## Aug 21 grenade attack Govt sits idle

Hossain alias Mukul.

It admits that it will not be possible to bring to book the culprits before the ruling coalition's term ends.

"The main culprit is holed up in India. He may return during the caretaker government period," State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar told The Daily Star, referring to top terror Joy.

On criticism of the government for hyping up the confessional statement of one Joz Mia. he said: "We are trying to arrest one or two more accused. If we can do so, their confessional statements will add to the credibility and we'll be able to submit the charge sheet.'

He then claimed success in the investigation. "There had been a significant progress in the case, but lately it has been stuck, delaying a charge sheet against the accused," he told The Daily Star Tuesday.

Interestingly, he made similar comments only a year ago.

Though almost two years have passed since the grisly attack that rattled the entire nation, the intelligence officials have not yet found a vital clue to identities of the attackers let alone bring them to trial.

Parliamentary Union (IPU) in May, the government claimed to have made significant progress in the investigation, saying that 20 people had been

arrested in connection with the attack. But it did not mention that 17 of them had already been released, as the allegation against them had no

Interestingly, the home ministry made the same claim before a parliamentary body about a year ago.

Of the 20, only three gave statements admitting involvement in the grenade attack. But those statements too appeared controversial.

The investigators in their forwarding letters to the court claimed that some of the arrestees had direct involvement in the blasts. But later they were released, as the allegations

against them could not be proved. So far the investigation has revolved around the confessional statement of Joz Mia, who was arrested at his village home in Birkot of Senbagh, Noakhali on June 10. He stands accused in five criminal cases.

The persons he named in his statement to be involved in the blast incident had left the country long ago. Joy, Mukul, Mollah Masud, Robin,

Shafiqul Islam, Jahidur Rahman and Jisan had been hiding in India long before the attack took place. The government's claims of prog-

ress are open to question as they are solely based on Joz Mia's statement.

The government was ready to submit the charge sheet after the confessional statement, but later backtracked as questions arose about

"Joz Mia's story does not provide any coherent link to the incident as well

officer experienced in carrying out such investigations. He described the statement as a

ery weakly woven story. Munshi Atigur Rahman, who is the fourth investigation officer of the case. said. "It's a case of national significance and we'd better not submit a poor charge sheet."

The case is already dug out. We're now waiting for three to four masterminds who have fled across the border," he said when asked about the investigators' achievement in last two "We'll inform you about it after

capture of the other gang leaders," he said in reply to queries on motive for "We know who hurled the gre-

nades from the eastern side of Bangabandhu Avenue. But members of the Mukul group that entered through Peer Yemeni Market and attacked from rooftop of a building are vet to be identified

"We will be able to find out the motive if one of them is arrested." he

According to sources, no major move was taken after FBI and Interpol members had left the country.

Munshi Atik, however, said the foreign investigators had expressed satisfaction that the investigation was

A former high official of the police said. "It is ridiculous that police are sitting idle and waiting for the accused to return and surrender.

The committee on human rights of parliamentarians of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, an organisation of the world parliamentarians, in a statement on July 14 expressed concern that the probe has not yet vielded any results.

It also reminded the state of its duty to identify and bring to justice those responsible for the criminal act.

### AL to observe

FROM PAGE 16

two-minute silence across the country from 5:22pm, the exact time the grenade attacks were carried out. In remembrance of the party leaders and activists, who were killed in the grenade attacks, candles will be lit in the evening followed by a mourning procession.

Such programme will be organised in all units of the party across the country, says an AL press

Meanwhile, The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) will stage a rally in front of its central office at Purana Platan in the capital today demanding immediate trial of the culprits who launched August 21 grenade attack on AL rally and blasted bombs at a CPB rally at Paltan. The party will also place wreaths at the monument on Bangabandhu Avenue tomorrow.

