

# Beware of Khaleda

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cunleashed a reign of terror across the country soon after coming to power.

Referring to a recent article titled "Beware of Bangladesh" published in the Far Eastern Economic Review, the opposition leader said it was the outcome of this government's misdeeds. She said this government and the prime minister must come up with the reply as to why the image of the country has been tarnished.

She said the Awami League government had depicted the country's image as a moderate one, but "this government has portrayed the country as a terrorist one and tarnished its image abroad."

Pointing to the new law passed by parliament to curb terrorism, Hasina said this law has been enacted to repress the political opponents.

About retrenchment of government officials and employees, the former prime minister said all would be reinstated when the Awami League will be in power.

At one such meeting near Mawa, Hasina said the government is conspiring to shift the site of the Padma Bridge from this place and called upon all to resist the move.

Alleging widespread corruption by the people in power, Hasina said Khaleda Zia's family has become the richest one by gobbling up public wealth and said people will take account of everything in the future.

The Awami League president criticised the government for not taking any resolution in parliament condemning the atrocities on Palestinians.

On her way to the town, hundreds of people stopped the motorcade of the opposition leader in various places to listen to her. She along with party leaders Abdur Razzak, Motia Chowdhury, opposition chief whip Abdus Shahid and

## PDB

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"We have asked the Asian Development Bank for assistance. But they have tagged the condition of export gas. Therefore, we are thinking of financing it from our own fund," Karim informed the press.

"But we don't know how much we can actually achieve because our country does not have enough fund. The future demand requires investment in exploration, development and pipelines," he said.

According to Petrobangla estimates, it subsidises the power sector over Tk 160 crore annually and the fertiliser plants another Tk 120 crore.

# Commissioner candidate shot in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Award commissioner candidate for the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) election was shot and injured by armed miscreants in the city's Paltan area last night.

The victim was identified as Anbir Adil Khan alias Babu, 52, a dissident BNP leader running for commissioner of ward 36 as an independent candidate.

Sources said Babu and his supporters brought out a procession from near the Bangabandhu National Stadium at about 7pm. As it neared the Paltan Balurmath, three masked men fired several bullets on the procession before fleeing the area.

Babu received a bullet in his right leg and was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Contesting the DCC election as an independent candidate after failing to obtain the BNP ticket, Babu told our DMCH correspondent that he was unable to identify the gunmen as they were wearing masks. He however suspected that the attackers might belong to the group loyal to his rival candidate.

Jamaat-e-Islami activist Khandakar Abdur Rab is the four-party nominee from ward no. 36.

# Terrorist Iqbal placed on remand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Listed terrorist and Jubo Dal cadre Md Iqbal Bahar Chowdhury was placed on two-day remand by the Metropolitan Magistrate's Court here yesterday.

Iqbal, accused in 11 criminal cases, was produced before the court with a prayer for a five-day remand but the court granted only two days.

According to sources, a special team of police will interrogate Iqbal.

He was arrested from Laldighi area in the city on Wednesday.

The State Minister for Home Lutfur Rahman Babor ordered for immediate arrest of Iqbal after a picture of the terrorist posing behind the minister at a law and order meeting at Chittagong Circuit House was published in some dailies on February 26.

# Sharon: Cold water

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the campaign two weeks ago after a wave of Palestinian attacks which killed more than 100 Israelis in March alone.

"We didn't have any other alternative," Peres said on US television. He said he was "aware of public opinion" against the incursion and said it would be concluded within two or three weeks.

"I don't like wallowing with pessimists," Powell said before leaving Madrid, where he won backing from the United Nations, the European Union and Russia for his difficult diplomatic visit. "My mission is still on."

Powell arrived in Jordan yesterday evening for talks with King Abdullah II on ways of halting Israel's offensive in the Palestinian territories, officials said.

Powell flew in from Madrid on the third leg of a tour of Arab countries that has already taken him to Morocco and Egypt, ahead of a daunting peace mission in Israel that is to begin later in the evening.

