

# AL walks out

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The AL lawmaker, Abdur Razzak, took the floor next and started speaking on hartal in defence. But the deputy speaker who was chairing yesterday's sitting intervened saying that no debate is allowed after any speech under Section 300 of the Rules of Procedure, and he switched off the AL leader's microphone.

Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain described Razzak's speech as beyond the Rules of Procedure and asked the deputy speaker to expunge his speech.

The AL at a post-walkout press briefing blasted the role of the deputy speaker. "The deputy speaker is silencing the opposition voice and protecting the ruling party, which is beyond the constitution," AL Presidium Member Suranjit Sengupta said.

The House also witnessed a heated debate on the chief whip's June 17 circular that restricted the use of cell phones inside parliament.

LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed and Khandaker Delwar Hossain from one camp and Suranjit and Razzak from the other took part in the debate.

The AL said the chief whip's issuance of the circular went beyond parliamentary norms as

only the speaker can dictate it.

"I am not talking about the content of the letter but about the chief whip's authority to write it," said Suranjit. "Only the speaker can do that." He accused the chief whip of an extra-constitutional act.

"We are not bound to go by the circular," he said before the speaker switched his microphone off.

In defence of Delwar, Moudud said what he did is not a directive but good advice. Delwar chimed in saying he has every right to give such suggestion on the use of cell phones in the House.

By the time Suranjit sought the floor again, the Chair proceeded to the day's next business -- general discussion on budget -- only to see the AL deputies walk out.

The AL lawmakers returned to the House within five minutes when Mannan Bhuiyan was speaking. He described the AL walkout as planned and said the opposition party called hartal only to show the foreign dignitaries that Bangladesh 'lacks' democratic norms.

The AL lawmakers wanted to counter Mannan Bhuiyan's arguments but the Chair did not allow them, leading them to leave the House for a second time.

The AL will decide today whether or not to join the next sitting, AL Presidium Member Abdus Samad Azad told reporters.

# Hasina: Oppression

**FROM PAGE 1**  
ruling-BNP.

"Foreign investment has fallen alarmingly due to criminal activities aided and abetted by the government and due to violation of human rights," Hasina said.

The BNP-Jamaat regime has been marked by killing, rape, torture, extortion and price hike of essentials, she observed.

She questioned the lawfulness of engaging the armed forces in curbing crimes and said, "The government must disclose how much was spent on the Operation Clean Heart that engaged about 40,000 armed forces and how many illegal arms were recovered."

She also criticised the bills for raising perks for the prime minister and ministers, the government interference in the judiciary and nomination of Salauddin Quader Chowdhury as Bangladesh candidate for secretary general of the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC).

Alleging that the government has made parliament inactive, Hasina said, "Opposition lawmakers are not allowed to speak in the House and it has turned out to be a place for making untrue statements."

She said the government lacked confidence as it had come to power "under a blueprint and not with people's mandate".

She told the council that the next leaders of the AL's city unit will be a blend of the youth and the old. She warned of punitive actions against

violators of party discipline.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil, Organising Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury and City unit General Secretary Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya also addressed the council chaired by Mohammad Hanif.

## Water crisis grips SBMCH as tubewell goes out of order

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal**

Water supply to the Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMCH) has remained severely disrupted for almost a week now as one of the two deep tubewells has stopped functioning since June 13.

The old tubewell cannot lift water for the 500-bed hospital due to rapidly falling water level while the other one, also very old and worn-out, could go out of order any time, said Public Works Department (PWD) officials responsible for maintenance of the tubewells.

Patients at the hospital's maternity, paediatric and cardiology wards and post-surgery patients are being forced to fetch water from a distance and carry it all the way even to the fifth floor of the hospital.

The old tubewells need to be replaced on an emergency basis or at least one new deep tubewell must be dug immediately, PWD officials said.

However, hospital authorities said they do not have the money to make the replacements or install a new tubewell.

