

## Cabinet body

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The ministries into four groups on the basis of their functions.

"We have taken these decisions to make the administration more dynamic and people-oriented," said Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman who chaired the meeting.

The cabinet committee suggests that all the existing 40 ministries – except for the law, justice and parliamentary affairs and foreign affairs ministries – should be grouped into four clusters, meeting sources said.

The ministries dealing with finance, industries and commerce will be bracketed in one cluster. A second cluster will group the ministries dealing with utilities such as energy, communication and telecoms. A third cluster will have ministries dealing with development works like the local government ministry and a fourth cluster will have ministries that deal with regulatory work.

The grouping of these ministries is aimed to make sure that specialised officials above the rank of joint secretary are transferred and posted within certain types of ministries suitable for their expertise. Officials below the rank of joint secretary can be transferred and posted from one group to another as they are considered 'non-experts'.

On increasing the number of PSC, the cabinet committee argues that the present PSC is unable to hire enough officials because of its limitations and

that it also lacks the expertise to hire doctors, engineers, economists and other specialised professionals.

"Primarily, there will be a new PSC in addition to the present one," said a meeting source. "This new PSC will hire professionals while the existing one will recruit general cadre officials."

On contractual appointments, the cabinet committee feels that contractual appointments can be continued on the basis of requirement.

On re-introducing a senior service pool that existed during former president Ziaur Rahman's rule, the source said, "This pool will be formed with brilliant officials of and above joint secretary rank. It will make up for the lack of brilliant officials in the present administration."

The system of hiring fourth class employees on a 'no-work-no-pay' basis has created resentment among the civil servants. The cabinet committee feels the system is unnecessary and rather discriminatory. So, such employees should be hired as full-time staff.

There are also proposals on golden handshake of government employees, extension of retirement age and some other issues which the cabinet committee did not consider yesterday.

"These need further scrutiny before we can decide on the issues," quipped the finance minister.

## Ailing agriculture

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Anwar said.

He mentioned that the country's population will rise to 180 million in 2020 and food requirement will be around 40 million tonnes. "We should also keep in mind that our cultivable land is gradually shrinking. It was 9 million hectares 10 years ago but now it is 8.29 million hectares," he said.

Fertility of soil has also been affected seriously due to lack of balanced use of fertilisers and crop rotation, the minister said. He admitted that in many cases government policy was responsible for such a situation as subsidies on all fertilisers excepting urea were withdrawn in mid-1980s.

Against this backdrop, Anwar stressed immediate steps for agriculture sector.

Uttam Kumar, research fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), suggested

subsidy on TSP fertiliser to help increase soil fertility and facilitate balanced use of fertilisers.

Amjad Khan Chowdhury, president of Bangladesh Agro Processors' Association, said it is not possible to alleviate poverty without developing agriculture and agro-processing industries.

Monwar Hossain, president and Nurul Hasan Khan, general secretary of the ERF also spoke at the dialogue.

## NUVC ordered

**FROM PAGE 12**  
in group and also individually.

"The VC threatened us to damage our academic career by showing our registration cards," he said adding that the police helped the attackers instead of saving the students.

Prof Aftab however told The Daily Star that while he was in the meeting with the students' representatives, the demonstrating students outside began to damage the windows of his office and attacked the employees.

Second year (honours) students of Dhaka College and Titumir College yesterday blocked the front roads of the colleges demanding punishment to those responsible for the attack on the students on NU campus.

The agitating students damaged at least five vehicles in front of the colleges. The students of Titumir College blockaded the front road from 12 noon to 1:00pm by burning tyres. They from a rally in front of the college threatened to go for tougher movement against the VC if the five-point demand and also the demand for punishment to the attackers were not met soon.

The Dhaka College students brought out a procession on the Mirpur road and put barricade at the Science Laboratory intersection. They held a rally on the college campus at about 12:30pm. From the rally they demanded punishment to the Personal Secretary (PS) to NU Vice Chancellor, proctor and the employees union president for attacking students on May 5. They also demanded promotion of the students who passed at least in two subjects or got 25 percent on average. The rally announced a token sit-in programme in front of the college for tomorrow.

