

## Dhaka decries reported Quran desecration at US camp

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh expressed grave concern over the reported desecration of the holy Quran at the US-run Guantanamo Bay detention centre in Cuba.

"Bangladesh has noted with grave concern the report of desecration of the holy Quran at the US detention centre in Guantanamo Bay. This has hurt sentiments of Muslims all over the world, not least in Bangladesh," said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a press release yesterday.

"We consider it to be an affront to the principles of tolerance and respect to the religious faiths of people worldwide," it said.

The government hoped that the perpetrators would be brought to justice by the competent authority.

Newsweek magazine of America in its May 9 edition reported that interrogators at Guantanamo Bay placed the holy Quran in washrooms to unsettle suspects.

The Guantanamo Bay camp is crammed with Muslim prisoners from Afghanistan and Iraq as well as some other countries.



## Prof Naiyar Sultana passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof. Naiyar Sultana, former member of the Bangladesh Public Service Commission (PSC), passed away yesterday at the Central Hospital in the capital at the age of 62.

Her namaz-e-janaza will be held at Azad Mosque in Gulshan after Zohr prayers today and she will be buried at the Banani graveyard.

An eminent educationist, Prof. Sultana was born in an illustrious family in 1943.

She was appointed as the first woman principal of Dhaka College in 1996 and director general of the Secondary and Higher Education Board in 1998.

Sultana is survived by her two daughters Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury, advocate of the Bangladesh Supreme Court, and Naira Naurin Chowdhury, human resources manager of P & O Nedlloyd, Bangladesh.

## Begum Umartul Fazal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cg

Begum Umartul Fazal, a woman leader and writer, passed away at a city clinic yesterday morning at the age of 84.

Wife of renowned litterateur Prof. Abul Fazal, she left behind five sons, one daughter and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn her death. Abul Momen, resident editor of the Prothom Alo, is one of her sons.

Umartul Fazal authored three novels, four books and a poetry book.

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina and Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury visited the residence of Umartul Fazal at Kazir Dewry to pay their last respects to the woman leader.

Umartul Fazal was buried at the family graveyard of Kazi Bari at Kazir Dewry after a namaz-e-janaza at the adjoining Kazi Mosque.

Her quikhwani will be held at the residence of her sons, Prof. Abul Mansoor and poet and journalist Abul Momen, at the VIP Tower on May 18.

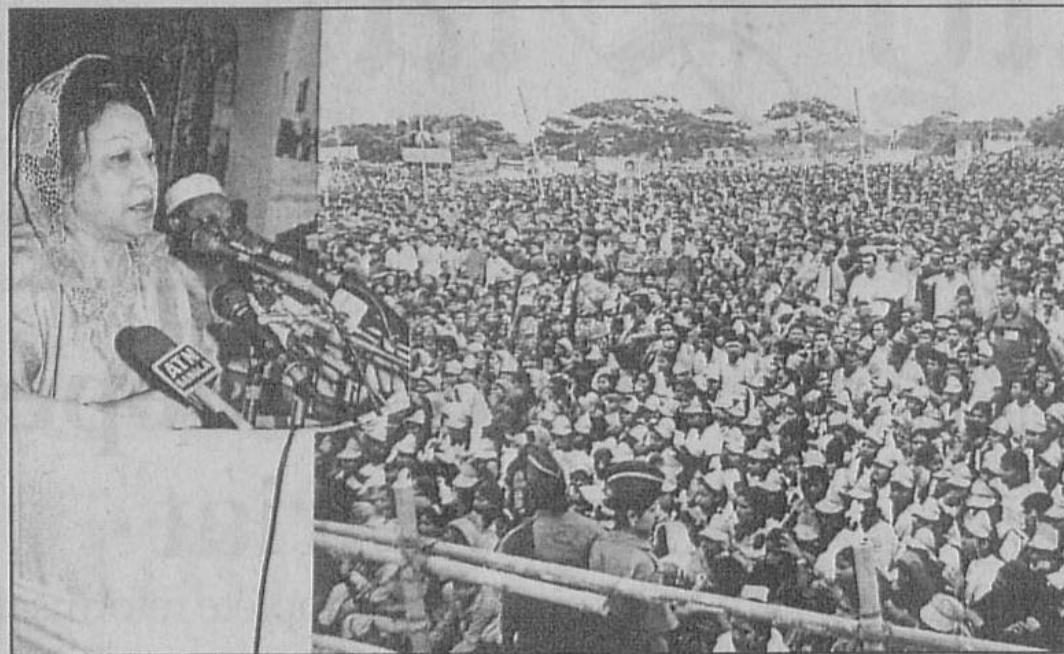
## Deadlock at DU soil dept continues

DU CORRESPONDENT

No classes were held at the soil, water and environment department of Dhaka University (DU) as the teachers' strike continued for the fifth day yesterday.

