

## HC orders army presence in all polling centres

By-polls tomorrow; troops called out; campaign comes to a close

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed the government to deploy the army in all polling centres on the day of Dhaka-10 by-election, while voters focussed their attention on the apparently tight race tomorrow.

Hours into the interim court order, the government called out the army to tighten security during the polls to the constituency that fell vacant with the resignation of retired army major Abdul Mannan from the House and the ruling BNP on March 10.

An HC division bench also asked the government to explain in two weeks why it should not be directed

to deploy armed forces in all polling centres in line with an Election Commission (EC) decision.

Earlier, the EC asked the government to commit at least five army personnel along with police, paramilitary forces and ansars to each of the constituency's 103 polling centres.

But the government on Sunday virtually rejected the EC's request for army deployment in every polling centre, as the home ministry reviving an earlier circular informed the EC that two companies of army would be deployed as strike force in the constituency, not every voting centre. The government stance forced the EC to depend on the court

The HC in yesterday's order did not specify the number of army personnel to be posted to every polling centre for duty.

Division Bench of Justice Abdul Wahhab Miah and Justice Zinat Ara issued the order after a writ petition filed by Mannan, now Bikalpa Dhara candidate, and three other nominees on Sunday.

Earlier, HC Division Bench of Justice MA Matin and Justice Tarik Ul Hakim heard the petition, but Hakim was absent yesterday because of his illness, prompting Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassir Husain sent the case to another bench for disposal.

After the order, Attorney General

AF Hassan Ariff told newsmen quoting the court order that the word 'armed forces' carries a wider meaning. "It includes VDP (Village Defence Party), Armed Police Battalion and other law-enforcement agencies," he said.

"The petition was filed after the Election Commission decision for deployment of five army personnel in each polling centre. The court rejected it (the EC decision) and asked the government to deploy necessary armed personnel in each polling centre," he said.

Continued Ariff: "The authorities will now decide how many army personnel will be deployed."

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

## Bhuiyan offers talks to end hartal culture

Hamid warns against a law, calls for consensus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling alliance yesterday offered Awami League (AL) dialogue to end politics of hartal, urging the main opposition party to help the government stop law and order slump.

"Give us the names of your representatives. Let's sit across the table and discuss ways to bid farewell to hartal, which cripples the economy," LGRD and Co-operatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told the Jatiya Sangsad, taking part in a discussion on the proposed budget.

Bhuiyan, also the secretary general of BNP, was responding to a previous proposal of the Awami League, reiterated yesterday by Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdul Hamid in the House.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

## FINANCE BILL PASSED

## Duty withdrawn, cut on 5 items

Budget for FY05 to be approved today; land registration, soap industry, poultry, CR coil, CNG bus get relief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The parliament yesterday passed the finance bill for FY05 with amendments to withdraw and reduce proposed supplementary and import duty on five items, a day before the budget is approved.

"This is not an over ambitious budget," said Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman before the bill was passed. "Next year, we will present a bigger one."

One of the five items dropped from the finance bill is raising of

income tax at source for land registration to 10 percent from the existing 5 percent.

"During the Awami League regime, the tax for land registration was 29 percent," said Saifur. "After coming to power, the BNP reduced it to 14.5 percent. It was then suggested that further reduction will increase tax collection. But this did not happen. Tax collection has gone down. That is why I proposed to raise it to 10 percent."

"But as everyone wants it to be at 5 percent, we reduced it again,"

Saifur said.

Another proposal to increase import duty on raw materials for soap industry to 25 percent from 15 percent was dropped.

The new budget proposed 7.5 percent duty on medicine for poultry. But this was withdrawn in view of the tough time faced by the poultry sector.

The proposed 10 percent supplementary duty on CR coil, a raw material for corrugated tins, was also dropped.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



PHOTO: STAR

Army personnel unload supplies from a pick-up to camp on the Dhaka University campus yesterday, a few hours into a High Court directive to the government to deploy army at all polling centres in Dhaka-10 constituency during tomorrow's prestige polls.

