

## BNP faces BJP wrath

FROM PAGE 16  
Battalion (Rab) custody.

In a resolution, the meeting expressed concern over the 'improper formation' of the four-party alliance government and non-implementation of the pledges spelled out in the election manifesto of the alliance.

It said the alliance's election commitment was to separate the judiciary from the executive, give autonomy to the state-owned radio and television, hold Upazila Parishad elections, create employment and control price of essentials.

The BJP leaders were critical of BNP, the coalition leader, for not incorporating all partners in the cabinet where only two Jamaat leaders were included from the three other components of the alliance formed before 2001 polls.

Many BJP leaders termed Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh a fundamentalist force while party Chairman Nazim Rahman Manjur without naming any party said the government must take action against the fundamentalist forces.

"BNP is patronising the fundamentalist and extremist forces in the country," Manjur told the meeting expressing serious concern over the growth of religious extremism.

He said that instead of establishing Islamic values BNP is extending help to the fundamentalist forces.

The BJP leaders also criticised the opposition political parties for creating an anarchic situation in the country through national and international conspiracies.

They called upon the government to initiate open dialogue with major political parties on reforms of the election commission and other demands.

Leaders of the BJP central committee and 56 district units spoke at the meeting and almost all of them expressed similar views about the coalition government's performances in the last three and a half years.

Many BJP leaders demanded that its top brasses take a quick decision whether the party will be with the alliance or not. "BJP is not a leased property of any other party," the BJP chairman said responding to his party leaders' views.

Manjur said, "The government should hold discussions with all on reforms of the existing election system and other demands raised by different quarters."

Manjur, who joined the four-party alliance deserting Jatiya Party of former president HM Ershad, expressed his frustration over all the rise of political violence and held all political parties responsible for the situation.

He blamed the government for its failure to keep the prices of essentials under control. "People will reject BNP if it fails to reduce the price hikes," he said.

Pointing to a senior minister's recent statement about negligible hike in rice price, the BJP chief said, "Don't tell lie about the prices of essentials. Visit the kitchen markets and give statements whether prices have increased or not."

Referring to the killings in Rab custody, Manjur said the extrajudicial killings have to be stopped.

Several BJP leaders blamed BNP for establishing an alternative power centre at Hawa Bhaban. Advocate Abdul Halim from Sylhet said BNP has introduced a dual rule

## KIDNAP BID Sergeant, brother sent to jail

**COURT CORRESPONDENT**

The traffic sergeant and his brother arrested on charges of attempting to abduct a businessman on the Supreme Court premises on Sunday were sent to the Dhaka Central Jail yesterday.

Ramna police produced Sergeant Mahfuzur Rahman and Mahbubur Rahman before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court following completion of their one-day remand.

The investigation officer (IO) of the case told the court that he had extracted from the arrested brothers important information which the police were cross-checking. The IO appealed to the court to keep the accused confined in the jail till the completion of the investigation.

Defence lawyers submitted a bail petition saying their clients were implicated in the case falsely to harass them.

After the hearing, the court rejected the bail petition and ordered to send the two to the Dhaka Central Jail.

## JS set to miss

**FROM PAGE 1**  
The deputy speaker then decided not to attend the CPA meeting.

The speaker, however, suggested the deputy speaker to send his representative, if he wishes, to attend the CPA meeting.

"But there is no scope to send any representative on my behalf. It will be a vital meeting of the CPA to discuss important issues," the deputy speaker told The Daily Star Monday.

Sources pointed out that for the first time the speaker represented the deputy speaker at a meeting of the Association of Asian Parliamentarians for Peace (AAPP) in Manila on April 5.

The AAPP had invited the deputy speaker to attend its advisory council meeting scheduled for today. But on advice from the speaker, he informed the AAPP that the speaker would represent him at the meet.

In a note to the deputy speaker, the speaker said, "I am going to attend IPU conference in Manila from April 2 to 8 and then visit Beijing for another week. It is unwise for the deputy speaker to leave the station (during his absence). If he wishes, he may send an MP delegating his authority."

**Pranab-Joy Meet**

**FROM PAGE 1**  
In the complaint, Advocate Mollah said the news-item published in the national dailies quoting the BSS on March 18 reported that Sajib Wajed Joy and Hasina's Political Secretary Sabir Hossain Chowdhury met India's Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee at his South Block office.

Seeing the report in the dailies, Joy and Sabir protested the news, terming it "baseless." The Indian defence minister also protested against the news in a statement.