During the three-hour visit, including a dinner with Abdullah, the king is expected to tell Powell that Washington has the biggest responsibility to put pressure on Israel to end its military escalation.

On the ground, the Israeli army said it had pulled out 24 villages overnight, a claim denied by the Palestinians. Israel has closed off most of the West Bank, making claims impossible to verify independently.

Reports of wide destruction, civilian deaths and a looming humanitarian catastrophe on land handed to the Palestinians under interim peace deals in the 1990s have exposed Israel to international

# Jubo Dal leader murder: Hartal observed in Dumuria

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A dawn-to-dusk hartal was observed in Dumuria upazila yesterday protesting the murder of Molla Sirajul Islam, general secretary of Khulna district unit of Jubo Dal.

BNP has directly blamed Awami League and CPB for the killing.

The body of Molla Siraj was brought to party office after autopsy at the KMCH morgue at noon and than taken to Dumuria for burial.

Police have so far taken four persons to custody for interrogation.

The Jubo Dal leader was gunned down by a gang of 15 armed men at Dumuria Bazar about 9:15 pm on Wednesday.

# Torture in custody Eminent citizens voice concern

UNB, Dhaka

Some 150 eminent citizens of the country have expressed deep concern at the reports of physical torture on some accused persons in the custody.

In a joint-statement yesterday, they drew attention to the allegations made by the accused or their family members and said this kind of attitude is in total violation of human rights and fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

They also urged the government to take appropriate steps in this regard to check repetition of such acts in future.

The signatories included: Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid, Prof Anisuzzaman, Prof A K Azad Chowdhury, Barrister Amir Ul Islam, Adv Abdul Minn Khasru, Kamal Lohani, M Ozaer Faruk, Prof Mesbah Uddin Ahmed, Prof Durgadas Bhattacharya, Prof Khondoker Ashraf Hossain and Prof AAMS Arefin Siddiqui.

## Gas

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age would go up to 1536 mmcf. The present gas production capacity is 1207 mmcf while the highest demand is 1170 mmcf.

"We can meet this future demand from our existing source," said SR Osmani, director (Finance) of Petrobangla. "If there is no new significant gas discovery, the need to buy gas from Bibiyana will arise within the next three years," he added.

He noted that the demand projection was set at a growth rate of 8 to 10 per cent.

Unocal's export proposal, if accepted even now, would require more than three years to materialise before the US oil company can begin to earn from its gas sale. On the other hand, the domestic demand within that same period would grow to the projected level such that the domestic market option should become as lucrative for Unocal as the export market.

Unocal, however, believes that Bangladesh's gas demand situation would remain saturated for the next 20 years, implying that there is no domestic demand for its Bibiyana gas.

But yesterday's view of Petrobangla contradicts this projection.

The Unocal proposal styled 'Bangladesh Natural Gas Pipeline Project' outlines a total project financing requirement of US\$1.2 billion including US\$310 million for the Bangladesh portion of the pipeline project and US\$881 million for the Indian portion.

## DCC polls

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Road in Rahmatganj area on Wednesday.

The BNP legislator went to the area to seek vote for party nominee for ward commissioner from ward-65 Haji Shahidul Islam Babul. He along with his men was confined by a large number party activists, now siding with the three ward commissioner candidates contesting as independents, failing to get party ticket. The three are Jalaluddin Jalal, Masud Alam and Shafur. The incident followed heated altercations between the two sides and brandishing of firearm and attack on an activist by lawmaker's body-guard.

At their press conference, the three independent ward commissioner candidates alleged that Pintu and his armed cadres had attacked them and sought security of their life.

"We want exemplary punishment of the attackers so that the forthcoming DCC polls could be held in a congenial atmosphere," said Jalaluddin. He warned that the independent candidates would boycott the election if Pintu again "unleashes such attack" on them.

He alleged that they had to file general diary with Labagh thana as police refused to accept their case.