Awami Sangskritik Forum will bring out a procession from Bangabandhu Avenue today demanding international probe into the August 21 grenade attacks and trial of the culprits.

not at all sufficient as the dumpsters

sufferer from this menace where

rainwater submerges on a regular

basis a 300-yard long Nazimuddin

Road running from Sheikh Burhanuddin Post Graduate

two dumpsters within a distance of

30 yards, frequently experience

immense discomfort as rainwater

mixed with wastes spilling from the

dumpsters creates a situation not at

times, it took no effective step to

alleviate our misery," commented a

officials however said the corpora-

tion regularly disposes of the gar-

bage. They also blamed the resi-

deployed to clean the dumpsters,

which is not even half the number

required to carry out such a huge

with adequate bleaching powder

and other pesticides except on Eid

or other special occasions due to

about 420 are removable metal

containers while the rest are fixed

and made of concrete without any

grounds for the capital at Matoail

under Demra and at Baliapur under

Amin Bazar where around 2 to 2.5

thousand tons and 1 to 1.5 thousand

Makeshift sub-jail

Asked if there is any Rab office in

the district, he said, "Rab men from

capacity to accommodate the

militants, he said as a reason for

Salim Ullah Selim said the militants

may have to stay around two

months in the sub-jail for the trial for

six Chandpur cases filed against 15

militants including JMB chief Abdur

Rahman and his deputy Siddiqul

about the security of the militants,

saving that it is too open to be a

Locals have expressed concern

The district iail does not have the

Assistant Public Prosecutor

Chittagong will take care of it."

respectively every day.

declaring the sub-jail.

Islam Bangla Bhai.

FROM PAGE 16

There are two waste disposal

Of all the dumpsters in the capital

financial constraints," he added.

lid on them.

task." complained MA Quddus.

dents for lack of cooperation.

"Despite informing DCC several

Denying the allegation DCC

"We have only 7,256 sweepers

"Besides we are not provided

all suitable for a residential area.

resident of the area.

Residents of the area, which has

College to Nirab Restaurant.

The old part of Dhaka is the worst

usually fill up quickly.

# Health hazards

city's ailing residents, experts said. Professor Abdul Jabbar, head of the department of community medicine at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) said indiscriminately dumped wastes spread around mixed with rain water and often seeps into tube wells and water supply lines through leaks,

spreading diarrhoea. "Besides, foul smell emitting from the dumpsters can also cause severe headache, heart problems. nausea and liver complications," the professor added.

These dumpsters are quite often the breeding grounds for mosquitoes and bees, facilitating the spread of diseases like malaria and

Moreover, many hospitals and clinics in the city dump a large amount of medical wastes carrying germs of highly infectious diseases, harmful chemicals, and used nee-

dles in nearby dumpsters Many of the 50,000 homeless people of the city, who often scavenge through these dumpsters, are regularly coming in contact with these germ infested medical wastes and getting pricked by infected

Some of these discarded used needles, saline containers, and tubes are finding their way back on the market for resale due to the absence of any medical waste

disposal facility in the city.

According to a Dhaka City
Corporation (DCC) survey 4,000 tons of wastes are collected every day from various dumpsters in the including around 50 tons of

medical wastes Denying the allegation that hazardous medical wastes are wantonly being dumped in the city's dumpsters. Asst Chief Conservancy Officer of DCC MA Quddus said, "DCC has personnel who collect hazardous medical wastes from hospitals and clinics, and dispose of them in a proper manner.

Prof Jabbar however said, "The hospitals lack facilities for incinerating medical wastes they produce every day and throw them on roadsides, a practice highly hazardous to human beings.'

The dumpsters, frequently placed far away from their designated spots usually remain filled with solid wastes, as DCC does not provide enough manpower to clean them on a regular basis.

"Sweepers of DCC remove the wastes only once in 24 hours," said a Farmgate resident adding that it is

Rahman said, adding that they are not sure about their identity.

