

## AL, allies form human walls today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) and its left allies today form no-confidence human walls across the country as part of the combined opposition's simultaneous movement to unseat the ruling alliance.

The hour-long demonstration from 4:00pm to 5:00pm will be observed simultaneously in six divisional headquarters -- Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Sylhet and Barisal -- and all the 64 district towns.

Different social and cultural organisations and professional bodies will also join the demonstration expressing their solidarity with the opposition movement.

Today's human walls, like the previous two human chains, will not disturb the traffic, as the participants will not occupy the roads and highways, said opposition leaders.

The human wall programme, an alternative to hartal as a means of protest, has been appreciated by the business community, development partners and general public.

## Dr Kamal to support hartal if barred from meeting PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Oikya Mancha President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday said his party will support hartal if they are prevented from meeting the prime minister (PM) to talk about protection of human rights and ensuring security to people.

"I from the core of my heart do not support hartal. But if we are barred from going to the prime minister's office (PMO) with a peaceful procession on a date to be fixed in consultation with the head of the government, we will support hartal," Dr Kamal said, urging police not to bar them on their way to the PMO.

Speaking at a protest rally as chief guest, the eminent lawyer said the 14 crore people are the owner of the country and to establish their rights, he will write letter to the PM seeking a date to meet.

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## IGP's DISMISSAL HC issues rule on govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday asked the government to explain why the president's dismissal of former inspector general of police Shahudul Haque after his conviction in a case should not be illegal as he should have automatically lost his job following his conviction.

It also wanted to know why the president exempted Shahudul from a rule that automatically dismisses a civil servant once they are convicted.

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# BB to put Premier, Al-Arafa banks under close watch

STAR REPORT

The central bank has decided to put Premier Bank and Al-Arafa Islami Bank under its 'Early Warning system' (EWS) of supervision to deal with some serious management problems including irregular interference of the banks' boards.

Sources at Bangladesh Bank (BB) said Premier Bank has become involved in fraudulent practices under the unusual influence of its board. The recent opening of 17,000 false accounts to manipulate the bank's initial public offering (IPO) is a clear example of the board's interference and malpractices.

"A section of Premier Bank's board members interferes in the bank's everyday affairs. Some high officials help these board members,

but branch managers and other lower level officials have to act as unwilling collaborators," noted a central bank official.

Al-Arafa Bank, on the other hand, has become a victim of a conflict among its board members that has been deranging its management, the BB official said. According to banking sources, in recent times, the intra-board conflict has led to a decline in the bank's performance.

Al-Arafa Bank's deposit grew by 17.85 percent over the year to stand at Tk 994 crore in December 2004. Its credit that year grew by 7.94 percent to Tk 759 crore. The bank at present has a Tk 90 crore classified loan, which is 11 percent of its total outstanding loans.

Premier Bank's deposit last year grew by 79 percent to Tk 1,798 crore

and credit by 85 percent to Tk 1,502 crore. It has only Tk 6.73 crore classified loan, which is only 0.44 percent of its outstanding loans.

"Although both the banks are financially well-off, the unscrupulous practices they are in will soon turn them into problem banks," the BB official pointed out.

To bring them out of the risky paths, the central bank will closely monitor them under its EWS. The BB will sign separate MoUs with them spelling out various targets for them. Besides, a central bank official will be attached to each of the banks.

The BB will send a letter soon to Premier Bank in this regard, simultaneously taking action against it for

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PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia talks to ailing former foreign minister and Awami League Presidium Member Abdus Samad Azad MP at the city's Birdem Hospital yesterday.

## Dhaka protests Tipaimukh barrage

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh sent to India a note verbal containing serious concern over their covert construction of Tipaimukh barrage and a proposal for removing the bilateral irritants, including border fencing, through discussion.

Talking to reporters yesterday Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan said India had initiated such move at

Tipaimukh across Sylhet border in 1993 to divert water from upstream the common river system, but it was stopped following an understanding at political level between Dhaka and New Delhi.

He said India reportedly started construction of what they called "reservoir" at Tipaimukh, which would cause the Surma and Kushiara to dry up.

"We are seriously concerned

about it and sent a note verbal through our high commissioner in New Delhi to the Indian government with a request to resolve the problem through discussion," the foreign minister told the journalists.

About the construction of barbed-wire fences along the bordera move that triggered border clashes--he said the 1975 Indo-Bangladesh border guidelines

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PHOTO: STAR

A boat filled with garbage collected from the Dhanmondi Lake area as part of a cleanliness drive by Dhaka City Corporation yesterday.

## 2 bombs go off at Dakhil exam centre

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Two powerful bombs exploded at a Dakhil examination centre at a madrasa in Mohimaganj in Gobindaganj upazila yesterday.

No casualties, however, occurred in the blasts on the roof of the two-storey Mohimaganj Ali-Kamil Madrasa building.

Witnesses said panicked examinees of the Fekha paper rushed out of the centre as the blasts occurred half an hour after the examination began.

However, after half an hour's disruption, authorities took the exam amid beefed up security measures.

Police have collected splinters of the locally-made bombs. They suspect extremists had hidden the bombs there for serving any illegal motive.

This was the third such incident in Mohimaganj since December last year.

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## CAG submits audit reports to PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday directed the authorities to link audit system with development, ensuring transparency and accountability in the job of the auditors.

Her observations came when Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) Asif Ali apprised her of annual audit reports at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) before submitting them to the president.

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## Nizami blames 'free press' for image crisis

UNB, Dhaka

Industries Minister Matiuir Rahman Nizami yesterday said "over-exercise of democracy and press freedom" resulted in the image crisis of Bangladesh in the outside world.

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## Pakistan draw from the jaws of defeat

REUTERS, Mohali

Wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal hit a glorious maiden century to lead a remarkable Pakistan fightback on the final day and ensure the first Test

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Prayer Timing		
March 13		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-05	5-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-12	6-15
Esha	7-30	8-00
Source: Islamic Foundation		

# Deuba vows street battle against king

AFP, Kathmandu

Freed from more than a month of detention, Nepal's sacked prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has vowed to take his supporters on to the streets in a bid to force King Gyanendra to reverse his power grab, reports said yesterday.

"It is a fact that the king has ended democracy so there is no alternative to a massive joint movement," Deuba was quoted as saying by the local media in his first comments after being released Friday from house arrest.

Deuba had been in detention since Gyanendra dismissed his multi-party government on February 1 and seized control of Nepal, imposing emergency rule and vowing to tackle an increasingly bloody Maoist revolt that has claimed 11,000 lives since 1996.

"My party will join hands with

other parties for a strong protest," Deuba told reporters. "All-party government is the only way to tackle the present problems."

Deuba, president of the Nepali Congress (Democratic), also demanded the release of other detained political leaders, including former prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala and Nepal Communist Party-United Marxist and Leninist (NCP-UML) general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal.

Deuba, who was freed along with 17 other detainees amid mounting international pressure on the king to restore civil liberties, was Saturday meeting with senior party colleagues to discuss latest developments, party sources said.

The release of the 18 came after a day after security officials freed eight other party leaders and activists.

On Thursday, Nepal's royal-appointed foreign minister, Ramesh Nath Pandey, said "certain rights of the people ... will be restored sooner rather than later". But he gave no details and set no timeframe.

Nepal has come under increasing pressure from the world community, including international donors, to free political detainees.

Human rights groups say over 400 activists are in detention or under house arrest. But Pandey, said on a visit to India earlier in the week "very few people are in detention."

The army, meanwhile, said Saturday human rights observers were welcome to meet political activists still in detention.

"The door of the Royal Nepalese Army is always open for representatives of the National Human Rights

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