as secretary general and replaced him with the then state minister for LGRD Moshir Rahman Ranga. It surprised many at the time.

In less than a week, Ershad made Hawlder his special assistance with the status of "next to party chief". Within 12 hours, he withdrew his statement regarding Hawlder's appointment, JP sources said.

The party joined the December 30 parliamentary polls as the key partner of the Grand Alliance and bagged 22 seats. Ershad was elected from Rangpur-3 though he could not carry out any election campaign.

The JP first split in 1999 centring party's then secretary general Anwar Hossain Manju's decision not to quit Sheikh Hasina's cabinet as communications minister.

Manju formed a party of his own, the Jatiya Party (Manju).

In 2000, the party split again as Ershad announced it was quitting the BNP-led alliance. This time, Nazim Rahman Manzur led the breakaway faction.

Before the 2014 national election, several top leaders led by late Kazi Zafar Ahmed left the party and joined the BNP-led 20-party alliance.

Uproot graft, drug menace

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Actions should be taken against the drug producers, sellers and traders, the PM said, adding that militancy should be under control and corruption must be stamped out.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and Secretary of the ministry Mostafa Kamal Uddin also spoke on the occasion attended by ministry high officials.

Praising the role of law enforcers in containing militancy, the PM said every situation can be controlled carefully when mass people are involved there.

"Now, the militancy is under our control, but we have to stop it forever as it has posed a global threat."

Reiterating her government's stance against corruption, Hasina said corruption has grabbed the society as a disease which is obstructing the country's progress to a larger extent.

"No government in the world increased salaries and other allowances of their staffers at a time to such an extent what we have done. At the same time, the government has taken steps

to provide them with better residential facilities."

"So, we have to remain careful about corruption," Hasina said.

The PM said military dictators indulged them in corruption and created opportunities for others to be corrupt. Military rulers are also the promoter of practice of defaulting on bank loans in Bangladesh, she said.

Mentioning the rise of "Bangla Bhai" and other militant groups in different parts of the country during the BNP-Jamaat government, she said unfortunately the militants and terrorists got the upper hand from an elected government in the past.

Hasina said her government has been making efforts to free the nation from those "sickness" and is ready to do everything to eliminate those menaces from the society. A country can never progress with those disorders, she said.

The PM said since her return home from exile in 1981, she has been struggling for establishing democracy and economic emancipation of the people.

Assuming office in 1996, her govern-

ment was making constant efforts to reach the benefits of independence to the doorstep of the people, she said.

The PM said, "Taking office for the first time, I noticed a gross negligence of the previous governments to the home ministry and other ministries and departments as well."

"The home ministry even had a lack of adequate manpower and infrastructural and training facilities. Since then we are trying to strengthen the home ministry through various steps."

Hasina said those who are responsible for ensuring security of people's lives must have to achieve people's confidence, which is possible by providing expected services to the people. The government will look into the facilities of the service providing personnel, she said.

The PM said her government has taken up a project to create employment opportunities for people languishing in jail for a long time. Under the project, she said prisoners would be engaged in producing various handicraft items.

They will also be allowed to sell those

items and get dividends from profits of the business, she said.

Appreciating the intelligence agencies for their excellent job, the PM said the detective personnel should be equipped with more sophisticated gadgets so that they can strengthen monitoring, locate and arrest criminals more quickly.

Pointing out the welfare activities taken for the law enforcement agencies and their families, Hasina said her government has taken steps for development of barracks, dormitories and quarters of the police officers in all districts and upazilas.

Measures have also been taken to establish a fire service and civil defence unit at every upazila level with adequate trained manpower.

The government has also taken steps for rehabilitation of the Sundarbans' robbers as rehabilitation and correction of a criminal is very important to encourage them to come to a better life, she said.

The PM said those who want to return to normal life will be given all support.

Frantic lobbying in AL for tickets

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in the first week of next month.

The polls in 480 of the 492 upazilas are likely to be held in phases from the first week of March, EC Secretary Helal Uddin Ahmed said at a press conference on January 14.

According to a rough estimate, more than Tk 500 crore will be required to hold the elections, said EC officials.

For the first time in the country's history, political parties will nominate aspirants in the upazila parishad polls, they mentioned.

In 2014, elections in 487 upazilas were held in six phases between February and May.

According to Upazila Parishad Act 2009, elections will be held for three posts -- chairman, vice chairman and vice chairwoman.

