

Dhaka signs

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Framework 2006-2010 (UNDAF) that outlines UN support, said an official announcement.

The six areas, as outlined in the UNDAF agreement, are democratic governance and human rights; health, nutrition and sustainable population; education and pro-poor growth; social protection and disaster risk reduction; gender equity and advancement of women; and prevention and protection against HIV/Aids.

The UNDAF process is undertaken every five years with the aim of coordinating UN activities at the country level.

"This approach is one component of the UN reforms being implemented in countries around the globe. Each new framework builds on the achievements and progress made previously," says the announcement.

As part of the process, UN agencies working in Bangladesh in close consultation with the government completed a Common Country Assessment (CCA), which details the country's state of development.

The CCA had used a rights-based approach clustered around four groups of rights – survival, liveli-

hoods, protection and participation.

This analytical approach distinguishes the CCA from the more target-driven focus of the Bangladesh MDG Progress Report and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

The CCA indicates over the last decade or so, Bangladesh has made 'impressive gains in key human development indicators'.

The most recent UNDP Human Development Report ranked Bangladesh 138 among 177 countries with a Human Development Index (HDI) score of 0.509, which is consistent with 'medium human development'.

"This implies the country enjoys improved macroeconomic stability, lower fertility rate, greater women's empowerment, reduced aid dependency, increased food security, more effective disaster management capacity, more active non-governmental organisations (NGOs), free and fair parliamentary elections, a vibrant and pluralist civil society marked by cultural activism and developmental debates, and an active and free press," the UN country office said in the announcement.

Coalition men grab

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The only offbeat allottees are two justices, an Awami League deputy and a Jatiya Party (Ershad) lawmaker.

But the authorities said there was nothing wrong in the allocation process.

"We have followed the same guideline in Banani-Uttara plot allocation as in case of Purbachal plots. Every minister and MP who had applied received a plot. And we will follow the same guideline in future, too," asserted Housing and Public Works Secretary Iqbaluddin Chowdhury.

"As the number of plots was limited, only the ministers and MPs were eligible to get them," he explained.

Officials at Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha claimed the allocation was made using a 'genuine and deserving' selection method under the Clause 8 of Dhaka Improvement Trust Rules, 1969.

According to the rules, every applicant has to submit an official declaration that he or she does not own any property in the city. If one does, it makes him or her ineligible to get a further plot from Rajuk.

"If any one is found to have received allocation of a Rajuk plot by hiding the information of owning a city property, his or her allocation would be cancelled," Chowdhury said.

But, in the present case, most of the plot recipients already owned one or more plots or flats in the city, Rajuk sources said.

The allottees are LGRD Minister Abdul Manan Bhuiyan, Environment Minister Tariqul Islam, Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al-Noman, Shahidul Alam Talukder, Masuda Akram, son of finance minister M Naseer Rahman MP, prime minister's brother retired major Sayeed Eskander, State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Prof Rezaul Karim, State Minister for Housing and Public Works Alamgir Kabir, State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman, Adviser to the Commerce Ministry Barkatullah Bulu, Deputy Speaker Akhter Hamid Siddique, M Shahidul Islam MP, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin, State Minister for Home Affairs M Lutfozzaman Babar, Sahjahan Chowdhury MP, AKM Fazlul Haque Milon MP, Abul Khair Bhuiyan MP, Abdul Hye MP, Moazzam Hossain Alal MP, Anti-Corruption Commissioner Prof M Moniruzzaman Miah, State Minister for NGO Affairs Lutfur Rahman Khan Azad, State Minister for Education ANM Ehsanul Haque (Milon), Barisal City Corporation Mayor Mozibur Rahman Sarwar MP, Rajshahi City Corporation Mayor M Mizanur Rahman Minu MP, State Minister for Cultural Affairs Selima Rahman, lawmaker from Cox's Bazar Shajahan Chowdhury, M Nazimuddin Alam MP, M Ilias Ali MP, Mozibur Rahman Monju MP, Alamgir Haider Khan MP, Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu MP, M Kabir Hossain MP, Salauddin Ahmed MP, M Hafiz Ibrahim MP, M Sahiduddin Chowdhury Anee MP, M Abul Hossain Khan MP, Deputy Minister