HuJi activists confirmed The Daily Star that the HuJi leaders who attended the meeting include Moulana Rahmatullah alias Shaikh Farid. commander Abdul Hye, founder chairman of HuJi's advisory board Moulana Mohiuddin Khan, acting HuJi ameer Mufti Shafigur Rahman, trainers commander Abdus Salam and commander Moniruddin Monir, commanders Abul Qashem. Salahuddin. Abdul Qayyum, Monjur Ahmed and Joynal Abedin, Moulana Abu Taher, Jainpuri Peer's son Enayetulah Abbasi. State Minister for Information Abdus Salam Pintu's brother Tajul Islam, Asadullah al Galib of Cox's Bazar, Khelafat Andolon founder Hafezzi Hujur's son Moulana Ahmadullah Ashraf and Mufti

Some of these leaders addressed the meeting held at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram after the Juma prayers while a few others were sitting on the dais

Following clamp-down on HuJi by the previous Awami League (AL) government after a 76kg bomb was recovered from the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina's meeting venue at Tungipara in July 2000 and the ban imposed by the present government on October 17 last year, these leaders continued their work under the banners of different Islamist organisations.

"Since it became difficult for us to work under Harkatul Jihad's banner. we had to adopt other names and work under different banners secretly," the HuJi activist told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity. He has been involved with the outfit for about 12

According to sources, some of the HuJi leaders and advisers run sepa-

rate Islamist organisations. Khelafat Andolon chief Moulana Ahmadullah Ashraf has been actively assisting the HuJi since the AL government took moves against the outfit. Moulana Abu Taher is active with a Khatme Nabuwat group that demands declaring the Ahmadiyyas non-Muslim. Some HuJi leaders are involved in Islamic publication.

A few Afghan war veterans launched the HuJi at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club on April 30, 1992 in Dhaka. HuJi Bangladesh president Abdus Salam, field commander Manzur Hasan, Dhaka city unit president Moulana Delwar Hossain, publicity secretary Mufti Shafigur Rahman, Obaidur Rahman Nadvi and Moulana Mufti Abdul Hye were present at the conference.

The HuJi leaders clad in sleeveless olive war jackets over traditional Kabul dresses and grey traditional Afghan turbans boasted of its international link at the press conference. Successive governments, including that of the AL, however, overlooked the matter.

Manzur Hasan told reporters at the conference that Bangladeshi youths went to Pakistan on student and tourist visas and joined Jihad (holy war) in Afghanistan.

Forty-one armed Huli men were arrested at a Cox's Bazar training camp in 1996 and sentenced to lifeterm, but were released on bail after the BNP-led four-party coalition came to power. Mufti Hannan, HuJi's operations commander was arrested in Dhaka on October 1 last year.

After the Baitul Mukarram meeting. the HuJi leaders and activists brought out a procession and joined a rally of Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) led by "Shaikhul Hadith" Azizul Haque at the Muktangan to protest a recent statement by India's Bharatiya Janata Party president against Bangladesh.

The IOJ leader led a nine-member HuJi delegation to Afghanistan via Pakistan in 1988 and met al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden

Areport published in The Daily Star on November 7, 2005 carried detailed information about the visit. "The HuJi Bangladesh top brass includes Shaikhul Hadith Allama Azizul Haq. also chief of a faction of ruling alliance partner Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ), Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish secondin-command Muhammad Habibur Rahman of Sylhet, Ataur Rahman Khan of Kishoreganj, Sultan Jaok of Chittagong, Abdul Mannan of Faridour and Habibullah of Noakhali. All of them are linked with different Islamic organisations and madrasas, and one of them, Ataur Rahman Khan, was elected an MP with BNP ticket in 1991 from Kishoreganj-3," the report said.

"In an interview a few years back, Habibur Rahman disclosed those names, with whom he had travelled to Afghanistan via Pakistan in 1988, visited some Taliban militant camps and also met al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden," the report added.

When contacted after Friday's meeting, a top-level intelligence officer told The Daily Star that they took note of the meeting and were gathering information about the HuJi leaders.

"We are checking whether they are floating a new organisation, who are involved with it, who are their patrons and whether they are agitating just for the BJP president's remark or has any serious motive," he said.