The complainant alleged that the objective of running the news-item was to undermine the image of the opposition leader of the Parliament Sheikh Hasina and to create controversy about her son Joy.

The false, intentional and diverting news-item, which defamed both Hasina and Joy, was run for the political gain of the ruling BNP, the complainant said, adding that the accused have yet to express regret for running the news-item.

After the hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate AJM Abdullah Hel Baki ordered a judicial inquiry into the matter.

## 90 Phuket Air passengers in trouble at Ctg

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg**

Ninety Dubai-bound passengers and their relatives suffered for some four hours yesterday in the Shah Amanat International Airport when an aircraft of Phuket Air departed without them.

The 214-capacity Boeing aircraft left with only 174 on board. Authorities said the passengers were stranded because of technical faults with the aircraft. The same flight also departed with fewer passengers on April 3, they added.

The incident triggered anger among the distressed passengers who missed the flight, prompting them to try to agitate where the airport authority sent them to the Phuket Air office at Agrabad. The general manager of the office promised Tk 2000 as compensation to each by April 10. He also assured an unscheduled flight for Dubai on April 12.

Witnesses said the wait was traumatic for passengers from remote areas of neighbouring districts. Sources say the untoward incident took place as the airlines had overbooked 50 passengers.

The next scheduled Phuket Air flights to Dubai are on April 20, 24 & 27, sources said.

## Recruiting agents

**FROM PAGE 1**  
It is not only the recruiting agencies that contributed to the visa prices, but also the individuals who buy visas from the companies abroad for their relatives," said the recruiting agency MD. The practice is used apart from the Middle East countries as well, he noted.

The experience of a recruiting agent in Brunei helps substantiate these facts.

MM Rahman, previously the managing director of Madina Overseas Private Ltd, a recruiting agency in Brunei, secured legal documents in 2001. As his first job, he deposited 1,10,000 Singapore dollars or about Tk 36 lakh to Careless Realty and Management, a local licensed company, for providing 88 Bangladeshis workers.

But at the final stage of the contract process, another Bangladesh recruiting agency in Brunei illegally made the contract, paying more money with the local company, Rahman told The Daily Star after Brunei immigration officials forcibly sent him home on March 23.

Finding the business unscrupulous, Rahman left the manpower business and opened a department store. "From then on I helped the Bangladeshis workers there and was vocal against the ill practices of the recruiting agencies, for which I became the enemy to other recruiting agencies."

Bangladeshis recruiting agencies, in connivance with the local company, convinced Brunei immigration officials to forcibly send him home, Rahman said.

There are between 10 and 12 recruiting agencies and more than 10,000 Bangladeshis workers in Brunei, but most of the workers are jobless. "Making money is the main target of the agencies, not finding the workers jobs," Rahman said.

Village agents of the recruiting agencies are another component that increases the migration cost.

A former village agent in Kunda, Savar, working on behalf of recruiting agencies in Dhaka, earlier told The Daily Star that there are many agents in the villages who lure prospective migrants with false promises of higher salaries and a brighter future.

"Agents have a contract with the recruiting agencies and take a share of the money. Say I have to pay the agency Tk 1.5 lakh, but I can motivate one to pay Tk 1.75 lakh. I will get Tk 25,000. It depends on the techniques of an agent how much he will profit," the agent, who was in Saudi Arabia, told The Daily Star in a previously printed interview.

The aspirant migrants never receive any receipts against their payment, which is much more than the government-fixed rate. On the other hand, the village agents exaggerate the salaries and other facilities promised.

**Kurd leader**

**FROM PAGE 1**  
magnate Sheikh Ghazi al-Yawar as his two deputies.

Kurdish negotiator and outgoing foreign minister Hoshyar Zebari said an agreement on the new cabinet to be headed by Shiite Ibrahim al-Jafarri as prime minister was also largely complete and that it would be approved "within a few days".

**JS body**

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Sources said he blamed the same developer at the last few meetings of the House body.

Mahbubur Rahman avoided a direct reply when pressed by newsmen to give the names of other developers, saying three-district administrations are not providing complete reports on land grabbers.

"The district administrations of Dhaka, Narayanganj and Gazipur have been submitting partial reports for the last year. We have asked them to submit a complete report at the next meeting (of the committee)," he said.

The committee yesterday discussed the issue of land grabbing under a miscellaneous agenda. No specific report against any developer was submitted at the meeting. But the committee chairman blamed one developer by name for grabbing land.

