

## Big powers

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opposes heavy Security Council involvement on Iran, fearing it would lead to punitive measures. Moscow last week proposed gutting a large part of the draft that asks Tehran to suspend uranium enrichment efforts, which could produce weapons-grade fuel.

Tehran says its nuclear research is for peaceful purposes, while the West believes it is a cover for bomb making.

On Thursday, the foreign ministers of the five council powers and Germany are due to meet in Berlin to hammer out strategy and try to break any remaining impasse on the statement.

"We are dealing with nervousness from some of the parties on what will happen next and uncertainties. Russia has particular concerns, including very high equities in Iran," a senior British official said in London.

Britain's UN ambassador, Emyr Jones Parry, told reporters: "We need to agree on the text and if possible to have it ready for adoption. If we can finish it before Thursday, we will."

But he cautioned that the five were only "edging forward."

"We're looking now at a mix of different comments on basic texts," Jones Parry said. "We've made a bit of progress but we have quite a lot more progress to make."

Russia, diplomats said, had now submitted a draft statement to counter one from Britain and France and all proposals are to be sent to governments of the five overnight.

"There are all kinds of drafts and all kinds of amendments," Bolton said, adding that he, too, "proposed some compromises that will be reported back to the capitals and we are going to continue to see if we can't reach agreement."

The last version from the Europeans arrived on Saturday morning, said China's UN Ambassador, Wang Guangya.

In Berlin, IAEA director-general Mohamed ElBaradei urged Iran to halt all uranium enrichment work

and help revive collapsed nuclear talks between Tehran and the European Union.

"We are not in a position today to say that (Iran's nuclear) programme is exclusively for peaceful purposes," ElBaradei said.

More than two years of talks between Iran and Germany, France and Britain reached an impasse earlier this year after Iran resumed uranium enrichment research.

At a conference in Berlin, security experts and officials discussed Iran, including the possibility of US military strikes against Iran's nuclear facilities.

Tehran's ambassador to the IAEA said air strikes would not destroy Iran's uranium enrichment activities.

"We can enrich uranium anywhere in Iran, with a vast country," Aliasghar Soltaniyeh said, citing Iran's more than 600,000 square mile area.

A report made public on Monday by David Albright and Corey Hinderstein of the Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security estimates that Iran would need at least three more years, and perhaps much longer, to make nuclear arms, depending on how many problems it runs into on the way.

The report accused anonymous US officials of distorting a briefing given the major powers this month by the IAEA in claiming Iran had made significant gains in mastering the process of enriching uranium to the point it can be used to make bombs.

"Looking at a timeline of at least three years before Iran could have a nuclear weapons capability means that there is still time to pursue aggressive diplomatic options, and time for measures such as sanctions to have an effect, if they become necessary," the report concluded.

## Shanta now fears

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why the inhuman and cruel behaviour of the police on Shanta should not be declared a violation of the constitution, the Police Regulation of Bengal and relevant laws.

The rule also ordered the respondents to show cause as to why they should not be directed to ensure that the petitioner will not be harassed or arrested in various forms, including filing of cases in the form of fictitious complainants.

Dr Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury, Barrister Shamsul Hasan and Barrister Tania Amir moved the writ for the petitioner while Deputy Attorney General Abdul Baset stood for the state.

**SHANTA'S DEPOSITION**  
Metropolitan Magistrate Shafique Anwar recorded the statements of Shanta and eight others in the second case filed against her and closed the stage of deposition of witnesses following a writ petition by the complainant.

Earlier on March 19, Judge Mohammad Mujibul Kamal of the First Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression, Dhaka ordered a judicial probe into the brutal police action on Shanta.

The court also asked the chief metropolitan magistrate (CMM) to assign a magistrate to probe the allegations against the accused and submit a report within seven days.

The order was passed after Shanta filed a case under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, accusing two DCs and others of misusing power, torturing and repressing her.

Shanta filed the first case with the CMM Court two days after she was tortured.

**PRESS CONFERENCE**  
Narrating her horrible experience of police brutality, Shanta said she repeatedly begged the police not to torture her as she was pregnant, but the police did not pay any heed.

Barrister Tania Amir, one of Shanta's lawyers, said Shanta had to have an abortion following doctors' suggestion.