Babul demanded at their press conference immediate arrest of the accused in the case filed by them on Wednesday. He alleged that Awami League leader Haji Selim and some others were backing those involved in Wednesday's incident.

About the independent commissioner candidates, he said they are not from BNP.

# NCTB won't revise textbooks

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'Political prescriptions' influenced projection of the role of heroes of the country's independence struggle, they noted.

During the rule of BNP in the past, its founder late president Ziaur Rahman's role was highlighted while during the tenure of Awami League government, the role of war heroes belonging to that party was focussed.

The BNP-led alliance government has now brought changes in 18 books for primary and secondary levels, incorporating BNP's ideology into those and eliminating the changes made by the immediate past Awami League government.

Changes have been made in books for class II to class IX. Two poems – Mujib Chhara by Sanaul Huq and Janajani by Asad Chowdhury have been excluded from a book and two other poems have been included instead.

"The poems were dropped as one poem depicted the heroism of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the other contained the word 'Bangalee', to which BNP is allergic," one source said.

In an essay in Bangla titled "Bir Shrestha Mostofa Kamal" in a book for class V, a sentence Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared the independence of Bangladesh in the early hours of March 26 prior to his arrest was replaced by the sentence On the night of March 25, 1971 they (Pakistani occupation forces) attacked and started mass killing.

Besides, changes were made in a Bangla essay Duijan Bir Shrestha-

In the Bangla textbook "Sahitya Konika" for class VIII, it has been mentioned that Ziaur Rahman declared independence of Bangladesh on March 26, 1971 as president and supreme commander of armed forces.

In contrast, during the previous rule of BNP till 1996, textbooks contained that Ziaur Rahman declared independence of Bangladesh on March 27, 1971.

In the Samajik Bigyan (Social Science) for class eight, two photographs of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivering the historic March 7 address have been dropped.

Eminent educationist and author of Bangalee Jatiyatabad Prof Sirajul Islam Chowdhury said change in historically accepted truth

# Independent MP Engr Shamsuddin joins BNP

UNB, Dhaka

Independent lawmaker Engineer Shamsuddin Ahmed (Mymensingh-6) joined ruling BNP yesterday expressing allegiance to the leadership of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

Ahmed met the prime minister at her office and expressed solidarity with the "politics of development and production" of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman and with the programmes of the present BNP government.

BNP leaders Shah Shaheed Sarwar MP, Shah Nurul Kabir Shaheen MP, Dr Mohammad Ali MP, Dr Rabeya Ali, Mymensingh district BNP general secretary Manjurul Huq, Prime Minister's political secretaries Haris Chowdhury and Mosaddek Ali Falu were present at the meeting.

The prime minister asked the MPs to carry forward the programmes of the BNP government for progress and development.

She said BNP believed in politics of unity and accommodation and that its political philosophy was ensuring development, production and welfare of the people.

With Engineer Shamsuddin Ahmed, the total number of BNP legislators now stands at 196.

Following is the standing of other parties in parliament: AL-58, Jamaat-17, JP(E)-14, BJP-4, IOJ-3, JP(M)-1, BKSJL (Bangabir)-1 and Independent-6.

# Little gains from trade talks

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exporting any of the products pencilled in the list barring one or two. As a result, there is no possibility to make an effort to narrow the unbearable trade deficit with India.

"Even the commitment made by the Indian side at the talks to look into the problem of non-tariff and para-tariff barriers imposed on Bangladeshi exportables is not encouraging. This situation is a matter of serious concern."

Commerce Secretary Suhel Ahmed, who led the Bangladesh delegation at the talks, echoed the sentiment. "Our main focus was to narrow down the yawning trade gap. I don't feel what India has agreed to will help us much to that end. We still have to go a long way."

In the face of US\$ 1.1 billion trade deficit in 2000-01 up from US\$ 150 million in 1990-91, Bangladesh's main focus was to have declaration from India through this forum on free access of 191 products to the Indian market, a commitment made by the Indian premier in 1999.