## Teenage girl raped in Rajshahi

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi**

A 14-year-old mentally handicapped girl was raped at Hazrapukur in Shiroil area of Rajshahi town Tuesday night.

The girl was visiting a neighbour's house when she was taken to a nearby bush and raped allegedly by Belal Mia, 26, and Sobhan Ali, 30, family sources said.

The victim's mother filed a case with Boalia police station against the two alleged rapists.

Both men have gone into hiding since the incident.

## Hanif, Maya

**FROM PAGE 1**  
general elections, alleged criminal activities of Maya's son Dipu drew the wrath of the party rank and file.

For several weeks after the polls, Maya, also a former minister, could not visit AL central office on Bangabandhu Avenue.

AL sources claimed the party was making efforts to ditch leaders with bad reputation from all new committees.

The AL secretariat at a meeting on March 28 decided to get rid of leaders with the 'godfather image'.

The meeting discussed, in detail, how negative images of leaders like Zoynal Hazari of Feni, Shamim Osman of Narayanganj, Abu Taher of Laxmipur and Abul Hasnat Abdullah of Barisal had contributed to the poor showing in the polls.

Within four days of the meeting, the party high command removed long-absconding Hazari from the post of general secretary of Feni district unit.

Addressing the inaugural session of the council, Hasina warned her party workers of punitive measures if they breached party discipline.

"I want a disciplined and well-organised party from the grassroots level with the blend of experience of the elderly and the dynamism of the young," she said.

## 3 BRTC buses

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ment of his activists in the series of destructive activities.

Baffled BRTC officials met at an emergency meeting yesterday afternoon where they feared the loss from the series of attacks would be around Tk 1 crore.

The BRTC, which filed cases with police stations, sought everybody's cooperation to save the state-owned vehicles.

## Rajya Sabha member KM Khan meets Hasina

**UNB, Dhaka**

Indian Rajya Sabha member KM Khan called on Awami League president and Opposition Leader in Parliament Sheikh Hasina at her Sudha Sadan residence yesterday.

Khan, also chairman of GLOBE South Central Asia and Asian Coordination Committee of NGO Affairs on the Palestine, discussed with the opposition leader matters of mutual interests relating to India-Bangladesh ties.

He paid rich tribute to "father of the nation" Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and recalled Indo-Bangla cooperation in various fields.

This was Khan's second visit to Dhaka. He first came here when Hasina was in power.

During the meeting, the Rajya Sava member lauded the leadership of Sheikh Hasina and hoped that cooperation between the two countries would be further strengthened.

AL advisory council member Faruk Ahmed Chowdhury, AL presidium member Kazi Jafarullah MP, Hasina's political secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Syed Abul Hossain MP and press adviser Jawadul Karim were present at the meeting.

## Imported rice delivered on fake documents: 16 sued

**UNB, Benapole**

A consignment of 85 metric tons of rice imported from India has been taken away by the importer from the Benapole land port producing fake bank documents to the customs.

Al Arafah Islami Bank that financed the import on 35 per cent down payment of US\$16,320 filed a case on Tuesday against 16 people including importer Mustafa Kamal of Diamond Enterprise of Dhaka, two customs officials and two C&F agents of Benapole.

Sources said the L/C for the import of rice was opened through Al Arafah Bank and the consignment reached Benapole port on May 19.

The importer took delivery of rice on production of forged documents of the bank on May 22.

Police said they were investigating into the case. None was arrested till Wednesday.

## 2 killed, 5 hurt in Jhenidah road mishap

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah**

Two persons were killed and five others injured in a road accident near Mobarakganj Sugar Mills yesterday.

The dead were identified as Atiar Rahman, 45, and Shahriar, 18, of village Kaliganj in the district.

Police and witnesses said the accident took place when a trolley collided head-on with a sand-laden truck at around 11:00 am.

The injured were admitted to Kaliganj Health Complex.

The bodies were sent to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

## Abed Khan

**FROM PAGE 12**  
freelance journalist and professional column writer in recognised dailies.

He published three books *Abhajoner Nibedon Iti*, *Talk of the Town* and *Gaurananda Kobi Bhone Shune Punyaban*.