At the last meeting of the House body, the Savar land office submitted a report accusing 42 developers of grabbing about 1,000 acres in Savar. But the chairman did not disclose their names at the press briefing after the meeting.

Mahbubur Rahman said they have asked the three-district administrations to send a list of the land grabbers to the committee. "We will send the list to the home ministry through the land ministry and will ask for deployment of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) to recover grabbed lands."

The prime minister has agreed in principle to deploy Rab, if necessary, he said.

## Lone bidder for Haripur power plant

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

A Power Development Board (PDB) tender to overhaul the 17-year-old 100-megawatt (MW) Haripur power plant at a cost of Tk 110 crore closed yesterday with a single bid from Japanese company Marubeni.

Although the PDB can set up a new plant by adding Tk 20-40 crore to the overhaul cost, sources said it will stick to pursuing the expensive scheme with the lone bidder.

An Awami League lawmaker and businessman, who wields strong influence in the government, has been lobbying to get the project, the fund for which comes from a Japanese debt relief grant.

Under the scheme, the contractor will overhaul three 33-MW old generators of the plant at a cost of Tk 100 crore. The contractor will also install a 10MW initial power generator, which will function as the starter of the main plant, at a cost of Tk 10 crore.

In contrast, the PDB in 2001 built the 100MW Baghabari plant at a cost of Tk 128 crore. The estimated cost for such a brand new plant is below Tk 150 crore at present.

The overhaul will add just a few years of life to the plant, which officially goes out of operation in 2008.

## Visit to take partnership

**FROM PAGE 1**  
interview on the eve of premier Jiabao's two-day official visit to Bangladesh.

He said, "It would be a curtain-unveiling event of our celebrating activities marking the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations with Bangladesh."

Referring to the 'encouraging enhancement' of economic cooperation and bilateral trade, Xi said China has committed to grant tariff-free access to 83 varieties and preferential tariff treatment to 157 items of Bangladesh products within the framework of Bangkok Agreement.

"We'll make more preferential duty arrangement to boost import from Bangladesh," he said when his attention was drawn to huge trade imbalance against Dhaka.

The total volume of two-way trade last year reached a new height accounting for 1,968 billion, 43.5 per cent up against the figure of 2003 -- making Bangladesh the economic dragon's third-largest trade partner in South Asia.

An upbeat Chinese envoy expressed the hope that project-contracting and investment by Chinese companies can help bring more capital back to Bangladesh. He pointed out that when projects like DAP-1 go into operation as planned, their products that meet the demand of the Chinese market can be sold back to his country.

He said China also expects that the Bangladesh side can explore more varieties of commodities with local characteristics and international competence for Chinese market.

On enhancing Bangladesh's capacity to compete on the international market in the post-MFA era, Xi said his government encourages the Chinese enterprises to develop high value-added garments and has implemented the policy of prohibiting the low value-added export products.

The Chinese government encourages the textile enterprises with reputation and competence to invest in countries like Bangladesh to help their friends develop its international competence.

## Govt plans

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Committee yesterday took the decision. However, the final order for the procurement drive will be given after the next meeting of the committee on April 11.

Committee Chairman Food and Disaster Management Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf presided over the meeting while LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Agriculture Minister M K Anwar, Deputy Minister for Food and Disaster Management Asadul Habib Dulu, Cabinet Secretary Dr Saadat Hussain, Food Secretary Fazlur Rahman and representatives from the finance ministry, National Board of Revenue and other organisations concerned were present.

Some senior ministers at the meeting expressed dissatisfaction over the government's low food stock and slow pace in the food procurement drive, asking the government officials to accelerate the drive and to increase the food stock for meeting any emergency requirement.

The government's food stock has declined to around 6 lakh tonnes, which is normally nine lakh tonnes. At present there is stock of 4.96 lakh tonnes of rice and 1.10 lakh tonnes of wheat.

The government officials told the meeting that the food stock declined because of a recent open market sell (OMS) of rice. The OMS is still going on and will continue at least for another two weeks. So far 1.46 lakh tonnes of rice have been sold through OMS.

Recently the government imported 1.20 lakh tonnes of rice and 1.25 lakh tonnes of wheat to meet the requirement, sources said, adding that a tender for another 50,000 tonnes of rice was opened yesterday.

The government procurement drive in the last boro season failed as there was a production shortfall because of flash floods. But this year production is better and the government expects to fulfil the target.