## AL's positive role must for better law, order

PM says budget implementation depends on shunning politics of hartal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday sought cooperation from the main opposition Awami League (AL) saying its 'positive role' is a must to ensure political stability for implementing the new budget properly and improving law and order.

Participating in the discussion on the proposed budget for fiscal 2004-05 in parliament, Khaleda said, "We will be able to implement the new budget properly if they (the opposition party) shun politics of hartal that creates chaos and if they practise healthy politics."

"Without cooperation from all political parties including the main opposition, it is not possible for the government alone to ensure peace and order in the country," said

Khaleda, also leader of the House.

Terming the proposed budget for fiscal 2004-05 a 'pro-people' one, Khaleda said every part of the budget is consistent with the reality in the country and it (budget) has already been described as a document for changing poor people's fate.

"We want to implement the budget in the interest of the people and development of the country. For this, support from all quarters is necessary," she said.

"The opposition's positive role is a must to ensure a congenial atmosphere for implementation of all development measures mentioned in the budget."

The prime minister hoped the opposition would cooperate with

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

## Budget to burden tax on people

Hasina at JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Sheikh Hasina yesterday accused the government of planning to impose extra-budgetary taxes to exploit people.

Taking part in the discussion on the proposed budget for fiscal 2004-05 in the House, Hasina said the budget has set a target of additional revenue of over Tk 5,500 crore without mentioning sources of the revenue. "How can the government realise the money without imposing fresh taxes?" she questioned.

She termed the finance minister's claim of no fresh tax in the proposed budget a bluff.

Bitterly criticising the government for its 'failure to check law and order downside,' Hasina, also president of the main opposition Awami League (AL), asked why people will pay tax as the rulers have absolutely failed to ensure security

of their lives.

The proposed budget will not bring any change in the socio-economic condition of the masses as it has failed to address crucial problems facing the country, she said.

"This budget cannot lead the country towards self-reliance and fight poverty and price spiral of essentials... It lacks specific guidelines for new investments, industrialisation and employment," Hasina said rejecting the budget.

The AL chief demanded withdrawal of proposed value added tax (VAT) for housing industry, on LP gas cylinders and CI sheets and import duty on newsprint, wood and spare parts.

During her hour-long speech, the opposition leader analysed different aspects of the budget and said the finance minister has shown growth rate at 5.52 percent against

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

## Saddam to be handed to Iraqi custody today

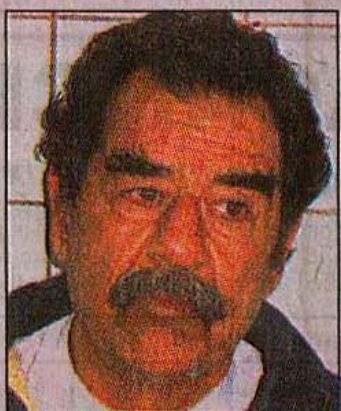
AFP, Baghdad

Jailed former dictator Saddam Hussein and 11 top officials from his regime will be transferred to Iraqi legal custody today and his arrest warrant read out the following day, Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi said yesterday.

"This government has formally requested the transfer of the most notorious and high profile detainees to Iraqi legal custody," Allawi told reporters.

"So Saddam Hussein... along with up to 11 other high valued detainees will be transferred to the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



Saddam Hussein

## RABBANI MURDER Sacked KEPZ chief, 6 others face charges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cg

Police yesterday pressed charges against seven people including prime suspect Abu Naser Chowdhury for the murder of Korean Export Processing Zone (KEPZ) managing director Ghulam Rabbani.

The investigation officer of the case, Panchlaish Circle Assistant Commissioner of Chittagong Metropolitan Police Faruq Ahmed submitted the six-page charge-sheet to the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM), Chittagong at noon. The CMM ordered sending it to the Court of Metropolitan Sessions Judge for next course of action.

Terminated former KEPZ managing director Abu Naser

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

## PETITION AGAINST CARETAKER GOVT HC appoints two legal experts to seek advice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday appointed two senior lawyers as specialists to assist and advise the court on a writ petition challenging the validity of the 13th amendment to the constitution that allows general elections under caretaker government.

