

## PM flies to UAE today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on a two-day visit flies for United Arab Emirates (UAE) this morning with issues of manpower and Bangladeshi product exports high on her agenda.

She also has development and investment assistance and purchase of oil at reduced rates on her agenda.

This will be her first ever bilateral visit since she assumed power in 2001. Earlier she visited UAE in 1993 during her first tenure. This time the visit is taking place at the invitation of UAE President Shaikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

"This is a goodwill visit aiming to boost relations between the two countries. This will create an opportunity for the heads of two governments to meet and discuss

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## Another rule on govt on tele-tapping

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued a rule on the government and Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) to explain within three weeks why tele-tapping of conversations of subscribers by different intelligence agencies, investigation authorities and other law enforcement agencies should not be declared illegal.

The HC rule also asked the government and the BTRC to show cause why the Telecommunication (Amendment) Act 2006 should not be declared unconstitutional.

The rule followed a writ petition filed by M Sanaulah, news editor of

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## EPZ WORKERS GO BERSERK

# 2 RMG units set ablaze, 100 damaged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several thousand workers of different garment factories in Savar export processing zone (EPZ) yesterday came out on the street, set two factories on fire, damaged more than a hundred factories and a number of vehicles, and put up barricades on roads demanding better wages, payment of unpaid wages, and other facilities.

They torched 10 to 12 vehicles on Parishad road in Ashulia inside the EPZ.

More than a hundred persons including workers, police and journalists were injured as employees loyal to the owners of different garment factories attacked the workers.

A worker named Rana was admitted to a hospital with a bullet wound in the buttocks.

Another worker Saiful, 30, received treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital for an injury in the head.

This was the second incident of garment workers' protest in a week in the capital. The EPZ authorities announced a two-day shutdown of

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Angry garment workers, left, through the highway in front of Dhaka EPZ demanding payment of arrear wages and higher wages. They torched buses parked on a field while a garment factory is in flames in the background.

PHOTO: STAR



## POLICE REFORMS GET NOD

# Cabinet committee for 26,000 more members, major increase in officers' number

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet committee on law and order yesterday approved a massive reform in police organogram, suggesting an increase of over 26,000-strong force with major increase in the number of officer ranks to improve the quality of supervision in both investigation and controlling law and order.

Number of the force will be increased in phases, beginning in the next fiscal year.

The six-member committee also decided to introduce separate police units for investigation and law and order control at each police station (PS), establish Sylhet Metropolitan Police and Barisal Metropolitan Police, decided in principle to form marine police and introduce upazila police officer and strongly proposed setting up of traffic driving and peacekeeping training school.

The reform organogram will come into effect after the cabinet approves it.

"Our police department is very undersized in comparison with our population, and the number of officers is too small for necessary jobs," LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, who heads the committee, said emerging out of the meeting that approved the organogram in principle at home ministry conference room yesterday.

The new organogram will raise the quality of service, training and logistic support besides increasing officers, he told reporters, adding that implementation of the new

organogram will take three to four years.

"We have reorganised the whole organogram after studying those in the neighbouring countries," State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar said, adding that the present people-police ratio (1350:1) will be changed to 1000:1.

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed, Livestock and Fisheries Minister Abdullah Al Noman, Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas and Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka and State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar, Cabinet Secretary Abdul Halim, secretaries for finance, establishment and law attended the meeting presided over by the LGRD minister.

**INCREASE IN FORCE**  
As per the new organogram, police strength will be raised to 1,43,578 from the existing 1,17,224.

Of the existing force, 1,247 are officers from the rank of assistant superintendent of police (ASP) to inspector general of police (IGP) making for a percentage of only 1.06.

After the increase, the number of officials will stand at 3,116 with the percentage 2.18.

"Our supervision is very weak now due to poor number of officers. We have only 10,000 sub-inspectors (SI) across the country

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## Iqbal denies his role in power sector graft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former state minister for power Iqbal Hassan Mahmood yesterday said he was never involved in any corruption in the power sector, and is open to anyone wanting to prove corruption charges against him.

Talking to The Daily Star, he said he takes pride in his ethical ways of conducting business. "My father was an honest man and I have run business in Motijheel for 30 years with honesty. I made my own money (long before becoming state minister)."

He said, "I do not know how I could make (black) money when there was no project in the power sector. There is no question of my accumulating wealth with foreign banks."

"You know who did what in the power sector (in the last four years)," said Iqbal, who was placed in the agriculture ministry as state minister on Saturday night.

"I tried to work as sincerely as possible. My hard work has pushed

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## VIOLENCE AT RMG UNITS BGMEA terms it plot of 'neighbouring state' to capture int'l market

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) leaders yesterday termed recent violence at garment factories as part of a "conspiracy by a neighbouring country" and demanded deployment of armed forces, BDR and Rab personnel at all factories in Dhaka and adjacent areas for safety.

Amid a fresh spate of violence this time in Savar by garment workers, the BGMEA leaders after an emergency meeting said such acts of violence by workers are stemmed from the conspiracy to damage Bangladesh's garment sector.

"A neighbouring country wants to grab Bangladesh's share in the competitive international market by creating an unstable situation at

factories here," said Abdus Salam Murshedi, acting president of the apex body of the country's garment manufacturers, at a press briefing after the meeting at its office.

But he declined to name the neighbouring country.

Salam brushed aside the allegation that poor wage is reason for violence and said workers at the factories, which were attacked, are well paid and working condition is good there. "Outsiders attacked the factories...not the workers," he commented.

