

## Bill to repeal PSA

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Trial in the pending cases will continue with the special tribunals formed under the PSA, said the bill adding that the accused will be able to seek bail as per the CrPC. The PSA had a very limited scope for bail.

Currently, about 15,000 people are accused in nearly 2,500 cases pending under the PSA.

The government has meantime initiated a process to withdraw all 'political' cases filed mainly against the BNP-led coalition activists by the previous Awami League government.

The AL government introduced the PSA two years ago amid widespread protests against the stringent law. The then opposition BNP and its allies enforced hartal

against the law calling it a black one. Nevertheless, the BNP-led coalition government has so far filed about 300 cases mainly against its political opponents since its assumption of office nearly four months ago.

The government may also move today another bill providing for some restrictions for port workers. Besides, a resolution to thank President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury for his address to the House is also on the cards.

Having opened on Thursday, the current session is due to take up regular agenda, including questions, notices etc from today. The inaugural sitting was marked by a presidential speech besides rituals like selection of a panel of chairmen and adoption of obituary references.

The parliament is likely to pass a number of other bills, including the one to restore women's reserved seats in the House during its current session initially planned for a March 18 end.

## AL writ

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Hearing on the writ is likely to take place today.

On January 23, the BNP-led four-party alliance government released the white paper on some 40 cases of alleged corruption, irregularities and abuse of power by the AL government. This was the first such white paper in the country.

Former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and almost all senior ministers in her cabinet were found involved in 'irregularities and financial mismanagement' between 1996 and 2001, according to the white paper.

The former ministers include Mohammad Nasim, Amir Hossain Amu, SAMS Kibria, ASHK Sadique, Abdur Razzak, Prof Rafiqul Islam, Mosharrarf Hossain, Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and Moulana Nurul Islam.

Prepared by a cell of four consultants, the 793-page white paper in two volumes was published two days before the end of the coalition government's 100-day programmes.

## Hasina tells BCL men Resist distortion of history in textbooks

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina called upon students to build up resistance to "terrorism, anarchy, torture, repression and distortion of history in textbooks."

She also urged the students to work for ensuring a congenial atmosphere on the campuses and join a movement against the "failure, incompetence, corrupt and autocratic" BNP-Jamaat alliance government.

The AL president was speaking when the Chhatra League leaders of Dhaka District met her at Sudha Sadan yesterday.

Since the assumption of power by the BNP-Jamaat alliance government, an anarchic situation has been prevailing at all educational institutions and terrorism has become a common phenomenon on the campus," she said.

Hasina claimed that during the five-year rule of Awami League all educational institutions were free from terrorism and session jam.

Maximum use of information technology was ensured to update the education system, and the standard of education was raised, she said.

## Benazir to return home before Oct

XINHUA, Islamabad

Former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has vowed that she would return to her country before October to take part in the elections, according to the local News Network International (NNI) yesterday.

"I want safe assurances for this purpose and it seems they will not give me safe assurances. But even then, I will go before October because I want to take part in elections, and I understand that the credibility of elections will depend on my participation in them," the NNI quoted Benazir as saying.

She said that the People's Party has decided to keep open doors for talks and to continue talks with the people of the government.

She claimed that these talks are still deadlocked because the military government wants her to leave politics, according to the NNI.

## DU Dean election today

DU CORRESPONDENT

Elections of the Deans of different faculties of Dhaka University will be held today.

Candidates of the ruling BNP and opposition Awami League backed Blue Panel are contesting the elections for seven Dean posts.

The Blue Panel candidates are Prof Kazi Shahidullah for Arts Faculty, Prof RIM Aminur Rashid for Science, Prof Mizanur Rahman for Law, Prof Gias Uddin Mollah for Social Science, Prof ZN Nawsher Ali Khan for Biological Science, Prof M Mahfuzur Rahman for Business and Prof Bidyut Kanti Datta for Pharmacy Faculty.

White Panel candidates are Prof Sadrul Amin for Arts Faculty, Prof Yusuf Haider for Science, Dr Taslima Mansoor for Law, Prof Mohammad Asaduzzaman for Social Science, Prof Abul Bashir for Biological Science, Prof Abul Kalam Azad for Business and Prof Chowdhury Mahmudul Hasan for Pharmacy Faculty.

The voting will be held at the Teacher Student Centre (TSC) from 9 am to 1.00 pm without any break.

