

## Hasina for dialogue to spell persecutors' doom

### Convention on "Crime Against Humanity" begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A national convention on "Crime Against Humanity" began in the city yesterday with Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad Sheikh Hasina announcing that she would initiate a dialogue with all political parties and other social forces to bring down 'those who believe in and harbour politics of killing and repression'.

"Our aim is to protect people's fundamental rights, resist violation of human rights and ensure peace and security... Let the people live in peace and harmony; that is all we always stand for," Hasina said.

The Awami League chief and former prime minister was inaugurating the two-day convention organised by the AL-backed National Committee on Crimes Against Humanity.

Hasina said, "Humanity is being [ragged] to the ground and human rights trampled across the country... SEE PAGE 11 COL 1, AND ALSO BACK PAGE & PAGE 11 FOR RELATED STORIES



PHOTO: STAR

Participants from home and abroad in the national convention, "Crime Against Humanity" at the Engineers' Institution in the city observe a one-minute silence to mourn Awami League leaders and activists killed in attacks.

## Coalition convention from Mar 15

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-led four-party alliance will organise a two-day national convention, beginning on March 15, on repressive and criminal activities by the past Awami League government.

"The main objective of the convention is to inform countrymen about misrule, harassment and brutality committed by the Awami League during its five-year rule," BNP Secretary General and LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said at a press briefing at the BNP city committee office yesterday afternoon.

BNP Chairperson and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is expected to inaugurate the convention to be

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## Results of 16 municipal polls

BSS, Dhaka

The Election Commission (EC) has announced unofficial results of the elections held on Tuesday in the country's 16 municipalities.

An EC press release said yesterday that Enayet Kabir and Belayet Hossain Bhuiyan were elected unopposed chairmen of Lalmoan in Bhola and Ramgarh in Khagrachhari municipalities respectively.

According to the results, Mohammad Hossain (Akk) was elected chairman of Nageshwari (Kurigram) municipality, Kamruzzaman Kamal of Akkelpur (Joypurhat), Mohammad Khoda Baksh Prang of Bhabaniganj

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## Dhaka seeks duty-free access to Iran

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka and Tehran yesterday stressed the need for holding dialogues for resolution of all conflicts and called for intensifying South-South cooperation in political and economic issues. The two countries also pledged to work closely in regional and international matters 'in the interest of peace.'

While reiterating their desire to enhance bilateral trade and investment cooperation, the two countries agreed to set up joint ventures and collaborate in business and industry.

Dhaka also asked Tehran for duty-free access of 21 commodities including jute, tea and leather products, Iran said it would actively consider the request.

These and many other aspects were discussed at the official talks between the visiting Foreign Minister of Iran, Dr Kamal Kharazi, and his Bangladesh counterpart

M Morshed Khan yesterday.

The talks were held at the state guesthouse Meghna for nearly two hours and were described by officials as being held in a 'very cordial and friendly atmosphere.'

Emerging from the meeting, Dr Kharazi said it was a very productive and useful discussion. Both sides, he said, discussed in details bilateral, regional and international affairs and expressed the need for dialogue and cooperation.

"We had discussions on Afghanistan, the current tension between India and Pakistan, and seriously condemned the heinous attacks on the Palestinians," Dr Kharazi said.

The Iranian foreign minister said peace in Afghanistan was a pre-condition to involve all parties in its restructuring. Effective dialogues are also essential for peace in various regions including the Middle East

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## Four killed in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four people were murdered in separate incidents in the city in last 24 hours till 9:00 pm yesterday.

A garment employee was gunned down by a gang of miscreants at Uttar Begunbari in the city's Tejgaon area yesterday morning.

Mahim, 22, son of late Jalaluddin of 37/1 Begunbari was chopped and gunned down by a gang of four while he was going to his grandmother's residence at Murapara, Tejgaon at around 6 am.

When Mahim reached North Begunbari, the gang swooped on him. They first chopped him and then shot in the head. He was rushed to DMCH where the doctors declared him dead.