But M Aminul Islam, a factory owner, told the press conference: "Manufacturers in India have told a buyer from France not to do business with Bangladesh saying that a war-like situation is prevailing here."

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## VOTER LIST SC judgment on CEC's appeal today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) will deliver judgment today on the appeal filed by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice MA Aziz against the High Court (HC) directives over preparation of the electoral roll.

The SC full bench headed by Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassar Husain completed hearing of arguments of both sides in the case on the fifth day yesterday, and fixed today for judgement.

The CEC's counsel TH Khan yesterday submitted that national elections in the past were held on the basis of new voter lists but no political party objected to that.

He also said there are no legal provisions or rules that a fresh voter list cannot be made for an election.

The Election Commission (EC) took the present move to prepare a

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## Objections too small against enormity of fake voters

EC receives objections against 24,783 voters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Objections were filed against only 92 voters on the draft voter list for Dhaka district although at least 222 voters have so far been alleged as fake for being registered under mysterious addresses in Mohammadpur area alone.

In the district that witnessed 60.55 lakh voters on the draft roll, 5,202 people applied for registering their names as voters.

An EC press release said last night the election offices across the country have received objections against 24,783 voters since the publication of the draft electoral roll on May 3, while 59,803 others have applied for inclusion in the list.

Sources at the divisional election offices said over 3,000 voters listed in the draft have applied for minor corrections of names and addresses.

The draft list, however, shows at least 1.11 crore unaccounted for voters if one goes by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics census report 2001.

Following the publication of the draft voter list, the Election Commission (EC) invited claims, objections and corrections and received those until May 21.

Officials at different election offices said people are not much interested in identifying fake voters and the EC also has no mechanism to identify them. So, if no complaint is raised, the fake voters--if any--on the draft will remain in the final list too, they said.

The highest number of 3,314 allegations was filed with the Rajshahi divisional election office while over 7,000 people have applied for registering their names in the list.

The Barisal divisional election office received objections against 2,533 voters and received 2,814 applications for registration.

The Sylhet divisional office received objections against 525 voters while 3,773 people applied for fresh registration.

In Chittagong, objections against 2,200 voters were lodged with the divisional office and 5,196 others applied for registering their names.

The Mymensingh divisional election office has received objections against 711 voters while it received 6,211 applications for registration.

The revising authorities will resolve the cases of allegations and applications by June 6 and then the EC will fix the date for publication of the final voter list.



## Nagorik Committee team to meet ACC chief today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An eight-member delegation of Nagorik Committee 2006, formed as part of civil society initiative for accountable development and national election 2007, will meet Justice Sultan Hossain Khan, chairman of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) today.

The delegation will also discuss the ways to resist the influence of black money and other corruption in election process with the ACC chairman at the view-exchange meeting.

The committee also met National Board of Revenue (NBR) chairman on May 8 and discussed about bringing transparency to the wealth declaration by the candidates.

The member of the delegation are -- former finance minister M

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## HEROIN SHIPMENT TO UK Rainbow owner started smuggling following BD Foods' footsteps

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Kazi Zafar Reza, proprietor of Rainbow Enterprise, yesterday told a magistrate that he started smuggling heroin hidden in vegetable consignments after he had incurred a huge loss in his legitimate vegetable export business.

He said his legitimate business could not compete with BD Foods Limited, which used to sell vegetables at a lower price since its vegetables were only a cover for heroin smuggling. So he decided to join the heroin smuggling ring, he said.

Zafar, arrested for smuggling 54kg heroin to the UK, confessed to Metropolitan Magistrate Nani Gopal Biswas that he smuggled another 100kg of heroin to the same country in different shipments from 1989 to 2004.

He said BD Foods Chairman Badruddoza Chowdhury Momen used to pack heroin in cartons of Benson & Hedges and Gold Leaf cigarettes and smuggle those to the UK concealed in legitimate consignments of vegetables.

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## Rahman, Sunny shown arrested in Humayun Azad case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) chief Abdur Rahman, his younger brother and JMB military commander Ataur Rahman Sunny and one of their accomplices have been shown arrested in the case filed for attempting to murder late Dr Humayun Azad.

However, the hearing on the seven-day remand prayer for Rahman and Sunny in the case was

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## JMB man gets 20-yr RI in bomb case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced a Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) member to 20 years rigorous imprisonment (RI) for possessing a powerful bomb.

Judge Mohammad Helal Chowdhury of the Special Tribunal-12 handed down the sentence in presence of the convict Hafez Ahmed Kader Mainuddin

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Jubo Sangram Parishad demonstrators show shoes at Dhanmondi Road 27 yesterday protesting 'fake' voters in the draft voter list while legitimate voters are left out.

PHOTO: STAR

## Man in fetters killed in 'crossfire'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man in fetters was killed in a so-called "crossfire" between the police and his accomplices at Lalbagh in the city early yesterday while an alleged criminal was killed in a similar incident at Madanganj in Narayanganj.

Lalbagh police claimed a police team led by its officer-in-charge took Ismail Hossain, also known as Tunda Ismail and placed on remand earlier, to Noor Dairy Farm near Shahidnagar Balurmath to recover his hidden firearms around 3:55am.

Ismail's cohorts ambushed the team trying to snatch him from custody and the police retaliated leading to an encounter when Ismail received bullets, a police press release said. He was taken to Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital where on duty doctors declared him dead.

However, Ismail's elder brother Shah Alam said a chairman of Kamrangirchar area who is close to a ruling BNP lawmaker used the police to kill his brother over a land dispute. He also alleged the dispute with the chairman started in 2001 after he bought a piece of land which the chairman also wanted to buy.

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