

## Khaleda, Hasina cross swords over elections

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday sounded tough on each other's election stances, indicating further escalation of conflict between the two main parties -- the BNP and the AL. Both leaders however were confident that elections will be held albeit their own way.

### If not AL, others will contest

*Khaleda says AL has no chance to win, they can boycott elections if they want*

STAR REPORT  
Prime Minister (PM) Khaleda Zia yesterday said if the main opposition boycotts the elections, there are many other political parties ready to contest the polls.  
Urging the main opposition to participate in the upcoming elections, she said it would stand a loser if it does not.  
Without naming Awami League (AL), she said: "They have no chance to win the election and they



### Both polls, reforms will take place

*Hasina says no third-party intervention needed, rejects elections under KM Hasan*

UNB, Dhaka  
Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday brushed aside any political crisis in the country and asserted that election must be held in time with implementation of the proposed electoral reforms.  
"There is no need for mediation or third-party intervention... People of this country are enough to resolve the problems on their own," she said at a briefing with the members of Overseas Correspondents



## Fuel dealers start indefinite strike

300 petrol pumps closed  
Dhaka Divisional Committee of Bangladesh Tank-lorry Owners Association, Bangladesh Jalani Tel Paribeshok Samity (Bangladesh Fuel Oil Distributors Association) and Bangladesh Tank-lorry Stramik Union have jointly called the strike.  
They also demanded resignation of the energy adviser and government intervention to overcome the present crisis.  
"The strike will continue until the government meets our demands," said Syed Sajjadul Karim Kabul, president of the

## Productivity higher in bribing firms

RMG units pay 1.3pc of sales, others 0.65pc to cut thru' customs, red tape and the state organs.  
According to the survey titled "Firm Productivity in Bangladesh Manufacturing Industries", bribes take up 1.3 percent of sales on average in the ready-made garment industry while the other industries have to pay 0.65 percent of their sales.  
The report mentioned that irrespective of their sizes, more productive firms have a larger ability to pay bribes to cut through

## A village that loves birds

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi  
Thousands of birds, both resident and migratory, have turned backward village Pochamaria in Puthia upazila into a bird sanctuary.  
Drawing lots of tourists from home and abroad, the Pochamaria Sanctuary, some 45km off Rajshahi city, with its natural habitat and conservation of birds by villagers has now come to the forefront for promotion of bird tourism.  
Tourists like Japanese Takuma Kurataki, Dubai Zoo Curator Dr Ali Reza Khan, and renowned ornithologist Inam Al Haq described the sanctuary in the visitors' book as "impressive" and "a paradise for both birds and wildlife enthusiasts".  
Although none could tell how many birds live at the sanctuary, locals said festivity begins in winter when countless migratory birds attract more visitors.  
They said they heard bird



Resident and migratory birds at Pochamaria sanctuary in Puthia, Rajshahi draw bird lovers from home and abroad.

## NUF presents huge pens to CEC to resign

STAFF CORRESPONDENT  
The newly formed National Unity Front (NUF) in an unprecedented move tried to give chief election commissioner (CEC) and three other election commissioners four eight-foot-long pens, symbolically asking them to resign from their posts within seven days.  
NUF leaders Major (ret'd) Abdul Mannan, Mahi B Chowdhury MP, Abdur Rouf and Zakir Hossain carried the pens, which had slogans demanding their resignation printed on them, to the Election Commission (EC).  
They left the pens next to the CEC's nameplate in front of his office on the first floor of the EC building at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar as the CEC and the election commissioners did not receive the pens.  
"We requested them to resign before but they did not respond. So we tried to give them symbolic



National Unity Front leaders leave four eight-foot long pens in front of the chief election commissioner's office demanding resignation of the CEC and three other election commissioners yesterday.