Sources, however, said the intelligence men were aware of the meeting in advance and some members of an intelligence agency were seen near the venue.

## Cancelled telecoms

FROM PAGE 1

chaired by Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman.

Sources said the family members of two highly powerful ministers represent these Chinese compa-

The first deal of \$11 million has been controversially structured for the state-owned China National Machinery & Equipment Import & Export Corporation (CMEC) to supply 185 units of radio links for BTTB's rural network A top-secret document of the

telecoms ministry, however, reveals that bids were originally invited for 220 units of radio links. The CMEC became the lowest

bidder but its price was 2.5 times higher than the BTTB budget. On April 28, 2004, the BTTB held a board meeting and unanimously

decided to abandon the tender and

invited fresh bids. The secret document also reveals that around two months later, on June 13, the Chinese vendor persuaded the telecoms ministry and the BTTB retracted its re-tendering process and go for customising CMEC's overpriced

In the process, the BTTB doubled the budget but reduced the total number of radio link units to 185, meaning it will be paying a far higher price for lesser number of equipment if the CCPP approves this purchase proposal on Monday.

Sources said the BTTB has earlier procured exactly the same equipment for its cellular mobile phone project at a far lesser price. Therefore, the telecoms ministry has no grounds for promoting this deal in favour of CMEC.

Sources said a brother-in-law of a highly influential minister from Chittagong represents the CMEC, which has supplied 1,89,000-line telephone systems to the BTTB since the time of the previous government under a highly controversial supplier's credit arrangement.

The present government has stipulated this deal in its "white paper of corruption by Awami League". But instead of taking any action it secretly attempted to

reward the CMEC with further \$10 million repeat order in 2003. It was, however, foiled as the media had leaked the move

**VOIP PROCUREMENT** Meanwhile, the telecoms ministry has also cooked up a \$3.6 million deal for Huawei Technology of China to supply four units of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) platforms to BTTB.

A high-powered review committee of the Central Procurement Technical Unit under the Implementation. Monitoring and Evaluation Division of the planning ministry has, however, found all the bids, including that of Huawei, technically non-responsive.

The review committee's report blames the BTTB for "hiding" 50 penalty points that Huawei deserves for "material deviation" in its bid. On July 24, the committee gave its unanimous decision to retender the project.

But the telecoms ministry brushed aside the verdict and forwarded Huawei's \$3.6 million purchase proposal to the CCPP.

Sources said the youngest son of a highly powerful minister from the northeastern region represents Huawei. This minister also holds a key position in the decision making process of the CCPP.

Meanwhile, competent sources of BTTB termed the VoIP platform project a wastage of public fund.

All BTTB customers are using VoIP services by dialling 112 without any so-called platform. "Therefore, why should we unnecessarily spend foreign currency for a useless project like this?" said a BTTB general manager, requesting anonymity. He said no other country has deployed such a "fictitious" platform in the name of VoIP service.

# Voter list update

FROM PAGE 1

updated list enlisting names of new voters," he said adding, "We will just keep it open for public inspection after the field level staff update it." Abdur Rashid Sarkar, yesterday

however said the registration officers and assistant registration officers will check the authenticity of the applications received. "People may also check the

updated voter list when it will be kept in files for inspection for at least three days," the secretary told reporters in a news briefing at the EC Secretariat. But many district election offi-

cers, who are working as registration officers, for updating the voter list, said it is not possible for them to inspect the authenticity of each application or of the names compiled by the field level staff.

"We will get a very short time even to display the updated list for public inspection," another district election officer said adding, "They could have got 15 days to display the voter list had the EC published a draft of it.

The EC Secretary however said they will take punitive actions against any duplication of names on the voter list, if proven.

About the present progress of the task, the secretary claimed that the task is almost completed.

