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# US hands self-rule to Iraq

Path ahead strewn with obstacles, Western-style restrictions outrage Iraqis

AGENCIES, Baghdad

The U.S.-led coalition transferred sovereignty to an interim Iraqi government yesterday, two days earlier than expected in a surprise move that apparently caught insurgents off guard, averting a feared campaign of attacks to sabotage the highly symbolic step toward self-

Legal documents transferring sovereignty were handed over by U.S. governor L. Paul Bremer to chief justice Midhat al-Mahmood in a small ceremony attended by about a half dozen Iraqi and coalition officials in the heavily guarded Green Zone. Bremer took charge in Iraq about a year ago.

"This is a historical day," Interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi said during the ceremony. "We feel we are capable of controlling the secu-

Iraq will need to overcome numerous obstacles, including two nationwide elections and a constitutional referendum, before regaining full sovereignty and a democratic government at the end of next



US Administrator in Iraq Paul Bremer, right, hands over legal documents to the head of the Iraqi Supreme Court, Midhat

#### US envoy for Bangla Bhai's arrest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Harry K Thomas yesterday con-demned the Sunday murder of Khulna Press Club President Humayun Kabir Balu saying radicals including Bangla Bhai, religious and political extremists should be arrested immediately.

Thomas said, "Fundamentalist groups have killed Humayun Kabir journalists today, they might kill everyone tomorrow. Police should SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

#### Row over draft law led to **US** warning

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Top government officials yesterday put down the US ambassador's warning to withdraw trade facilities to Bangladesh to a disagreement between the government and US embassy over the language and some wordings of the draft law on allowing trade unionism in the exclusive industrial zones.

The officials told The Daily Star SEE PAGE 11 COL 1 **EPZ TRADE UNIONISM** 

# Pass law by June 30 or face US trade facility withdrawal

Thomas tells press

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US Ambassador Harry K Thomas yesterday warned Bangladesh of withdrawing either the GSP (generalised system of preferences) facility or export-import bank financing if it does not adhere to labour standards and allow trade unionism in its exclusive trade zones by the month-

"I have not seen this [draft] law passed in parliament. If it isn't passed by June 30 we have two options: withdraw the GSP or withdraw export-import bank financing," the US envoy said at a 'Meetthe-Press' address titled "US-Bangladesh Relations", celebrating the golden jubilee of the National Press Club at its VIP lounge yester-

The cabinet on May 23 approved a draft law titled, "EPZ Workers Association and Industrial Relations Act, 2004" to allow limited trade ·unionism in the six exclusive trade

Thomas said Dhaka made an agreement with Washington and other donors on May 10 to adhere to International Labour Organisation

Harry K Thomas

standards, including the rights to association and collective bargaining, at the EPZs (export processing zones) by June 30. The government decided to allow limited trade union activities in the exclusive industrial areas from November 1, 2006.

The ambassador was optimistic the government would enact the law, as agreed, before the deadline. Otherwise, he said he would refer the matter to the US Trade Department and the White House to finalise punitive measures against

Bangladesh.
Asked if there were any room for further negotiations, Thomas replied, "There is always room to extend the time, but not for six months, six years or 14 years like we have done before.

Bangladesh has enjoyed \$300 million in duty-free exports to the US market under the GSP facility since 1993, based on its commitment to adhere to the ILO standards and provide freedom of association in the EPZs. Washington has been pressing Dhaka to pass the workers' rights legislation since 1990.

HUMANTRAFFICKING

Thomas also reiterated US concerns over the grave human trafficking situation in Bangladesh that may lead to sanctions on nonhumanitarian and non-trade sec-

"It (Bangladesh) failed to make significant efforts to prosecute traffickers and address the complicity of government officials in trafficking," Thomas said, explaining the placing of Bangladesh from Tier 2 to Tier 3 in the annual US report on "Trafficking in Persons Report for SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

KHULNA EDITOR MURDER

## 10 suspects held, Balu laid to rest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna police yesterday arrested 10 people on suspicion of having links to the murder of Press Club President Humayun Kabir Balu.

The arrested are Manik 25, Ismail 18, Abdul Hye 22, Feroze 18, Monirul 18, Jamal 25, Rabiul Gazi 18, Bashir Howlader 20, Afzal 18 and Saidul 27. Of them, four were identified as peanut vendors, four as rickshawpullers and the others as wanderers. When asked, Officer-in-Charge

Mosharaf Hossain said they have taken the arrestees into custody for questioning to extract possible leads

Meanwhile, Sub Inspector of

Mannan's profile

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mahmud, as Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi smiles during the power handover ceremony in Baghdad yesterday.