## Govt fears bomb attacks, rise in crime in Ramadan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT  
The government apprehends bomb attacks, and a sharp rise in organised crimes during and before the Ramadan and Durga Puja, the two major religious occasions of the nation.  
Law enforcement agencies have already been ordered to step up security at the diplomatic zone and other key points in the capital.  
"We simply can't dismiss the possibility of subversive acts. We always take such apprehensions seriously," State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar told reporters after a meeting on law and order yesterday.  
Asked whether they have any specific intelligence reports in this regard, he avoided a direct reply and said, "We're working on it."  
But sources said the participants at the meeting discussed in detail the probabilities of blast

## VOTER LIST PREPARATION EC now passing buck on court for delay

SHAKHAWAT LITON  
In defence of seeking exemption from Public Procurement Regulation (PPR) 2003 for printing updated electoral rolls, the Election Commission (EC) is now passing on the blame for delay in preparing the list on the shoulders of the Supreme Court.  
The Cabinet Purchase Committee however declined to provide the EC with the exemption as indiscriminately as it is seeking, although the commission is claiming that it is seeking the exemption to enable itself to finish printing the updated voter list before the election scheduled for next January, sources said.  
With the parliamentary election around the corner, the EC has yet to complete the preparation of the voter list and it will take at least two months to finish the task even if it is exempted from the regulation. The EC Secretariat has yet to even start the process of printing the updated voter list, sources said.  
The EC, which had wasted at least six months by dilly-dallying to implement the court's orders for updating the existing voter list, requested the Cabinet Purchase Committee on August 22 to exempt it from PPR to complete printing the voter list on time.  
In a summary, approved by the EC and sent by its secretariat to the Cabinet Purchase Committee, the commission said activities for

## Feeder operators cease agitation in Ctg Port

STAFF CORRESPONDENT  
Chittagong Feeder Trade Committee (CFTC) withdrew its agitation programme of suspending loading and unloading of containers at Chittagong Port yesterday with immediate effect.  
The suspension programme was withdrawn following a four-hour long discussion with State Minister for Shipping Mohammad Quamrul Islam at his office last night.  
The Singapore-based feeder vessel operators also agreed to refund the congestion surcharges realised since August 20.  
Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) also agreed to withdraw the cases it filed against the five feeder vessel operators.  
The CFTC stopped loading and unloading containers at Chittagong Port following a contempt case filed by the BGMEA for realising congestion surcharge from June 5.  
Local feeder operating company HRC Shipping, however, did

## EC SECRETARIAT SIEGE PLAN 14-party vows to go ahead defying ban

HASAN JAHID TUSHER  
Defying the government ban on all kinds of gatherings and rallies in the areas around the Election Commission (EC) Secretariat, the Awami League (AL)-led 14-party combine has vowed to lay siege to it today to press home the demand for electoral reforms.  
The government has planned a heavy security net around the EC Secretariat to thwart the siege programme.  
The opposition leaders sounded a warning that if the government tries to foil the 'peaceful' programme, it would have to take the responsibilities for any

## Peacekeepers laid to rest

UNB, Dhaka  
The six Bangladeshi peacekeepers, killed in a road accident in Ivory Coast, were buried with full military honour at their family graveyards yesterday.  
Earlier in the morning, the namaj-e-janaza of the peacekeepers was held at the Army Stadium in Dhaka.  
Ministers, MPs, Military Secretary to the President Maj Gen M Aminul Karim, Military



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## GRENADATE ATTACK Investigators to bring 4 arrestees face to face with Mufti Hannan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT  
Investigators may bring Harkatul Jihad al Islami (Huji) leader Mufti Abdul Hannan face to face with four arrestees to cross-examine their statements regarding the grenade attack on British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury.  
A taskforce of combined intelligence officials is interrogating the four, who were arrested from Sylhet division on Saturday and Sunday, to extract detailed information about their involvement in the attack and the masterminds behind them.  
Huji leader Abdur Rouf, who was arrested along with 26 others in Bhaluka in Mymensingh on August 2, may also be brought before them

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