REGD. No. DA 781

Vol. XI No. 44

DHAKA WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 28, 2001

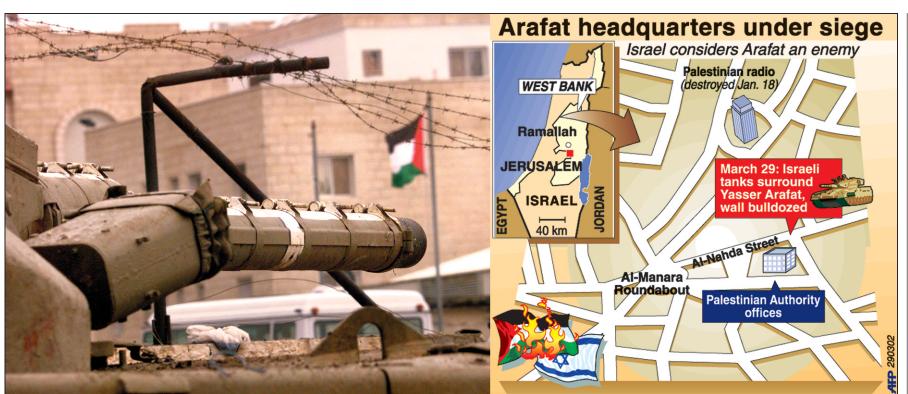
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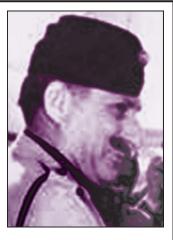
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16 PAGES PRICE: TK 6.00



An Israeli tank aims its cannon at Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's headquarters in the West Bank city of Ramallah. Israeli forces broke into the compound punching a hole in the outer wall and seized two buildings. (More pictures on page 5)



'Butcher of Bangladesh' dead

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistan's former army chief general Tikka Khan, once labelled the "Butcher of Bengal" for his ruthlessness against Bangladeshi freedom fighters, died on Thursday after a long illness, the official media reported.

State-run Radio Pakistan said Khan, who died at the age of 87, was buried with "full military SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Israel calls Arafat enemy, takes over Ramallah

Arafat vows not to cow down as Israeli tanks smash into his ho

Israel vesterday declared Yasser Arafat an enemy, sieged this West Bank town and stormed the Palestinian leader's headquarters, as part of a largescale military operation launched in response to Palestinian terror attacks that killed 29 Israeli civilians in three days. Five Palestinians and an Israeli soldier were killed in yesterday's fighting in Ramallah.

Arafat's three-story office building came under heavy Israeli tank shelling during the assault. Earlier yesterday, an Israeli bulldozer demolished a wall at the main entrance of Arafat's headquarters.

Arafat was in a windowless groundfloor room, but his aides said the situation was very volatile and that the Palestinian leader's life was in danger. Israel insisted it had no plans to harm Arafat. In the compound, Israeli soldiers exchanged fire with Arafat's guards,

killing one and wounding 25. Israeli snipers took over two buildings and set up positions on rooftops, giving them a clear view of Arafat's third-floor office, while tank shells punched holes into the walls of the compound. A defiant Arafat said he did not fear death and would not be cowed. "They

want me under arrest or in exile or dead, but I am telling them, I prefer to be martyred," Arafat said in a telephone interview with Al Jazeera, the Arab satellite television channel. "May God make us martyrs."

leader in 18 months of fighting. Israel has confined Arafat to the headquarters for four months, barring him from traveling.

SHARIER KHAN

government funds

When the finance ministry is refus-

ing to allow any power project under

supplier's credit, the Power

Development Board (PDB) has

"arbitrarily" decided to kick-start the

250 MW Barapukuria coal-fired

power project by paying its Chinese

developers the first tranche of

Atop PDB official said it is prepar-

ing for a payment of Tk 5.5 crore to

the Chinese consortium so that it

can arrange its own share of pay-

The raid was the closest Israeli forces have come to the Palestinian

In Jerusalem, meanwhile, a 16-year-old Palestinian girl blew herself up at

Barapukuria power project

PDB set to release funds

defying finance ministry

move on.

can not be started.

ment from the Exim Bank of China

and the 220 million dollar project can

also have to get a Letter of Guarantee from the finance ministry

and give it to the Chinese consor-

tium. Otherwise, the project work

Rahman earlier told PDB that his

ministry would not issue any quaran-

tee for any project under supplier's

credit, including the Barapukuria

power project. Without this guaran-

Finance Minister M Saifur

However, prior to that, PDB will

the entrance of a Jerusalem supermarket yesterday, killing herself and two Israeli civilians, and wounding at least 19 shoppers. A militia linked to Arafat's Fatah movement claimed responsibility.