At least 50 students of different colleges under NU were injured on May 5 when NU employees at Gazipur allegedly attacked students demonstrating in front of the VC Office following the failed negotiations over their five-point demand.

The demands include allowing students to retake exams only for the subjects failed and give auto promotion to second year from first year, reformation of syllabus, formation of a question preparing committee by the teachers of NU-affiliated colleges, holding exams under specific guidelines and certain time-frame.

## BJP gains

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Congress and allies 167-179 seats and 87-99 to others.

Zee News in collaboration with Taleem Research Foundation exit poll says BJP and allies are likely to end up with 267 seats, while Sahara News-DRS allows NDA to have 263 berths. The Zee News and Sahara News projected 187 and 183 seats for Congress-led combine.

But all the exit polls suggested that the NDA has made gains in the penultimate phase of poll, especially in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and electorally-rich Uttar Pradesh that has the highest 80 seats.

After the exit polls, BJP central leadership held a meeting at the residence of its President M Venkaiah Naidu yesterday to review the progress and map out strategy for the final lap of election on May 10 when 182 constituencies go to poll across 16 states and federally-ruled territories.

Nomination seekers for Dhaka-10 seat include city BNP General Secretary and former deputy mayor Abdus Salam, Adviser to the Commerce Ministry and Juba Dal President Barkatullah Bulu, former general secretary of the DUCSU and Organising Secretary of Juba Dal Khairul Kabir Khokon and Dhaka City Corporation ward commissioners Chowdhury Alam, Arifur Rahman, Anwaruddin Anwar, L Rahman and MRUhl Amin Chishty.

Earlier, another Political Secretary to the PM M Harris Chowdhury had also sought nomination from Dhaka-10 constituency but sources said he is not in the race now.

Nomination seekers from Munshiganj-1 constituency include Momen Ali, Anwar Hossain Ujjal, Leba Kazi, Ali Akkas Nadim, Shafi Biktampur, Mir Sharafat Ali Sapu, Shawkat Ali Bhuiyan, Mainuddin Ahmed, Haji Abdul Jalil, Mahub Anam and Ajmeri Begum Chanda.

Meanwhile, the alternative political stream has not yet finalised nomination for the two seats.

## 5 killed in city

**FROM PAGE 1**  
relative Mahboob, who was to teach them.

Police however said the killers and the victims are members of an organised criminal outfit led by one Chasha and Nazrul Islam, nicknamed NI.

"The murders are the result of an internal conflict and the killers have been identified," said Ashrafur Huda, commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) after visiting the scene.

Police said Monir was earlier arrested seven times on various charges.

In another incident, police recovered the body of a young fruit trader from Bhagobati Banerjee Road in Sutrapur in the early hours of yesterday. Wrapped in a sack, the body was found beside the road and sent to Mirfoid hospital for autopsy.

The victim, Haroon-ur Rashid, 33, used to run his footwear shop near Bangladesh Bank and lived at Konapara in Demra. His associates said he may have been killed by extortionists for speaking out against them.

Medical sources quoting forensic experts said Haroon was strangled and the body was put inside the sack and dumped at the spot.

In yet another incident, armed assailants shot dead a young workshop mechanic in Gulshan yesterday. A gang of four went to the residence of Mohammad Dulal, 25, at School Road at Badda and called him out of his house at 11:00am, according to the family.

Dulal's wife China Begum Shampa told journalists at the DMCH that Dulal was sleeping when local gang leader

Gaffar called him out. She saw Jewel, Saiful and Ripon standing outside their house.

"Half an hour later I heard my husband has been murdered," China said.

The killer pumped bullets in the abdomen, throat and head, China said.

Sub-inspector Bhubesh of Gulshan Police Station retrieved the body and sent it to DMCH for autopsy.

The victim's mother said her son was a workshop mechanic and not involved in any criminal activities.

Dulal's friends said he might have been killed by extortionists and that he had moved from Biswa Road to School Road recently fearing attempts on his life.

In the other incident, assailants hacked a young man to death at section 12 in Pallabi in the early hours of yesterday.

