

# 51pc work of Jamuna Bridge completed

Some 51 per cent work of the Jamuna bridge, the largest project of the country, has been completed, reports UNB.

This was informed at the 52nd meeting of the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Authority (JMBA) held yesterday with Adviser for Communications Syed Manzur Elahi in the chair.

The meeting discussed various problems and the current stage of implementation of four contracts of the project that began in October 1995, said an official handout.

It observed that different problems, including management, technical and supply of materials, have slowed down the implementation pace of this giant and complicated project scheduled to be completed by 1997.

The meeting asked the bridge authority to complete the project within the stipulated time.

It also discussed matters relating to payment of premium and other dues of the people affected by land acquisition for the bridge and took several decisions to speed up the rehabilitation process.

A proposal to construct the JMBA headquarter building

## Stock position of foodgrains satisfactory

The stock position of foodgrains in the country is satisfactory, this was informed at a meeting in Bangladesh Secretariat in the city, reports BSS.

The meeting reviewed the overall food position and price situation of foodgrains.

Agriculture, Food, Land, Relief and Fisheries and Livestock Adviser A Z M Nasiruddin presided over the meeting.

It was informed in the meeting that the quantity of food stock was 9 lakh 40 thousand metric tons on June 11 and it would rise to 10 lakh 50 thousand metric tons on July 30.

The meeting also reviewed elaborately the food for education programme, VGO, TR, GR, food for works, procurement of foodgrains and jute bags.

## One killed

Besides, five people were injured during a clash between the processionists of AL and BNP at Jallaghata in Banshkhali (Chittagong-15) yesterday afternoon.

In Narayanganj, 20 people were injured when miscreants attacked several election processions of Awami League candidate for Narayanganj-1 yesterday.

Witnesses said the armed miscreants attacked the processions at Taraba, Kanchan, Murapara and Yousufganj areas.

One of the injured, Berek (26), was rushed to Dhaka for treatment.

Local Awami League leaders blamed BNP for the attacks.

Our Staff correspondent adds: At least 10 people were injured in a clash between the activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jot (IOJ) at Mir Hazirbagh under Demra thana in the city yesterday afternoon.

Three of the injured — Nawshad Alam, 35, Shahidul Islam, 28, and Nazmul Hasan, 20 — were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), hospital sources said.

The clash began when the processions of the rival parties from opposite directions faced each other at around 6 pm, local people and police said.

In another incident, at least five persons were injured when an unidentified group pelted brickbats on a campaign procession of the Awami League near Shergunbagicha High School yesterday evening.

Our Khulna Correspondent adds: Fourteen Jamaat and six BNP activists were injured in an hour-long clash Sunday midnight at Koira thana of the district.

Police and eye witnesses said, the clash began when a group of BNP supporters attacked the procession of Jamaat.

The attackers also damaged two motorcycles escorting the Jamaat candidate contesting from Khulna-6.

Condition of Mostafizur Rahman, president of Koira thana unit of Shibir is stated to be critical.

## Honorarium

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to increase their honorarium for election duty from Tk 60 to Tk 80 per person.

Following an instruction from the office of the chief adviser, the EC Secretary investigated into the matter and found that originally the honorarium in the February elections, was fixed at Tk 100 per person and no polling personnel was paid the amount earmarked for them by the EC.

Honorarium of the presiding officers in the June 12 elections has been increased to Tk 120, officials said.

Meanwhile, some presiding officers participating in the training programme for the June 12 elections sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) alleged that they did not yet get their honorarium of Tk 100 per person for attending the programme.

Officials at the EC said the money was already despatched to the respective deputy commissioners and thana nabhi officers.

also came up for discussion at the meeting. Considering its importance, the meeting approved the proposal in principle.

Adviser for Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry Dr Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, Planning Commission Member (infrastructure) Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, ERD Secretary Lutfullah Majid, Water Resources Secretary Dr Moshirur Rahman, Finance Division Secretary Dr Akbar Ali Khan, Roads and Railway Division Secretary Wahidul Islam, Chief Secretary Staff of Bangladesh Army Major General Muhammad Anwar Hossain and Jamuna Bridge Division Secretary Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury were, among other, present at the meeting.

## JP briefs foreign diplomats

The Jatiya Party held a briefing session with ambassadors, high commissioners and senior diplomats of various embassies and high commissions in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

Chairman of the JP's central election conducting committee, Saeed Tarek speaking on behalf of the party said that the present caretaker government had been showing 'negative attitude' toward the Jatiya Party.