The violence appeared to doom the latest US truce mission, though US envoy Anthony Zinni was to remain in the region. Zinni spoke to Arafat by phone yesterday and met with Palestinian Cabinet Minister Saeb Erekat in the West Bank town of Jericho, Palestinian officials said.

The fighting came a day after an Arab summit in Beirut, Lebanon, approved a plan that calls on Arab nations to develop normal relations with Israel in exchange for its withdrawal from territory captured in the 1967 Mideast war

The plan marked the first time in more than a half-century of Mideast conflict that Arab states have made such an offer. Israel said it would study the plan, but that its top priority was responding to Palestinian attacks.

The latest escalation began with a suicide bombing by the Islamic militant group Hamas on Wednesday in a hotel in the Israeli resort of Netanya. The bomber blew himself up in the hotel's banquet hall, among 250 Israelis gathered for the Passover Seder, the ritual meal ushering in the Jewish holiday. Twenty-two diners were killed -- one died of wounds yesterday and more than 130 were hurt, putting the attack on par with a suicide bombng outside a Tel Aviv disco last June that also killed 22 Israelis.

Israel's Cabinet met for an all-night session. Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon announced yesterday that Israel now considered Arafat an enemy nd would completely isolate him. The Cabinet also approved a large-scale SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Rallies allowed without loud speaker!

AL city programmes uncertain

REAZ AHMAD

After "foiling" three scheduled programmes of Awami League in the city in last one week, police authorities were now "refusing" to give it permission to use even loud speaker, party leaders alleged yesterday.

As a result, the party's planned rallies in the city in the first week of April have become uncertain.

"The Opposition Leader (Sheikh Hasina) is scheduled to undertake some mass contact programmes and address rallies in the city but police authorities are refusing to allow use of loud speakers," Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Political Secretary to the AL President Sheikh Hasina told The Daily Star yester-

Though AL got permission for holding rallies, police authorities are refusing permission to use loud speaker. "They say are acting on instructions from higher authorities",

"We are at the mercy of the government to hold any political programme in the city", he said.

Sheikh Hasina has plans for nass contact and rallies in Khilgaon-Sabujbagh, Lalbagh and Mirpur areas. These programmes ahead of the AL-called April 6 dawn-to-dusk countrywide hartal country are important he said.

When contacted Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Abdul Quiyum said the home ministry recently gave instruction to strictly follow relevant rules and to limit use of loud speaker to seven designated meeting venues in the city.

When his attention was drawn to

use of loud speakers everyday by different socio-cultural and religious organisations at different city spots, he said, "We will go by rules.

He however said, "Unless AL's programmes coincide with those of any other organisation, I don't think the DCs (Deputy Commissioners of DMP zones) concerned will have any reason to refuse them (AL) permission. May be, they (DCs) are preoccupied with other work and do not get time to see the applications for permission."

He was asked about alleged police protection to a front organisation of the ruling party which occupied the Muktangan on March 28 though AL was given permission to use the venue on that day. He said. "AL was given permis-

sion to hold a rally at the venue but SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Race for DCC ward commissioner

Over one-fourth of 4-party nominees are criminals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than one-fourth of the BNP-led ruling alliance nominees for ward commissioners in the coming Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) election are listed or identified criminals, according to police sources and press The four-party combine

announced a list of 114 ward commissioner candidates on Thursday, including 30 woman candidates. Thirty-two of the nominees are

accused in cases for murder, extortion, illegal grabbing of property and other crimes. Various national dailies already carried reports on submission of

nomination papers by a large num-

ber of branded criminals for contesting the DCC polls Sources in the alliance said their leadership was earlier determined not to nominate alleged criminals,

various quarters in the alliance. However, none of the 'most wanted' criminals was nominated, they mentioned. A total of 1026 candidates sub-

mitted nomination papers for 90 DCC ward commissioners on March 20. Of them, 278 are alleged criminals including 12 most wanted ones.

