



PHOTO: STAR

Candidates running for ward commissioner of the Dhaka City Corporation parade through their respective wards yesterday, carrying banners and election symbols. Elections to the local government body will be held on April 25.

# Golam Rasul Nabu murder Order on prayer for remand of 3 BCL leaders Apr 29

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court, Dhaka yesterday fixed April 29 for issuing an order on prayer for remand of the three Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leaders in connection with the murder of Golam Rasul alias Rabiul Hasan alias Nabu.

The three -- newly elected president of BCL central unit Liaquat Sikdar, general secretary Nazrul Islam Babu and vice president Rafiqul Islam Kotwal, were produced before the CMM's Court at 12 noon yesterday where the hearing on the remand prayer was held.

The defence lawyers -- Advocate Shahara Khatun, SM Altaf Hossain, M Sajwar Hossain, Abu Syedagar, Abdullah Abu and Abdur Rahman Hawlader submitted a petition seeking bail along with cancellation of the remand prayer.

They maintained that the names of the accused were not in the FIR of the murder case and that they were shown arrested on April 4 in connection with the case. As they were implicated in the case as part of a conspiracy to harass them politically, they were praying for bail and seeking cancellation of the remand prayer, the lawyers added.

The prosecution side opposed the bail petition and prayed for a five-day remand.

After hearing both sides, the court fixed April 29 for ruling on the matter. Magistrate Mohammad Shahidul Islam also directed the authorities concerned to place the

## Hasina leaves

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contact tours across the country. Eighteen teams consisting of AL leaders and lawmakers left Dhaka yesterday on a visit to all districts to rally public opinion against the 'repression let loose by the ruling coalition'.

Hasina's visit to the UK has coincided with the April 25 polls to three city corporations -- Dhaka, Khulna and Rajshahi -- which her party boycotted, demanding resignation of the chief election commissioner.

# Speedy trial courts

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The magistrates themselves have repeatedly informed the higher authorities in the past that cases were piling up due to manpower shortage.

Asked to focus on and dispose of trials quickly in the speedy trial courts, the magistrates now fear they would be made to pay little attention to the affairs at the magistrate courts, leading to further rise in the pending cases there.

"There is no doubt that there will now be more pending cases in the magistrate courts," lawyer Dr M Zahir said.

The government so far did not seek the Supreme Court's suggestions in appointing and transferring the magistrates to the speedy trial courts.

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed told the BBC Radio Sunday that it was not mandatory to seek the Supreme Court's advice to this end. But the Constitution experts say it is mandatory.

"This violates Article 116 of the Constitution that suggests the government must obtain the Supreme Court's advice in this regard," Dr Zahir pointed out.

"If the government argues that it is not required then it must declare that these magistrates have not been appointed to perform judicial tasks.

"The government can say that these magistrates have been appointed earlier through appropriate procedures. However, the argument would not count, for although they were appointed earlier they have been given new judicial tasks. This violates the spirit of Article 116," he concluded.

Dr Shadin Malik, also a lawyer, yesterday said the speedy trial courts are in violation of the

# JCD cadres kidnap school girl in Natore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

JCD cadres kidnapped a school girl at Mohishkhola under Gopalgur pourasava of Lalpur upazila on Saturday night.

Jesmin Ara Boby, a student of Lalpur Girls' School and sister of Gopalgur poura AL vice president Fazlur Rahman, was kidnapped at gunpoint from in front their house at 8 pm.

Fazlur Rahman, a lecturer of English at Lalpur woman's college filed a case with Lalpur thana accusing six persons.

None was arrested in this connection till filling of the report yesterday.

## BNP refutes

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where else. The leaders, who were not identified as ministers but party leaders in the meeting, did not utter any word in their speech that might have been tantamount to violation of Election Code of Conduct.

The three leaders stayed for some time for rest in the Rajshahi circuit house but did not discuss anything related to the mayoral election there, it said.