## ACC remains divided

**FROM PAGE 1**  
about 876 staff, nearly half of what most of the members had desired.

The Commission came into being on November 21 last year with a chairman and two commissioners and its immediate task was to formulate an organogram and necessary rules.

But a commissioner and the two other members including the chairman debated for months on end over the number of staff in the new organogram.

ACC commissioners Prof Maniruzzaman Miah and Maniruddin Ahmed drafted two organograms, with Miah suggesting 964 staff and Ahmed 1,449.

Chairman Justice Sultan Hossain Khan chose neither and asked Dhaka University in February to have its experts draft one. But the chairman found the number of staff in the third draft too fewer to his liking and decided against sending it to the government, sources said.

At yesterday's meeting, the Commission also decided to ask the government to appoint on deputation skilled senior government officials from the administration, income tax, customs, judiciary and Finance Division to the Commission.

Sources said the chairman proposed for appointment of officials from the army and police, but Commissioner Prof Miah opposed such appointment of army men at this stage.

The Commission last month decided to seek views of the law ministry about whether to probe laundering cases, but it shelved the idea after Prof Miah at yesterday's meeting said it is out of ACC's jurisdiction.

The Commission at yesterday's meeting also decided to permit its investigators to press charges in the corruption cases filed earlier with Bac.

The meeting was adjourned until Saturday.

**JOURNALISTS KEPT AT BAY**  
The Commission members did not speak to journalists yesterday citing a meeting decision.

"All decisions will be made public through press releases," Syed Iqbal Hossain, personal secretary to ACC chairman, told reporters.

Since the formation of the Commission, former Bac director Lt Col. Abdul Hannan Mridha, who now holds no position in the watchdog body, and the chairman were looking to bar journalists from covering the Commission. The chairman decided in February to meet journalists once in a week but used to speak to journalists after each meeting.

As journalists were trying to talk to the chairman about the latest decision, Hannan Mridha, who was not present at the meeting, claimed that the chairman has directed him to speak to press.

He later briefed journalists on the meeting.

Asked if he was speaking as a spokesman for the Commission, Hannan asked the crew of TV channels to turn off their cameras and left the place saying that he would not say anything about it.

But Prof Miah said the chairman allowed no-one to speak to journalists.

**Kashmir**

**FROM PAGE 16**  
However, three prospective passengers have opted out citing technical reasons, officials sources said.

Abdul Haq Cheshi and his mother Hajira Begum have decided not to undertake the journey, as Hajira was bed-ridden and unable to move.

The sources said another person has also opted out of the travel on health grounds. He is scheduled to undergo surgery on April 8, the sources said.

Two persons, who were among those selected to travel on the inaugural bus, have not reported to the authorities so far, the sources said.

## Bangladesh limps

**FROM PAGE 1**  
publication Asian Development Outlook (Ado) 2005 at its resident mission in the city. Du also said, "We are deeply concerned about the [violence apprehended during the] next election."

Besides, though the affects of the quota phase-out have not been immediately apparent until today, Bangladesh might be badly hurt in the coming months, Du added.

Du said the world economy is changing rapidly and there are lots of opportunities. Bangladesh needs to detect and grab them. She also felt that there are great opportunities for the country to improve its competitiveness.

She recommended the government to undertake policy initiatives to diversify the export base, resolve some pressing issues like the law and order situation and structural bottlenecks, and create a more investment-friendly environment.

**ADDO FORECASTS**  
According to Ado forecast, despite widespread and destructive flooding in 2004, Bangladesh economy is expected to grow by 5.3 percent in fiscal year (FY) 2004-05, slightly lower than last year's 5.5 percent growth.

But, it observed, to achieve the millennium development goals, the country needs to effect a 7 to 8 percent annual economic growth, instead of the present rate of 5.3 percent.

Bangladesh is doing relatively better than the Pacific countries, said Rezaul Karim Khan at the report launching. But it needs to grow faster, approximately by 7 to 8 percent to mitigate the intense poverty, he maintained, adding it is possible provided reforms are undertaken and governance problems are addressed properly.

Inflation is likely to edge up to 7 percent in FY2005, mainly due to higher domestic food prices and increases in fuel prices, the Ado said. However it expects the inflation to tone down to 5 percent by 2007.

With a setback in rice production, food prices are unlikely to decline significantly during the rest of the year, said Khan. According to him, maintaining macroeconomic stability and augmenting domestic revenue would be two crucial factors in the days to come.