Moreover, many of the 40 products were not on the Dhaka's list. And the Indians handed the list of items over to the Bangladesh side minutes before the signing of a joint press statement, which also includes products that the country produces in insufficient quantity to meet domestic demand.

The list also has products like dental cements and fillings, bone reconstruction cements, dental floss which Bangladesh does not produce. There are many other products like this.

The MCCI and the DCCI said whatever concession India agreed to give will not help, in anyway, to narrow the yawning gap in the bilateral trade against Bangladesh.

President of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) Tapan Chowdhury and President of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) Matur Rahman signed the joint

- in a book for class IX. The essay now begins with the sentence "Major Ziaur Rahman announced the independence on March 26 from Kalurghat radio station". Previously, it was "Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman called for the independence of Bangla". There have been changes in the exercises of the essays as well.

Some sources said that during the tenure of the previous BNP government from 1991, changes were made in textbooks but history was not destroyed.

Some history books said Ziaur Rahman did not call for joining the War of Independence on March 26, 1971 from Kalurghat radio station. He gave the announcement on March 27 on behalf of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

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# Dhaka-Thimpu trade accord soon

UNB, DHAKA

Bangladesh and Bhutan will sign a trade agreement soon aiming at increasing trade between the two countries.

The decision was taken at a meeting between Commerce Minister Amir Khasru Mahmood Chowdhury and Bhutanese Commerce and Industries Minister Lyonpo Khando Wangchuk in Thimpu, according to a message received here yesterday.

Both sides discussed elaborately issues of bilateral trade and agreed to work together for expanding trade volume.

Issues of investment, infrastructure development, streamlining tax and duty structure and removing problems in exchange of goods and commodities also came up for discussion.

Earlier, the Bangladesh minister called on acting Foreign Minister Dasho Ugyen Tshering and Finance Minister Lionpo Yeshi Zimba and discussed bilateral issues.

He also met with leading importers and exporters of Bhutan and assured them of providing all-out support to solve their problems.

While visiting a market in Thimpu, the minister expressed his satisfaction seeing plenty of Bangladeshi products there and their demand.

will create disregard among the students towards history. It will also create confusion regarding history and generate unnecessary debate among the citizens, he noted.

# 30 injured as AJM workers clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

At least 30 people were injured in a clash between two rival groups of workers at Adamjee Jute Mills yesterday evening.

The clash erupted following an attack on a worker belonging to CBA president Ruhul Amin group by BNP-backed Abul Khair Khwaja group at about 4:30 pm.

Khwaja group, equipped with firearms, attacked CBA office at Dhaka Baju Colony at about 6 pm and hurled bombs at the office. In the face of attack, Ruhul Amin group opened fire and exploded crackers leaving 30 injured from both sides.

Police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. Additional police was deployed in the mill area to avert further clash.

# Terrorist held with arms in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday arrested an alleged terrorist along with a revolver loaded with six bullets from Sayedabad Bus Terminal in the city.

The arrested was identified as Medda, 30, son of Abdul Halim, of 18 Swamibag, Munshirte under Sutrapur thana.

Police said Medda is accused in nine cases filed with Sutrapur and Demra police stations.

Acting on a tip off, a CID team raided the area and nabbed Medda with arms. His accomplice managed to flee the scene.

A case has been filed with Sutrapur thana.

## Buddhadev

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this regard took place between the two countries as yet.

Earlier, the journalists' team also met former chief minister Joyti Basu.

He told them Bangladesh and India have friendly relations. The West Bengal government is trying to solve bilateral problems amicably, he said.

Basu criticised the central government for maintaining a 'daring liaison' with the US government.

He also said they will call a country-wide strike on April 16 to topple the Modi Government of Gujarat. The Modi government is fully responsible for all the unwanted incidents in the state and police also helped the mobs, he said.