According to the statement, the BNP secretary general returned to Dhaka in a private car with no National Flag.

"We want to make it clear that BNP as well as the four-party alliance is fully respectful to the Election Commission and these parties have been extending the best cooperation towards the EC to hold the elections in a free, fair and neutral manner," it said.

BNP called upon all concerned not to mislead the people as well as the EC by making such false, fabricated and baseless allegations in future.

## Shazneen

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ernment's list of 100 most sensational cases for speedy trial.

Meanwhile, cross-examination of the first prosecution witness in the case, Additional SP of CID Mojibur Rahman, was completed yesterday.

Mojibur Rahman, also the complainant in the case, framed charge against the accused on May 28, 2000. His cross-examination began on July 9 the same year.

Cross-examination of only one witness has been completed in the last 23 months although the Women And Children Repression Prevention Act provides for trial of such a case in 90 days. According to Sharfuddin Khan Mukul, Special PP in the case, the prosecution is taking long time due to delay in cross-examination of the complainant.

Among others, Special PP Arfanuddin Khan, ABM Sharfuddin Khan Mukul and Advocate Mahbub Ahmed appeared for the state while Advocate Moshafa Hossain Kajal and MA Kamrul Hossain Khan Aslam appeared for the accused.

Judge Mohammad Shah Alam Mia of Special Court for Women and Children Repression Prevention, Dhaka framed charges against the accused.

Shahidul Islam alias Shahid is the prime accused in the case. Syed Sajjad Mainuddin Hasan alias Hasan, Badal, Shaniram Mandal, Parveen and Minu have been charged with abetting the crime.

The murder case, pending with the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka was earlier stayed by an order of the Supreme Court. The order will remain valid till disposal of the rape case.

## Rare bird

**FROM PAGE 1**  
grove pitta in his bird book and their residential status in the Sundarbans is a question mark.

The bill of this mangrove pitta (Pitta megarhyncha) is little longer and their uniform brown crown with narrow buffish supercilium and deeper blue wing coverts and rump are more prominent than that of the Indian pitta.

This bird was photographed at Jantali Khal near Katka Sanctuary office of the Sundarbans early morning when it was singing perched on a kewra tree.

## Armed forces

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The EC will deploy five companies of army personnel in Khulna city and four in Rajshahi city. The other arrangements will be the same as the capitals. The EC sources said that 150 of the 241 polling centres are vulnerable, while it did not identify any centre as vulnerable in Rajshahi city.

In running summary trials, the EC has planned to deploy 45 magistrates in the three metropolises. They will try election-related offenders. As many as 505 magistrates will be attached with the army and BDR teams.

"The fresh deployment of security forces three days ahead of the election would help shore up confidence among voters," said an election official justifying the deployment.

The EC has asked the law enforcers to take necessary steps against any suspected of violating the election atmosphere. The authorities have also been asked to dragnet the listed criminals and recover the illegal arms.

The ruling party-backed candidates are intimidating their rivals, and to make things worse, the law enforcers are siding against them, some independent ward commissioner candidates in Dhaka alleged.

With the exception of a few independent and ruling party candidates, most aligned with the Awami League are facing intimidation.

"As the city election is being dominated by money and muscle-flexing, we feel that the election is going to be a mockery," said a senior citizen in the city's Khilgaon area yesterday.

# Extortionists attack LGED office at Mymensingh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, M'singh

A group of extortionists attacked the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) office Saturday evening as the executive engineer of LGED refused to pay a toll of Tk 10,000 demanded by the group.

According to the FIR filed yesterday with Kotwali thana by executive engineer Md. Shahidur Rahman Pramanik, a group of extortionists allegedly demanded a toll of Tk 10,000 from quality control engineer Md. Ashraf Ali Khan on Saturday, upon which he paid them a sum of Tk 3,000.