As per the act, the mayors of municipalities, chairmen of union parishads and members in seats reserved for women in both municipalities and union parishads automatically become members of an upazila parishad.

Talking to reporters last week, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader said the AL would participate in the upazila elections under the banner of the party, not that of the grand alliance.

In every upazila, multiple AL candidates are active to get the party ticket.

Local senior leaders say nominations would be given to those who maintain regular contact with grassroots people, and the opinion of grassroots leaders and activists would get priority in this regard.

"Upazila chairmen must be connected with people, and that is why we will prefer those who are committed to grassroots-level politics," said Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran, AL central committee member and Sylhet city unit president.

AL leaders in some districts said nominations would be awarded on the basis of political performance of local leaders in the last couple of years.

Those who worked hard to ensure victory of the party candidates in the December 30 election will get priority in getting nomination for the upazila elections, said Azizul Imam Chowdhury, general secretary of Dinajpur district AL.

Local leaders and activists in big numbers are thronging AL unit offices to have discussions about possible candidates and the upcoming polls.

Nomination aspirants are visiting the houses of local lawmakers and senior AL leaders, thinking that they would play an important role in the selection of the candidates.

"The grassroots leaders and activists are enthusiastic following the party's

landslide victory in the parliamentary election. They are confident that if they get the party ticket, they will win," said Arunangshu Datta Tito, president of Thakurgaon Sadar upazila AL and nomination aspirant for the post of upazila chairman.

Another chairman aspirant, Bagha upazila AL General Secretary Ashrafur Islam, said, "I visit at least one union every day and hold meetings with ward-level leaders and activists."

Tauhidul Islam, president of Atwary upazila AL in Panchagarh, said, "We have started communicating with grassroots activists, and we are very confident of victory."

But things are different for local BNP leaders as the party is yet to decide whether it will participate in the elections.

The issue has been discussed in the party forum several times, and most of its senior leaders are against taking part in the polls.

If any party man wants to contest the polls independently, the party will not object. But it will not extend support to anyone formally, said party insiders.

BNP men are busy fighting legal battles as many of them have been accused in cases in many districts. They are not carrying out any activities relating to the upazila polls, according to

reports from our correspondents in six districts.

"Most of our party men have to appear in court every day. How can we contest the elections?" asked Thakurgaon district BNP President Toimur Rahman, who himself is facing lawsuits.

"Our local party men are not willing to contest the upazila polls after the experience in the recent parliamentary election," said Khulna district BNP President Shafiqul Alam Moni.

Echoing his view, Abu Sufian, vice president of Chattogram city BNP, said, "There is no congenial atmosphere to join any polls under this government and this Election Commission."

"It has been proved through the parliamentary polls," he added.

However, BNP men in some areas are interested to contest the elections and are confident of victory.

Abdul Hakim, Gowainghat upazila parishad chairman and vice president of Sylhet district BNP, said that with the backing of his party, he was elected chairman in the last two elections, and worked for the people.

"If my party decides to participate in the upazila polls, I believe it will win in my upazila," he headed.

[Our correspondents from Chattogram, Thakurgaon, Khulna, Rajshahi, Dinajpur and Sylhet contributed to the story.]



A group of Rohingyas, including women and children, wait under the open sky in the no-man's land in Brahmanbaria's Kaziatali border for the third consecutive day. PHOTO: COLLECTED

No resolution

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which was issued by the UNHCR, India.

The Daily Star correspondent has collected a picture of one of the identity cards issued by UNHCR, India, which shows the name of the bearer as Abdur Shakur and his country of origin to be Myanmar.

BGB and BSF have both deployed additional forces and increased patrols in the area which has led to a tense situation among the locals.

Meanwhile, the stranded Rohingyas, including women and children, have begun showing signs of illnesses as they had been staying on the fallow land under the open sky ever since India tried to "push" them into

Bangladesh territory on Friday evening.

Among the 31, there are eight men, six women and the rest are minors.

BSF forces supplied them with food and water on Sunday morning, local UP member Shafiqul Azam Babu said.

The BSF have been trying to push 31 Rohingyas into Bangladesh since Friday evening through Kaziatali border, according to intelligence reports.

The BGB have been on high alert ever since the situation arose and increased security in the area since Friday night.

The locals had also been alerted to help the BGB foil the bid of forcing the Rohingyas into Bangladesh.