He said industrial growth is expected to be a robust 7.8 percent, while exports are projected to show a strong growth of 15 percent in FY2005.

The services sector is likely to mark a strong 6 percent growth in this fiscal, helped by improvements in transport and trade services, increases in public administration recruitment and higher profitability of private banks.

Due to the flood-induced setback in the Aman harvest, the agricultural growth is reckoned to slip this year to 0.4 percent. The fiscal deficit is likely to increase to 4.7 percent of the GDP this fiscal year, reflecting a trend of increasing expenditures against a weak revenue performance, Khan explained.

On the larger picture of Asia, the Ado said despite high oil prices and the devastating tsunami, the Asian developing countries will experience robust growth in FY2005 and continue with a healthy expansion in FY2006 and FY2007.

The Ado 2005, the 17th annual economic flagship publication of the ADB, was launched yesterday simultaneously in other countries including Hong Kong and China.

The ADB projects the region will achieve an overall economic expansion of 6.5 percent to 6.9 percent in 2005-2007 on the back of buoyant domestic demand and further strengthening of intra-regional trade.

But the Ado also warns of a risk that global imbalances could unravel the confident baseline outlook for a developing Asia in the forecast period.

## Mourns Pope

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Senior Cabinet Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf left here yesterday to represent Bangladesh government at the funeral of the Pope.

The funeral of the late pontiff will be held in Vatican City tomorrow.

## Quaiyyum

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Quaiyyum of the Special Branch (SB) replaced Ashraf Huda, whose third contract expired yesterday.

Quaiyyum is the 23rd IGP.

He joined the police service in 1973 and served in different important positions, including the commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP). He went into retirement on March 27 this year. Later on March 31, the government gave him service on a two-year contract.

Quaiyyum is likely to take over the office of the IGP today, a source at the Police Headquarters said.

## Reform

**FROM PAGE 16**  
improve qualities of the politicians including making the people more knowledgeable about politics.

Rajshahi Concerned Citizens' Committee (RCCC) and Transparency International Bangladesh co-organised the roundtable on "Parliament: Our hopes and Achievements" at Parjatan Motel. The slogan of the roundtable was, "We want an effective parliament and accountable government".

Former caretaker government adviser and TIB Trustee Board Member M Hafiz Uddin Khan attended the roundtable as chief guest. RCCC Convener Advocate Golam Arif Tupa chaired the function moderated by TIB Executive Director Dr Ittefakuzzaman.

TIB Research Officer Abdul Alim presented a report of Parliament Watch published in Dhaka on March 1. The TIB report said the parliament failed to ensure the government's accountability, parliamentary standing committees on different ministries could not play an effective role, severe quorum crisis wasted Tk 5 crore of Tk 22.11 crore spent on running four sessions last year, lawmakers discussed irrelevant issues, hailed party leaders and criticised opponents 1,565 times and lawmakers of the main opposition were absent from parliament on 48 out of 83 days.

Former Rajshahi University vice-chancellors (V/C) Prof Abdul Khaleque, Prof Saïdur Rahman Khan, eminent litterateur, Hasan Azizul Haque, economist Prof Sanat Kumar Shaha, political scientist Prof Zaglul Haider Chowdhury, former V/C of Open University and Islamic University Prof Kayes Uddin, Rajshahi University Teachers' Association President Nazrul Islam, Rajshahi Mohila Parishad President Abid Raihan Bui, engineers Tajul Islam and Lutfur Rahman, politician Enamul Haque, former Rajshahi City mayor Abdul Hadi, former Atomic Medical Centre director Dr Rustum Uddin Ahmed, Rajshahi Traders' Association Convenor Mosharrif Hossain Akhujee and journalists Liaquat Ali, Mustajibur Rahman and Ziaangir Alam Akash, among others, spoke.

M Hafiz Uddin Khan said no parliament since the country's birth could live up to people's hopes or had even tried to do so. "We have to ensure people's right to know about the candidates' personal and financial background before elections and the elected candidates must fulfil their promises."

"The speaker should quit his party and there should be laws to protect neutral speakers from the wrath of the rulers," he noted and asked for quality among parliamentarians.

## Govt to cut

**FROM PAGE 16**  
import level will be slashed down by Tk 908 crore to Tk 15,100 crore.

The targeted revenue at local level will be reduced by Tk 255 crore to Tk 9,255 crore and the income tax by Tk 727 crore to Tk 5,550 crore.