## Bush advisor

**FROM PAGE 12**  
director for Asian affairs, Patterson served concurrently in 1998-2000 as president of Raytheon Japan; senior country manager for Taiwan; and president, North Asia Division, Raytheon International Inc.

Fluent in Japanese, he retired from the US Navy in 1994 and since then has been a senior associate at the Pacific Forum CSIS thinktank in Honolulu and a consultant to Armitage Associates LC and The Scowcroft Group.

## PCP leader

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dents gathered at the administrative building and shouted slogans for release of the arrested students.

The vice-chancellor did not attend his office yesterday and ran a makeshift office at his residence.

Meanwhile, some JCD activists led by its President Asrafur Alam Jewel brought out a procession from the VC's residence, protesting the attacks on the administrative building and the VC's and proctor's residences. The JU registrar, some pro-BNP teachers and officials of the university also joined the procession.

Police have been deployed at the VC's residence in the wake of high-pitched tension.

VC Prof. Jasimuddin Ahmed told journalists that he did not give permission to the police to enter the campus.

The authorities are thinking of



President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury addresses a citizens' rally at Munshiganj yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

## US stance against 'axis of evil' major challenge to Russia

AP, Moscow

President George W Bush's denunciation of Iraq, Iran and North Korea as an "axis of evil" presents a major challenge to Russia, which has strong ties to all three nations, and could blunt the striking improvement in relations recently between Russia and the United States.

Over the past week, senior Russia officials and lawmakers have warned that any unilateral US moves to extend the anti-terror campaign beyond Afghanistan could jeopardize Russia's support for Washington's efforts to eradicate the al-Qaida error network.

Russia has been a strong supporter of the US anti-terror campaign since the Sept 11 attacks on New York and Washington, but the Kremlin does not want to be perceived as the White House's handmaid.

"We mustn't follow American policy, especially if the United States assumes the role of global policeman," Sergei Rogov, the head of the USA-Canada Institute think tank in Moscow, told reporters Friday.

US National security Adviser Condoleezza Rice said Thursday that Russia is being asked to help promote change in Iran, Iraq and North Korea.

But Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov questioned whether there was enough evidence to label the nations an "axis of evil," as Bush did in his State of the Union speech Tuesday.

"That is what has to be verified," Kasyanov said after meeting with Vice President Dick Cheney.

Otherwise, the government has remained silent on Bush's speech.

Both Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin want smooth relations in the run-up to their first summit in Russia this May. Key issues are on the agenda, including a strong desire by both countries to reach a final agreement on major nuclear arms cuts.

The two leaders also want to clear the way for an improvement in trade ties, and Putin has set his sights on membership in the World Trade Organisation. Russia's bid will require strong support from Washington.

Russia's close ties with Iraq, Iran and North Korea stand in the way. And there are signs the Kremlin will continue to resist Washington's demands that it change its policies towards the three nations.

Just last week, Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov said following a meeting with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz that Russia "does not accept the course of mechanically extending the anti-terrorist opera-

tion to any state, including Iraq."

Russia has long been supportive of Iraq, backing Saddam Hussein's efforts to bring an end to UN sanctions imposed for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Russia is also Iraq's leading trading partner. Iraq owes Russia about \$1.7 billion, and a new conflict could jeopardise repayment.

"The United States is attempting to disrupt the existing economic relations of Russia with these countries and here is pursuing a purely commercial goal," said Konstantin Kosachev, deputy head of the defense committee in the State Duma, the lower house of the Russian parliament.

Russia also has close ties with Iran, and has a \$1.8 billion deal with Tehran to help complete the Bushehr nuclear power plant. The United States says Iran could use the technology to develop nuclear weapons, and has accused Russia of being a proliferator of weapons of mass destruction.

Putin forged close ties with North Korea last year during a rare visit to Russia by that country's reclusive leader, Kim Jong Il. The two leaders signed a declaration pledging close consultations. Russia promised to help rebuild the North Korea economy, and both countries roundly criticised US plans for a national missile defense shield.

## Warlord's forces rearm in Gardez for fresh fighting

AP, Kabul

A warlord re-armed his men yesterday to mount another assault on a provincial capital where residents don't want him as governor and are dismayed that US forces operating in the area won't come to their rescue.

The power struggle for Gardez, capital of Pakia province, triggered the worst fighting in Afghanistan since the ouster of the Taliban and dealt a setback to Prime Minister Hamid Karzai, who returned early yesterday from a six-day trip to the United States and Britain.

