



Car passengers face a check with metal detector before entering the diplomatic enclave in Baridhara yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

# Make wealth statements of bureaucrats public

## MPs propose to Saifur in pre-budget discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parliamentarians yesterday proposed that wealth statements of all bureaucrats, especially of the tax officials be made public.

At a pre-budget meeting, 20 ruling BNP lawmakers and three Jatiya Party (JP) members of parliament (MPs) also proposed to Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman for an increase in allocation for the police to improve law and order, resist corruption and wastage.

A JP MP said the government should allocate development funds to opposition constituencies. "We find that the constituencies won by the opposition MPs do not get any allocation for development work," said JP MP GM Kader. "This is undesirable as it undermines social justice."

The parliamentarians also recommended subsidy for farmers. They said union committees headed by the chairmen of union

parishads would certify who to get subsidy.

Saifur agreed with the suggestions and observations of the MPs but said, "Increasing allocation for the police is not enough to improve their performance. In the current fiscal year, I have given Babar (State Minister for Home Affairs) Tk 200 crore by diverting funds from elsewhere. But what is the gain?"

He added that increasing the number of police might not guarantee improvement in law and order as there is a need to boost their morality first.

"Suppose we add 10,000 policemen... there is a chance that we are adding 10,000 more bribetakers," the finance minister frankly told the meeting.

Without the improvement of morality, increasing police outposts will only increase harassment to the people, he added.

After the meeting, he told the

press, "We will increase the police force and its allocation. But we will also take steps to improve their quality and morale."

The parliamentarians should also play a role in improving law and order, he added.

The meeting agreed that the huge corruption in education, health, road construction, water management and other public services needs to be addressed.

To do that Saifur says the government will give more power to the three parliamentary bodies -- accounts, undertakings and estimate -- and strengthen the audit bodies.

"We now have a procurement guideline (to reduce corruption in tendering) and we will ensure its better implementation," Saifur said.

Criticising imposition of Statutory Regulatory Orders (SROs) as a tool to change tax structure, the

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# 3 robbers lynched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

A mob on Thursday night lynched three armed robbers at Palerkhondo village under Morrelganj upazila in Bagerhat.

The robbers are Lokman, 24, son of Siddique Sarder of Chaprakhali village, Palash Shaikh, 25, of Bhajorha village and Nurul Huq of Shomaddar Khali village of Morrelganj.

Police said the mob held the robbers when the latter stormed into a fish depot of Khalilur Rahman. Police recovered a revolver, a shutter gun and four cartridges from the robbers.

Officer-in-Charge of Morrelganj Police Station Abdur Razzaque said the mob gouged out the eyes of the three and beat up them to death. The robbers were wanted in several robbery and burglary cases, he added.

No-one claimed the dead bodies until yesterday afternoon.

# Bhola under flood threat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Barisal*

With surging floodwater entering the town through a huge breach of the protection embankment, the island district of Bhola is threatened with inundation any time.

Meanwhile, State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharrar Hossain Shahjahan on Friday criticised the Water Development Board (WDB) officials for their neglect and failure in flood and erosion control in Bhola.

The rise in water level of the major rivers and their branches in the region at the downstream of the Meghna and near the estuary of the Bay of Bengal causes flood in the island district every year.

District administration sources said the district headquarters, the riverbanks and lowland areas are now in danger of being flooded by mighty rivers.

The breach on the town protection embankment has already widened more than 75 feet. Floodwaters reached 2 km the town centre until yesterday morning.

Seasonal crops of about 4,000-acre land in Chingaria, South Ilisha, Gangakirti, Baloramsura, Kanainagar and areas on the outskirts of the town have already been damaged due to the floods.

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# FBCCI mulls legal step on chief removal bid

STAR REPORT

An emergency board meeting of the FBCCI yesterday vested its President Abdul Awal Mintoo with the authority to consult lawyers and take legal steps on a recent government order to incorporate a controversial clause in its Memorandum of Articles of Association (MAA).

The clause the government seeks to insert in the MAA of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) would enable its board members to remove its president or vice-president if their conducts are deemed detrimental to the federation's interests.