In turns, he was elected president, joint secretary and member of East Pakistan Journalists' Union and Dhaka Journalists' Union.

## Forex reserves

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number of harsh measures including capping of illegal money transfers through hundi and opening of exchange houses abroad to bring remittance to official channel.

Monetary policy was also tightened to restrict imports by imposing higher margins on imports.

Finance ministry sources said the reserves may stand at \$2.5 billion this month with the availability of loans from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

## Duty rebate

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ment but the proposal for its inclusion drew strong opposition from India.

Representatives of the member countries debated for over three hours on the issue in the last meeting but failed to reach a consensus. The main reason behind India's opposition was Pakistan's refusal to recognise India as a most favoured nation, the official said.



Indonesian President Megawati Soekarnoputri places wreaths at the National Mausoleum at Savar yesterday.

# Dhaka, Jakarta firm

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Nazir Rahman Manzur, Abdul Qader Siddiqui and Rashed Khan Menon, editors and senior journalists, academicians, business leaders, and senior civil and military officials attended the dinner.

Khaleda Zia in her address stressed the need for strengthening political and economic ties between the two developing Asian countries.

Welcoming the Indonesian president and her delegation, she recalled the visit of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman to Indonesia in July 1978.

The prime minister particularly mentioned the illustrious role and the leadership of President Soekarno in attaining independence of the Republic of Indonesia.

In this regard, she also referred to the timely leadership of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman in the Liberation War of Bangladesh.

Khaleda Zia drew similarities between the Indonesian Democratic Party, the ruling party of Indonesia, and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party that leads the ruling alliance government in Bangladesh.

She said both parties won massive victory in their respective last general elections and have a similar national agenda.

"This means keeping economic development at the top to ensure a better quality of life for the common people", she said.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia said her government has targeted poverty alleviation as the primary goal and devoted maximum resources to

achieve it within the shortest possible time.

"As a business-friendly government, we are providing incentives to create a strong and healthy private sector," she added.

Khaleda Zia deeply appreciated the inspiring role of Megawati in the restoration of multi-party democracy in Indonesia.

Referring to the recent terrorist attack in Bali, Khaleda lauded the courageous leadership of Megawati in handling the situation and for the singular measures to steer the development effort on its track.

In her address, the Indonesian leader expressed similar conviction about enhancing and expanding mutual cooperation among the two biggest Muslim populations by maximum utilisation of the available potentials.

She also expressed her firm belief that there are more areas to be explored to achieve a more meaningful and substantive bilateral relation.

Megawati termed her current visit as extremely instrumental in "our efforts to enhance and expand mutually beneficial cooperation."

She mentioned that as members of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organisation of Islamic Conference, Bangladesh and Indonesia always support each other.

"At the bilateral level and in dealing with common issues in other international forums, we also continue to work together and consolidate our stance," the visiting president said.

Referring to the bilateral trade

volume that reached only US\$ 220 million in 2001, she regretted that it was clearly far below the actual capacity and potentials.

President Megawati said Indonesia is always open to any innovative suggestions and inputs that would help boost the trade exchanges.

"We also consider the importance of enhancing and expanding cooperation in social, cultural and education fields," she added.

The Indonesian president called for exerting more efforts to proceed with broad contacts at government level, among institutions or organisations, as well as at parliamentary level and among companies and entrepreneurs to interpersonal relationship.

She hoped the Joint Commission would explore a wider scope and spectrum of relations as well as a more intensified bilateral cooperation.

President Megawati invited Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to make a return visit to Indonesia.

Bangladesh comes first in her 10-day trip across Asia, which will take her also to Mongolia, Japan and Vietnam. Megawati will fly to her next destination Ulan Bator, the capital of Mongolia, tomorrow morning.

It is the second visit to Bangladesh by Megawati and also by any Indonesian head of government since the then president Suharto's in 1979.