Warriors of the Gardez local council forced fighters loyal to Karzai's newly appointed governor for Pakia, warlord Bachha Khan, to retreat into the surrounding mountains Friday.

Khan's brother, Wazir Khan, told The Associated Press that 10 truckloads of weapons and ammunition had been sent to the warlord's men and that fighting would resume today.

"They killed 11 of our people, we buried them, and tomorrow we will begin fighting again," Wazir Khan said by telephone.

Government mediators dispatched to broker a solution had not contacted Bachha Khan's side, Wazir said. It was not immediately possible to contact the council in Gardez, 100 kilometers (60 miles) south of Kabul.

In New York, Afghan Foreign Minister Abdullah repeated calls for the British-led international peacekeeping force currently limited to protecting the government in Kabul, the capital, to be expanded and

deployed in the volatile provinces, where warlords hold power.

Abdullah endorsed a suggestion Friday that the force be increased from 5,000 to about 20,000 and spread to major regional centres, including Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif, Jalalabad and Kandahar.

"I think that will provide enough assurances ... about maintaining the stability throughout the country," Abdullah said.

American troops are not taking part in the peacekeeping force, but are combating the countryside for al-Qaida and Taliban renegades. Pakia province, where Osama bin Laden's terror network had extensive training camps and arms caches, has been a target of repeated US airstrikes and ground operations.

Combatants said at least 61 people were killed during the factional fighting Wednesday and Thursday in Gardez, half of them civilians. US aircraft hovered over the town of 40,000 people but did not try to stop the clashes. Nor did special forces troops conducting operations from an old fort nearby.

"We looked to the Americans, hoping they would do something," said Abdul Malek, a policeman. "The people of Gardez are a little disappointed in America now."

American officials at the military base in the southern city of Kandahar said that part of the US mission is to assist the Afghan government and that the situation was being monitored.

"We believe this is an Afghan situation and they are certainly free

to govern themselves," said Marines spokesman 1st Lt. James Jarvis. "We're executors of national policy, not policymakers."

While professing loyalty to Karzai's interim administration, the Gardez council claims that Bachha Khan is a smuggler and tyrant and want someone else as governor. The council has requested UN mediation, the Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press agency reported Friday.

## Bomb hurled at Pabna AL office

UNB, Pabna

Unidentified terrorists hurled bomb at the district Awami League office when a party meeting was in progress yesterday.

AL leaders said terrorists hurled the bomb when they were holding the meeting on the first floor of the party office at Abdul Hamid road. However, there was no damage or injury in the blast.

District AL general secretary Rezaur Rahim Lal blamed BNP and Jamaat activists for the incident. BNP and Jamaat leaders denied the allegation.

Meanwhile, AL took out a procession and a held rally in the town condemning the incident.

## JU students go on rampage

**FROM PAGE 1**  
rods, bamboo sticks and bricks broke the windowpanes of the teachers' quarters, but the proctor did not come out of his residence.

Then, the agitated students rampaged through the dairy farm gate, but the police deployed there lobbed teargas shells and fired rubber bullets to disperse them.

The students set a Dhaka-bound bus of Supti Paribhan on fire. Police lobbed 50 teargas canisters and fired several gunshots, which left 35 students injured.

The students then rushed to the VC's residence at around 2.30am and urged him to stop police action. They also broke the lights and windowpanes of his residence.

Meanwhile, police intercepted a mourning procession brought out in the morning.

Later, the demonstrating stu-

dents gathered at the administrative building and shouted slogans for release of the arrested students.

The vice-chancellor did not attend his office yesterday and ran a makeshift office at his residence.

Meanwhile, some JCD activists led by its President Asrafur Alam Jewel brought out a procession from the VC's residence, protesting the attacks on the administrative building and the VC's and proctor's residences. The JU registrar, some pro-BNP teachers and officials of the university also joined the procession.

Police have been deployed at the VC's residence in the wake of high-pitched tension.

VC Prof. Jasimuddin Ahmed told journalists that he did not give permission to the police to enter the campus.

The authorities are thinking of

fling a case against the ETV for its 'wrong' information that 40 students were arrested -- the "fabricated report that incited the students to violence", he said.

Another source on condition of anonymity said the authorities might file cases against some students who were involved in the incidents of ransacking VC's and proctor's residences.

