

March 5, 2006

## PM to open Adamjee industrial park Mar 6

UNB, N'ganj

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia opens an industrial park at the site of the closed Adamjee Jute Mill tomorrow.

On July 1, 2002, the government shut the gate of Adamjee, world's largest jute mill, to some 25,000 workers on grounds that the mill had incurred a total loss of Tk 1,200 crore since its nationalisation in 1972.

After the closure, around 200 industrial plots have been developed at the mill's site to accommodate new industries replacing the lone Adamjee.

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## Outage in north dists worsens

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Power outage in the northern region showed no signs of let-up with Rajshahi and Rangpur zones witnessing 400MW load-shedding yesterday.

Rajshahi City was virtually plunged into darkness last night as authorities supplied 70 percent load to rural areas for irrigation. The city dwellers experienced two hours of load-shedding in every three hours all day long.

Of the 320MW supply from the national grid and local sources, SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

# Biggest arms haul in CHT in 3 years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

A joint team of army and BDR yesterday seized another huge cache of arms and ammunition from Naikkhongchhari upazila in this district, destroying two dens of gunrunners in a 36-hour operation on Mirinjahill.

The security forces however could not capture any of the crimi-

nals during the operation. This was the biggest arms haul in the last three years in this hilly area very close to Myanmar border, an army spokesman said.

The cache include sophisticated firearms including five AK47 rifles, two M16 rifles, one M1-A1 heavy machinegun, one 21-A1 machinegun, one German-made G3 light machinegun (LMG), one G3

rifle, one 7.62 bore rifle, one heavy SBBL gun, two SBBL guns and one Russian-made sub-machinecarbine.

Besides, 18 rocket shells, one two-inch mortar, 12 grenades, 47 anti-personnel mines including 27 US-made Clamour mines, 31 explosives-charged rocket launchers, one 40mm rocket launcher, 19 SMG magazines, eight SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



PHOTO: STAR

The arms and ammunition recovered by the army and BDR from two dens of criminals in Naikkhongchhari in Bandarban yesterday.

## Rahman will be tried under existing laws

Says Mannan Bhuiyan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Minister for Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday said JMB chief Abdul Rahman will be tried under existing laws and the charges pressed against him are very effective.

The laws of the country do not have provisions for strict punishments for sedition, Bhuiyan said while talking to journalists at a news briefing at his official residence.

But, if needed, sedition charges might also be brought against the JMB chief, he said replying to a question.

He urged the opposition to help the government in apprehending the militants who are still at large.

Rejecting Awami League's (AL) claim that the arrest of the erstwhile most wanted militant leader, Shaekh Abdul Rahman, was a staged drama, ruling BNP's secretary general, Bhuiyan, said the opposition leader is trying to mislead the public in a 'Goebbelsian' fashion.

"When the government asks the opposition to discuss reform proposals they say it is a drama, when the militants are jailed they say it is a drama and when Abdul Rahman is caught they still say it is a drama. What will convince them as being true?" the minister asked adding, "She (Sheikh Hasina) is making such illogical statements out of SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

# Sunny, Awal come face to face with JMB chief today

Rab raid 4 places in Natore, N'ganj on Rahman's information

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK and SHAMIM ASHRAF

Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) chief Abdul Rahman will be brought face to face today with his brother Aatur Rahman Sunny and son-in-law Abdul Awal Sarker for interrogation about the militant outfit's network and sources of funds at home and abroad.

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), meantime, has begun raiding different parts of the country, following up the information obtained from some of the 12 detainees including JMB supreme Abdul Rahman. The 12 were arrested in Sylhet in raids Wednesday and Thursday.

Sunny and Awal, both members of JMB Majlis-e-Shura, the top decision-making body, were to be brought to Dhaka last night.

A team comprised of members of the Detective Branch (DB) of police and other law enforcement agencies has already set off for Dhaka, taking with them the two from Barisal jail. They had been behind bars since they were awarded a 40-year imprisonment sentence each for killing two judges in Jhalakathi.

Officially, Sunny and Awal will be brought for quizzing as accused in a case filed for a blast in Ramna Police Station area on August 17. The court has already given police the permission to grill Sunny for seven days in connection with the case.

Sources said the police will produce Awal before a court this morning with a remand petition.

Earlier on February 8, both Awal and Sunny confessed before the court to having been involved with JMB and carrying out the August 17 blasts across the country.

Besides what they said in their confessional statements, the two have given some other information

during earlier interrogations, added the sources.

"All those information will be checked by putting the two in direct contact with Abdul Rahman. It may also provide us with the link that has been missing in their previous statements and

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PHOTO: TV GRAB

Rab men escort arrested JMB chief Abdul Rahman, wearing a bulletproof vest, to a Sylhet court.

# Many RMG units still unsafe

PINAKI ROY

Apparently unmoved by recurring accidents in garment sector claiming hundreds of lives and leaving thousands injured, the factory owners are yet to wake up to the urgency of taking effective steps to ensure safe working condition at the factories.

Most of the garments units still continue to be virtual death traps with little increase in safety measures and the government's factory inspection office is also failing to do what is expected of it.