Member Secretary of Bikalpa Dhara National Committee Major (retired) Abdul Mannan made his debut in politics in 1990 and in the following year he became a member of parliament from Dhaka-10 constituency defeating Awami League President Sheikh Hasina.

named none as the accused. Replying to a query, acting Police Commissioner Sajjad Ali said he was A three-time MP from the same constituency, Mannan was born in hoping for a significant break-through in the investigation that 1942 at his ancestral home in Noakhali. He had his schooling at would lead to tracking down the real Noakhali Zila School. After obtaining HSC degree from Feni College, killers of Humayun Kabir Balu, Slain editor of Dainik he joined Pakistan Army. In 1962 he graduated from Pakistan Military Janmabhumi Humayun Kabir Balu was laid to rest at Basupara grave-

yard after Zohr prayer yesterday. His first namaz-e-janaja was held at Shahid Hadis Park at 11:00am. Hundreds of people including Information Minister Shamsul

Khulna Police Station Maruf

Hossain has filed two separate first

information reports (FIR) but

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Uplift vow Falu's plank, AL help Mannan's hope

Campaign closes tonight, Bikalpa Dhara denied Karwan Bazar, Muktangan meeting venues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two key rivals in July 1 by-polls in Dhaka-10 constituency were busy in last hours of electioneering yesterday before official ban on the campaign takes hold midnight tonight, 48 hours ahead of the vot-

Academy, Kakul as a commissioned The Bikapla Dhara could not hold a planned public rally in After taking retirement from Karwan Bazar or at Muktangan Bangladesh Army in 1974, Mannan because of the authorities' nonwent into trading business by setcooperation, but the main oppositing up Azim Mannan Ltd. Later he tion Awami League's (AL's) commitment to launch a full-fledged cam-SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

paign in the closing hours lifted the

Although as many as 22 candidates are vying for the seat, political analysts believe the contest will mainly be limited to BNP-led alliance nominee Mosaddak Ali Falu and the Bikalpa Dhara candidate

retired army major Abdul Mannan. The seat fell vacant when Mannan resigned from both parliament and the BNP on March 10 to join the Bikalpa Dhara, founded by former president AQM Badruddoza

FALU'S CAMPAIGN

Falu, accompanied by BNP lawmakers Moazzem Hossain Alal and Joynal Abedin Faruq, engaged in mass contact with garment factory employees and slum dwellers in Tejgaon and professionals in Ramna and top BNP leaders addressed public meetings and participated in

processions to swing votes. As the garment en described the sorry state of road communications in the areas, Falu said the election code of conduct barred him from making any promise. "But I'll solve all the problems discussing with Prime Minister

Khaleda Zia, other ministers and government officials if you cast vote for the sheaf of paddy.

"Development is possible only by the ruling party candidate. Since I'm the ruling alliance candidate, I'll be able to serve you the best.

"How can Mannan, who failed to ensure any development during his two and a half years in office as a ruling party lawmaker, can deliver good for his electorate as an opposition man?" he asked.

After exchanging views with pro-BNP professionals at the National SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

### Falu's profile

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Little could be learnt about the background of M Mosaddeq Ali Falu, the four-party coalition candidate for the Dhaka-10 by-election.

Balloters have been left only to a leaflet that states he was born in Dhaka in 1960 in a respectable Muslim family and started his politi-cal career as a member of Jago Jubo Dal, the youth wing of BNP, in 1978. The leaflet, circulated by the courtesy of the Doctors' Association of Bangladesh, however refrained from elaborating his family background.

No mention of education qualifications was made in the leaflet although it describes Falu as a writer and publisher of several books on Islamic, historical and development

Falu first came into the political limelight in 1991, when he was appointed personal secretary to then prime minister Khaleda Zia. He SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

# 18 die as truck spins off road at Gazipur

At least 18 people were killed, three of a family, and 22 injured as a truck spung off the road at Bagherbazar under Sadar Upazila yesterday.

Of the dead, six were females, six males and six children. Five of them were identified as Rashida Khatun, 30, wife of Siddigur Rahman, her daughter Rijiya Khatun, 8, Masud, 13, and Somla Khatun, 9.

'Most of the victims were dayworkers travelling on top of the sand-laden truck," police.

