

## Corridor of friendship

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cott by the opposition.

The Foreign Minister treated parliament to a brief history, beginning with the 1974 Agreement and ending with the March 26, 1992 understanding which finally paved the way for Bangladesh to acquire lease of the territory, which he hoped would become a 'corridor of friendship' between Dhaka and New Delhi.

In an apparent effort to dispel disquiet over amendments to the 1982 Agreement, the Foreign Minister explained at length why some restrictions had been put on the movement of people along and across the corridor.

He pointed out that Indian nationals living in Kuchibari and Mekhliganj also use the corridor across its north-south axis, with Bangladeshis using the east-west road.

"Therefore, people and vehicles of the two countries cannot use this path at the same time," Rahman said, likening Timbigha to a railway junction.

"When trains move, people and road vehicles don't, and when people and vehicles move, trains don't. The reason is very simple. If they did, there'd be collision," he said.

That, he said, was the reason why Bangladeshis would use the corridor every other hour and a total of six hours during the day.

The Foreign Minister explained in his statement that, due to the existence of some law and order problems in the area such as smuggling, robbery etc. movement at night would be restricted to emergency cases alone.

Administrative personnel and members of law enforcement agencies, however, would be allowed to use the

corridor at any time, he said.

"Of course, we will keep an eye on matters relating to the use of the corridor, and review it at an appropriate time," Rahman assured the House.

Describing the opening of the corridor as a 'success for the democratically-elected government and people of Bangladesh,' the Foreign Minister expressed the hope that this success would begin a new era of friendship and good neighbourliness between Bangladesh and India.

"We are hopeful that we would be able to solve all other outstanding problems through peaceful negotiations in the best interest of the people of the two countries," Mostafizur Rahman ended his statement by saying.

## Seven held in connection with Shitol robbery

By Staff Correspondent

Detective Branch (DB) police in a drive during last four days arrested seven people in connection with the robbery at Shitol Department Store and put them under police remand Sunday.

They raided the store on April 1 last and robbed of cash, gold ornaments, sarees, wrist watches, shoes and cosmetics worth about Taka 15 lakh.

A DB police team led by an Assistant Commissioner, Ruhul Amin, during last four days arrested Bakul, 35, Abdul Mannan, 35, Alamgir Hossain alias Anwar Hossain, 24, Siddiqui, 30, Jakir, 28, Liton Kumar Das, 24, and Arabinda Roy, 46.



'Ghatik Dal Nirmul Committee' processionists in the city yesterday demanded withdrawal of cases against its 24 members and called for making the June 30 march towards the Jatiya Sangsad a success.

## JS bound march

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organisers of Golam Azam's public trial. The march will start from in front of the National Museum in the afternoon.

Meantime, the major opposition parties including Awami League, Five-party combine, Patriotic Democratic Front, Ganatantrik Party, Ganatantrik Biplobi Jote and an alliance of student organisations Ganatantrik Chhatra Oikya have extended their all-out support to the march programme.

The city unit of Awami League brought out a procession yesterday evening to drum up support to the march programme. The processionists paraded the main city streets.

Ekatturer Ghatik-Dalal Nirmul Committee, a component of the National Coordination Committee, held a gathering in front of its 33, Topkhana Road office yesterday.

Chaired by the Nirmul body city branch chief Sadek Ahmed Khan, the gathering was addressed by the committee's central leaders including Shahrier Kabir, and Noyce Jahangir.

The speakers called upon all concerned to take part in tomorrow's march.

## Opposition may be back

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democratic behaviour to the Opposition political parties.

BNP sources told The Daily Star that Abdus Salam Talukder, Minister for LGED, Saifur Rahman, Minister for Finance, Majedul Huq, Minister for Water Resources, Irrigation & Flood Control and Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury, Deputy Leader of the House were negotiating with the Opposition, either individually or as a group.

The sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said there were strong indications that the government may agree to lift the cases against the sponsors of the People's Court to bring the Opposition back to Parliament.

One of the negotiators said that though the government was considering to drop charges against the sponsors of Gana Adalat, that would require a fresh meeting between Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Jahanara Imam, convenor of the Nirmul Committee. Such a meeting was earlier arranged on the evening of June 21. The meeting did not take place because of police action against the journalists.

On the issue of trial of Golam Azam, according to the negotiator, it has boiled down to 'rephrasing the proposal earlier adopted in parliament.'



Students of Dhaka University observed a complete strike yesterday protesting police action and cancellation of Honours degree of Ansar Ali, a student of the Department of Physics.

## No classes held in DU

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Teachers stayed away from the campus, but many students were seen sitting in groups on the lawns of the sprawling campus. Boys and girls held friendly talks or strolled through the campus apparently in a relaxed mood unconcerned about trouble.

The Dhaka University Teachers Association (DUTA) condemned Saturday's attack, saying that it was a conspiracy to spoil the academic atmosphere.

At a press conference in the University Club Sunday DUTA leaders Prof S M A Faiz and Prof Said-ur-Rahman blamed the rampage on terrorists and some misguided students. They said the general students had no part in the violence.