In the wake of the Spectrum Garments disaster at Savar that killed around 70 workers and injured more 100 hundred in April last year, the office of the factory inspector filed cases against 92 garment factories in and around the capital. But that failed to make their owners take any initiative to improve safety of workers. Owners or management of some of the factories even said they were not aware of any such cases.

During a visit of the Star correspondent to more than 15 of the garment units, their main gates were found locked. Some of the factory buildings were found poorly constructed or so old that they might collapse anytime.

At Eve Garments in the city's Gulshan, iron-made emergency staircase was found so narrow and

steep that just one person could get down that way very carefully. The staircase is only 27 inch wide. And electric wires were found hanging here and there in the building in a disorderly manner.

Asked about this, Shahidul Azad, executive director of the factory, said he is not supposed to show others the safety measures at his unit. "We are not aware of any case in this regard and no one told us about this," he said in reply to a

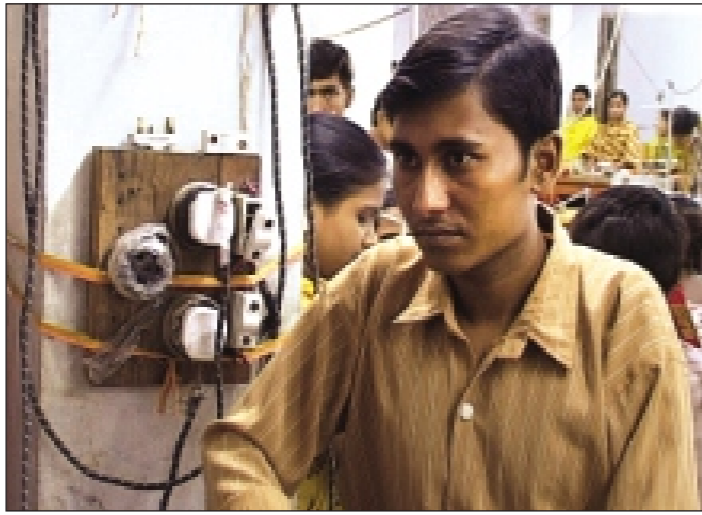


PHOTO: STAR

A worker in a garment factory in the city's Mohakhali area sits next to a taped and poorly installed electric outlet on wall that poses risk of short-circuit.

question on the cases against 92 factories.

Safety situation as seen at some factories situated at Rasulbagh in Mohakhali is even worse. Workers at four factories housed in an old building were doing their duty with electric wires hanging around them, posing threat of danger anytime.

"We have just hired the building and running the factory with permission from the government. If they (factory inspection office) file case,

we would shift from here," said Zulfikur Rahman Lipon, managing director of Max Reliance Apparels at Mohakhali.

When asked, two female workers said they do not know what to do in case of an emergency situation and one said she knows.

"They are new here and we are yet to train them," said the managing director.

The situation is almost the same at all the factories this correspondent visited at Mohakhali, Gulshan, Banani and Mirpur. Spider nets on the fire extinguishers at most of the factories clearly showed no one touched them for long.

Emergency staircases at the factories have less than the required width. At Titanic Garments and Rana Garments in Mirpur, the emergency exits were found closed with their main gates also locked.

"The gate of the emergency staircase always remains closed," said one of the guards at the factories.

An official at only one of factories admitted that the factory inspection office filed a case against them.

All the garment units are violating the Factory Act, 1965, which provides for safety measures for workers.

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## Hasina calls for fight against militancy, graft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon the people to fight against anti-liberation forces, militancy, corruption, misrule and unprincipled politics to uphold the spirit of the Liberation War.

"This is the final fight so that the conspirators can not play with the fate of Bengali people," Hasina, also the president of the main opposition Awami League, said.

Addressing a seminar titled 'Look Back: In the Mirror of 21st Century' on Bangabandhu's historic March 7, 1971 speech, organised by Jatir Janak Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Memorial Trust at the Diploma Engineers Institute in the capital, Hasina said people's expectations in the independent country have not yet been fulfilled.

Professor of the History department of Dhaka University Zaheda Ahmed presented the keynote on the topic and Prof Imtiaz Ahmed of International Relations and eminent scholar Sarder Fazlul Karim took part in the discussion.

"There is no place of idealism in the politics now. Rather, corruption and lie have destroyed the politics which is really unfortunate for the SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

# Biman to reroute NY flight to halve loss

Brussels, Amsterdam stations to be closed

REAZ AHMAD

Failing to make the Dhaka-New York flight operation a financially viable venture for Biman, the authorities of the national flag carrier are now planning to re-route the longest of its 26 international flights.

It appears that there has been no respite in tireless experimentation with the most loss incurring flight operation, which put a dent of Tk 70 lakh a week in Biman's already poor coffers.

The latest plan on card re-routing the Dhaka-NY flight through Heathrow or Manchester instead of Brussels would at best halve the recurring losses on this route but would still remain far short of making the venture economically viable, Biman officials said.