The teachers have been on an indefinite strike since May 11 to press home their demand for removal of department Chairman Prof. Md. Khurshid Alam.

Meanwhile, DU Vice-Chancellor Prof. SMA Faiz has sent Prof. Alam on forced leave to bring normalcy to the department and Prof. Syed Fazle Elahi has been given the charge temporarily, sources said. But a teacher seeking anonymity said they have not received any official order in this regard.



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia addresses a public meeting at Shibchar in Madaripur yesterday.

## BRIDGE ON ARIAL KHAN RIVER OPENS

# Construction of Padma Bridge soon: Khaleda

UNB, Madaripur

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia inaugurated Haji Shariatullah bridge on Aerial Khan river on Dhaka-Khulna highway yesterday.

The 450-metre long and 10-metre wide bridge was built at a cost of Tk 30 crore. Another Tk 57 crore was spent on the river training under the South-West Road Network Development project, jointly financed by the Asian Development Bank, OPEC and NDE.

Korean company Haynil Construction Company Ltd built the bridge under the supervision of consulting firm JOC-BCL.

After unveiling the plaque of the bridge, Khaleda Zia addressed a public meeting at Dattapara. She assured that the construction of the Padma bridge would start at the earliest.

The prime minister urged the people to contribute to the stream

of development initiated by the BNP-led four-party alliance government.

In an oblique reference to the politics of the main opposition Awami League, she asked the people not to support those who do not bother about the welfare and development of the country.

Khaleda said the government would continue to work for the development of road communications as well as expansion of power supply to rural areas to create more employment opportunities.

"We will ensure more development if we return to power through next general election," she added.

Referring to free supply of seed, fertiliser and other agricultural inputs to the farmers to cope up with the damage caused by floods last year, she said this initiative resulted in bumper Irri-boro yield this season.

Presided over by local BNP leader Rashid Mallik, the public

meeting was also addressed by Communications Minister Nazmul Huda, Social Welfare Minister Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid, PM's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury, State Minister for Communications Salauddin Ahmed, Hemayetullah Aurango MP and Zahiruddin Swapan MP.

## BNWLA corrigendum

A BDNEWS report titled 'Rocca enquires about victims of trafficking, camel jockeys' ran by The Daily Star on Saturday, May 14 said BNWLA officials including Sigma Huda and Fouzia Karim, and US Ambassador Harry K Thomas and other senior officials of the embassy visited a shelter home. But Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association said the US ambassador was not present on that occasion.

## ARREAR BILLS OF MPs, MINISTERS

## BTTB asked to inform HC within a week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday asked the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) to inform the court within a week about the total amount of arrear telephone bills to be realised from the lawmakers and ministers.

The rule came after Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services and Trust (BLAST), a human rights organisation, filed a writ petition with the HC in 2001 for realising about Tk 6 crore arrear telephone bills from the lawmakers under the 5th and 7th parliament.

The Blast filed the writ with the HC making the BTTB as its respondent.

Dr. Shahdhan Malik moved the petition on behalf of the Blast while Advocate Raisuiddin defended the respondent.

An assistant attorney general participated in the hearing on behalf of the government.

## Youth burnt to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A youth was burnt to death at Motijheel area in the city yesterday.

He was identified as Ekramul Hossain, 25, a day labourer who lived in a bamboo-built house at Gulbagh.

Police said Ekramul fell asleep while he was smoking a cigarette that caused the fire. He died before the locals could douse the flame.

## 3 houses gutted

Meanwhile, Fire gutted three semi-pucca houses in the city early yesterday.

Fire fighters said the fire originated from an electric short-circuit at about 2:15am and engulfed the houses having 35 rooms at Nakhla para.