"Some people may remain out of the list. They can register their names as voters by communicating with the election offices." he said ruling out again the possibility of another extension of the time limit

Till August 16, a total of 1.58 crore people applied for inclusion of names while 21.90 lakh applied for deletion of names on the existing voter list, prepared in 2000, which currently has 7.64 crore listed

voters. The EC secretary however said the commission will sit today to discuss the overall progress of the

The task of compiling the information received in applications will start from tomorrow. "We asked field level officials to complete the task of compiling the information in prescribed forms by August 26," the secretary said adding, "We will begin the process of printing the voter list in September."

About registering Leader of the

### BSF kills 1

FROM PAGE 1 body and did not return it as of

6:00pm yesterday. Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) strongly condemned the killing and asked its Indian counterpart to return the body.

#### Criminal killed FROM PAGE 1 Police Station for interrogation. Following Sama's confessional statement, another police team

along with him went to the Smashan

Ghat to recover hidden arms and

capture his accomplices, police sources claimed. As the team reached the spot, Sama's cohorts opened fire on them forcing police to retaliate in selfdefence. Sama was caught in the line of fire while he tried to escape from police custody.

Opposition Sheikh Hasina as a voter, the secretary said field level officials had provided the opposition leader with an application form. The officials informed me that the leader of the opposition will sign the application form today," he said

LOCAL BNP LEADERS **OBSTRUCT UPDATING** 

Our Netrakona correspondent reported that the district election office sources said only 75 percent of the updating have been completed in ten upazilas and five pourasavas in Netrakona so far.

Local residents said the EC staff did not go from door to door in the area to update the voter list.

When contacted, two assistant registration officers of two unions told our correspondent on condition of anonymity that influential BNP leaders of the area had pressured them not to enroll some names on the list. "We could not enroll many eligible young men and women due to pressure from BNP leaders" one of the officers said.

Humayun Kabir, assistant registration officer (ARO) of Kalmakanda, Sajal Chandra Sarkar, ARO of Durgapur, and Anwar Mahmud, ARO of Khaliajuri, told the correspondent that they could not update the voter list properly due to political pressure from ruling party leaders.

Mohammad Salamat Ullah Mia. district election officer of Netrakona. said "I heard about the complaint but nobody filed any written complaint with me in this regard. But it is true that political leaders created obstacles to the updating process of the voter list." he added

**BALLOT BOXES** In addition to existing ballot boxes, the EC secretary said they will sign a contract with the machine tools factory soon for manufacturing 20,000 more ballot boxes at a total cost of over Tk 1.90 crore or Tk 954

for each box. The EC already rejected the demand for introduction of transparent ballot boxes in the next parlia-

### Zawahri's son-in-law

FROM PAGE 16

A missile from a CIA drone aircraft hit a meeting of al-Qaeda leaders in Bajaur in January. US intelligence officials believed Zawahri might have been attending the gathering.

The airliner bomb mastermind was believed to have met one or more of the plotters in Bajaur or across the border in Kunar, Dawn said. It did not say when the meeting was believed to have taken place.

initial payments to the plotters, Dawn said, citing its unidentified Separately, the US network ABC

The mastermind had made some

reported on Friday that Pakistani officials had arrested a top al-Qaeda commander. Matiur Rehman, in the course of their investigation into the London bomb plot. Pakistani security officials have

denied that Rehman, one of the

country's most-wanted militants,

had been arrested.

### Hasina accuses

**FROM PAGE 16** country's liberation war and the country itself, Hasina said. She also said the prime minister

is ruining the country's economy while allowing her family to get rich. The AL president lambasted late president Ziaur Rahman for bringing back anti-liberation war collaborators to the country and for giving them voting rights.

Severely criticising the present government for politicising all sectors, Hasina said the government appointed a large number of 'unscrupulous ruling alliance people' to different government posts and promoted them violating proper procedures. The four-party alliance government has been harassing government employees and officials by sacking them and by penalising them with OSDs (officer on specia duty) without proper reasons, she

Journalist Obaidul Hague Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud Barrister Amir-UI Islam, Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, Prof Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, Dr Qamrul Ahsan Khan, Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Dr Rashid-e-Mahbub, Altaf Mahmud, Chowdhury Khalequzzaman, Abdur Razzak, Prof Nurul Huda, Kazi Faruk Ahmed,

### Khulna BNP

FROM PAGE 16 on Friday alleging violation of article-5 of the BNP constitution. "The illegal convening committee can not expel anyone," Manju said in a press conference held at noon yesterday at Khulna Press Club.

