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BGD42944.E

31 August 2004

Bangladesh: Update to BGD40761.E of 13 February 2003 on the Jatiya Party (Ershad), including the treatment of its members by the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) (February 2003 - August 2004)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

Information on the Jatiya Party (Ershad) was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

The Daily Star, a Dhaka-based English-language independent daily newspaper, has made several references to the Jatiya Party (Ershad): in November 2003, it reported that, after walking out in protest of remarks made in parliament by a deputy minister, members of the party returned to parliament once they had received assurances from the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) that such remarks would not reoccur (20 Nov. 2003); in February 2004, it reported that Jatiya party members boycotted parliament after the government barred its leader, H.M. Ershad, from leaving the country (10 Feb. 2004); in April 2004, it reported that four presidium members were expelled from the Naziur Rahman Majur-led Jatiya Party and joined the Ershad-led Jatiya Party (11 Apr. 2004); and in May 2004, it reported that H.M. Ershad called on parliament to withdraw the 14th Amendment Bill (11 May 2004).

Additional information on the Jatiya Party (Ershad) could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

Information on the treatment Jatiya Party (Ershad) members by the BNP could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP), "the largest website on terrorism and low intensity warfare in South Asia" (SATP n.d.b), indicated that on 10 January 2004, the leader of the Janajuddha faction of the Purba Bangla Communist Party (PBCP), Shahadat Hossain Raju, said that the faction had "engaged a 10-member team to kill 19 leaders of the BNP, Awami League and Jatiya Party (Ershad) in the southwestern region of the country" (n.d.a). Information on whether this alleged intent was executed could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

The Daily Star [Dhaka]. 11 May 2004. "Withdraw 14th Amendment Bill: Ershad." <<http://thedailystar.net/2004/05/11/d40511100491.htm>> [Accessed 30 Aug. 2004]

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_____. 10 February 2004. "JP Too Kicks Off JS Boycott." <<http://thedailystar.net/2004/02/10/d40210011313.htm>> [Accessed 30 Aug. 2004]

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Additional Sources Consulted

Internet sites, including: Abyz News Links, Amnesty International (AI), BBC, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2003*, Dialog/WNC, European Country of Origin Information Network (ECOI), *Freedom in the World 2003*, Google, Human Rights Watch (HRW), Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), *New Age* [Dhaka], News from Bangladesh.

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