for Land M Ruhul Quddus Talukder (Dulu), Deputy Minister for Food Asadul Habib Dulu, SM Hasan Reza, president's son Imtiaz Ahmed, BNP leader Khainul Kabir Khokon, M Nadim Mostafa MP, BNP leader M Mofiqul Hassan Tripty, Mosiur Rahman MP, Hafiz Uddin Ahmed MP, M Habibul Islam Habib MP, Water Resources Minister Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, Awami League lawmaker Dr Hamida Banu Shova, legal successors of late BNP lawmaker Shamsuddin Ahmed Esak, M Ahsan Habib, Minister without Portfolio Abdul Matin Chowdhury, State Minister for Power Iqbal Hassan Mahmud, Adviser to the Foreign Ministry M Reaz Rahman, Syed Abdullah M Taher MP, retired major Manzur Kader MP, BNP leader Fazlul Kader Chowdhury, Rashiduzzaman Millat MP, former secretary Sabihuddin Ahmed, M Sahidul Islam, health minister's son Khandakar Mahbub Hossain, University Grand Commission Chairman M Asaduzzaman, Nasrot Rajee, Faisal Mahbub, Sabrina Sharmin, Kabir Ahmed Khan, Tasnim Ahmad, Golam Nabi Alamgir, Afifa Mustary, SM Mostakim Reza, Zahir Uddin Swapon MP, Prof M Shahidul Islam MP, Shahiduzzaman (Beltu) MP, Syed Manjur Hossain MP, Principal Shorab Uddin MP, National University VC Prof Afifab Ahmed, Justice Shamim Hasnani, Justice Shah Abu Nayeem Mominur Rahman, former inspector general of police Mudabbir Hossain Chowdhury, Shah Nurul Kabir MP, Alhaj M Javed Ali Chowdhury MP, State minister for Water Goutam Chakraborty, Deputy Minister for Industries M Abdus Salam Pintu, Sultan Mohammad Babu MP, State Minister for Environment and Forest Jafur Islam Chowdhury, Abdul Momen Talukder MP, Abeda Chowdhury, Dildar Hossain Selim MP, Abdul Gaffur Bhuiyan MP, ABM Ashraf Uddin (Nizam) MP, Amzad Hossain Sarker MP, Mozahar Hossain MP, Mostafa Kamal Pasha MP, M Mozammel Haque MP, M Abul Mottalib Akanda MP, Hazi M Mozammel Haque MP, Whip Muhammad Fazlul Haque Aspia, M Abdul Gani MP, Masud Ahmed Masud Arun MP, AKM Selim Reza Habib MP, Mohammed Gheyas Uddin MP, M Harunur Rashid MP, M Shamsuzzoha Khan MP and Khurum Khan Chowdhury MP.

Rajuk sources said the city planners first decided to allocate 50 plots in Uttara and invited applications for them in 2004. It received a total of 535 applications. Finding that 80 of the applicants were ruling party ministers, state ministers and lawmakers, Rajuk then decided to add 50 more plots to the basket from Uttara Sector 14.

The housing and public works ministry finalised the list of allottees recently and instructed Rajuk chairman to sign the allotment letters and make a public notification in the press, the sources said.

The housing and public works minister could not be reached yesterday despite repeated attempts.

SCBA Election

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their votes in the two-day SCBA election for 2005-2006, which ended yesterday.

The counting of votes, which started at 6:00pm, an hour after the vote casting ended, continued until the writing of this report at 8:00pm.

Judge Mohammad Mojibur Rahman of the Fourth Assistant Judge's court issued the order at 5:10pm following Advocate Shawkat Ara Begum's suit praying for an ad-interim injunction on counting the votes and publishing the results.

In the suit, advocate Shawkat Ara said the names of 401 voters were enlisted both in the SCBA and the Dhaka Bar Association, violating the provisions of the Bangladesh Legal Practitioners of Bar Council Order Amendment Act 2003.

In the provisions, it is stated that no voter would cast his vote in two bar associations.