She came to Bangladesh earlier in 2001 as vice-president and a few months later, she was elected the president.

# Powell arrives this afternoon

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Middle East.

Six major issues are likely to dominate official talks between Dhaka and Washington during the visit, officials said.

Dhaka is likely to seek duty- and quota-free access of goods to the US markets, a liberal policy on visit and immigration visa for its citizens and a soft attitude toward Bangladeshis living in the US.

Washington is likely to seek minimisation of the trade gap heavily tilted to Bangladesh, special protection of its investment and consent to signing the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA).

Powell will lead a seven-member high-powered delegation that includes Christina B Rocca, assistant secretary of the Bureau of South Asian Affairs and Richard Boucher, spokesman of the State Department.

Unprecedented security cover was thrown over the city and several advance delegations, including the security team, arrived in Dhaka a few days ago.

Officials from both sides stayed tight-lipped on the itinerary. Some foreign ministry officials told reporters that they did not receive any confirmed schedule of the visit.

They said Powell was likely to arrive at Zia International Airport on board his official aircraft at about 12:30pm from where he will be driven straight into Sheraton Hotel. He will have a working lunch with senior ministers at the hotel.

He will also hold a tête-à-tête with his Bangladesh counterpart M Morshed Khan before attending a joint

press briefing at the same hotel at about 2:30pm. From Sheraton, he is likely to go to the US Embassy.

Powell will call on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office at around 4:00pm. Bangladesh sought 45 minutes for the meeting.

He is expected to leave Dhaka at about 6:00pm concluding the visit, the third by a US secretary of state to Bangladesh after Henry Kissinger's tour in October 1974 and Madeleine Albright's visit in March 2000 along with president Clinton.

Powell is coming to Dhaka from Cambodia after attending meetings in Phnom Penh with the organisations under the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on regional security, international politics and economy.

According to US State Department, Powell's visit stems from the US conviction that Bangladesh is a moderate Muslim country and a partner in the US-led war on terrorism and that it is making efforts towards establishing democracy.

"The United States values Bangladesh highly as a voice of moderation in the Muslim world. It has been a steadfast partner in the war on terrorism and has made solid progress in building democratic institutions, especially the holding of free and fair elections," said a press notice of the State Department.

According to the American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh, the US has an investment of US\$ 1.2 billion in sectors like oil, gas and energy in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh fetches over US\$2 billion a year through export to the US,

while its import bill is around US\$300 million.

Readymade garments, frozen foods, leather and leather goods dominate Bangladesh's export list, while machinery, spare parts, chemicals, medical equipment, wheat and defence equipment make up its import tray.

Dhaka has agreed in principle to sign the TIFA for which Washington approached it in February. It will inform the US secretary of state of the decision during the visit.

The US has such an agreement with Sri Lanka in South Asia and with a number of countries in Southeast Asia.

Dhaka will come up at the talks with the issue of US National Security Entry and Exit Registration System (NSEERS) under which 7,238 Bangladesh nationals in the US registered their names and another 25 were arrested and released on bail.

Around 2.5 lakh Bangladeshis live in the US.

After his Bangladesh visit, Powell will leave for Jordan to attend the World Economic Forum where he will discuss proposals for a Middle East Free Trade Area and the Middle East Partnership Initiative.

He will also meet officials from the United Nations, European Union and Russia in the Jordanian capital of Amman on June 22 to discuss ways of assisting Israel and the Palestine in their efforts to end terror and violence and moving towards the goal of a peaceful, two-state solution.



A pro-hartal poster hangs on a closed gate of Dhaka University yesterday. The Bangladesh Chhatra League will enforce the hartal countrywide today to protest the killing of its city leader Saiful Rasul Palash.

# Govt has made Parliament ineffective: Hasina

**UNB, Dhaka**

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday accused the ruling alliance of making the parliament ineffective and using it for spreading falsehood and carrying out propaganda against the opposition.

"Democracy is struggling and rule of law is absent... judiciary is there but people have no right to seek justice. There is parliament where people's voice is gagged," she said addressing the triennial conference of Dhaka City Awami League at the Engineers Institution auditorium.