Manju said BNP Secretary

General Mannan Bhuiyan and the Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman did not approve nor give their consent to his expulsion. "I talked to them over telephone on Friday night to know if they were aware of my expulsion. Both the top central leaders asked me to continue my party work peacefully as usual," Manju added.

"We sent a letter to the party high-ups demanding expulsion of Lobi, Tayebur and Majedul Islam as they expelled me violating the constitution of the party and without the approval of its standing committee," he added.

The faction will hold a rally at

Shahid Maharaj Square today followed by a procession carrying black flags protesting against Mayor Tayebur and lawmaker Lobi. Manju said a grand rally would be held on August 24 at Shahid Hadis

Park to announce their next course

of action if the 'illegal city convening

committee' was not dissolved and Lobi and the mayor were not expelled from the party. The convening committee in an emergency meeting on Friday declared Whip Ashraf persona non grata in the district for making 'indecent remarks' against the prime

secretary general. It also expelled committee member Nazrul Islam Manju in a disciplinary action on charge of antiparty activity.

minister and the party's senior join

### Silver in swimming

FROM PAGE 1

failed to repeat the same act in the crunch Group B match. India lead the first half 2-0. Feroz goal back for Bangladesh converting a 68th minute penalty but that was not

enough for them to avoid an early elimination from the competition. The victory took India through to the last four from the group along with Nepal, who thrashed Afghanistan 5-1

While the booters failed to fire, the swimmers enjoyed mixed bag in the Sugathadasa Swimming Complex. Jewel Ahmed produced the first silver when he finished the men's 50m butterfly in 26.60s, 0.63s behind India's Virdhaval Khade. The bronze went to hosts Sri Lanka. Jewel had won a bronze two years ago in

Islamabad at 26, 19s. Bangladesh also won a couple of bronze medals in the pool, Niaz Ali in men's 200m breaststroke and Mahfuza Khatun in women's 100m breaststroke.

Mahfuza was tipped to win the first gold for a female swimmer, but it remained elusive. She clocked 1:20.90s to touch the block in an event that Sri Lankan Mayumi Raheem won with Games record timing of 1:15.84s, breaking India's monopoly in the first day's swimming competition. remaining six swimming gold medals

went to India. Meanwhile, weight lifter Ekramul Islam won the first medal for Bangladesh at the Games when he lifted bronze in the 56kg category. His elder brother Hamidul Islam also won a bronze in the 62kg event.

In other events, Dolly Akhter finished fourth in the women's 100m breaststroke and took a distant fifth place in the 50m freestyle. Afsana Talukder finished sixth in the 50m freestyle while the men's 4x200 fresstyle relay team clinched fourth position, behind India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

## Palestinian dy PM

FROM PAGE 16 guerillas on Israel's northern border after two soldiers were abducted on July 12 in a cross-border raid. A ceasefire came into effect on Monday.

An Israeli army spokesman confirmed troops had taken al-Shaer into custody, saying it was "due to his membership in a terrorist organisation. Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, a Hamas leader, con-

demned the arrest and said govern-

ment and people would remained

undaunted "Israel's aims to undermine the Palestinian political system and to put obstacles before the government and the people ... This is blackmail but we are determined to continue our

march," Haniyeh said. Huda al-Shaer, the official's wife, said he was picked up at their home in the West Bank town of Ramallah. She told Reuters that "severa jeeps circled the house before dawn" then troops came to the door.

# Regional dialogue

FROM PAGE 1 and protection of land from erosion of

Padma and Jamuna rivers. Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) organised the dialogue in joint collaboration with The Daily Star, the Prothom Alo and Channel i. It was part of a series of discussions arranged by the civil society initiative for campaign for honest and competent candidates in the election 2007 and ensuring accountable development in the country.