Sixteen persons are defendants in the suit, including the SCBA president, the general secretary, the chief election commissioner for the SCBA election and the Bangladesh

Bar Council secretary.

The court also issued a show cause notice upon the SCBA chief election commissioner asking him to explain within three days from receipt of the copy of the notice why a temporary injunction would not be imposed upon counting votes and publishing the results.

The court order was sent to the SCBA chief election commissioner at 6:30pm yesterday.

Meanwhile, the pro-BNP panel boycotted the election on Tuesday, terming the voters' list 'illegal'.

Protesting the election, pro-government lawyers also brought out a procession on the bar premises in the afternoon yesterday.

Saarc secretary

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courtesy call on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia. He is also scheduled to meet Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan and Foreign Secretary Hemayet Uddin.

Dorji will visit Saarc Agricultural Information Centre (SAIC) and Saarc Meteorological Research Centre (SMRC).

Jamaat MP

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Rahman Chowdhury has claimed that his diplomatic passport has been lost and he applied to parliament for issuance of a new one. The lawmaker however would not comment on the passports of his wife and son.

The foreign ministry, however, did not issue a fresh diplomatic passport that the lawmaker applied for through the parliament secretariat. Instead, the ministry on March 10 sent back the application to the parliament secretariat along with the note verbal of the Danish embassy. It also asked the secretariat to initiate necessary steps.

"The passports were retained by this embassy as we found very clever evidence of fraud in connection with the above passports. The expert opinion of the Consular Section of the British High Commission also confirms this," sources quoted the note verbal of the Danish Embassy as saying.

The Jamaat lawmaker applied to the Danish embassy on February 23, 2005 for visa for him, Esmat Ara Begum, his wife, and AT Mahedi Chowdhury, his son.

The lawmaker in his application to the parliament secretariat on March 1 for new diplomatic passport said his diplomatic passport was lost. He said he had filed a general diary with a police station in his constituency, Nilphamani-3, and had also placed an advertisement in a local newspaper, Dainik Salmatha.

The lawmaker told The Daily Star on phone last night that he had not applied for Danish visa. He also said his and his wife's passports were lost but could not say when.

26,348 cars

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divisions. A total of 26,651 vehicles were purchased under the projects while only 303 vehicles were returned to the central transport pool.

The purchased vehicles include 355 microbuses, 1,379 jeeps, 227 cars, 534 pick-ups, 190 trucks, 18 buses, 36 minibuses, 12,537 motorcycles and 11,375 others.

The ministries and divisions returned 27 microbuses, 129 jeeps, 79 cars, 23 pick-ups, one bus, one minibus and 39 motorcycles on completion of the projects.

The agriculture ministry is using the highest 12,322 vehicles while it returned only 17. The LGRD ministry is using 4,501 vehicles and returned 61. Primary and mass education ministry is using 2,829 vehicles and returned 56.

The opposition members of the standing committee at the meeting demanded a physical investigation of the vehicles being used by the government organs.

Awami League lawmaker AKM Jahangir Hossain told the meeting that the establishment ministry in last January said they had information about only 11 ministries but it found 43 ministries and divisions responsible for the misuse of public vehicles.

Committee member and opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid said they (opposition lawmakers) demanded discussion on the government policy on the promotion of public servants. The issue will be discussed at the next meeting.

7 killed, over 100

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Reports from Pabna said one person was killed and over 50 were injured as the nor'wester lashed over 15 villages in Chatmohor, Bhangura and Faridpur upazilas at about 7:00pm.

Locals said Kasiruddin, 44, of Faridpur upazila was killed in a thunderbolt during the storm.

PM calls

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including increase in the number of beds in public hospitals.

Modern medical equipment is being provided and the standard of service being improved at the district-level government hospitals, she said.

Special programme has been taken for development of human resources in the health sector, the prime minister told the function, adding that 'Accreditation Council' has been formed to improve professional standard of the doctors.