He said the neutrality of the caretaker government could be questioned now as party chairman HM Ershad was not allowed to address the nation over Radio and Television before the June 12 polls.

## 72 die in Eritrean ship fire

ASMAR, June 10: More than 70 people were killed when a ship caught fire off the coast of Eritrea last Thursday as it was heading for Saudi Arabia, Eritrean state radio said today.

The radio said 72 people died when the ship caught on fire near Dahlak off the Red Sea coast of Eritrea last Thursday. It said the ship carrying 105 people was trying illegally to cross Eritrea's maritime border, reports Reuters.

## Shamsul murder

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nection with the killing till last night while police was yet to locate the spot where Shamsul Huq alias Santi, 30, was attacked by a gang of unidentified miscreants late night Saturday, police said. Shamsul was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with fatal stab injuries. He died there Sunday.

Police suspected that Shamsul was a member of a notorious gang of professional terrorists for Kamrangirchar area. He broke with the group and took away some illegal weapons few months back. This may be the cause of the murder, police said. There is also a case with Labagh thana against Shamsul under the Explosives Act, police added.

Meanwhile, Shamsul's mother, Sakhina Bibi, lodged a case with Labagh thana accusing BNP activists for the killing while his younger brother Anwar Hossain in a GD accused AL activists for the murder.

## Zulu

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on seven days' police remand Friday.

Zulu was produced before the court of Magistrate Sharfuddin Ahmed yesterday. He recorded a confessional statement, police sources added.

An armed gang shot dead Shahabuddin near his residence in the afternoon of May 31.

Police so far arrested two persons — Zulu and Salimuddin alias Sallu — of the 10 accused named in the FIR with Mohanadpur thana. Sallu was arrested on the day of the murder and later after four days' remand he was sent to jail last week.

## Ershad's speech

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the Constitution purporting to equal right to all, is not applicable in this case."

He also submitted that as the government had not violated any law Article 31 of the Constitution contemplating that everyone enjoys equal right to protection of law is also not relevant with this case.

There are some restrictions in the Jail Code as to communicate with persons outside the jail, he submitted.

The AG further submitted that a prisoner, with some restrictions, only can communicate with his relatives and friends, not with his political workers.

"For these restrictions Ershad is unable to function as his party chairman and there is an acting chairman of his party and for the same reason he, as a prisoner, cannot address the electorate," he argued.

The Attorney General again submitted that the letter inviting the party chief or his nominee to address the electorate is an administrative order which does not create any legal right in favour of Ershad and the same cannot be enforced under writ jurisdiction.

Attorney General M Nurul-lah assisted by Additional Attorney General Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan and Assistant Attorney General Sairud Rahman moved for the government while Senior Advocate Rafique-ul-Huq assisted by Barrister Kazi Shahadad Hossain appeared for Ershad.



BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a big public meeting in front of the party office at Naya Paltan in the city yesterday. — Star photo

# It's a propaganda, says Khaleda

## Civil servants won't face action for joining non-cooperation

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday dispelled the "propaganda" that her party, if returned to power, would take actions against those civil servants who had joined the non-cooperation movement.

"We would take no action against any government servant. None would be terminated or be punished. Rather, we would honour them as per their qualities," she said while addressing a huge election-projection meeting organised by her party at Naya Paltan in the city.

Some political parties and individuals are doing propaganda against the BNP, Begum Zia said.

Begum Zia said, "While in power, we never took punitive action against anybody (in the administration) without any reason. We did justice to all. We also gave due honour to our political opponents," she said.

Chaired by A M Zahiruddin Khan, chief of the BNP election coordination committee, the rally was also addressed by the party's candidates from eight constituencies in the city — Ekhlis Mollah (Dhaka-11), Major (ret'd) Quamrul Islam (Dhaka-5), Barrister Abul Hasan (Dhaka-8), Sadek Hossain Khoka (Dhaka-7), Major (ret'd) Abdul Mannan (Dhaka-10), Salahuddin Ahmed (Dhaka-4), Mirza Abbas (Dhaka-6) and Mir Shawqat Ali (Dhaka-9).

Introducing the party's nominees for the June 12 parliamentary election, Begum Zia called upon the people to vote for them "to help continue development of the capital."