Later, they forcibly entered the room of executive engineer and demanded the same amount of money from him. But as he refused to pay, the extortionists tried to physically assault him.

The group also ransacked his room, damaging an air-conditioner and windowpanes, and the glasses of three official vehicles. They also cut off the phone connection in the building.

Being informed, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control after baton-charge and firing from a shotgun.

Three people were injured in the incident.

# Sandwip tense: Some documents shifted from UNO office

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Sandwip thana administration yesterday shifted some documents and papers from the old UNO office complex at Harishpur to the new one at Haramia amid tight security.

A contingent of over 200 policemen, deployed in the offshore island on Friday following violent resistance to the shifting, maintained a tight security during the shifting.

The situation was calm yesterday as there was no more resistance by people of Harishpur and Kuchiamora areas in the old part of the town.

At least three persons were killed and over fifty injured as people of the old part of the town, resisting the shifting, clashed with those of the new part of the town and police on Thursday and Friday.

When contacted yesterday, local MP Mostafa Kamal Pasha told this correspondent that the situation was calm.

He claimed that the issue has been settled through talks with representatives of the old part of the town.

"Twelve Union Parishad chairmen agreed to give statement supporting the shifting", the MP said.

But some local people denied that there was a settlement through talks and that the 12 UP chairmen supported the shifting.

# Saifur: Donor 'excesses'

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for Human Resource Development scholarship at the NEC auditorium yesterday.

Under this programme, introduced marking 30th anniversary of Japan's diplomatic tie with Bangladesh, 30 professionals, 14 from government jobs, will go to Japan for one to two years higher studies.

Economic Relations Division (ERD) Secretary Anisul Huq Chowdhury and Ambassador of Japan in Dhaka Jiro Kobayashi also spoke at the function.

The minister expressed his reservations about some emerging terms such as civil society, ombudsman and human rights commission, saying these are external concepts with less applicability and relevance to Asian practices.

"The term ombudsman is not known to many countries, perhaps not heard in Japan also. It's a Scandinavian concept," the minister said, citing the hollowness of the

post in a South Asian country.

Referring to Bangladeshi experience about sweeping skepticism, he asked how the post of ombudsman or Human Rights Commission could be accepted to all since the reputation of a former chief justice and that of a chief election commissioner could be questioned by certain quarters.

"Then who will chair those posts? I could not choose persons for proposed commissions for income and expenditure," the minister told his audience, saying that the country's constitution and laws safeguard human rights well enough.

The minister regretted how bad management wastes huge investments in education and health sectors in Bangladesh. Despite government spending 60 to 65 per cent of education budget at primary level, teaching is not up to the mark. Bangladesh has got the best health structure in Asia having network up

to union parishad level, but services are poor.

"If you get health assistant, you would not get any doctor. If doctor and nurse are there, you'll find emergency vehicle stuck for years only because of a punctured tyre," said the minister, deploring the bureaucracy that requires approval from higher authorities in district or in Dhaka for repair of tyres even.

Data available with ERD show Japan has been the single-largest bilateral donor providing grants and loans worth US\$ 6,049 million since 1971-72 fiscal year up to 2000-01. During the period, ADB has given US\$ 4,655 million, the USA 3,395 million, UN systems excluding UNICEF 1,896 million, Canada 1,860 million, Germany 1,444 million, the UK 1,274 million, the EU 1,162 million, the Netherlands 1,039, Saudi Arabia 888 million, Sweden 652 million, Denmark 586 million, France 552 million and UNICEF 542 million.

# Khaleda rejects plea

**FROM PAGE 12**  
pledge of the late president made in 1979 and renewed by Khaleda Zia during her last election campaign at Pirojpur.

Criticising main opposition Awami League Khaleda Zia said if there is any negative side of the new law, they should come to parliament and discuss it. "Instead, they took to the street and resorted to terrorism."

The prime minister observed that the opposition does not want development. "They did nothing for development while in power and now they were disrupting government initiatives to ensure massive development across the country."