The prime minister later went round the hospital taking a close look at the medical facilities available.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr Khandakar Mosharraf Hossain, Chairman of Apollo Hospitals Enterprise Limited, India, DR PC Reddy, Chairman of STS Holdings Bhagwan W Kundanmal, Managing Director of STC Group Khondoker Moniruddin and Director of STS Group MA Moyeen also spoke on the opening ceremony.

Ministers, MPs, FMs, political secretary, diplomats, a large number of physicians from home and abroad and CEO of Apollo Hospital Dhaka Richard Larsson were present.

Saarc Summit

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from New Delhi said.

The summit, scheduled to be held from January 9 to 11, was put off in the wake of the tsunami tragedy, which had affected three member-countries—Sri Lanka, the Maldives and India.

Later, a curtailed two-day summit was scheduled for February 6-7, but was again postponed as India pulled out of it citing the "deteriorating" security situation in Bangladesh and political developments in Nepal.

Pakistan, the current Saarc Chairman, has suggested that the summit be held in April.

On the holding of the stalled 13th summit, Bangladesh had repeatedly stated that it wants to host the summit any time convenient for all member-countries. But Dhaka was not yet officially informed by the current chair, Islamabad, about the rescheduling.

Dawn-to-dusk hartal

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Paribahan Samity made the announcement jointly on Monday and said, if necessary, they would offer the passengers a 50-percent fare discount on the hartal day.

On hartals days, usually a few minibuses and three-wheelers operate in the capital, but the long-route buses and trucks keep off the roads.

Apart from the AL, the components of left-leaning 11-party alliance, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal and National Awami party leaders from separate rallies this month had announced the shutdown, initially for March 27, but later shifted to today considering the Easter Sunday.

The opposition line-up has been agitating on street against the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition since late 2004 on a common nine-point charter of demands and protesting price spiral of essentials, deteriorating law and order, repeated grenade attacks and rise of Islamic militancy in the country under alleged government patronage.

Around 8,000 law enforcers will be deployed today at different city points to maintain law and order. Police have been asked to remain alert and not to allow any procession during the hartal hours.

AL and its front organisations yesterday brought out processions in the city to drum up support for today's hartal.

Leaders of Truck Owners' Association and Bangladesh Sarak

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BTTB launches

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mobile phone licence to Teletalk. Their tenure ended on January 30, 2005 and the positions remained vacant until the appointment of Reza-E-Rabbi as Vice Chairman and Justice Muhammad Abdus Salam as Commissioner on March 8, 2005. The chairman and two commissioners are yet to be appointed.

Rabbi went for a major cardiac surgery and the telecoms ministry, according to sources, pushed Justice Salam to unilaterally and illegally transfer the BTTB's mobile licence to Teletalk.

BTTB now has lost the licence and the frequency it had acquired from BTRC on September 1, 2004. Teletalk is also without a licence it refused to comment on any of the issues.

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about 1:30pm.

An on-duty traffic sergeant rushed there and settled the issue. The youth drove away only to come back after 15 minutes bringing along him at least six associates in two private cars.

He then snatched the stick from the traffic constable and started beating him until he collapsed on the road, a top police official said seeking anonymity.

Constable Majid was rushed to Suhrawardy Hospital where doctors had to give him three stitches for wounds on the left side of his forehead. Later, he was shifted to Rajarbagh Police Lines Hospital where reporters were barred from talking to Majid.

"I am told that the youth identified himself as a son of lawmaker Ali Kadar. We are trying to find out the youth and the number of the private car. Once we do that we will go for legal action," said Deputy Commissioner of Traffic (North Division) Firoz Al Mujahid Khan.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner SM Mizanur Rahman told The Daily Star, "I have directed the deputy commissioner to investigate the matter and take proper action against the person responsible."

Reached by phone, a daughter-in-law of Ali Kadar MP, who only identified herself as Dipti, said she does not know of such an incident.

Govt may lose

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RPCL's project.

It was found that the local agent of Lahmeyer illegally attends the RPCL board meeting and influences decisions.

With cooperation from the ERD, German auditors were all set to visit Dhaka in November-December to review the documents of the DNPP and another German funded RPCL project—the Mymensingh 70mp third phase project.