Five fire fighting units from Tejgaon and Mohammadpur stations extinguished the blaze at 5:30am.

No casualty was reported.

# Resist anti-liberation forces

## Jalil urges freedom fighters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil has called upon the freedom fighters to unite to resist the anti-liberation forces in assuming the state power.

"Forget the past as we will fall far behind if we bother so much about our past mistakes," he said at a memorial meeting in the city yesterday.

The meeting was organised by the Central Command Council of Bangladesh Mukti Joddha Sangsad to condole the death of Lt General Jagjit Singh Aurora, commander of Bangladesh-India Joint Forces in 1971.

It is ludicrous to find the freedom fighters hankering after power and position bringing in manifold divisions among them, said former chairman of Bangladesh Mukti Joddha Sangsad Abdul Matin Chowdhury.

Walitur Rahman, former ambassador, said there should be a mausoleum for more than twelve thousand

Indian soldiers who laid down their lives for the liberation of Bangladesh.

President of Dhaka University Teachers' Association AAMS Arefin Siddique said Gen. Aurora was a true friend of Bangladesh.

India has to widen its areas of cooperation with Bangladesh to further strengthen the bilateral ties, said Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haq Inu.

Gono Forum leader Pankaj Bhattacharya quoted Aurora as saying that Bangladesh's liberation would not have been possible without the freedom fighters who played a crucial role in the war.

Chaired by Central Command Council Chairman Abdul Ahad Chowdhury, the meeting was also addressed by Chairman of Mukti Joddha Samannoy Parishad Abeer Ahad, Advocate MA Bari, 11-Party alliance coordinator Bimal Biswas, Golam Kuddus of Sammilito Sangskritik Jote and Indian Deputy High Commissioner to Bangladesh Sarbajit Chakrabarty.

## Law to be enforced to check launch accidents

Minister tells JS

UNB, Dhaka

Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain said in Parliament yesterday that the Local Classification Act would be enforced from July to help check the incidents of launch capsizes and other incidents in the waterways.

Replying to a supplementary question from Fazle Rabbi of Jatiya Party, he blamed the faulty design of motor launches as one of the reasons that leads to frequent launch disasters.

"Many launches are built in villages where carpenters don't bother to follow the rules," said the minister who faced bitter criticism for tragic launch disasters every year, leaving hundreds of people dead.

He said: "We are trying our best to reduce the number of launch mishaps."

Replying to a question from Prof. Shahidul Islam (BNP), Akbar said the water route from Ashulia to Sadarghat could not attract passengers not because of navigability, but for lack of public interest.



Firefighters struggle to put out a burning microbus at Agargaon in the city yesterday. A mob set fire to the vehicle after it ran over a schoolboy in the area.

# Cable TV network guidelines soon

BSS, Dhaka

Information Minister M. Shamsul Islam yesterday said the government will formulate cable television network guidelines soon keeping consistency with history, heritage, culture and values of the country.

"The guidelines will be presented at the cabinet meeting soon," he told the waiting journalists after the 7th cabinet committee meeting on formulation of the cable television network guidelines at the ministry.

President of the committee M. Shamsul Islam presided.

The meeting elaborately discussed the draft guidelines for the cable television network. Besides, it also discussed various aspects relating to operations of cable televisions with representatives from cable distributor companies.

Shamsul Islam said, "There are many channels both local and of foreign origin, including pay channels

through the cable network."

He said many programmes and commercials made by operators, which somehow go against the country's culture, heritage and values, have been airing.

The tendency of airing anti-people programmes is on the rise as there is no monitoring system.

He said, in these circumstances, the government has taken initiatives to formulate the cable television network guidelines.

Committee members Science and ICT Minister Dr. Abdul Moyeen Khan, Post and Telecommunications Minister Barrister Aminul Haque, Education Minister Dr. M. Osman Faruk, Foreign Minister M. Morshed Khan, State Minister for Home Lutfuzzaman Babar and State Minister for Cultural Affairs Begum Selima Rahman were present.

Eminent businessman Abul Khair was present at the meeting on behalf of the cable distributor companies.