She told her audience that the opposition had called four hartals in six months to disrupt peace, law and order and create indiscipline and anarchy in the country.

"Not only this, they are tarnishing our image abroad by branding the country as Taliban and fundamentalist. They are launching a campaign to stop foreign aid," she said accusing the opposition of "anti-state activities".

Khaleda Zia reassured that Bangladesh is not a fundamentalist country and there is no Taliban here. People of all religions, including Hindus, Buddhists and Christians, are living here in peace and communal harmony.

She reminded that people of all faiths unitedly fought for the country's independence and they were determined to build Bangladesh as a developed and prosperous country in future through combined efforts.

"Those who loot the property of people, those who plead for stopping foreign aid cannot be friends of

the people. So people must reject them and they will be totally alienated from the people," she said in a note of caution against negative politics.

And Awami League has already become frustrated seeing massive development done by the four-party government. "Because," she told the gathering, "while in power they looted everything and now were out to destroy public property."

Khaleda Zia criticised the opposition MPs for enjoying all facilities, including red passport, without going to parliament. She also referred to an absentee Awami League lawmaker's fraudulent act to secure visa from a foreign embassy.

## Directive

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people may be submitted for the knowledge of the prime minister.

For the sake of maintaining all kinds of austerity, it has been directed to limit the number of vehicles for the head of the government and members of her entourage. Besides, instructions have also been given to stop whimsical use and unnecessary presence of vehicles.

Directives have been issued not to disturb the routine functions of educational institutions during the prime minister's tours. Unnecessary presence of officials and employees has been discouraged during receptions and farewells to the prime minister.

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Dr Kamal Uddin Siddiqui, in a circular, yesterday asked the field administration to follow the instructions properly.

# Armed attack on meeting of BNP commissioner candidate in city

UNB, Dhaka

Four supporters of a BNP commissioner candidate were injured, one of them seriously, in an armed attack in the city's Agargaon area yesterday.

Witnesses said 4-5 miscreants fired gunshots and hurled bombs at a meeting of Ward No-41 commissioner candidate Abubakar Siddik near his election camp in the area at about 8:30 pm leaving his four supporters injured.

Hospital sources quoting a witness said the hoodlums fired 8-10 shots, hurled 4-5 bombs and left the scene in an autorickshaw.

The injured -- Babu, 24, Nazrul, 20, Manwar Hossain Manu, 20, and Jashim, 24, -- were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the condition of Jashim was stated to be critical.

Commissioner candidate Abubakar Siddik blamed a rival candidate for the attack.

## 40 centres

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bles. Returning Officer AR Siddiqui said that as many as 150 magistrates would work on the election-related activities.

Of them, ten magistrates will conduct mobile courts for summary trial of the fake voters and other criminals violating law and order.

A special election tribunal has also been formed with Joint District Judge of Rajshahi Mohammad Mahtab Hossain to dispose of election-related cases after the election.

Electioneering in the forms of meeting and procession will remain banned from the midnight of April 23 to the midnight of April 25.

# Gas reserve

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whether the country has enough gas to export through pipeline to India or not.

One group advocated in favour of the recent Norwegian-Bangladesh (Hydrocarbon Cell of Energy Ministry) study that puts the current available recoverable gas reserve at around 18 trillion cubic feet.

The other group rejecting this figure upholds the last Petrobangla-ICM scientific study conducted in 1991 saying that the Norwegian study was not a scientific study. This study puts the existing proven gas reserve at 11.23 tcf (which includes gas reserves added by the international oil companies after mid-1990s).

The counter argument goes that between 1991 and 2002, there has been significant progress of exploration and development technology, which is why the Norwegian study is much more convincing.

The other issue of dispute was the domestic gas demand projection. In this regard, one group argued that the current GDP growth suggested huge gas demand growth. The other group remained cynical about future demand growth saying that the government planners unnecessarily projected higher demand figures, which were never achieved in reality.