The RPCL that had been vehemently opposing the audit, at one point announced that it would not use German fund for the project.

As the arrival of the auditors became imminent, one Md Haideruzzaman, claiming himself to be a prospective industrialist, filed a petition at the HC saying that the audit has "made the DNPP uncertain". On November 21, the HC imposed injunction against the audit.

Before the injunction's January deadline came to a close, another petitioner in December obtained a fresh HC injunction for six months. But the ERD informed Germany of this injunction only recently.

Meanwhile, the RPCL secretly went ahead with its own plans to award a contract to Swiss company Alsthom, to set up the first phase 280mp plant under the DNPP.

The local agents of Lahmeyer and Alsthom belongs to the same business lobby.

This unsolicited contract with Alsthom, signed in October last year, outlines a very high cost of Tk 1000 crore and violates the private power policy and the Prime Minister's Office's specific directives.

In contrast, the 450 mw AES Meghnaghat Project was set up at a cost of Tk 1200 crore (at present exchange rate of dollar) which offered a power tariff of Tk 1.7 (2.79 US cents) per kilowatt hour.

But Alsthom seeks a tariff of Tk 2.2 for the same. Besides it suggests that the tariff will increase by

DEAD CHICKENS

Cops still

clueless

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police still have no leads on the gang involved in illegally supplying dead chickens to city restaurants.

Police continued interrogating Azad—arrested with 53 dead chickens at Mirpur on March 28—who admitted that he and many others like him regularly supply dead chickens to different restaurants in Mirpur and Pallabi.

"But he refused to reveal who else is involved in the illegal activity," said Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Mirpur Police Station.

Azad was placed on a two-day remand on Tuesday.

Police said they raided areas in Mirpur yesterday taking Azad with them to nab one Abul—the only accomplice Azad has so far revealed—but failed to arrest him.

The OC said police continued raiding different areas in Mirpur to arrest people involved in the illegal trade.

Mirpur police said they plan to start an operation to nab the crooked restaurant owners and Azad's associates after having specific information.

Police sources also said that a syndicate of poultry farm and depot employees and restaurants are involved in the dishonest trade.

Students protest

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students took initiative to organise a programme following resistance from teachers.

The incident took place at Jahanabaj Hazrat Abu Bakkar Siddique (R) Fazil Madrasa at Dhulihar in Sadar Upazila. The local people and students said the teachers of the madrasa had collected money from the students to observe Independence Day but the madrasa authorities did not observe the day.

The students demonstrated when there was no sign of programme even two days after Independence Day. Later the madrasa authorities hurriedly arranged a simple programme comprising teltawe Quran, a recitation of poems and ghazals.

When the authorities did not pay heed to the students' demand for better programmes, the students demonstrated and organised a programme involving sports, drama and discussion. They also prayed for the salvation of the martyrs' soul.

A large number of local people attended the programme though the madrasa authorities were absent. A senior teacher Shawkat Hossain said the Independence Day programmes were cut short due to the Alim examination.

Zakir Khan

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efficiently and thus been considered for the post. He is currently serving on a contract as he had earlier passed the age of 57 years, the retirement age for government servants.

The sources said a number of top ranking serving and retired bureaucrats, including one at the PMO, had lobbied for the post.

Meantime, the PMO sources said the government is also considering appointing Akbar in a key position to a number of vital bodies on his return from Washington.

They said the government may appoint him the next governor of Bangladesh Bank or the chief election commissioner (CEC).

Although the government has not finalised its decision, most policymakers prefer Akbar as the CEC considering his efficiency and non-controversial image, they added.

BNP policymakers believe opposition parties may not raise an objection if Akbar becomes the next CEC. The five-year term of the incumbent CEC, MA Syeed, ends on May 22 this year.

Mobile court

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licence. But there is no such provision for traveling agents.

The Atab leaders agreed in principle on those proposals but observed that it will require clearance from the law ministry before forming such a mobile court and making provision for depositing money by travel agents.

"We in principle agreed to the proposals and think that the law ministry will give necessary clearance in this regard," said a high official of the civil aviation ministry after the meeting.