"Soon we'll re-route the New York flight by operating it on Dhaka-Dubai-Heathrow/ Manchester-New York route and this we hope will halve the loss, if not more," acting Managing Director of Biman, Lt Col (ret'd) Mahmoodur Rahman told The Daily Star recently.

Such a re-routing would make the airline's expensive outstations in Brussels and Amsterdam redundant and better cater to the growing flight demand of sub-continental passengers in Great Britain.

Biman now operates an aging DC-10 twice a week on Dhaka-New York through Dubai via Brussels and incurs a loss of Tk 35 lakh on each flight. Due to an acute craft shortage, Biman, has decided to stop operating the weekly second flight from March 13 and unlikely to resume it till the airline is able to procure at least two more craft on lease.

Biman's New York flight is considered the costliest yet most prestigious of all its international flights. But the Dhaka-New York flight appears to be its Achilles' heel as the state-run airline, already struggling to buy fuel and new generation aircraft because of financial constraints, continues to absorb huge losses to keep up the prestige.

The new state minister for civil aviation and tourism, Mirza Fakhruddin Islam Alamgir, who took over after the unceremonious axing of Mir

Nasir in November last year, is learnt to have given the Biman management two-month time to improve upon the record of loss on its New York flight.

During previous Awami League regime, the New York flight used to operate on Dhaka-Delhi-Brussels-New York route incurring a loss of Tk 50 lakh per flight. With, Mir Nasir re-routing the flight through Dubai instead of Delhi, Biman's operational loss on this route was brought down to Tk 22 lakh but repeated rise in price of jet fuel scaled up the loss to Tk 35 lakh now.

Asked about the rationale for operating such a loss-making long-range flight, Biman's MD said, "Stopping operation of flights on a particular route that causes loss is the easiest of all solutions but it's always tough to regain slots, particularly to North American destinations. Biman's Dhaka-New York flights cater to two million ethnic SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## Supplementary charge sheet accuses Bangla Bhai

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A supplementary charge sheet of a case filed with Mollahat Police Station under Bagerhat district on August 15, 2002 was submitted to a court at Bagerhat Thursday evening, accusing eight Islamist militants, including Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai, operation commander of the banned Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB).

As per order of the home ministry, police, after further investigation into the case, submitted the charge-sheet to a magistrate's court.

Seven other accused are Laltu Molla, Taru Shaikh, Firoz Sarder, Hakmat Molla, Matin Molla, Shariful Islam and Waliur Rahman Liton.

Liton hails from Pabla ward under Daulatpur Police Station of Khulna city, while six others are from Gaola village under Mollahat upazila of Bagerhat. All the accused are still at large.

Bangla Bhai and Laltu Molla were left out of the main charge-sheet submitted by Sub-Inspector SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## RESUMPTION OF SHORT COURSE Army puts decision on hold

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

The army has put on hold its decision to resume after 25 years short course training for recruited officers to address shortage in junior-level officers, failing to get adequate number of suitable candidates.

The scheme to recruit through a 45/50-week course instead of the regular two-year course through the ISSB (Inter Services Selection Board) has not gone according to expectation as only around 25 recruits qualified for the short course to be conducted in the Bangladesh Military Academy (BMA) at Bhatiyari.

As the number of qualified candidates was very poor the authorities merged them with the 57th long course.

The army authorities will now review the decision as resumption of short course did not bear expected result, said sources.

In another step to recruit new officers, the army authorities in an unprecedented move recalled some earlier disqualified candidates, and after further test, recruited them on special consideration.

The short course was first introduced in 1975 with the aim of quick recruitment in the BMA. Eight batches completed the course and joined the service as commissioned officers. The last course of eighth SSC (short service commission) passed out on November 7, 1979.

There is another six-month short course for the engineering, medical, education etc corps who join the service on completion of post-graduation.

The regular two-year long course was first introduced in 1977 (1st BMA LC) to raise the standard of officers with proper military training. The first batch passed out in 1979.

Sources in the army said, the shortage of officer from the rank of second lieutenant to that of major was being felt over the last six to seven years.

"The reasons for this shortage of lower level officers include lack of SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## Vote for able leader, not for symbols

Dr Kamal urges people

UNB, Chawabganj

Gano Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday urged people to vote for qualified persons, not for symbols, as none of the party symbols is free from allegation of corruption.

"We have seen that after being elected with party symbols, many indulge in corruption," Dr Kamal told a public meeting at Mohipur College ground.

Organised by 11-party combine, the meeting was addressed, among others, by Rashed Khan Menon, Pankaj Bhattacharya, Mostafa Mohsin Montu, Zakir Hossain and Nurul Islam. Gano Azadi League President Abdus Samad presided.

"Although the country belongs to the people, they are now helpless due to terrorism and corruption by the alliance government," Kamal said.

Termining the surrender of JMB chief Abdul Rahman as a stage-managed drama, Kamal said once they had claimed that there was no militant in the country, and now they are taking pride of capturing the militant. "They'll have to answer to the people for their falsehood," he said.



When most parts of the country are experiencing power cuts, Shyamoli Cinema has been illuminated to host an international film festival now going on in the capital. The photo was taken yesterday.