The members of the committee would start drafting the report from Tuesday.

Formed in January at the directive of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia

# Bangladeshi shot dead by BSF in Chuadanga

UNB, Chuadanga

Indian border guards shot dead a Bangladeshi national in the district early yesterday, official sources said.

The dead was identified as Mizanur Rahman, 26, son of Abdur Ali, of Akandabaria village in Sadar upazila.

The Indian Border Security Force (BSF) shot him near the main pillar number 74 at about 4 am. He died on the spot. The BSF men took away the body.

Meanwhile, BDR sent a message to BSF asking them to return the body of Bangladeshi youth. They also lodged protest against the killing.

However, BSF did not respond till 6:37 pm yesterday.

## Memo to president

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mayoral candidate Advocate Abed Raja said that at a meeting with the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) on April-20, they complained to him that Khoka was violating the polls code. The CEC assured them of looking into the matter immediately but no action has been taken, he said.

He said they will consider boycotting the DCC polls if action is not taken against Khoka after submission of the memorandum.

Earlier, the mayoral candidates staged a sit-in for about an hour in front of the Bangabhaban gate as police barred them from entering it to meet the President.

Following the sit-in, the APS to the President received the memorandum and assured them that he will arrange their meeting with the president soon.

They also alleged that police also intercepted their small procession in front of the Jatiya Press Club when it was heading towards the Bangabhaban.

They said they will stage a token hunger strike at the Muktangsan today protesting the incidents.

# Govt trying to hide

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The AL chief bitterly criticised the government of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia for shifting all the blames on opposition's shoulders. "They're accusing us of making propaganda but the actual scenario is that because of their corruption and repression, Bangladesh's image is being tarnished abroad."

Turning to the issue of price hikes of foodstuffs, the former PM alleged that the BNP-Jamaat alliance did not want to see a self-reliant Bangladesh. "When we left office, granaries were full of food grains; why then should the prices mark such a rise in just six months' time?" Hasina wondered.

"Does the prime minister at all believe in sovereignty and independence of Bangladesh or does she run the country at the dictates of her foreign master?" questioned Hasina, wanting to know why the six-month old government of the ruling alliance was unleashing repression on the people of the country.

She noted that the farming community of the country was not spared from the repression of the new regime. "I want you to make a full list of properties, farms, cattle, poultry farms and fisheries that the farmers lost due to attacks of the ruling alliance men," Hasina instructed the Krishak League leaders.

Noting that her government had achieved most success in the sectors of agriculture and social welfare, Hasina lamented saying, "These two ministries went to the Jamaatees."

The opposition leader was highly critical of the "malignant" attitude of the government that, she alleged, had stopped the works for setting up

science and technology universities that Hasina's government had initiated, and also changed the name of 'One house, one farm' project to 'One house, one garden.'

Portraying a gloomy picture of the law and order situation in the country, she referred to the incident of killing in police beating, rapes and listed criminals getting elected in city corporation polls.

"Eleven people have already been elected uncontested while many independent candidates had to withdraw from the race after they received death threats," Hasina alleged.

Referring to the big bomb incidents that took place in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Jessore and Gopalganj during her term in government, Sheikh Hasina once again alleged that "Jamaat-Shibir men carried out the offences under directives from Hawa Bhaban (BNP's Election Office)."

Earlier, addressing the reunion programme former agriculture minister and AL central leader Motia Chowdhury alleged that farmers were being subjected to extortion in using irrigation facilities and applying fertilisers in croplands.

She further alleged that activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and Jubo Dal, BNP's front organisations, were taking farm credits from banks in the guise of farmers while the real farmers were being deprived of loans.

AL presidium member Abdur Razzak, and central leaders Advocate Rahmat Ali and Abdul Mannan, also spoke, among others, at the programme chaired by Krishak League president Rashed Mosharrar.