



TO
People's Right to Know

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XVI NO. 61

DHAKA THURSDAY MARCH 16, 2006

CHAITRA 2, 1412 BS

SAFAR 14, 1427 HIJRI

16 PAGES PLUS RISING STARS PRICE: Tk 10.00

www.thedailystar.net

ELECTORAL REFORMS EU hopes all parties to work constructively to reach deal

DIPLMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The European Union (EU) yesterday hoped that all political parties in Bangladesh would work constructively to reach an agreement on key electoral reforms to ensure a sound basis for next general elections.

Addressing a press conference at the EC office here, EC Deputy Director General for External Relations Herve Jouanjan said the EU is ready to dispatch an exploratory mission as soon as a request is received from the Bangladesh authorities as part of observing the next general elections.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS REFORM

AL demands specific proposal from govt

Wants the body's terms of reference in writing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) yesterday asked the government to send a written proposal specifying the terms of reference of the committee to be formed to discuss the opposition-proposed reforms in the caretaker government system and the Election Commission.

The government will have to specify whether the committee will be a parliamentary one or a body

comprising political leaders. And if it is going to be a parliamentary body, the speaker has to initiate formation of it, AL leaders told reporters after a meeting of the party's working committee.

The prime minister has nothing to do if the proposed committee is a parliamentary one, they said.

Leader of the Opposition and AL chief Sheikh Hasina chaired the meeting.

Referring to discussion at the

meeting, AL presidium member Tofail Ahmed said, "We are not against discussion but it must be based on the proposals tabled in parliament by the leader of the opposition on February 12."

Asked about Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain's talks offer to the deputy leader of the opposition on Tuesday, acting AL General Secretary Obaidul Kader termed it 'vague' and said the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

BNP leaders say ToR can't be specified before forming body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In response to Awami League's demand for a written and specific proposal mentioning the terms of reference (ToR) of the government-opposition committee to discuss reform agenda, the ruling party top brass yesterday wondered how the ToR could be fixed before forming the committee.

They however hoped that the opposition will sit with the chief whip to sort out things.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Khandakar Mosharruf Hossain told The Daily Star last night that the prime minister has proposed to form a committee

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Construction yet another high-casualty sector

PINAKI ROY

While media exposure, buyers' pressure and civil society's insistence have slightly improved the garment and ship-breaking workers' lot, those working in many other industrial sectors are still subject to their employers' whims mainly due to poor enforcement of labour laws.

"If a garment worker dies, at least her family gets one lakh taka as compensation. The families of ship-breaking workers also get the

same. But, what about us, what do we get? In most cases, nothing, although the developers are pocketing crores of taka in the current real estate boom," laments Mohammad Mohsin Mia, general secretary of Bangladesh Construction Carpenters and Workers Federation.

He claims no less than 400 workers in the construction sector died last year, regretting, "But, neither the government nor any NGO backs us up."

The figure Mohsin cites might

be a little inflated, as a newspaper audit by Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Foundation finds 80 construction workers died and at least 173 were injured in work-place accidents in 2005, which put this sector in second position on the casualties list. The garment industry topped the list with 120 deaths and 715 injuries, while road transport came out third with 14 deaths and 8 injuries, ship-breaking fourth with 11 deaths and 15 injuries, and rice

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Caretaker govt faced problems in dealing with armed forces

Say former advisers

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The caretaker governments faced difficulties in dealing with the armed forces before the parliamentary elections as the forces who play vital role in maintaining polls security are kept under the president during the interim period.

Since the non-party government does not have any power to control the armed forces and the next election is due in less than a year, political debates have started over the defence portfolio during

the caretaker government's tenure. A former chief adviser and some former advisers to the caretaker government have said the armed forces should be kept under the caretaker government during the period to avoid the difficulties since security and neutrality are major concerns in elections.

One the other hand, legal experts have said the 1996 constitutional amendment that empowered the president to hold defence

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

US suspends Peace Corps activities amid terror fear

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The United States yesterday suspended indefinitely its Peace Corps activities in Bangladesh, fearing possible attacks on its volunteers in retaliation for recent capture of militant leaders.