A larger HC bench of three judges appointed Barrister Rafiqul Haq and Advocate Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan as 'amici curiae' or friend of the court on the first day of hearing on the petition yesterday.

Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassir

Husain formed the bench with Justice Jainul Abedin, Justice Awlad Ali and Justice Mirza Hossain Haider earlier this month for the hearing on the petition.

Supreme Court lawyer M Salimullah filed the petition on January 25, 2000 and the court issued a rule asking the government to explain in three weeks why the 13th amendment should not be declared unconstitutional.

The petitioner says the democratic structure of the government is the basic principle of the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

## British envoy set to return to Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

British envoy to Bangladesh Anwar Choudhury, who was injured in a grenade attack at Hazrat Shahjalal (RA) Shrine in Sylhet, is set to return to Dhaka after medical treatment in London for over a month.

"He will arrive shortly," said Mili Sengupta, head of press and public affairs of the British High Commission in Dhaka. However, she declined to provide any specific date.

She was reluctant to give details about his arrival saying that security issues were constantly under review.

Unknown assailants targeted Choudhury, the first Bangladeshi-

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

## No headway in Balu murder case

Police hope to make breakthrough in 72 hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The probe into the murder of Dainik Janmabhumi Editor Humayun Kabir Balu so far has failed to make any headway, generating a general sense of frustration among the people, particularly the journalists, of the southwestern region about its fate.

Acting Commissioner of Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) Sajjad Ali however said, "The killers and masterminds are identified. I hope for a 'breakthrough' in the next 72

hours."

On the motive behind the murder, Ali said by it the communist extremists wanted to create public panic, as most of the businessmen had stopped paying tolls to them. But he did not elaborate.

The KMP commissioner did not rule out the Khulna Press Club president's leading role against the murderers of journalist Manik Saha as another possible reason for the June-27 grenade attack. Balu was on the hit list of Purbo Bangla Communist Party (PBCP),

Janajuddho faction for quite a while.

The KMP earlier appointed armed guards for his security after he had received death threats from Janajuddho cadres, who also had demanded Tk 50,000 as tolls from him. On his own request, two months ago, the guards had been withdrawn, a source in city Special Branch of KMP said.

In the latest development in Balu murder case, names of 10 Janajuddho members were added as accused to the first information

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

## 63 Rab men rewarded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home ministry yesterday rewarded 63 members of Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) for their 'outstanding performance' in arresting country's one of the most wanted criminals - Picchi Hannan and his accomplices on Saturday.

A cheque for Tk 10 lakh and a certificate were handed over to Lieutenant Colonel Chowdhury Fazlul Bari in a simple ceremony at the home ministry yesterday.

"We want to appreciate people who want to work," Lutfozzaman Babar, state minister for home affairs told in his speech, adding, "If we can improve law and order, a whole lot of investment will be attracted to the country."

"The arrest of Picchi Hannan will

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

### Bangladesh International

Bangladesh International is an exclusive range of banking services for Non-Resident Bangladeshis (NRBs) and foreign currency services for Resident Bangladeshis, which is unique to HSBC in Bangladesh.

**Services include:**

1. Foreign currency ATM card with access to over 800,000 ATMs around the world
2. NFCD/RFCD foreign currency current/time deposit accounts
3. Non-Resident Taka accounts with ATM card facility and Taka time deposits with competitive interest rates
4. Purchase of Wage Earner Development Bond (WEDB) and US Dollar Bond (USDB) issued by Bangladesh Bank
5. Taka loan and overdraft facility against time deposits and WEDB/USDB at competitive interest rates

Bangladesh International assists NRBs to send money back to Bangladesh through official channels and to keep their foreign currency savings in Bangladesh rather than overseas through more than 9,500 HSBC offices in 79 countries.

**For more information,**  
Call Dhaka : 011 88HSBC (4722), 011 88LOAN (5626)  
9143423  
Chittagong : 011 708985-86  
Website : www.hsbc.com.bd  
E-mail : hsbc@hsbc.dhaka-bd.net

**HSBC**  
The world's local bank

Issued by The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited