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## Squabble over IG, Prisons ends

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has finally withdrawn Inspector General (IG), Prisons, who was appointed to the post on deputation from the armed forces four years ago for a period of six months only.

Additional Inspector General, Prisons, Liaqat Ali Khan has now been appointed the new IG, Prisons. The former IG Brigadier Waliur Rahman Chowdhury has been transferred to Mymensingh Medical College as its director.

Bypassing rules and regulations, authorities in 1997 appointed Brigadier Waliur from the armed forces as IG, Prisons, leaving out potential candidates from the rele

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## Dipu's bail prayer rejected

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka yesterday rejected the bail petition of Dipu Chowdhury, principal accused in the Taraj Uddin murder case.

The Court also directed the investigation officer of the case to submit a report regarding Dipu's involvement in the killing.

Lawyer for Dipu submitted a bail petition stating that the accused has been implicated in the case as part

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## Power plight revisited

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Frequent power failure and low voltage coupled with loadshedding throughout the day increased the sufferings of the city-dwellers yesterday.

According to sources, city's Moghbazar, Noyatola, Iskatan, Karwan Bazar, Mohammadpur, Green Road and different areas of the old part of the city were the most affected areas yesterday.

DESA officials attributed yesterday's power problems to the rain and storm on Wednesday that tripped a number of power supply lines.

The Ulon-Moghbazar 33 kV line tripped yesterday morning cutting off power in Iskatan, Noyatola, Moghbazar and Karwan Bazar areas

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## Abductors skip talks again

### Kalparanjan expects negotiations to begin today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Uncertainty over negotiations with the armed group of tribals holding three Europeans hostage in the forests of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) continued as talks with them could not be held for the second consecutive day yesterday.

The still unidentified group kidnapped three engineers --Torben Mikkelsen and Nils Hulgard of Denmark and Tim Selby of Britain -- from a road construction site at Betchhari in Naniarchar thana in Rangamati on Friday last.

They demanded TK nine crore as ransom and proposed talks with negotiators led by Minister for CHT Affairs Kalparanjan Chakma on Wednesday. But they did not show up for the negotiations on Wednesday and also yesterday with the minister who was accompanied by Dipankar Talukder MP and UP Chairman of Mahalchhari Archeamedis Chakam who was acting as a mediator, officials in Dhaka said.

The abductors have reiterated their demand for withdrawal of army cordon around their hideout in Kalapahar between Rangamati and Khagrachhari and put a new condition for negotiated release of the three hostages.

They have demanded that Kalparanjan Chakma, Dipankar Talukder MP and Archeamedis Chakma should accompany them to a safe place after army withdrawal and said they would then free the hostages, our Staff Correspondent in Chittagong reported yesterday quoting sources.

Proposed talks with the abductors on Wednesday at a Duk Bungalow in Mahalchhari and at a designated venue yesterday did not take place as the they did not show up.

The team led by Kalparanjan Chakma went there in vain and returned. Earlier, the abductors had demanded presence of the minister and the MP along with the UP Chairman.

Considering the urgency of release of the hostages, the minister got clearance from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to conduct the negotiations with the abductors, sources said.

Two representatives of the abductors turned up at the meeting venue yesterday with notes from the abductors and also from the hostages report

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## Purchase of Navy frigate

### JS body ROK bound

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An 11-member parliamentary team leaves for South Korea today to see the progress of building a frigate for Bangladesh Navy.

The frigate worth 105 million US dollars is being built by Daewoo Corporation and 80 per cent payment has already been made.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence Ministry at a meeting yesterday discussed the issue in view of recent reports of Daewoo's becoming bankrupt.

Representatives from the Navy, however, assured the Committee that financial problems of Daewoo would not affect building of the

frigate, meeting sources said.

They told the meeting Daewoo Shipyard and Marine Engineering had assured that Bangladesh would get delivery of the frigate soon.

The Navy representatives also said there is a guarantee clause in the contract for the frigate stating that in case of any failure on the part of Daewoo, the South Korean government would be the guarantor for the frigate.

When a committee member and ruling party lawmaker wanted to see the guarantee clause, he was assured that the Defence Ministry

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## Khaleda's words fall on deaf ears

### Liaison body sticks to 2-day hartal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Central Liaison Committee of the BNP-led opposition alliance has ignored an instruction of opposition leader and BNP chief Khaleda Zia to call off Monday's hartal in view of the Hajj flight.

February 27 has been scheduled

for the last Hajj flight.

The alliance earlier called for countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal on Sunday and Monday in a bid to force the government to stand down.

Sources said Khaleda prior to leaving for Singapore for treatment

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## Defenders down, Indians to go

### Local lads romp to final

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh cricketers put behind their previous match blues when the unpredictable hosts thumped down a five-wicket defeat on Sri Lanka in the first semifinal of the GrameenPhone Second Under-17 Asia Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

In a reduced 40-over contest, Bangladesh, chasing a modest Lankan total of 140 all out in 34.5 overs, rattled up 144 for five in 37.2 overs. The match was truncated by five overs due to wet ground condition.

Eliminated from semifinal stage in Pakistan last year, Bangladesh will now take on India in the grand finale at the same venue tomorrow.

It was a remarkable turnaround for the hosts after going down to Pakistan

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## Indian cos want batteries from Bangladesh out

### Writ filed for anti-dumping duty

STAR REPORT

Two Indian companies have filed a petition asking for initiation of an anti-dumping investigation and imposition of anti-dumping duty on battery export to India in a bid to stop export of lead acid battery from Bangladesh.

Lead acid battery is among few products Bangladesh is now exporting to India as a least developed country (LDC) under the South Asian Preferential Trade Agreement (SAPTA).

"We urge the government to take up the matter seriously with Indian

government to uphold the spirit of SAPTA and promote two-way trade between the two countries," said Niaz Rahim, President of Bangladesh Accumulator and Battery Manufacturers Association (BABMA) at a press conference at National Press Club in the city yesterday.

Kazi Mohiuddin and Layek Ali, vice-presidents, and other officials of the association were present at the press conference.

Niaz Rahim said Exide Industries Limited and Amara Raja Batteries Limited have filed the anti-dumping

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## CEC, AL debate over by-polls anomaly

### Dialogue on electoral reforms off to a positive note

NAZRUL ISLAM

The process of dialogue between the Election Commission (EC) and the political parties began yesterday with a positive note as the ruling Awami League (AL) appreciated the EC's reform proposals to ensure fairness in future elections.

The discussion however was marked by a heated debate between the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the ruling party leaders over 'irregularities and fraudulence' in some recent by-

elections, sources concerned said.

The EC has initiated discussions with political parties on its reform proposals which include registration of political parties with the EC. AL was invited on the first day.

The EC would hold meetings with the opposition BNP and other parties on the same agenda. They would be invited soon, an EC official said.

The ruling party gave a positive response to EC's reform proposals and expressed eagerness about

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