They alleged that the university authorities had failed to ensure teachers' security. Referring to police tear-gas they said this had worsened the overall situation.

defended the Syndicate's expulsion of Ansar Ali and said that the controversial student had faked his academic documents and supplied fraudulent information about his examination performances.

Producing some papers to newsmen Prof Faiz said that Ansar Ali manipulated the marks he obtained in various examinations to prove himself a good student. In some examinations he even obtained below 30 in a subject out of 100 marks, Prof Faiz claimed.

Earlier, the teachers held an emergency general meeting to discuss the situation prevailing on the campus and demanded punishment to the troublemakers.

The teachers returned to work only on Saturday ending a 20-day strike demanding punishment to Ali for allegedly beating up a Physics Department teacher Dr Badrul Alam last month.

## Polling cards

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Justice Mohammad Abdur Rouf, while briefing newsmen yesterday at his office on the progress of the on-going electoral registration process.

He said that the 'polling cards' would be similar to those used in the United Kingdom and would include basic information about the voter and an individual identification number.

"A polling card would be issued as a trial run and its delivery would be ensured by the next pourasabha and city corporation polls," Justice Rouf said.

On the other hand, he added, the 'identity cards' for voters would include photographs along with separate identification number and the basic information about a voter.

The Chief Election Commissioner said that the voters' list would be computerised and digital photography introduced for issuing the identity cards, which would be of 'multipurpose use'.

"A feasibility study and tests have already been carried out to introduce the identity cards and this can be done through the use of computers," Justice Rouf said, adding "the ultimate objective is to create a permanent voter record ... and to allow voters to vote with the cards."

The Chief Election Commissioner noted that if the identification card system could be introduced it would help establish discipline in the electoral process which in turn would also enable the restoration of discipline in other sectors.

The Japanese government and the US-based National Democratic Institute (NDI) have expressed their willingness to provide support in this venture.

## PM: Strategy

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session of the regional workshop on Organisation and Management of Agricultural Services for Small Farmers in Asia organised by the Centre for Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) in collaboration with FAO and Commonwealth Secretariat, the Prime Minister said: "We have adopted two integrated strategies and approaches for poverty alleviation."

The first strategy was to create employment opportunities for the rural people to utilise their labour in a productive way, she said.

Begum Zia said our second strategy of poverty alleviation is — widespread provision of basic services for rural masses.

The Prime Minister said "Development can neither be imported nor exported. It originates from the soil."

Every country has its own tradition of development. Our tradition and culture of development are self-reliant villages, she said.

Presided over by LGED and Cooperatives Minister and Vice chairperson of CIRDAP Salam Talukder, the function was also addressed by Agriculture Minister M Majid-ul-Haq, Assistant Director General, FAO, AZM Obaidullah Khan, Assistant Director, FPRDD, Commonwealth Secretariat G L Balfour and CIRDAP Director A T M Shamsul Haque. CIRDAP Programme Officer Dr Saheuddin Ahmed gave the vote of thanks on the occasion.

Policy makers, experts and representatives of small farmers' organisations from 15 countries of Asia as well as participants from a number of international organisations will deliberate on various issues in the five-day workshop which is being held to focus on pragmatic remedial action for the benefit of the participating countries.

The Prime Minister said with a view to utilising the rural labour force in a productive way, the government was setting up extensive rural infrastructure and institutional facilities. She said stress had been laid on development of agriculture and building up agro based industries.

Begum Zia pointed out that steps were under way for ensuring easy availability of irrigation, agriculture input and credit facilities. An amount of Tk 14,160 million has been earmarked for agriculture and water sectors in the next year's Annual Development Programme outlay, she said.

Begum Zia said a land bank had been stipulated for the benefit of marginal farmers. Rural economy is being rejuvenated through boosting small and cottage industries, she said adding the rural poor were being productively mobilised under the nation-wide canal digging programme.

The Prime Minister said primary health care and family planning facilities had been extended upto village level, primary education had been made compulsory and education for girls upto class eight in rural areas had been made free for widespread provision of basic social services for rural masses.

## The Midnight File

### Rabbani new president of Afghanistan

KABUL, June 28: Prof Burhanuddin Rabbani, a 50-year-old Islamic scholar and guerrilla leader, was named President of Afghanistan in Kabul today, the fourth man to hold the post in ten weeks. Rabbani is the second president of the Islamic government of Afghanistan, established by rebel forces in April after they captured Kabul in the climax to 14 years of civil war, reports Reuter.

### Mitterrand flies out of Sarajevo Airport

SARAJEVO, June 28: French President Francois Mitterrand flew out of Sarajevo airport by plane at 5:10 pm (1510 GMT), a UN spokesman announced here. Mitterrand, accompanied by Health and Humanitarian Action Minister Bernard Kouchner, spent about six hours in the besieged capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina after arriving on a surprise visit following a European Community summit in Lisbon, reports AFP.

## Halt this slide to chaos

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Ziaur Rahman, had shown again and again in their commitment to the future of Bangladesh.

If there has ever been a time to honour the memory of these two leaders, through action rather than in hollow rhetoric, the time is now.