# Little gains from trade talks

thing in the joint press statement." When he was told that the newsmen were yet to receive the press statement he said, "You will get it. There are plenty of that."

The talks had hiccups from the very beginning and were postponed twice in last four months. In mid-December, an Indian team led by its commerce ministry joint secretary came to Dhaka to finalise the talks agenda.

When the meeting finally began on April 8, it ran into trouble from the very first minute over the agenda. The Indians said they will accept Dhaka's agenda if it include transshipment, border trade and Dhaka's lifting of ban on yarn and sugar import.

The talks ran through the day, but on several occasions the meeting teetered on the verge of collapse. Ultimately, the Indians walked out an hour to the scheduled end.

On the second day the negotiators sat half an hour behind schedule and the meeting broke down after half an hour. Some backstage parleys however saved the talks from ending in wilderness.

Accordingly, the negotiators met again on Wednesday morning with a renewed effort to come to a conclusion and pen down a joint statement. The Indian side objected to Dhaka's mentioning the trade gap figure in the statement, highly placed sources said.

The Indians made a draft and Bangladesh made some corrections in it. But the Indians refused to accept those. Later on, both sides managed to stand on a common position and drew up the communiqué.

According to sources, the Indians were keen on Bangladesh's lifting the ban on yarn import through land ports as it was mentioned during the talks that yarn worth Tk 2000 crore were imported annually from India.

# AL at budget session

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But at a meeting of the AL Parliamentary Party on March 20, a majority of party lawmakers held a line against any hasty move to tender resignation letters to the Speaker.

They, however, agreed that all would submit their resignation letters to Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, also head of the ALPP.

The following day (March 21), Hasina said the AL lawmakers would go to parliament for a day prior to resignation to put on record the repression, torture, corruption, and plundering of the economy by the BNP-Jamaat coalition government.

Sources close to the AL president said that there was a possibility that AL legislators join the next parliamentary session -- crucial on various counts.

The first budget of the new government is likely to be presented before the House in its next session. There is also a strong possibility that the parliamentary standing committees on various ministries will be formed in the same session.

AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman confirmed that the 58 party legislators submitted their resignation letters to Hasina.

"She (Hasina) will decide when to tender the resignation letters. But it is certain that before she finalises the decision on resignation, there would be a meeting of the party policy planners," Zillur told The Daily Star recently.

Although the prime minister urged the opposition to join parliament, there had been no sincere effort by the ruling alliance to bring

# Rancour in BCL ranks

**FROM PAGE 12**  
over-aged while some others have criminal records for their involvement in various crimes on the DU campus during the Awami League rule.

On many occasions, the AL president Sheikh Hasina and some other top leaders have promised that only young and dedicated students will be in leadership position at different tiers of the BCL, student front of the AL.

Sources in BCL claimed that the reason for inclusion of non-students and over-aged persons is that the central body is the main force of the student organisation.

Another reason is non-holding of annual BCL council.

The BCL constitution provides for formation of a central committee for one year. With the expiry of its tenure, another committee has to be formed. But the rule is never followed. That is why a student leader sticks to student politics for years, hoping for a place in the central body, the sources said.

Another reason for commotion is inclusion of only nine persons from the northern districts. As in the past, most leaders including the top ones have been chosen from the greater Faridpur, Mymensingh, Chittagong and Barisal districts, they said.

Iqbalur Rahim of Dinajpur was the last person from the northern districts to hold the post of general secretary in 1992-93.

The only leader from the region to have held BCL presidency was Habibur Rahman of Pabna back in 1990. Ruban, another BCL leader from the northern district, was the organising secretary in 1999.

The sources said a section of BCL leaders have demanded cancellation or reshuffle of the central committee since its announcement on April 5.

Meanwhile, the AL has formed a probe body to investigate ransacking of the BCL office on the DU campus by some BCL leaders after announcement of committee.