Sources said Nasim Ahmed Chowdhury alias Russell, 27, came out of his residence for a walk with his ailing mother. After some time, he told his mother to go home and said he would be back soon.

He however did not return and the locals found him lying on his face on the road in front of his house.

Pallabi police recovered the body from the spot at about 5:30am and sent it to the DMCH for autopsy. The motive behind his death could not be known immediately.

There were marks of injuries caused by a sharp weapon on his shoulders and the back of his head, hospital sources said.

Locals took the body from the hospital but his relatives did not come.

## More photos emerge

**FROM PAGE 12**  
of the situation.

**SADISTIC ABUSE**  
More photos of Iraqi prisoners being abused by their US jailers have turned up among 1,000 digital pictures passed around among US military police who served at the Abu Graib prison, The Post said yesterday.

The pictures show similar acts of abuse and humiliation that have been seen around the world and touched off a major scandal that has led to investigations and expressions of disgust and disappointment by top US military and political leaders.

President Bush went on Arabic television on Wednesday vowing to punish US troops behind the abuse but stopping short of apologising.

The graphic images, taken by several digital cameras, loaded onto compact discs and passed around among military police who served at the now notorious Abu Graib prison in Baghdad, include a soldier holding a leash tied around a naked prisoner writing on the ground.

Another shows a group of three or four naked prisoners tied together on the ground outside their cells as US troops mill around them.

Many of the prisoners are wearing white identification bands on their wrists, said the daily, adding that it could not rule out the possibility some of the pictures were staged.

Other photographs include one of a naked prisoner wearing a black pointed hood handcuffed to the bars of his prison cell and another naked prisoner with a pair of women's undies over his head and face tied to the metal bunk bed in such a way his back is arched.

There are also images of soldiers simulating sexually explicit acts with

one another and shots of a cow being skinned and gutted and soldiers posing with its severed head. There are also dozens of pictures of a cat's severed head, the daily said.

Finally, the daily said there are pictures of wounded men and corpses, one of which shows a soldier smiling and giving the "thumbs-up sign," leaning over a grey, decomposing corpse.

## Bangla Bhai

**FROM PAGE 1**  
The DIG of Rajshahi Range hoped three to four thousand Sarbahara men would surrender by May 15 and urged people of Bhabaniganj, Taherpur and Habilkutsa in Rajshahi, the operational base of Bangla Bhai, to cooperate with the JMBJB.

Meanwhile, talking to our Bogra correspondent yesterday Bangla Bhai claimed that 3,000 of 4,000 Sarbahara had already surrendered to JMBJB and black badges were attached to their attires so that none torture them.

A correspondent from Naogaon reports: JMBJB men yesterday allegedly beat three outlaws to death at Atrai.

Depankar, 21, died on the spot while Shaikh Farid Uddin, 46, and Saidur Rahman, 24 succumbed to their injuries at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

The JMBJB, which waged its so called anti-extremist war in April in the region infested with the outlaws, has allegedly killed seven people and assaulted hundreds of others, describing them as Sarbahara men.

## BNP meets Tuesday

**FROM PAGE 1**  
BNP sources said seven party leaders already purchased nomination forms for Dhaka-10 seat and 20 for Munshiganj-1 seat till yesterday.

The two seats fell vacant following the resignation of retired major Abdul Mannan (Dhaka-10) and Mahi B Chowdhury (Munshiganj-1) from parliament and also from the BNP. Both later joined former president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury's "alternative political stream".

BNP insiders said some important candidates, including Political Secretary to the PM Mosaddak Ali, are likely to purchase and submit nomination papers on the last day today.

Highly placed sources within the ruling BNP said the party high command has almost finalised its choice of Mosaddak Ali for Dhaka-10 and Momen Ali for Munshiganj-1 seats.

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## Hasina

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Wednesday, Hasina said massive rigging, capturing of polling stations, preventing voters from going to centres and attacks on Awami League leaders and workers marked the elections which, she alleged, cannot be happened without government backing.

"They (BNP-Jamaat) have created an alarming situation across the country...the international observers who had given certificate of fair election should now see what the government will do in the next general elections if they can make such a situation in local body polls," Hasina said.

She also cited some incidents that took place in Meherpur, Munshiganj and some other parts of the country.