It will be presumptuous on our part to suggest what the two leaders should say to each other or what formula they should devise in halting the present drift. By winning the electoral mandate, they have earned the right — and the responsibility — of finding solutions to our problems. When they fail to exercise this right or carry out the responsibility that goes with it, they would not be where the nation has put them today.

All we can ask the two leaders is to look around and see for themselves the scenario of the crisis situation that developed during the past few days, starting with the boycott of parliament by major opposition parties to the transport strike in which over 200 vehicles were damaged, some beyond repair, from the police rampage against journalists at the Press Club to the chase given to panicky fleeing teachers by a group of students at the Dhaka University.

This is not all. Add to it the untold hardship of ordinary men and women caused by the transport strike, the rising prices of essential food items due to the uncertain supply from the countryside and the suspension of all classes in the university. Then, one starts wondering what may happen next in the vicious cycle of violence and lawlessness prevailing in the country, especially in the capital, the heart of the administration.

To the man in the street, it is no consolation to know that the administration is probably being sabotaged from within and that there are plots and conspiracies being hatched against the ruling party — or for that matter, against the opposition — to derail our

hard-won democratic system. Another dimension of the crisis may be slowly coming into focus.

The national budget will be passed, with the country entering a new fiscal year, under the threat of lawlessness, work stoppages and general tension. Does Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman — or anyone else in the government — expect that in such a situation, the private sector will give its best, foreign investors will rush in, the export will go up and all other targets put forward by Rahman will be met to the satisfaction of the aid agencies and donor nations? The optimist may say, we can set things right in a matter of months, if not weeks.

But a pragmatic technocrat like Rahman knows it is not that simple.

Finance Minister Saifur Rahman should not be the only one in the government to warn the Prime Minister of the crisis the country is faced with, just as Tofael Ahmed and Kamal Hossain should not be the only leaders in the Awami League to suggest to Hasina that moderation should not be confused for weakness. And there are others. I can name them here and report on their sense of frustration and anguish. But let's give them a chance, a chance to speak up to their leaders, before the country's slide down to chaos becomes a grim reality.

### Flood situation in Sylhet unchanged

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, June 28: Overall flood situation in Goainghat, Companyganj, Jaintapur and Zakiganj remained unchanged today.

Erosion in Kushiara river at Shaola Ghat of Bianbazar upazila and at the upazila head-quarter at Goainghat and Companyganj engulfed about 100 business establishments and part of three markets.

## Hearing: UZ Parishad

From Page 1 Col 4

relating to people's participation (deleted by the 4th Amendment) in the administration of state affairs at all levels was restored. The amendment which also restored Articles 59 and 60 spelled that functioning at all levels of the government be further democratised and that effective participation of the people through their elected representatives in administration at all levels shall be ensured.

Barrister Islam said when the Constitution empowers the people to administer the republic at all levels through their elected representatives, the stripping off elected chairmen (upazila) from power and giving those to government appointed bureaucrats were contrary to the spirit of the Constitution.

He said the government would always extend all encouragement to the development of local government.

This aspect, he pointed out, was never deleted from the Constitution and remained intact during all changes.

As for the charges of corruption, wastage and inefficiency levelled against upazila as reasons for dissolution, Islam said it was not unique in Bangladesh. There were preponderances of these vices in other countries in early stages of local governments, he said.

He said wastage and corruption were found in the USA and those were corrected, but those institutions were not dissolved. In a lighter vein, Islam said the head should not be chopped off to get rid of headache.

Making lengthy quotations from American and British constitutional writers, Islam said the concept of running a modern state without decentralised administration was simply impossible.

He said British colonial rulers introduced local government in India late last century and it flourished mostly in Bengal where these acts came into being which

continued to remain in force and valid today. Articles 9, 11, 59, 60 and 152 were incorporated in the Constitution on the basis of past experience, he added.


Islam said Constitution has to be viewed in the light of the historical experiences and added Articles 9, 11, 59, 60 and 152 were not incorporated suddenly. The usefulness of these articles were felt. The local government institution has to be examined and analysed on historical perspective and on the basis of experiences of those countries where those developed and flourished.

Speaking about the experiences of local government institutions in the USA, Norway, France and Italy, Islam said besides doing their own functions, these institutions also work as agents of central government.

As for meeting expenditures, he said besides the revenue it gets under different heads the local government receives grant and loans from central government. The institution also raises fund through various other means to meet expenses. Such acts, the counsel argued, do not alter or change the character of local government.

Barrister Islam said it was true that development programmes are mostly financed by the donors, but that do not change the definition of national government. Similarly, the local government institution in the country which receives fund from the central government cannot be construed as its (central government's) part since national government being a recipient of donations is not a part of EEC, USA or Japanese administration.

The other members of the bench are Justice Mohammad Habibur Rahman, Justice A T M Azif, Justice Mustafa Kamal and Justice Latifur Rahman. The hearing resumes today (Monday).



**বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক**

প্রধান কার্যালয়

ঢাকা।

**বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

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সহযোগিতা করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা  
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