Yesterday's board meeting also decided to convene an extraordinary

general meeting (EGM) on June 12 where around 1,200 general members of the country's apex trade body will decide whether the clause will be incorporated in the MAA or not, meeting sources said.

"The meeting lasted only 5 to 10 minutes. But, the aggrieved business leaders continued informal discussion for a long time about the way the government is putting pressure on them to carry out its order," said a board member who attended the meeting held in the federation's conference room.

On May 17, the commerce ministry sent a letter to the FBCCI president asking him to take measures to incorporate the clause in Articles 14 of its MAA within four

weeks.

The FBCCI director thinks the government move is aimed at paving the way to remove the FBCCI president. "As some political aides to the prime minister and a section of business leaders did not like the political views he expressed at a press conference on April 26."

But, instead of addressing the issues of capacity building of trade bodies, governance and corruption, some people having political clout and muscle are busy with issues devoid of any public interest, the business leader observed, adding, "The move will leave a serious negative impact in the long run."

In the April-26 press conference,

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# AL calls hartal in Sylhet May 27

UNB, *Sylhet*

Opposition Awami League (AL) has called a dawn-to-dusk hartal for May 27 in Sylhet to protest the bomb attack on Hazrat Shahjalal Shrine on Friday.

The AL blamed fundamentalists for the heinous act and also announced other programmes. The programmes include wearing black badge on May 23, demonstration on May 24, mourning procession and special prayers at all mosques and other places of worship on May 25 and procession in support of the hartal on May 26.

The district and city units of the party jointly announced the programmes at a press conference here yesterday. Presidium members Abdus Samad Azad and Suranjit Sengupta spoke and

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About half a kilometre road of north Begunbari in Tejgaon industrial area has developed craters due to long neglect, affecting business.

PHOTO: STAR

# US probes eight more prisoner homicides

## Abuse anger unites Arabs at Tunisia summit

AGENCIES, *Washington/Tunisia*

The deaths of eight more detainees held by American forces in Iraq -- including one of Saddam Hussein's top generals -- are being investigated as homicides, the Pentagon says.

The Justice Department also said on Friday it had opened its first criminal investigation of a civilian

contractor in Iraq over possible mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners, but declined to give details about the nature of the suspected wrongdoing.

Meanwhile, Arab leaders meeting at an annual summit yesterday were united in outrage over the prisoner abuse scandal in Iraq, according to draft resolutions that also condemned terrorism and

reiterated calls for Arab-Israeli peace.

An issue that has united virtually all the leaders was the prisoner abuse scandal by US troops in Iraq.

Presidents Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, a major player in the Middle East, and Moammar Gadhafi of Libya were among those who arrived just before Tunisian

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# C'wealth lifts ban on Pakistan

REUTERS, *London*

The Commonwealth has announced it is lifting its suspension of Pakistan from the 53-member organisation, saying the country has made progress on democratic reforms.

The Commonwealth also said yesterday it expected President Pervez Musharraf to fulfil his pledge to stand down as chief of the army by the end of this year, and it would monitor progress on that move.

Secretary General Don McKinnon said Pakistan had to fully

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# Corruption at heart of GK project task re-tender

SHARIEF KHAN

The water resources ministry has decided to re-tender the implementation of a massive irrigation system in the Ganges-Kobadak (GK) project area amid allegations that the re-tendering is aimed at getting the job done by a pre-determined company at a highly inflated cost, sources said.

Last year, the Water Development Board (WDB) under the ministry that floated tender for the project selected the proposal

outlining a cost of Tk 132 crore by Japanese company Ebara Corporation. A second bidder -- Kanematsu of Japan -- had offered Tk 180 crore.

Despite Ebara's competitive offer, the ministry has been hammering on the idea of re-tendering the project since last November on the plea that the WDB's tender process was faulty. But objection by a parliamentary body slowed down the ministry's attempt to re-tender.