Asked whether AL lawmakers were going to join the House to either save their membership or perform their responsibility as parliament members, Hasina said they (AL) wanted to perform their responsibility, but they were not allowed to do so.

"BNP does not want us in parliament. They urged us for joining the House on one hand and prevented us from speaking in the House on the other," she said.

Hasina said her party's women workers were taken on remand and tortured, which was never seen in country's history. "We don't know what example of Islamic values has been created by this (BNP-Jamaat) government," she said.

Referring to the by-polls in Munshiganj and Dhaka-10 constituencies, Hasina said, "What's the use of participating in such elections? Let them play with it."

The AL chief will leave London for Miami today (Friday). Awami League presidium member Kazi Zafar Ullah MP, Assistant Private Secretary to the Opposition Leader Alauddin Ahmed Chowdhury and Hasina's personal aide M Awlad Hossain will accompany her. Hasina is scheduled to return home on May 15.

## Niko, Bapex mulls

**FROM PAGE 12**  
Sadar Police Station, now the joint venture is planning to produce 10-15MMCFD.

The joint venture agreement between Niko and BAPEX was signed in October last year for developing the abandoned gas field. Niko has invested \$15million in the project.

Bangladesh Gas Fields Company Limited, another subsidiary of Petrobraganza, had discovered Feni gas field in 1981 but abandoned it in 1996 as its well-2 turned dry.

The first well was opened on September 24, 1991 and second one on January 8, 1995 by the then prime minister.

Feni is the first operation of Niko under the joint venture. The Canadian company will also develop the abandoned Chhatak gas field.

Under the joint venture agreement, initially Bapex will be owner of 20 percent of gas to be produced from Feni. Later, its ownership will be 42 percent in phases.

But Bapex is not spending a single penny neither for Feni nor for Chhatak. It is also getting service charge from Niko.

Niko had been pleading for a Joint venture agreement with Bapex for Feni and Chhatak gas fields and the government last year allowed it considering its vast experiences on marginal gas field development.

The state minister in-charge of the fisheries and livestock ministry, Ukil Abdus Sattar, was given same status at the land ministry.

BNP policymakers talking to the

Shahjan Siraj was transferred to the textiles and jute ministry from the environment and forest ministry.

State minister in-charge of the jute ministry M Lutfur Rahman Khan was given the portfolio of NGO affairs ministry, which was long under the PMO.

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## Pakistan to try

**FROM PAGE 12**  
was very excellent in reaching complete understanding on all issues.

Asked about the prospect of Bangladesh's candidature for the post of secretary general of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) since Turkey and Malaysia are also in the race, he said although it is a difficult situation for Pakistan having 'brotherly and friendly relations' with all these three countries, Islamabad clearly supported Bangladesh's candidature.

In reply to a question, Khokar said it is the obligation of Pakistan to bring about a consensus as "certainly we will not like to see all these three countries will be shooting over the post."

He hoped that alongside Pakistan, other countries particularly Saudi Arabia would make a constructive role to this end.

On the progress of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) since the holding of its 12th summit in Islamabad in January this year, he said the foreign ministers will meet in Pakistan in the third week of July to examine the progresses so far made.

Besides, he said Pakistan prime minister and current Saarc Chairperson Jamali will be visiting the Saarc countries in two phases—Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal in the first leg and Sri Lanka, the Maldives and India in the second leg.

Khokar was asked to comment about India's frequent allegation against ISI activities against India from the soil of Bangladesh as well as Pakistan's reported hand behind the recent arms haul in Chittagong.

He said, "I think, allegation is not worth commenting on. It's laughable," he said, adding that Pakistan and of any of its entities or organisations will never do anything that will undermine the sovereignty and integrity of Bangladesh and its people. Any such absurd allegations from any country or neighbours are only to undermine the Pakistan-Bangladesh relations."

"ISI has better things to do than what has been suggested," he told a questioner.

In the afternoon, Reaz Khokar made a courtesy call on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office and said that Pakistan would extend all-out cooperation in successful holding of the 13th Saarc summit in Dhaka in January next.