Some female students alleged that police harassed many of them in the name of search, when they were returning to their dormitories from Dhaka Friday evening.

An emergency meeting called by the JU Syndicate yesterday to review the situation was postponed due to lack of quorum.

## Derailment Train service on Dhaka-Ctg-Sylhet routes disrupted for 7 hours

BSS, Dhaka

Train service on Dhaka-Chittagong and Dhaka-Sylhet routes were disrupted for more than seven hours as a wagon of a Dhaka-bound container train derailed at a place between Arikhola and Ghorashal railway stations yesterday.

Following the derailment, passengers trains remained stranded at different railway stations till 5 pm.

Railway officials said a wagon of a Dhaka-bound container train from Chittagong derailed at about 10 am.

After the accident, Dhaka-bound 'Subarna Express' 'Mahanagar Provat' remained stranded at Bhairab and Narasingdi stations respectively.

Railway authorities also cancelled departure of 'Egarosindur Express' from Kamalapur Railway Station.

A technical team of the Railway led by Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Habib Ahmed went to the spot and restored the communications at about 5.15 pm, the officials said.

## Garment worker murdered in N'ganj

UNB, N'ganj

A garment worker was stabbed to death in Isdair area under Fatulla thana on Friday night.

Police said a group of terrorists dragged Sohel, 17, out of his house at 8 pm, stabbed him indiscriminately and threw him into a pond.

Sohel succumbed to his injuries on way to hospital. The reason behind the killing could not be known.

Meanwhile, police held four people in connection with the killing. A case was filed with Fatulla thana.

## Garment worker gangraped in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A garment worker was gangraped allegedly by some fellow workers at East Rampura in the city on Friday night.

The incident took place when she was returning home from a sweater factory in the locality, where she works. She was forcibly taken to an under-construction building and raped by some colleagues including one named Ainal, sources said.

Local people later sent the victim, aged about 16, to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

A case was filed with Khilgaon police and Ainal was arrested.

## Fuel import and marketing may be liberalised

AFP, Dhaka

The country is set to liberalise the fuel import and marketing industry as part of efforts to boost the country's fragile economy. Official sources said yesterday.

Currently three state-run companies under the control of the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) deal with the importation and marketing of fuel but under a new plan private companies would also be allowed to do so.

Sources from the energy ministry said Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's cabinet had agreed to the plan in principle and it would be made effective after the formation of an energy regulatory body. A fuel pricing guideline will also be formulated.

State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources Mosharrarf Hossain said the government might also privatise the BPC.

"The government is considering offloading shares of the BPC-run companies," Hossain told the private UNB news agency.

"If the step is taken then the government can avoid huge annual losses," he said.

Donor agencies and countries have long been asking the government to privatise several state-run enterprises in order to cut government expenditure.

## Shahriar's reception

**FROM PAGE 12**  
requested us to organise the reception inside any hall or auditorium citing home ministry's directive," alleged Mafizur Rahman, former president of Chittagong City unit of BCL.

Meanwhile, DC (North) NBK Tripura, who is now also the Police Commissioner in-charge in the absence of CMP Commissioner Shahidullah Khan, refuted the allegation.

"We apprehend, as per intelligence reports, that an untoward incident may occur on February 5 at the reception venue following Shahriar Kabir being declared persona non grata and ongoing campaign by a section of people against the reception. So we only urged the organisers to think about an alternative venue," he told this correspondent.

"The decision regarding permission is however still under consideration. The final decision will be taken on the CMP Commissioner's return," he added.

Meanwhile, the organisers held a preparatory meeting on Wednesday night.

The meeting was attended, among others, by president of Chittagong Union of Journalist (CUJ) Mohammad Idris, poet and journalist Arun Das Gupta, resident editor of Prothom Alo Abul Momen, general secretary of Bangladesh Mohila Parishad Noorjahan Khan, president of Chittagong University Teachers' Association Professor Bakhtiaruddin Khan, freedom fighter Nurul Islam, and cultural activists Dewan Maqsood Ahmad and Dr. Chandan Das.

## Simi's suicide

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Simi, 21, a final year student of Narayanganj Institute of Fine Arts, committed suicide on December 23 after being harassed by local hoodlums.

She left a note holding four youths -- Khalil, Mofazzal, Ripon, and Doel -- and the police SI responsible for her death.

Meanwhile, different Human Rights organisations demanded immediate arrest of the main culprits, responsible for the death of Simi.