The Peace Corps in Washington, DC took the decision over the possibility of terrorist attacks on the Peace Corps volunteers here, "perhaps in retaliation for the recent capture of five of the top seven leaders of [Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh]", said a statement issued by the US Embassy in Dhaka yesterday.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Raid in B'baria, Sherpur to capture 2 Shura men

STAR REPORT

Law enforcers in their hunt especially for the two absconding Majlish-e-Shura members of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) ran massive raids in Brahmanbaria and Sherpur yesterday and arrested six JMB operatives, including the outfit's Sherpur commander.

On information that JMB Shura member Salahuddin was hiding in Brahmanbaria, the joint forces of police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) conducted the five-hour raid at different points of the district as of 9:00 last night.

Three JMB activists arrested in Brahmanbaria admitted that they had carried out bomb blasts at five places in the town on August 17 last

year as part of the outfit's country-wide bomb attacks.

The Rab, which earlier arrested JMB chief Abdur Rahman, his closest aide Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai, JMB's military unit chief Aatur Rahman Sunny and Shura member Hafiz Mahmud, said they intensified intelligence and operational work to arrest the fugitive Shura members-- Salahuddin and Khaled Saifullah.

"We have spread our intelligence network all over the country besides strengthening our operation to arrest Salahuddin and Saifullah and other JMB leaders," Commander Mashuq Hassan Ahmed, Rab Legal and Media Wing director, told The Daily Star yesterday.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



Juvenile workers without any protective gears enter a sewer to unclog it near the Bangladesh Secretariat yesterday. They get Tk 150 each a day for the hazardous work.

Housewife to cringe for life at thought of cops

Policemen made brutally beaten Shanta sign on blank paper

MORSHED ALI KHAN

In severe pain and barely able to walk, Shahin Sultana Shanta, the woman victim of merciless police beating during the 14-party protest programme on March 12 shed tears murmuring, "I want to cry out as loudly as possible, I can't bear the pain and humiliation."

Shanta, a university graduate in law and a mother of a ten-year old boy, is currently three months pregnant. She sat on the floor of her Mohammadpur flat and said she has been unable to sleep since the day she was beaten up by the police. Her right hand plastered, she bore deep bruises on her other hand, feet, legs and the back. She said the 'gang' of policemen and police-women crushed every muscle on her body. She quoted doctors saying that it will take at least ten months to recover from the wounds. "But I shall live with the trauma all my life," Shanta said.

"Yesterday my husband received threatening calls on his mobile phone. The caller told him that I would be the first woman in the country to die in

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



PHOTO: STAR

Tearful Shanta talks about her traumatic ordeal she experienced in the city during the 14-party's EC siege programme on March 12.

Opposition alliance to hem in Wasa office today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) led 14-party opposition coalition will lay siege to the Water And Sewerage Authority (Wasa) office in the city today protesting the poor water supply in the capital.

At a 14-party alliance meeting held at AL's central office at the Bangabandhu Avenue yesterday, the preparations of the siege programme were discussed. City 14-party coordinator Mofazzel

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

EC delegation for open trial of Rahman, Bangla Bhai

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The visiting European Commission (EC) delegation yesterday asked the government to ensure an open and transparent process of trial for militant leaders Abdur Rahman and Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai.

The EC team expressed deep concern over 'extra judicial kill

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

CASE AGAINST SUNNY Court asks for probe report immediately

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court on March 13 directed the investigation officer (IO) of another case filed against JMB (Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh) military commander Aatur Rahman Sunny and nine others to submit the probe report

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Rejoinder, our reply

Rabitat Al-Alam Al-Islami in a rejoinder protested a portion of The Daily Star report "JMB's Covert Operations" published on March 10. Dubbing the report baseless, it denied any involvement in funding

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Our Country

Our Bank

DBBL'S
29th Branch Opens today

A. Majid Arcade, CDA Avenue, Chittagong

Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited
YOUR TRUSTED PARTNER

One Time Paint for Many Seasons

BERGER Weather Coat SMOOTH 100% ACRYLIC

- Anti-fungal
- Anti-fading
- Anti-flaking

THE SCIENCE OF WEATHERPROOFING