The revenue officials dubbed the current revenue target as ambitious. They said revenue collection initially was very slow, but in recent times it has picked up speed.

"We believe the revised target is very much achievable. In fact, we think we may exceed the target," said an NBR high official.

Revenue collection marked a 12 percent growth in July to March period in the current fiscal year, with the NBR collecting Tk 20,294 crore so far. But, the targeted growth rate was 19 percent.

In that nine months, the growth at import level was 10 percent, with the total collection standing at Tk 10,551 crore.

But, at local level the growth was an impressive 17.89 percent with a total collection of Tk 6,299 crore and at income tax level 20 percent with a total collection of Tk 3,278 crore.

The NBR officials pointed out to the IMF officials that the revenue growth has been lagging behind the target mainly due to poor collection at import level.

Sources said in the first eight month of FY2005, the total value of taxable imports was Tk 25,773 crore, marking a 25 percent surge from the previous year. But the imports of tax-free items, on the other hand, marked a massive 50 percent growth, with their value totalling at Tk 15,037 crore.

The import duty collection was also affected by the reduction of duty slabs that the government had done in line with a World Bank prescription to comply with certain World Trade Organisation rules.

## Warm reception

**FROM PAGE 1**  
with Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina, the ruling BNP high-ups and leaders of Bangladesh's business community.

The Chinese premier will lead a 102-member delegation that includes four important cabinet ministers, four state ministers, high officials and a number of business people.

Dhaka has completed all preparations to accord a warm reception to the distinguished guest, who is coming here from Islamabad as part of his maiden South Asian tour as the Chinese premier.

A 19-gun salute will be presented as soon as Jiabao appears at the doorway of his special aircraft, which will land at the VVIP terminal of Zia International Airport at 2:40pm.

Khaleda Zia will receive her Chinese counterpart as he disembarks from the aircraft, while a child will present him a bouquet.

He will then be taken to the saluting dais for a guard of honour by a smartly turned out contingent of the three services, as the band will play the national anthems of China and Bangladesh.

Airport ceremony over, the premier will drive to the Sonargaon Hotel, where he will stay during the visit.

Jiabao visits Bangladesh after attending a 26-member forum of ministers from Asian and Middle East countries in Islamabad. He will also visit India and Sri Lanka.

Meanwhile, the capital has been colourfully decorated to welcome the Chinese leader. Portraits of the two premiers have been hung on major thoroughfares, which are illuminated at night.

Khaleda visited China in 2002. Earlier, the then Chinese premier visited Dhaka the same year.

On the first day of his visit, Jiabao will first meet Khaleda at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). Political Secretary to the PM Harris Chowdhury will receive him at the PMO.

After a 20-minute telete-tete between Khaleda and Jiabao, the two premiers will join official talks at 5:00pm, likely to last an hour.

Three top BNP leaders -- Finance and Planning Minister Saifur Rahman, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan -- will then hold an exclusive meeting with the visiting premier at his hotel suite.

BNP sources said the meeting will mainly be a political one.

In the evening, the Bangladesh premier will host a banquet in honour of Jiabao at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre (BCFCC).

The visiting premier will also hold a meeting with Chinese embassy staff and representatives of the Chinese community in Dhaka.

On Friday, Jiabao will visit the National Memorial at Savar to pay homage to the Liberation War martyrs. State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Rezaul Karim will receive him there at 8:45am.

He will then visit the mazar of late president Ziaur Rahman, where BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan will receive him.

The Chinese premier will call on President Iajuddin Ahmed at the Bangabhaban at 10am.

Leader of the Opposition and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina will call on Jiabao at the Sonargaon Hotel.

Jiabao will hold a meeting with the business leaders of Bangladesh and China at the Sonargaon Hotel. He will also inaugurate a photo exhibition at the Sonargaon Hotel marking the 30th anniversary of Bangladesh-China diplomatic relations.

He is due to leave Dhaka at 1:00pm on Friday. The foreign minister will see him off.

## No contest

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Five candidates have so far submitted their nomination papers but four of them have given up before the last day for withdrawal today.

They are Abdul Muktaadir Chowdhury from Jatiya Party (Ershad), Krishak Mohammad Sadeque from Krishak Samaki Mukti Andolan and independents Syed Mamun Miah and Mokbul Hossain.

The parliamentary seat fell vacant after the assassination of Awami League lawmaker Shah AMS Kibria in a grenade attack in Habiganj on 27 January.

The by-election is scheduled for April 25.