## Pickets clubbed

**FROM PAGE 1**  
kept on a hawk-eyed vigil for any prospective picketers throughout the city during the 11-party Alliance called eight-hour hartal.

Motivated vehicles remained off the city roads till 11:00am yesterday, while movement of rickshaws was normal. Educational institutions and markets remained closed.

The alliance, a platform of left-leaning political parties, called the countrywide hartal from 6:00 am to 2:00 pm protesting the government's 'anti-people steps' including price hike of fuel, gas and electricity, plan to export gas and demolition of slums without rehabilitation of the dwellers.

Police also barred alliance leaders and activists from bringing out processions during the hartal. Three attempts to bring out processions were foiled by police at Paltan and its adjacent areas.

A number of leaders including the coordinator of the alliance, Haje Abdus Samad, and some female activists were injured as police swooped on a procession at Tophkhana Road heading towards the Jatiya Press Club at 10:00am. Monjurul Ahsan, Rashed Khan Menon and other central leaders were leading the procession.

The processionists made another attempt to march towards the House Building crossing, but police chased them away. At one stage police lobbed several tear gas canisters and picked up a number of pro-hartal activists. Another attempt to hold a rally at Tophkhana road was also foiled by police.

Earlier, police chased a pro-hartal procession and forced the activists inside the CPB central office at Paltan at around 7:00am. Large contingents of police were

deployed outside the CPB central office to shut them inside for hours.

Pickets damaged a mini bus at the Paltan crossing at around 10:00am. However, no untoward incidents were reported from others parts of the city.

Nearly 35 alliance leaders and pro-hartal activists were picked up by police from Science Laboratory, Shahbagh, Paltan and Khilgaon rail crossing areas during yesterday's hartal.

The leaders include CPB leader Professor AN Rasheda, General Secretary of the central committee of Bangladesh Students' Union Noor Alam and Convenor of Dhaka University unit of Samajtantrik Chhatra Front Mahmoodur Rahman Mamun.

The 11-party Alliance alleged that 14 of its leaders and activists were arrested from Chittagong, Jessore, Bogra, Feni and Lalmonirhat during hartal hours yesterday.

"A number of leaders and activists were injured in Bogra in police attacks on a peaceful rally," said Saiful Haq, a leader of the alliance, at a press briefing at the CPB office at 12:30 pm.

Meantime, terming yesterday's hartal "a success", alliance leaders at a press briefing at the CPB office yesterday strongly condemned the police attack without any provocation and vowed to hold demonstrations across the country today to protest police torture.

The demonstration will take place at 4:00pm at the Mukhtangan. The leaders of the alliance also demanded immediate release of its arrested leaders and activists.

## 25 DGMs of Janata Bank transferred

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-eight senior officials of the Janata Bank have been transferred to various branches across the country.

According to an order issued by the head office of the bank yesterday, 25 deputy general managers and three assistant general managers have been transferred.

Bank sources said the transfer is only the first phase of the total changes.

"There will be more changes in the second phase," the order said.

## Minority issue

**FROM PAGE 12**  
people have been subjected to repression after the BNP-led four-party alliance took over.

The meeting instructed the ministries concerned to take necessary steps in this regard.

With Eid-ul-Azha ahead, the meeting ordered the inspector general of police to deploy trained plainclothes police aiming to stop extortion in the cattle markets and from cattle-carrying transports.

## Plane lands at ZIA

**FROM PAGE 1**  
night. But he could not say if the plane with pilgrims aboard would take off later tonight.

Earlier on Friday, the aircraft had arrived at Chennai in the Indian State of Tamil Nadu. But it could not reach ZIA due to technicalities.

Meanwhile, State Minister for Civil Aviation Mir Nasiruddin and State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharrarf Hossain Shahjahan held a meeting at ZIA yesterday with officials concerned and the representatives of travel agencies, different airlines and Air Bangladesh to review the situation.

The meeting took note of the situation arising out of Air Bangladesh's failure to carry any pilgrims. Meeting sources said representatives from Saudia, Emirates, Gulf Air and Oman Airlines who attended the meeting had been requested to take the stranded pilgrim-clients of Air Bangladesh.

Mir Nasiruddin later visited the Hajj camp and assured the affected pilgrims that arrangements were being made so that they could fly

within one or two days, hajj camp officials said. The minister was however not available for comment.

A meeting to review the situation has been