CPD Executive Director Debapriva Bhattacharva conducted the dialogue at Bandhan Community Centre in the town. AR Shamsul Islam, former principal of Government Mohila College, Pabna, presided over the discussion while Abdul Kader, executive director of development organisation Somota, and advocate Ronesh Moitra were special quests.

Chairman of CPD and convener Nagorik Committee 2006, Prof Rehman Sobhan, and editor of the Prothom Alo Motiur Rahman also spoke on the occasion. Describing the prevailing political

situation, the speakers expressed doubt about the fate of next general election. Somota Executive Director Abdul

Kader demanded two kinds of accountability from the politicians -one at the local level and another at the national level. Opening of the closed mills and factories in Pabna, creation of more

job opportunities for the unemployed people and protection of land from river erosion are people's demand he said, adding that at the national level, people want policy and programme for reaching the resources to the poor. Along with increase in the number

of poor people, the number of drug addicts is also going up, Kader said. He expressed concern over the increase of landless people in Pabna district due to erosion by Padma and Jamuna rivers. Urging the political parties to be

united under a separate platform and

formulate a vision for developing the

country, advocate Ronesh Moitra said. "A separate platform is necessary on the question of common objectives as the evil forces are getting organised regularly.' He called upon the people to launch a mass movement like that in

To explore the country's immense potential of growth, direct road and rail link with India should be established. Moitra said.

Although the gas supply through

pipeline reached Pabna, it is not

1969, against the misrule and corrup-

being supplied to mills and factories. he said. He called upon the civil society to create pressure on the government to stop mismanagement, corruption

and terrorism.

Moitra also criticised the government for price hike of the essential items and deteriorating law and order situation. In his presidential speech, AR Shamsul Islam made some recommendations for free and fair elections

-- system of negative vote on ballot

paper, rapid liquidation of election

cases, acceleration of strategy for

poverty alleviation, separation of religion from politics and ensuring honesty of the candidates. He said the election in 2007 is very significant for implementation of

Vision 2021. Competent candidates were not elected in the previous elections, he said, adding that the candidates take the advantage of voters' poverty. Besides, they are also being given training on election engineering, he

Prof Rehman Sobhan, chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue and convener of Nagorik Committee 2006, said the poor people should get some benefit of the democracy that cannot be fruitful without poverty If an honest and competent

person gets nomination people

should support him, he said, adding

that people should also keep watch

on their representatives after an

election. The people have been divided into two groups -- the elite and gen-

eral mass. Prof Sobhan said. He said the government should think how the khas land can be distributed among the landless.

Motiur Rahman said the ruling

coalition has become desperate to cling to power while the opposition is also hopeful about their victory but neither of them accepts defeat after the election. The ruling party controls every-

thing and the opposition regularly boycotts parliament, he said, adding that such a situation makes the fate of next elections uncertain. Former member of parliament advocate Amjad Hossain demanded that candidates should not be

allowed to contest in the next general

elections if they had failed to fulfil the

promises made during the previous elections He also expressed his doubts whether the next general election scheduled in 2007 will be held at all.

To check the influence of black money in polls, Anwarul Haq, a local journalist, proposed to impose a ban on the election rallies by the political parties adding that the candidates will address from a single platform arranged by the Election Commission.

Haque also demanded cancellation of the provision allowing tax-free import of cars by the members of parliament Mahbubul Alam Mukul, president

of Pabna Chamber of Commerce, demanded immediate supply of gas to the BSCIC industrial area, alleging that though gas supply reached Pabna through pipeline a few years back, the mills and factories are yet to

Agriculturalist Jafar Sadigue sees immense potentiality of growth in agriculture sector. By applying appropriate technology, a total of 10 crore ton crops could be produced on 17 lakh hectares of land annually, he

Opposing participation of businessmen in the elections, he said if they (businessmen) want to contest, they should come through Federation of Bangladesh Chamber

of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI). Advocate Shamsul Haque Tuku, general secretary of Pabna District Awami League (AL), observed that fanaticism, terrorism and corruption are the main features of the country these days. He called upon the civil society to come forward for ensuring

a free and fair election. Mohammad Azizul Haque, principal of Pabna Law College, criticised the unilateral administration system controlled from Dhaka and stressed

the need for a change.