Civil Aviation Secretary Kazi Abul Quasem presided over the meeting and representatives from the ministries of expatriate welfare and home affairs, Biman Bangladesh Airlines, Atab President M A Mohaimen Saleh and General Secretary Gulam Mustafa were present.

In response to Atab leaders' demand to make membership of Atab mandatory for all travel agents, government officials said there is legal barrier in the matter.

Still the civil aviation ministry will seek opinion from the law ministry in this regard, they said.

The Atab leaders supported the move to check the licences of all travel agents through mobile courts.

"We need healthy growth of travel agencies in the country but not their mushroom growth which is responsible for recent fraudulent practices," said Atab General Secretary Ghulam Mustafa.

Atab leaders reiterated their 15 point demands, which include yearly monitoring of genuine travel agents' activities, considering educational and business background before issuing new licences and ending harassment at the airports.

Alliance partners skip

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inquiry conducted by Paul Volcker, a former US Federal Reserve chair-

man, found no evidence that Annan had influenced bidding for a lucrative contract under the \$67 billion program to a Swiss firm that employed Annan's son, Kojo.

And it said that the firm as well as Kojo Annan, 31, a businessman in Nigeria, had misled his father on his continued relationship with the firm.

But the report also said that Annan and UN officials failed to thoroughly investigate the potential Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan announced five of his party men as the commissioner candidates from five wards under his constituency, Chittagong-10.

After the unilateral announcement, the alliance partners started announcing the names of their own candidates for different wards.

Islami Oikya Jote the same day named five candidates – Principal Maulana Monjurul Quader Chowdhury (ward-11), Maulana Musa Bin Izhar (ward-14), Fazlul Karim Jahidi (ward-13), Prof Nazrul Islam Chowdhury (ward-20) and Maulana Abdul Jabbar (ward-2).

"We were surprised at the minister's announcement, that's why we boycotted the meeting," Musa Bin Izhar told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We will be stick to our party nominations and keep bargaining for this. If BNP does not agree, we

will then decide our next course of action," he said.

Sources said Jamaat-e-Islami has also planned to announce the names of its own candidates for different wards. The party initially demanded 11 candidates but now it is going to declare nominations of 17 party men.

Nayeb-e Amir of Chittagong City Jamaat Afsaruddin Chowdhury at a rally at Bohaddarhat on Tuesday night declared that party leader advocate Golam Faruque will contest the polls from Chandgaon ward.

The foreign minister has already named Showkat Ali as BNP candidate from this ward.

"The attitude of several BNP high-ups and lawmakers who are selecting the commissioner candidates is frustrating," alleged Liaquat Ali Siddiquee, publication secretary of Jamaat, while talking to The Daily Star over phone.

However, the coalition partners continue to support Mir Nasir as the alliance candidate. Both Maulana Musa and Siddiquee said they would work for him wholeheartedly.

The alliance high command has entrusted Morshed Khan, Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury and Abdullah-Al Noman with the responsibility of deciding the nominations for ward commissioner candidates in the May 9 polls.

Kibria family

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protest the killing of the former finance minister.

The two-hour display of the banners of signatures starting at 4:00pm is hoped to exceed the 3000-foot length of the Manik Mia Avenue.

Briefing newsmen at her residence, Asma Kibria, wife of the slain Awami League (AL) leader, requested all who seek an end to the country's existing political violence to demonstrate their commitment to justice and peace by attending the display wearing blue dresses. "I hope leaders of the ruling BNP will also join the demonstration," she said.

Asma said senior artists of the country would also participate in the programme with their artworks protesting the deteriorating law and order in the country.

Kibria's son Dr Reza Kibria said, "The business community in the country should also participate in our peaceful demonstration as they always call for holding such programmes instead of hartals."

"We have received banners bearing signatures from 44 districts of the country as well as the USA, UK, Australia and Sweden," Asma informed.

She said different political parties have sent their banners inscribed with signatures, including the main opposition Awami League and its different front organisation, Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh, professional bodies, socio-cultural organisations, university teachers, trade unions as well as commoners.

Kibria's family launched the mass campaign of collecting signatures on February 12.