Victim's mother claimed that A B M Faruq and his accomplices killed her son following a dispute over a piece of land.

Faruq, a manpower businessman, evicted Mahim's family from their land a few days ago. Four cases were filed with Tejgaon police station in this regard, family members alleged.

In another incident, an alleged robber, identified as Abu Taher, 32, was beaten to death by a mob in the city's Uttara Model Town in the early hours of yesterday.

Fatally injured Taher was admitted to a local clinic and later shifted to the DMCH where he succumbed to his injuries yesterday morning.

Mohammadpur police recovered body of an unidentified young man

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## 50 hurt as rival BNP men clash at Tongi

UNB, Gazipur

Rival BNP workers clashed yesterday centring CBA election at Telephone Shilpa Sangstha (TSS), leaving about 50 injured.

Mahfuzur Rahman, 38, a local journalist and employee of TSS and three others -- Monir, 35, Hafizur, 40 and Akter, 30 -- were rushed to Orthopaedic Hospital in Dhaka.

Monir, 33, Ahsan, 32 and Mustafa, 48, were admitted to Tongi Hospital while others treated in different clinics.

Sources said rival groups of workers supporting Akhter-Alauddin panel and Islam-Alim panel are vying for the Feb 18 CBA election.

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## Sniffing out tobacco tax

### BAC probes Tk 569 cr 'evasion' by Akij Group

STAR REPORT

The Bureau of Anti-corruption (BAC) has initiated an investigation into the case of alleged tax evasion of Tk 569 crore by Akij Group of Companies.

The bureau filed two first information reports (FIRs) accusing 14 persons, including chairman and managing directors of two companies -- Dhaka Tobacco and Asia Tobacco -- and three tax commissioners on the basis of the primary inquiry by a BAC team into tax evasion. Deputy Director of the BAC Abdul Malek led the team.

The tax evasion was first revealed by an investigation carried out by Kazi Anwar Hossain, a customs intelligence official at the National Board of Revenue (NBR), in July 1996.

BAC Officer Zulfiquer Ali, who is investigating the complaints, lodged the FIRs with Tejgaon and Tongi police stations.

He will examine all necessary documents on the tax evasion. However, he could not ascertain when the chargesheet would be submitted.

"It will take some time to investigate the case," he said. There is no time limit in the law for framing

chargesheets, he added.

Sources in Tongi Police Station said that no warrant was issued or none was arrested in this regard. "We can arrest an accused in the FIR, but in such cases, we act on the basis of requisition by BAC," said Omar Faruq, the officer-in-charge.

The NBR no longer deals with the matter, since the BAC is investigating the case, NBR member (VAT) Fakhru Abedin told The Daily Star, when contacted.

"All necessary documents on the alleged tax evasion was sent to the bureau."

Asked why the case did not follow the normal procedure, the NBR member said the departmental action slowed to a crawl with the case taken up by the BAC.

Normally, such cases of tax evasion are heard at the Tax and VAT Commissionerate and the Tax and VAT commissioner gives a judgment and issues a demand notice, sources said.

But about the case of Akij Tobacco, the higher authorities of the NBR and the Ministry of Finance

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PHOTO: STAR

No let-up in snarl-up...traffic congestion is commonplace in the city, as on the Shahbagh-Matsya Bhaban Road yesterday.

## Stuck again!

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the government deciding on 'humanitarian' grounds to defer till the Eid a 'crackdown' on unlicensed auto-rickshaws, rickshaws and thousands of other unfit vehicles, the city streets were choked with vehicles yesterday causing serious air and noise pollution.

Traffic police officials however attributed this to various reasons which include Eid rush, presence of a large number of Hajj pilgrims and relatives accompanying them, a huge gathering of VIPs at the Awami League sponsored National Convention on Crimes Against Humanity and traffic on about 360 extended city bus routes.

They also said that with the Eid nearing, thousands of poor people from the rural areas have flocked to the capital to work as rickshawpullers during the Eid rush. This has led to an alarming rise in the number of the manually run three wheelers.

The BRTA and the Traffic Department of the DMP have agreed to 'defer

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