Hasina formally inaugurated the council releasing pigeons and balloons. She hoisted the national flag while City AL president Mohammad Hanif and general secretary Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya hoisted the organisational flag.

The Awami league chief said the BNP-Jamaat alliance government has created a suffocating environment across the country unleashing a reign of terror and people are now fed up with government's misrule, repression and torture.

Terming the government "corrupt and terrorist", Hasina also alleged that the BNP-Jamaat alliance has turned the country into a "safe haven" for the killers.

She criticised the government for imposing additional taxes on essentials and reducing duty on luxury items. "Why the people will give you (the government) an additional 5000 crore taka for your luxury?" she asked.

Delegates and councilors from 22

## 48 more Rohingyas repatriated

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar**

Forty-eight more Rohingya refugees of eight families went back to Myanmar from Nayapara and Kutupalong refugee camps here yesterday, officials said.

Officials of Bangladesh government and UNHCR saw them off on the bank of Naaf river at Teknaf.

Myanmar immigration officials received them at Kaningchong reception centre.

With this, a total of 2,34,297 Rohingya refugees of 46,826 families have so far returned to their homeland.

# Gender ratio gap

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dren affairs ministry titled "Statistical profile of women in Bangladesh" shows that maternal morbidity has come down to 3.8 per cent from 6.5 per cent within the past 18 years.

However, the ratio might have decreased simply because male migration abroad has increased or there was a good coverage of women by the census, Nurunnabi added.

According to gender experts, there are various causes behind having fewer women than men. Higher mortality rates for girl children between ages one and five and higher maternal mortality rates have contributed to the shortfall of women.

They pointed out that the under-enumeration of women in census might be another reason why men-women ratio had remained unequal. However, UNDP gender experts put it down to chronic social repression of women in a male dominated society.

The ratio has been specially wide in the South Asian countries as opposed to Europe or other societies where women are better treated.

According to the census of 1901 there were 111.3 males against 100 women. It came down to 104.5 in 1911, 105.5 in 1921, 105.9 in

1931, 107.5 in 1941, 109.7 in 1951, 107.6 in 1961, 107.7 in 1974, 106.4 in 1981, 105.9 in 1991 and 103.8 in 2001.

Interestingly, while the female ratio is going up, the gap is very wide in the capital. The census says there are 130.6 males against 100 females in Dhaka.

Dr. Nurunnabi pointed out that many people come to Dhaka to earn a living, leaving their better halves back home.

Ayesha Khanam, general secretary of Mahila Parishad, said people are now relatively more aware of women health and nutrition.

"The discrimination between a daughter and a son has decreased in the country," she said.

The government policies have also had positive effects, Ayesha added.

The government has been running various programmes on mother and child health for the past four decades. In recent years, it has strongly emphasised the education and protection of girl children.

## Hartal

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Bangabandhu Avenue yesterday afternoon. Addressing the rally they demanded immediate arrest and punishment of the killers of Palash.

"Our leaders and activists across the country also staged demonstrations in support of the hartal," BCL President Liakat Shikder said.

Palash was gunned down by a group of unknown assailants at a bus ticket counter at Kalyanpur in the city on June 16.

## US soldier

**FROM PAGE 12**  
detainees was known to be have been a bodyguard of the Iraqi leader.

Odierno said his soldiers seized 8.5 million dollars in cash, 300 to 400 million Iraqi dinars, uncounted Euros and British pounds, as well as large cash of gems and jewels valued at over a million dollars.

One man, who was tracked by an unmanned spy plane as he fled a farm house in a vehicle, was captured with an additional 800,000 dollars in cash, Odierno said.

"In addition, we confiscated late model Russian-made night vision goggles, sniper rifles, uniforms and equipment of Saddam's personal guard."

"We continue to work hard and I believe over the next three to four days, you will hear much more about the number of senior Iraqi individuals we have detained here over the last couple of days."