The alleged criminals who got BNP ticket are: Munshi Bazlul Bashir Anju-- ward 7, Monwar Hossain Dipjal-- ward 9, Shamim Parvez-ward 11, Abul Meser--ward 23, ADM Badsha--ward 30, Mohammad Moslem Uddin--ward 31, Harunur Rashid--ward 33, Mirza Khokon-ward 34, Munshi Wadud--ward 38, Anwaruzamman Anwar-- ward 40, KM Ahmed Raju--ward 44, Abu Saved Bapari --ward 46. Jasim Uddin Mahmud-- ward 47, Sirajul Islam Sirajul--ward 50, Abdul Latif-ward 51, Chowdhury Alam--ward

Motia obstructed from attending **Gazipur rally**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Activists belonging to the ruling BNP prevented Awami League leader Motia Chowdhury and some other party leaders from attending a scheduled party rally at Amria in Gazipur yesterday, she claimed at a press conference at Gazipur Press

held back the ferry on the other side of Shitalakhya river so that they cannot cross it. They also fired two blank shots, she alleged.

They put up road barricade and

The former minister also alleged that the district administration also banned any rally at Amria yesterday. Failing to advance further, Matia addressed a gathering near the ferry

ghat and later returned to the capital. However, the OC of Kapasia thana, Gazi Moinuddin, when contacted, said, "We escorted Motia to the venue and there was no unto-

ward incident on the way." But Motia termed the OC's claim a "blatant lie".

The local unit of AL organised the rally to protest last Sunday's alleged police attack Tanjim Ahmed Sohel, MP from the area, near the Jatiya SEE PAGE 11 COL 3 Press Club in the city.

BNP to go by Constitution if AL rejects dialogue offer: Huda

56, Khaja Habib--ward 57, Sabbir

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling BNP would wait for a 'positive response' from the Awami League to its offer for dialogue to resolve some contentious political issues including display of the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh . Mujibur Rahman.

But it will go by the Constitution if the main opposition party sticks to its present position and cannot reach a consensus on the issues. Minister for Communications Nazmul Huda

He told BBC Bengali Service last night that BNP would continue its initiatives. There is no last word in

politics, he said referring to the conditional acceptance of the dialogue offer by Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Sheikh Hasina.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister and BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan on Thursday SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Friend turns foe over DCC polls

Wahid was killed by rivals? STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jubo Dal leader Wahiduzzaman was killed apparently in a conspiracy by his rivals following his refusal to withdraw from the race for ward commissioner in the coming Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) election.

According to police sources and residents of Mohammadpur area, Wahid, general secretary of ward 42 unit of the BNP-backed Jubo Dal, was asked to withdraw from the polls race by Salimullah Salu, another candidate for ward commissioner from the same ward, after Wahid submitted his nomination papers.

Seeing that he stood no chance of winning the election against Wahid Salu allegedly a notorious criminal of Mohammadpur area, met Wahid a few days ago and asked him to withdraw from the race.

'They were very close friends, but a bitter rivalry was created between them over the DCC election," said a police official



"Later Salu warned that he would not hesitate to kill Wahid if he refused to withdraw his candidature and help him (Salu) get elected as commissioner from ward 42," said the police official requesting ano **SEE PAGE 11 COL 4**

100 AL men may

Although the main opposition Awami League has decided not to participate in any polls under the present CEC MA Syed, nearly a hundred AL leaders, including 29 incumbent ward commissioners, are set to take part in the coming Dhaka City Corporation (DCC)

parliamentary election, the AL accused CEC (Chief Election Commissioner) MA Syed of partisan role in the general election and decided not to participate in any election under Syed.

Accordingly, after the announcement of the city polls, the AL officially rejected the election and did not nominate any mayoral candidate. The main opposition party also asked its party leaders and workers to boycott the elections. But sources said that a good

number of party leaders including

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

DCC election contest as independent candidates ABUL KALAM AZAD

able to mobilise funds.

the PDB official said.

"But we signed a contract with

the Chinese company for this project

in the middle of last year. The gov-

ernment decision against supplier's

credit is applicable for new projects

and we are hopeful that we will be able to convince the finance ministry

why it should issue the guarantee,

But finance ministry sources said

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

it is not convinced with PDB's argu-

ments in favour of such a costly

elections.

After a debacle in the October 1