Describing the administration in the district town as poor, Haq said people even cannot file complaints with the police station. The local administration has no accountability,

M A Kafi Saker proposed an emergency meeting of all major political parties for holding a free and relection. Ilias Iftekhar Rasul, an eye spe-

cialist, observed that the election would not be fair if the Election Commission does not set an expenditure limit for the campaigns. He also said that the presence of democratic practice with the political parties was the worth of almost zero. The political parties have hardly

any influence on people as degrada-

tion of the parties' morality continues.

He said changes only in the Election Commission would not ensure fair general elections. Prof Nurunnabi, former principal Government Shaheed Bulbul College, Pabna, said Bangladesh is not a failed state. "A government can fail but a state cannot." he added. Nurunnabi said the civil society has

great contribution to a number of

major achievements of the country. Gopal Sanyal of Drama Circle observed the caretaker government system was the by-product of a political rivalry and lack of confidence between political parties. He said the Election Commission is working like a puppet and the political parties have turned into business compa-

Baby Islam, president of Pabna Diabetic Society, said, "Honest and competent election candidates are hard to find. Those who opposed the independence of the country are now making their moves with the national flag in their hands." He said people can say nothing as everything is

controlled from Dhaka, even though this is a democratic country. Doctor Sarwar Jahan said people should monitor the activities of the lawmakers after the election and the civil society can play an active role in

this regard. Former member of parliament Zannatul Ferdous, President of Pabna District Bar Association Hossain of Workers Party. Municipality Commissioner Shamima Shirin, Masud Rana Mohammad Shamsuzzman, Dr Amin Ahmed Khan, Rokeya Ahmed, Rabeya Khatun, Roisuddin, Saifu Islam, Habibur Rahman Shawpon, Kazi Rafiqul Alam, Vashkor Chowdhury, Gonesh Das, SM Alauddin Paragh, KM Ataur Rahman Rana, Mohammad Shamsuzzoha,

Quamrun Nahar Joly, Purabi Moitra

## also participated in the discussion.

Israel kills

FROM PAGE 16 and Lebanese Prime Minister called the military action a "flagrant violation" of the ceasefire, which took effect Monday following 34 days of

Israeli army said the raid was

aimed at disrupting the shipment of

weapons to Hezbollah guerrillas from Syria and Iran -- both of which deny arming the group. "Special forces carried out an operation to disrupt terror actions against Israel with an emphasis on the transfer of munitions from Syria

said, adding that the operation had achieved all its aims. Bodai is 15 km northwest of the ancient city of Baalbek and 26km

and Iran to Hezbollah," the army

from the Syrian border. The Israeli raid coincided with a Lebanese army drive to tighten its grip on the border with Syria. Thousands of troops deployed on the eastern border on Saturday, security sources said. Hundreds deployed on the northern frontier on

A UN-ordered "cessation of

hostilities" on Monday halted the war between Israeli forces and Hezbollah guerrillas in which at least 1,183 people in Lebanon and 157 Israelis were killed. A UN resolution ordered Israel to

Friday.

end all offensive military action and Hezbollah to end all attacks. It also called for the deployment of the Lebanese army in the south alongside a strengthened Unifil, the UN peacekeeping force in the area. (Reuters, AP, BBC Online)

#### Kabita Parishad FROM PAGE 1

On August 26, the Kabita

himself on August 24 and video show at TSC on August 25.

Parishad will observe a daylong mourning programme at the Central Shahid Minar.

#### But chief investigator of the case. Senior ASP of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Munshi Atigur Rahman said the case is already 'dug out and proved' In a report submitted to the Inter-