She said the police have no right to torture Shanta assuming that she went there for picketing. Shanta said she went to Dhanmondi on that day to pick her son, a student of Willes Little Flower School, from his coaching at the Dhanmondi Boys' High School.

Criticising the police high-ups for not giving any statement after the incident, Barrister Rabeya Bhuiyan said those who are involved in torturing Shanta need to be punished.

Shanta's husband Supreme Court lawyer Atiur Rahman was present at the press conference.

## Govt slaps 24-hr ban

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peaceful programme, the capital will be brought to a halt and the ongoing movement take a new turn," Jallil had warned earlier yesterday.

The ban comes at a time when an atmosphere is emerging conducive to holding discussions between the ruling and the opposition sides on the electoral reform agenda.

Directed by the government high-ups, DMP Commissioner SM Mizanur Rahman imposed the 24-hour ban from midnight today to midnight tomorrow on what he considers a security threat to the Secretariat.

The ban is imposed on carrying all kinds of arms, explosives and other harmful substances as well as rallies, processions, demonstrations, laying a siege to and sit-in programmes around the Secretariat.

The DMP commissioner in a press release said a programme of some political parties has posed a security threat to the Secretariat, which is an important establishment of the government and a restricted area. Maintaining a peaceful atmosphere and public safety there is needed," he added.

DMP Sources said it has been planned to halt the opposition activists far away from the Secretariat by barbed-wire barricades and deploying additional security forces.

The mainstream opposition combine that has been agitating since last year has already faced several government-sponsored obstructions to their programmes.

Law enforcers foiled the opposition's March 12 programme to lay siege to the Election Commission Secretariat.

The government declared the opposition line-up's February 5 long-march programme illegal, and said, to protect public interests and property, it would resist any attempt of creating a law and order situation.

Again, ahead of the opposition-announced November 22 grand rally last year, a government-backed transport workers union enforced a wildcat strike to foil the rally.

### RESTRICTED AREAS

The areas and roads that fall under the

ban include Osmani Udyan, Abdul Gani Road and from its west end to Bangabazar and Doel Chatter via High Court intersection, South GPO Link Road to House Building crossing to Matsya Bhaban roundabout via Tophkhana Road and Kadam Fountain.

The restricted areas also include Noor Hossain Square to Baitul Mokarram Mosque's south gate, Tophkhana crossing to Kasturi Hotel at Bijoynagar, and the old Diabetic Association office in Segun Bagicha to Carpet Lane near Shilpakala Academy.

All roads, lanes and playgrounds in the areas are also under the ban.

**OPPOSITION PREPARATION**  
The opposition combine meanwhile has undertaken massive preparations to mobilise huge people from all across the capital and the adjacent districts for tomorrow's programme.

In the last couple of days, senior leaders of the opposition parties and their front organisations held series of meetings preparatory to the programme.

Opposition leaders at a rally yesterday said the talks with the ruling coalition on electoral reforms will not yield any positive result, adding they will have to realise the demands through street movement.

"We are not at all concerned about Mannan Bhuiyan's reply, as our demands are crystal clear and we think they have to be realised through street agitation, not talks," Jallil told a rally.

He, however, said they are not against the dialogue but people would not tolerate the time killing in the name of a dialogue.

Dhaka City 14-party coordinator Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya said they have completed all preparation for the programme. "We've planned to gather over one lakh people around the Secretariat from different parts of the capital," Maya told The Daily Star yesterday.

## ADP

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implemented projects will be diverted to help implement the priority projects," Saifur told reporters.

He asked the Planning Commission members, heads of six divisions under the Commission and officials concerned for quick implementation of the projects as the budget for the next fiscal year is approaching fast.

"We'll hold a meeting next week to examine the ADP implementation process and to see which projects can surrender the resources," the minister said replying to a query.

He, however, said it will not be possible to divert resources from local components, but it can be done from external resources.

Replying to another question, Saifur said there has been a huge rise in spending on fuel oil due to price hike in the international market while the revenue earning has been lower than expected for less import of taxable items and higher import of non-taxable items.

A senior official, who attended the meeting, said projects of the current fiscal involving Tk 24,500 crore will suffer from non-availability of funds and the government will implement 25 new and six revised projects on priority basis.

## BB asks

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Shakil alias Mollah Omar and Hridoy Chowdhury.

High officials of a number of banks however pointed out that it will be very difficult to find out if there is any bank account in the name of any militant as the BB could not provide addresses against all the names.