The former Prime Minister listed some "achievements" during BNP rule and also reiterated the major election pledges including free female education up to HSC level, and pension for elderly citizens. She urged the people to vote for the sheaf of paddy, BNP's election symbol, for "continuation of national development."

Termining the June 12 polls was very crucial for the nation, she said. "Cast your vote judiciously. Because, your votes would determine whether the development works will continue or not."

Begum Zia also pledged setting up of more industries in the northern districts and creation of more job opportunities, especially for the women, to remove unemployment.

Mizan blasts caretaker govt

Jatiya Party acting chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury yesterday lambasted the caretaker government for not allowing over radio and television and accused it of tilting towards a particular political party, reports UNB.

"The government deliberately did not allow the JP chairman to address the nation over radio and television as it has been influenced by the BNP," he said while addressing a press conference at the Photo Journalists' Association office here in the evening.

Former president H M Ershad was debarred from addressing the nation over radio and television by a Supreme Court order yesterday.

"We have doubt about the fair election as the government has lost its neutrality," Mizan Chowdhury said accusing the caretaker government of step-motherly attitude towards the Jatiya Party.

## NGO official assaulted in Savar

By Staff Correspondent

An official of the Centre for Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP), a voluntary organisation based in Savar, was attacked and beaten up by a group of hoodlums near the Savar bus stand yesterday.

The attackers stopped a car of the administrative officer of CRP, Ahsan Habib. Dragged him out, beat him and took away Taka 5,000 from him. They also broke the windshield of the car, said a press release of CRP.

In a FIR filed with the Savar thana, the CRP authorities alleged that an identified group of miscreants have been trying to damage the organisation through terrorist activities.

## Political violence

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armed youth wings, accountable for acts that are violations of international human rights law and crimes under Bangladesh law.

In a 26-page report entitled 'Bangladesh: Political violence on all sides', HRW said "the power struggle between Bangladesh's main political parties have fostered a situation of lawlessness and civil strife in which willful acts of violence have become routine features of the political process."

HRW noted that just before the February 15 polls, gunbattles and other armed confrontations broke out frequently in the streets of Dhaka and other cities. "Several newspaper offices were attacked in the main cities, and journalists and news photographers reporting on the violence were assaulted and threatened," said the human rights organisation.

It said, on the pretext of searching for illegal arms, the police conducted a brutal raid at Dhaka University, beating and arresting minority students, many of whom were not politically active.

HRW finds that all parties to political violence in Bangladesh have violated their obligations under domestic and international law.

BSS adds: BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia last night refuted the allegations made by certain parties that her BNP government introduced the system requiring prime ministers' permission to enquire into corruption by investigating agencies.

She said her government inherited the system requiring the head of the government's permission for investigations into corruption.

She described the allegations as baseless and intended by certain parties to gain propaganda mileage before the election.

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## Polis will be held peacefully, Biswas tells Solarz

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday said he, as a democrat in his long political career, was committed to smooth functioning of democratic norms in the country, reports UNB.

He was talking to a delegation of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) of the United States. The four-member delegation, led by Stephen J Solarz, called on the President at Baghabhan. The other members of the delegation are Andrew Peacock, Eric Bjornlund and Tom Metta.

Welcoming them, the President said the entire nation was now poised for election scheduled for June 12.

"The people are enthusiastically waiting for participating in the elections and they are very much conscious of their right of franchise," he told the Americans.

Team leader Solarz said the presence of so many international election observers reflected the interest they have about Bangladesh.

He also said he had witnessed the exercise of democracy in the country and wished its total success.

Secretary to the President Nooruddin Almasood, Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan and Military Secretary to the President Maj Gen Ruhul Alam Chowdhury were present.

## SAARC observer team to cover 34 districts

All the 40 members of the South Asian NGO group overseeing Bangladesh's general election yesterday proceeded to 34 districts to undertake observation on the pre-election environment, reports UNB.

They will consult representatives of political candidates, local officials and representatives of NGOs on local issues relating to fairness of the electoral process.

Each member of the observer group will cover three constituencies on the election day by directly visiting as many polling areas as would be possible, said a press release.

The observers will also follow the counting process to ensure that they obtain as detailed and comprehensive understanding of the electoral process as may be practicable.

Seven members of the group will be assigned to cover the constituencies in Dhaka city.