Responding to the Pakistan foreign secretary's gesture, Khaleda said she would visit Pakistan at a convenient time this year.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interests and regional issues were discussed. International issues of common concern also came up at the meeting for discussion.

## Bashundhara first

**FROM PAGE 1**  
teledensity which the country badly needs," Murshed said.

"I believe this would help quadruple the number of fixed phones as we plan to award more licence to the private sector." There will be multiple operators in a zone, the BTRC chairman added.

He said the commission plans to consider other applications for PSTN in its next meeting. Around seven private companies have pre-qualified for licence to set up land-line phones in four zones since the telecoms regulator started receiving applications under an open licensing system.

Most of the operators have shown interest in the Sylhet and Chittagong zones as their commercial viability is comparatively greater than others.

Some leading business groups, including Rangs and Bangla Phone Limited, a joint venture among Nitol Group, Technohaven Company Ltd. and U S - b a s e d B e n g a l

Communications International Inc., are among the applicants, BTRC officials said.

The commission has segmented the country into four zones – Dhaka multi-exchange area (city); Sylhet, Chittagong and Comilla; Barisal and Khulna; and Rajshahi and Rangpur -- for private-sector landline telephone service. However, Dhaka city has been kept out of the open licensing regime as the WorldTel Bangladesh Limited served a legal notice on the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications in early January, pre-empting any move to open its area of operations to other companies.

The ministry awarded licence to the WorldTel in July 2001 to run fixed-line phones in the capital under a duopoly along with state-owned telecoms monopoly, Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board, and that too only for four years from the date its licence takes effect.

## Cabinet reshuffle

**FROM PAGE 1**  
BNP, was made minister without portfolio from the Ministry of Textiles.

Information Minister Tariqul Islam was given the portfolio of environment and forest, while M Shamsul Islam was transferred to the information ministry from the land ministry.

Shamsul was at the helm of information ministry under the previous BNP government.

Chowdhury Kamal Inbe Yusuf, who was holding the portfolio of disaster management and relief, was given the responsibility of the food and disaster management ministry.

Abdullah Al Noman, who held the food portfolio, was made minister for fisheries and livestock. He held the same portfolio in Khaleda's previous government.

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BNP policymakers talking to the

## 3 GIs

**FROM PAGE 1**  
"The people of the Middle Euphrates are eager for a return of normal life. They are going to have it," Bremer told a news conference.

The appointment of al-Sharif was seen as part of a strategy to marginalise Sadr, who has been held up in Najaf since Bremer issued a warrant for his arrest in March and declared him an outlaw in connection with the killing of a rival cleric last year.

Soon after the appointment was made, US tanks, armoured vehicles and troops gathered about five kilometres (three miles) northwest of the city, apparently braced for an attack on insurgents, and one US soldiers said the road had been blocked.

A little later, explosions and gunfire were heard inside the city.

Earlier in Baghdad, witnesses said a suicide bomber sped his car around a roundabout where civilian contractors were lining up to cross the heavily fortified July 14th Bridge, used only by the military and employees of the US-led Coalition Provisional Authority.

The military later said that two US soldiers had been killed and two others wounded in another bomb attack in Baghdad late on Wednesday.

The attacks followed fierce clashes between US forces and militiamen loyal to Sadr in which 10 insurgents were killed overnight in slum districts of Baghdad.

## Early warning

**FROM PAGE 12**  
study and made it public at a workshop jointly organised by the Beta and Bangladesh Institute of Administration and Management (BIAM) Foundation in the city yesterday.

"Lack of employment opportunities and wide financial disparity between the rich and the poor are the two main causes that aggravate monga (near-famine situation)," the study says.

It also says farmers become the worst victims of monga as they are forced to sell their labour at a much lower wage.

While commenting on the study, noted economist and Executive Director of Power and Participation Centre (PPC) Hossain Zillur Rahman said monga is the extreme outburst of poverty.

"We have arranged the discussion in light of poverty as there's a nexus between monga and poverty," Rahman said, adding, "Poverty eradication is the focal point of our development process."

Senior research fellow of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) Dr Binyak Sen told the workshop that Bangladesh has overcome the outbreaks of famine but starvation still exists.