## Dhaka court

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Battalion (Rab) and his accomplices at Khagan under Savar Police Station sometime between 12:15pm of March 8 and 6:30am of March 9.

The accused in the case are State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar, his cousins Mirza Hafizur Rahman and Mirza Nurul Islam, Home Secretary Sarfarraz Hossain, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Abdul Quayyum, Additional IG (Headquarters) Anwarul Iqbal, Additional IG (Special Branch) Fakrul Ahmed, and Additional IG (Criminal Investigation Department) Khoda Baksh.

The other accused are Director General (DG) of Rab Abdul Aziz Sarker, his commanding officer, second-in-command, DIG of Dhaka Range Dr Sadikur Rahman, Superintendent of Police (SP) of Dhaka Baktiar Alam, Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Savar Police Station Mohammad Haider Ali, Sub-Inspector (SI) Mortuza, 16 unidentified members of Rab-4, six unidentified constables and 16 other people.

In his complaint, Nazrul said Babar's cousin Mirza Hafizur Rahman forcefully took possession of 11 acres of land at Miton village of Savar on February 16, but thousands of local people led by Dhaka district unit Jubo League leader Iman Ali managed to recover the land from the grabbers.

On March 8, Rab personnel arrested Iman Ali at a Dhaka court when he appeared before it in a criminal case filed against him. The next day, the complainant came to know that his brother was killed in "crossfire" and his body was lying at Khagan in Savar.

Iman was killed as he protested the land grabbing by Babar's cousin, the complainant alleged adding that the planning and killing were executed under the direction of high-ups including the state minister.

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## Govt approves

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proposal to invest in the country's fast-growing hotels and tourism sector.

"The KHI in its proposal said it would invest one billion dollars in the country's tourism and infrastructure sectors," Mohammad Lutfulah, a senior officer at the Board of Investment told AFP.

The company would like to buy the Sonargaon Hotel and transform into a Four Seasons Hotel. Alwaled bin Talal is the principal owner of the hotel chain.

Pan Pacific Hotels currently runs the Sonargaon but its contract expires in 2007.

KHI focuses on the luxury hotels sector in high-growth markets such as the Middle East, Africa, Asia and parts of Europe.

## Protesters threaten

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people who said Thaksin should quit dropped to 26 points, down from 48 percent on Saturday.

"This could mean that as the protesters move, they are losing sympathisers," pollster Nopadol Kanikar said, adding that traffic concerns appeared to be behind much of the discontent.

Police said they will deploy at least 450 extra traffic officers in the area on Wednesday.

Thaksin, who was campaigning in his home town of Chiang Mai, said the government might take action against demonstrators if they cause serious disruption.

"We may use legal procedures to take action against protesters. But we will avoid using violence to control demonstrations," he told reporters.

The neighbourhood poses a special security concern because the protest at Siam Paragon will take place near the palace of Thailand's beloved Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, and just one block from national police headquarters.

Chamlong Srimuang, one of the protest leaders, rejected the police worries.

"All of Bangkok is gridlock already. We won't be the cause of the traffic jam, the prime minister will. If he resigns, we will return home," he told reporters.

Owners of Siam Paragon and two adjacent malls decided to close at least for Wednesday and Thursday and will meet Thursday to decide when to reopen. The decision shatters a major component of downtown Bangkok's retail core.

## Experts doubt

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yesterday.

"The election commission will have to take massive preparations to hold the polls. If it doesn't have adequate time, it will not be possible to do that," he explained.

Emphasising removing all controversies immediately from the EC, former caretaker government adviser ASM Shajahan said if the situation in the EC remains unchanged it would have an adverse impact on the next election, as well as on the country's democracy.

"So, the crisis should be resolved immediately," Shajahan told The Daily Star yesterday.

About the activities of the present EC, he said there is a lack of transparency in some activities and scrutinising information about the prospective voters, scheduled to end on January 1, are yet to be completed.

The CEC's unilateral move for a fresh voter list preparation has been facing a lot of legal challenges. On two writ petitions, the High Court on January 4 asked the EC to revise the existing electoral rolls. But the EC continued the fresh voter listing, ignoring the court directives. Finally, the CEC filed an appeal against the High Court directives on February 1, which is still pending with the country's apex court.