When contacted yesterday, AL leader and chief of the BCL committee formation commission Obaidul Quader said that married persons and those who have already completed their academic life would be axed from the new central committee. However, he said cases of female leaders, who are married, would be considered.

"Everything has been solved and the new BCL leadership is sitting together and bringing out processions," he said. "The BCL is the largest and oldest students organisation in the country and there can be some incidents in formation of new leadership."

Meanwhile, some genuine

# Surgeons in the dark

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units neurosurgery, orthopaedic, plastic surgery and paediatric surgery—perform operations there.

"It is risky to perform neurosurgery in such insufficient light because it involves brain or spine operation. But often we have to do it taking great risk," said another surgeon seeking anonymity. A major neurosurgery takes more than seven hours.

Repeated requests were made to the hospital authorities by the departments concerned but nothing has been done to fix the lights that costs less than a few thousand taka.

At the 'general OT' next door, only two out of seven overhead bulbs were found functional. The rest are out of order for the last two years, one surgeon there said.

"At least three operations are done in the 'general OT' every day. Only god knows how we perform the operations," he said smilingly. "We are held responsible for any fault or after-effect."

The situation is no less horrifying in other operation theatres at the

the opposition back, the sources said.

Meantime, inflexible stances by one side or the other marred two initiatives for dialogues.

On March 21, the parliament revoked the law on preservation and display of Bangabandhu's portrait, having disagreed to a proposal by the opposition for withdrawal of the repeal bill.

Nor did the government side heed an opposition's plea for adjournment of the session to pave the way for further discussions.

Rather, the bill was passed the same night and the pro-government elements reportedly damaged portraits of Bangabandhu in various places.

A week later, another move for a government-opposition dialogue met with failure, as neither of them felt the urge to communicate further.

In response to the March 28 BNP secretary general's offer for dialogue, the AL general secretary set conditions on creating an environment conducive to talks. As usual, the move ended in failure.

AL sources pointed to the happenings between March 21 and 28 when the government clamped down on at least three peaceful opposition programmes.

The AL tried to project all incidents of alleged human-rights violation. Yet, the party found it difficult in the past weeks to make the development partners understand its stand on abstinence from parliamentary sessions.

Rather, the development partners viewed that the AL should join the House, an AL leader acknowledged.

students, who have been overlooked, have made no bones about their displeasure at the heavy presence of non-students in the new committee.

"Non-students have been favoured and student and dedicated activists ignored in formation of the new BCL body," regretted a BCL leader, who aspired to be a vice-president. "The new committee would not be able to complete its tenure due to inclusion of a large number of non-students."

Another BCL leader, who is a Dhaka University student, said, "Being sidelined I am now looking for an alternative to students politics. "My hope to be a central leader was shattered and now I have no way but to concentrate on studies."

A city unit leader observed that inclusion of a large number of non-students in the committee mars election to the two top positions and hoped that non-students would be axed and genuine students accommodated to restore the image of the students organisation.

## Beware

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Muslim country, she told the parliament.

Khaleda also went on to allege that the AL is portraying Bangladesh as a country of the Taliban and fundamentalists.

The prime minister also forecast a "Beware of Awami League" campaign in the country, prompting her arch rival Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina to come back at her in less than 24 hours.

"Beware of Khaleda Zia", AL chief Sheikh Hasina told a public rally in Shariatpur district yesterday afternoon. Infuriated by Khaleda's yet unsubstantiated charge, Hasina also said the BNP-Jamaat coalition government is a terrorist coterie.

The opposition leader also said the Review report reflected the coalition government's misdeeds, apparently subscribing to the controversial report though she earlier condemned anti-Bangladesh propaganda of any shapes.

Hasina also demanded an answer from the prime minister and her government as to why the image of the country has been tarnished. She claimed to have brightened the country's image during her five-year rule.

The latest verbal burst between the two top leaders had pushed the already tangy government-opposition relationship to a new low. And, analysts say, this is bound to further heighten political tension in the country.