## Italian senator, British MP lead EU team

Election observers from the European Union (EU) were formally briefed on the electoral process and the relevant laws and regulations governing parliamentary elections in Bangladesh, at a two-hour briefing session at the Hotel Sheraton yesterday, says a press release.

The briefing was conducted by Nazim Kamran Chowdhury, Yasmeen Murshed and Akhtesham Chowdhury of the Centre for Analysis and Choice (CAC), a Dhaka-based organisation dedicated to public policy research and legislative support.

The EU election observers, comprising representatives from EU member states, will visit the six divisional headquarters in teams of two to observe the parliamentary election tomorrow. They will leave for their respective destinations today by road and air.

Meanwhile, Cayetana De Zulueta, a senator from Italy, and Peter Shore, a member of the British Parliament, were elected team leader and deputy team leader respectively of the EU team of polls monitors.

## Rallies banned

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Article (80) says, a person is guilty of an offence punishable for a term which may extend to three years and minimum six months with fine on the polling day if he (1) uses in such manner as to be audible within the polling station, any gramophone, loudspeaker or other apparatus for reproducing or amplifying sounds; (2) persistently shouts in such manner as to be audible within the polling station; (3) does any act which (a) disturbs or causes annoyance to any elector visiting a polling station for the purpose of voting, or (b) interferes with the performance of the duty of a presiding officer, assistant presiding officer, polling officer or any other person performing any duty at the polling station; or (4) abets the doing of any of the aforesaid acts.

The press release said that the above offences are cognizable as per criminal procedures and non-bailable and as such police can arrest the offenders without any warrant and it can be tried in session courts.

## The Midnight File

### Accord to end war in Chechnya

NAZRAN, Russia, June 10: Russian and rebel Chechen negotiators signed an agreement today intended to end 18 months of fighting in the breakaway Chechnya region. The agreement, read out to reporters at the signing ceremony, provided for a withdrawal of Russian troops by the end of August and a demilitarisation of Chechnya — a term meaning the disarmament of rebel Chechen forces seeking independence, reports Reuters.

## Give at least a chance to AL, appeals Hasina

Awami League president Sheikh Hasina yesterday appealed to the people to give at least a chance to her party to serve the nation by establishing a terrorism and corruption free society, reports UNB.

Addressing the nation over radio and television last night, she said the Awami League wanted to establish in the country the political culture of accountability.

Hasina said: "We believe that the people is the main and only component of society and state. So, we want to stay beside the people by establishing the culture of accountability."

She apologised to the people for any mistakes committed by the Awami League while rebuilding the war-ravaged country from 1972-75, urging them to take those with good grace.

Hasina said: "I know you have not committed any mistake in exercising your right of franchise in the past. It is my firm belief that this time also you'll take the correct decision," she said in an address to the nation over radio and television on the eve of Wednesday's parliamentary polls.

Begum Zia said the national election of 1991 was the election of establishing democracy while the February 15 election was to ensure the continuity of democratic and constitutional process.

She urged the people to elect the BNP nominees to the 7th parliament for peace, progress and continued prosperity of the country as well as to protect democracy, independence and sovereignty.

## Nooruddin returns home

Former army chief and Awami League nominee in a Narsingdi constituency lieutenant General (ret'd) Nooruddin Khan returned home last night after having treatment in a Singapore hospital, family sources said in the city, reports BSS.

## All set for polls

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his confidence about peaceful holding of elections. These did not worry him at all and that the EC was now ready for the elections, he said yesterday at his office.

The EC completed despatch of 56,716,937 ballot papers (equal to the number of voters) to the 25,957 polling stations across the country on June 7. Other election materials were sent to all the centres earlier.

Moreover, the EC, under a UNDP-aided project to educate voters and election officials for tomorrow's election, had produced 8,75,000 posters, five lakh leaflets, 22 TV spots, 14 radio spots, eight short films, 8,75,000 copies of the code of conduct, five thousand folders and 35,000 leaflets for national and international observers.

As the election results are scheduled to be announced directly from the EC office through TV and radio, experts from both the media were seen yesterday at the EC premises setting up their facilities.

A total of 268 foreign observers and diplomats will observe tomorrow's election. Many of them have already arrived in the city and the rest will arrive today, EC sources said. The 99 diplomats who will monitor the polls represent Dhaka-based high commissions and embassies of different countries.

The local observers will total about 35,000 or more, the sources said.

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