With the appeal pending with the court, the EC cannot fix the dates of publication of the draft and the final voter lists. And the field-level task of information collection and scrutiny of the prospective voters has also come to a halt across the country.

Moreover, the controversies over the appointments of CEC MA Aziz, two election commissioners - Justice Mahfuzur Rahman and SM Zakaria - are yet to be resolved, as the Awami League-led 14-party opposition combine rejecting the appointments has declared that they would not contest the polls under the present EC.

## Carjackers on the prowl

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Gate and Mohakhali bus stand and Nakhalpara areas.

The Tamu and Haq groups usually kill the drivers of the vehicles they hijack.

One day in mid-February, Mujibar's three-wheeler was blocked by a microbus in Uttara. Four young men and a woman got down from it, beat up Mujibar and took away the autorickshaw.

Later, a broker named Swapan at a CNG filling station in Maghbazar asked Mujibar to pay Tk 60,000 to get it back. As a proof that he knows where the vehicle is, Swapan showed Mujibar the papers of the three-wheeler.

While the CNG-run three-wheelers are mostly sold back to their owners, taxicabs and private cars are usually sold out to other customers in changed condition.

After lifting a car the criminals take the vehicle to garages in and outside Dhaka and change their colour and chassis. Some car-lifters arrested recently told the police that they arrange forged papers with the help of some officials at the

Siam Paragon alone draws some 100,000 shoppers a day, 40 percent of them foreigners. The sprawling high-rise mall which fills most of a city block expects sales of 10 billion baht (256 million dollars) this year.

The opinion poll was a boost for Thaksin, who is hoping for a popular reaffirmation of his leadership in Sunday's election.

He called the election three years early in hopes of defusing the protest movement, but an opposition boycott and claims of fraud have already marred the vote.

## India confirms

**FROM PAGE 1**  
clean-up and sanitising will be followed," Kumar said.

Although India has tested scores of people in areas where chickens have tested positive for bird flu, it has not reported avian influenza in humans.

Kumar said teams of veterinary workers were being sent to Jalgaon district and culling would begin on Wednesday.

India has been testing birds in hundreds of villages around Jalgaon and the town of Navapur, which is one district away from Jalgaon and where the first outbreak was reported last month.

According to the World Health Organisation, 186 people have been infected with the H5N1 strain of bird flu worldwide. Of these, 105 have died.

Millions of chickens and other birds have been culled in countries in Europe, Asia and Africa.

certified copy of the rule," he told journalists.

### FATE OF VOTER LISTING

Uncertainty looms large over the fate of preparing a fair voter list on time, as the CEC created huge controversies by undertaking a programme to prepare a fresh electoral roll since January 1 by a unilateral decision. Nobody in the EC knows when the voter list will be published and whether it will be a fair one.

The task of publication of the draft voter list was scheduled on February 28. But the EC failed to do that. Even the task of collecting and scrutinising information about the prospective voters, scheduled to end on January 1, are yet to be completed.

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## 3 JCD men held at RU for mugging

### RU CORRESPONDENT

Locals and students captured three Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) members of Rajshahi University (RU) as the JCD men were attempting to snatch cash from a student yesterday in front of Bangabandhu Hall on the campus.

The muggers were identified as Shovon, JCD RU unit member and student of MBA programme of Department of Accounting, Rana and Jewel, both members of Ziaur Rahman Hall JCD unit and fourth year students of Department of Anthropology.

University administration and JCD leaders however managed to rescue the three later from the angry students and locals.

Sources said Ratan Mia, a student of Department of Statistics, drew Tk 25,000 from a bank on the campus around 10:00am for his trip to India for treatment.

The JCD cadres followed him to Bangabandhu Hall and stopped him on his way. They tried to force him on to a rickshaw at gunpoint.

Responding to Ratan's cry for help students and pedestrians caught the JCD leaders and gave them a thrashing. Students of Bangabandhu Hall confined the muggers for three hours inside the dormitory's guest room.

Other JCD leaders led by RU unit joint convener generals Rana and Russel rushed to the spot and tried to get release of their party members.

Bangabandhu Hall Provost Shaikh Zuban and Assistant Proctor Abul Hasnat appeared on the spot and released the JCD men after they gave a written statement that they would not do such a thing in future.

## Unfair practice

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According to sources, each of the 40 feeder vessels operating between Chittagong and Singapore has to wait at least three to four days at the outer anchorage for getting permission for berth.