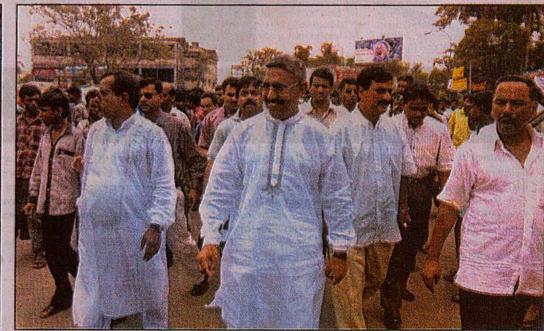
The fatal accident occurred at

about 3:30pm when the Dhakabound truck from Balipara in Mymensingh hit a pothole on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway and skidded off the roadside, killing 14

The injured were admitted to Gazipur Sadar Hospital and 17 of them were shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where three succumbed to their injuries.

on the spot and injuring 25 others.

Among the injured are Dulal, Sohidul, Mofija, Urmila, Shahin, Ershad Ali, Kitab Ali, Kashem Ali, Jomshed, Soikat, Nuzrul, Masud, SEE PAGE 11 COL 2



Bikalpa Dhara candidate retired army major Abdul Mannan, left, waves to people on Bangabandhu Avenue in a gesture to swing votes and his key rival BNP-led alliance nominee Mosaddak Ali Falu, right, intensifies his campaign in Tejgaon yesterday in the final hours to the official ban on electioneering for Dhaka-10 by-polls on July 1.

#### Noab slates Balu killing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Newspaper Owners Association of Bangladesh (Noab) yesterday strongly condemned the murder of Khulna-based journalist Humayun

Kabir Balu in a bomb attack. In a press statement issued yesterday, Noab President Mahfuz Anam said, "We are shocked and horrified at the brutal murder of Humayun Kabir Balu, editor of Dainik Janmabhumi, who was also

president of Khulna press club." "We condernn this heinous act and call upon the government to launch an urgent investigation to capture the killers. We extend our heartfelt condolence to the bereaved family and pray to the Almighty for the salvation of the departed soul," it added.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

## Budget won't work unless crimes curbed: AL Stop hartal for uplift: Treasury bench

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Senior ministers yesterday came down heavily on the main opposition Awami League (AL) in parliament accusing it of hindering development programmes through hartal and street agitation.

Refuting the accusation, AL lawmakers blamed the government for what they said was patronising criminals that led to a law and order

Taking part in the budget discussion in the House, Minister for Communications Nazmul Huda

demanded amendment to the constitution to ban hartal and street agitation for at least four years of a government's five-year tenure to allow uninterrupted development

AL adviser and former finance minister SAMS Kibria said law and order is deteriorating as the ruling alliance backs criminals and that this has led to a poor economic situation in the country.

The budget will not bring any positive change in the socioeconomic condition of people if law and order does not improve", said

He said investigations into crimes are stalled whenever the authorities find ruling alliance loyalists are involved in them.

Explaining this, Kibria said alliance men are involved in the huge arms hauls in Chittagong, Bogra and at Kuril in Dhaka, killing of AL lawmaker Ahsanullah Master at Tongi and two policemen at

On the price hike of essentials, the former finance minister asked the government to apologise to SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Fundamentalists | issue death warrant to 3 DU professors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Islamist zealots have issued death sentence to three noted professors of Dhaka University (DU) accusing them of running anti-Islamic propaganda in the country. The three receiving death sen-

tences are Prof Muntasir Mamun of history department, Prof Humayun Azad of Bangla department and Prof MM Akash of economics depart-The Nastik Murtad Resistance

Committee and Muslim Millat Shariah Council yesterday in a faxed message sent their "verdict" to different print media offices in the

tation of its order.

DHAKA-10 BY-POLLS

## Govt rejects EC request for troops in each centre

High Court verdict on the issue likely today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has virtually rejected the Election Commission's (EC's) request to deploy army in each polling centre in Dhaka-10 bypolls, making the EC to depend on a High Court (HC) verdict likely to be delivered today for the implemen-

The home ministry on Sunday reviving an earlier circular informed the EC that two companies of army would be deployed in the constituencyduring polls slated for July 1.

The ministry did not say a word on the EC's request for deployment in each centre in what the EC found was an attempt to turn down its

EC officials explaining the circular said the order meant servicemen would patrol the constituency during the election, but not guard every polling centre as expected by

an informal meeting SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

#### Bangla Bhai men abduct one more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Cadres of Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) yesterday kidnapped one more person but hours later released him after taking an undertaking that he had never been

The kidnapped was identified as Azizar Rahman, president of Pramanikpara Zame Mosque at Raipura village in Bagmara. Earlier in May JMJB cadres cap-

tured him and inflicted some gruesome tortures. Later they forced him to write a rejoinder against newspaper reports on the incident. JMJB cadres also released the two

women and a child they kidnapped on Saturday, but kept a gold SEE PAGE 11 COL 7