In March, the ministry sought permission of the Cabinet Purchase

Committee to re-tender the project. But the Cabinet Division returned the files on April 5 saying the ministry did not explicitly propose or suggest anything on the project and that the cabinet could not give any decision on an unclear proposal.

But instead of going back to the cabinet with a clear proposal, the ministry on April 25 decided on its own to re-tender the scheme.

"I have discussed the issue with the cabinet secretary," Water Resources Secretary Aiyub Kadri

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Members of the Sylhet Division Development Parishad hold a rally at Muktangan yesterday to protest against the bomb attack at Shahjalal shrine Friday.

PHOTO: STAR

# Car bomb kills five, hurts Iraq minister

AP, *Baghdad*

A car bomb exploded outside the home of a deputy interior minister yesterday, wounding him and killing at least five people, including four police.

Later, several explosions were heard in central Baghdad. The cause was not clear. The press office of the US-led coalition said it had no information.

The earlier blast hurled two cars onto the front lawn of the official's house, and police fired shots to disperse distraught bystanders who suffled with them.

Abdul-Jabbar Youssef al-Sheikhli, the deputy minister in charge of security, was slightly injured in the forehead and right arm, said Hassan Hadi, a Health Ministry official. "I expect he will leave the hospital in a short time," Hadi said.

Al-Sheikhli is a member of the Shiite Muslim Dawa party, which lost a prominent member this week in another fatal car bombing. On Monday, the president of the Iraqi Governing Council, Dawa member Izzadine Saleem, was killed along with at least six other people near the headquarters of the US-run coalition in the capital.

Also Saturday, the military said a US soldier was killed and three others were wounded in an attack on their vehicle south of Baghdad, and a Marine died in a non-hostile incident. It said the soldiers' vehicle was "ambushed by a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device" in Mahmoudiyah, 20 miles south of Baghdad. The statement did not say when the attack occurred.

Two of the injured soldiers were evacuated to a combat hospital. The third wounded soldier returned to

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# Truck, bus plunge kills 64 in India

AFP, *Itanagar*

At least 64 people were feared killed when a truck and a bus plunged into deep gorges in separate accidents in India, police said yesterday.

In the northern state of Arunachal Pradesh, which borders China, at least 35 people were believed killed when the driver lost control of an overcrowded bus, sending it hurtling down a steep gorge near the state capital Itanagar, a police official said.

"The terrain is so rough that rescue teams took a long time to reach the site of the accident," the official, H.N. Singh, told AFP by

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# JCD calls the shot at Eden College

## Principal, vice-principal, 4 teachers transferred for their 'non-cooperation'

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

The principal, vice-principal and four teachers of Eden College have been transferred recently as they stood against illegal activities of leaders of the college unit of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student front of the ruling BNP.

The college unit JCD leaders were allocating hostel seats in exchange for money after the BNP-led coalition came to power. The opposition Awami League's (AL) student wing Bangladesh Chhatra League used to take money against illegal seat allotment when the AL was in power.

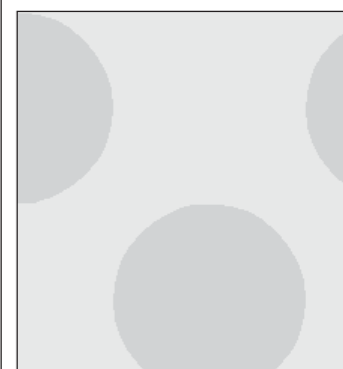
The student leaders also take money from many admission-seekers and influence the college authorities to allow admission of students who do not qualify in the admission test, it is alleged.

The four teachers the education ministry transferred are hostel supervisors of Razia Begum Hostel and Puratan (old) Hostel and two others who were on the hostel committees to look into the irregularities. They are Mamtaz Shirin of management department, Taslima Begum and Sabera Tahmina of history department, transferred to Kabi Nazrul College, and Laila Arjumand Banu of home economics department, transferred to Badrunnesa College.

Sources said the education ministry has so far transferred 34 teachers of different government colleges in the city, most of them for political and partisan reasons.

About the reasons behind transfer of the principal, vice-principal and four teachers, the sources said

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