For per day waiting, each ship incurs an average loss of \$10,000 to \$15,000.

As a result, feeder operators are ready to pay even Tk 2 lakh in kickbacks for getting one-day priority in berthing. Normally a container ship takes at least 3-4 days to discharge from the terminal after unloading and loading containers. The discharge time has been reduced for gearless vessels after allocation of one terminal for them.

During inspection of MV Young Xing the mercantile marine department officials also found gross violation of the load line act. They did not find any endorsement of load line certificate about the missing cranes.

The ship's master could not produce any document relating to absence of cranes in the ship. This unauthorised alteration of ship's structure might also hamper the stability of the ship, the official said.

Shipping ministry sources, however, said the priority berthing was given to encourage the gearless ships call at Chittagong port and avail the quick loading and unloading facilities using the gantry cranes installed at a cost of around Tk 150 crore.

Container handling at the port has been accelerated after installing gantry cranes, the source said, adding that now the cranes are handling 12 to 15 containers per hour.

## JCD leader

**FROM PAGE 16**  
formation of their unit committee.

Witnesses said at least 30 Jubo League activists suddenly attacked the other members of the front with sticks and iron rods when their names were not mentioned for the committee. Five of injured were treated at the DMCH yesterday afternoon while the rest in local hospitals.

## BGMEA

**FROM PAGE 1**  
calling upon the entrepreneurs to help implement the programme.

The apex trade body of the apparel industry took up the crash programme immediately after the fire at KTS Textile Industries (Pvt) Limited in Chittagong and formed a 40-member committee divided in 10 teams to monitor with cameras the RMG factories.

Under the programme, the BGMEA will fine a factory Tk 10,000 if it keeps its gates closed during working hours for the first time and Tk 50,000 for the second time. The BGMEA will cut all facilities to the factory if it commits the same offence for the third time.

The teams will also provide training for the mid-level management of the member factories in this regard.

## Eden College

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Since then, the students have been staging demonstrations to press their demands, including punishment of the JCD activists responsible for the attack.

At a rally at Central Shaheed Minar yesterday, the students issued an ultimatum to the college authorities to reopen the dormitories within seven days, otherwise they would go for tougher movements.

Contacted, Acting Principal of the college Prof Jahane-Gulshan said that they would reopen the residential hostels as early as possible.

Meanwhile, the education ministry held an emergency meeting yesterday to review the present situation at the college. The principal and the Superintendent General of the college dormitories Julekha Khatun attended the meeting, ministry sources said.

The decision of the meeting could not be known up to 7:10pm.

The meeting was to discuss whether Prof Feroza Begum could be reinstated and review the report of the probe committee formed to investigate the alleged sex business at the college hostels.

Sammilita Nari Samaj in a press conference yesterday demanded the government take steps to stop Sunny

## Sunny

**FROM PAGE 16**  
now in custody.

Rab dropped the names of Monir and Abul Khair, landlords of Sunny, from the charge sheet, as evidence leading to their involvement with JMB was inconclusive.

Sunny, younger brother of Abdur Rahman and also a member of JMB's top tier Majlish-e-Shura, masterminded the countrywide August 17 blasts. He was arrested at Tejgaon Polytechnic Institute on December 13 last year.

Following his information, Rab had seized 56 items of arms, ammunition, explosives, bomb-making materials, and books on jihad from the house of Abul Khair at South Manda in the city's Sabujbagh area.

## ADB plans

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Emile noted that Bangladesh has improved "dramatically" during the last 15 years with great achievements in areas like human development, primary education, and healthcare and sanitation.

He said the macroeconomic texture is also very sound, but having some future challenges like congenial atmosphere to attract private sector.

"We exchanged views as to how ADB can help achieve Bangladesh's economic objectives," said the ADB executive, who identified the challenges in making a further leap forward, including infrastructure for sustainable power and energy supply and improved road.

"I think these are feasible," he said, indicating that the country could overcome the hurdles with right planning.

Under the project being prepared, ADB will provide necessary funds for installation of the proposed 240-MW Siddirganj peaking plant.

## A year of test

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Service, who is currently in Dhaka to conduct a televised debate entitled "Bangladesh -- Can Democracy Deliver?"

Talking to The Daily Star at a local hotel, Sackur said that now is the time to decide how real the people's commitment to democracy is.

"You have got to make sure that your general election is free and fair