## PRICE HIKE OF ESSENTIALS 8 left parties' protest on May 29

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eight left-leaning parties will stage demonstration in front of the secretariat on May 29 demanding steps to check price hike of essentials and ensure utility services in the city.

They will also hold rallies and bring out processions in all districts on June 8 in support of their demands.

The parties include Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal (BSD), a faction Workers Party of Bangladesh, Bangladesher Samyabadi Dal (MLM), Samrajibi Mukti Andolon and Gonatantrik Samik Party.

BSD convenor Kahalequzzaman at a press conference yesterday said the rampant corruption by the ruling party men has made the commoners' life miserable.

Common people are suffering due to repeated rise in electricity, gas, petrol and diesel prices.

"Though the prices of essentials have gone beyond the purchasing capacity of the common people, but the government is indifferent to the matter and taking no steps to check the price spiral," Kahalequzzaman said.

He blamed the government for closing mills and factories, leaving thousands of workers unemployed.

"The per capita income of 20 per cent people has gone up in last few years, but the overall income of the rest of the people has dropped by five percent," he added.

"Hundreds of crores of money are being plundered by the corrupt government officials and the ruling party men in different sectors. So why should the common people pay extra money to the service sector?" he questioned.

He criticised the 'crossfire' by Rapid Action Battalion and police, saying such a practice would bring disaster to the country.

The BSD convenor also criticised the government move for giving blanket immunity to the World Bank.

"Immunity to the World Bank will go against the national interest and human rights," he said.

Saiful Haque, general secretary of a faction of Workers Party, politburo member Pares Chandra Saha and BSD leader Abdullah Sarker were present at the press conference.



Citizens' Rights Movement forms a human chain in front of the National Museum at Shahbagh in the city yesterday demanding that cellphone call charge be slashed to 50 paisa per minute.



## No change in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty to squally wind is likely at a few places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and one or two places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions till 6:00pm today.

Mild hit wave may continue over Khulna division and the regions of Ishwardi, Met office said predicting nearly unchanged day temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 39.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chuadanga and lowest 18.7 degree Celsius at Sylhet.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:34pm today and rises at 5:15am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	31.5	24.2	85	76
Chittagong	34.5	27.0	71	78
Rajshahi	35.8	26.0	76	77
Khulna	37.2	28.2	84	73
Barisal	35.0	27.6	76	72
Sylhet	27.3	18.7	94	91
Cox's Bazar	34.5	28.0	70	76

# Govt staffs protest move to cancel time scale

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The non-gazetted government employees yesterday blasted the government's move to cancel the time scale and selection grade from the new pay scale.

The employees are enjoying the facilities of time scale and selection grade following a long movement and they will not accept a pay scale without such facilities, said Md. Shahabuddin, secretary general of Bangladesh Sarkari Karmachari Sanghati Parishad, at a press conference.

The association leaders also demanded four time scales and 100 percent selection grade in all departments.

The non-gazetted employees, who have no scope to be promoted, get financial benefits of higher ranks at fixed intervals through time scales and selection grades.

Criticising the government's policy to declare pay scale every seven to eight years, Shahabuddin said the living costs increase many times by that time, which brings sufferings to the government employees.

"We request the government to form a permanent pay commission and raise the salaries and allowances annually after reviewing the inflation rate and market price," he said.

President of Bangladesh Third Class Government Employees' Association Md. Harun-ur-Rashid, President of Sanghati Parishad Abul Hashem Mia, President of Bangladesh Audit Parishad Lokman Ali, President of Roads & Highway Employees' Union Mahfuzur Rahman, and President of BG Press Karmachari Union Abdul Aziz were present at the press conference held at the National Press Club.

## Body of slain

FROM PAGE 1

in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is scheduled to arrive at Zia International Airport tomorrow morning.

Bangladesh Army Chief of Staff Lt General Hasan Mashud Chowdhury is expected to receive the body.

Nur was among the six UN peacekeepers from Bangladesh injured Thursday evening when a band of Lendu FRPI militia waylaid their convoy at Geti, some 50km off Bunia, the principal town of the rebel-infested Ituri region.

A contingent of 40 Bangladeshi blue-helmets was travelling in the convoy of two armoured cars and four jeeps. Of them, three suffered bullet injuries and another three were wounded when their jeep turned turtle and fell into a roadside ditch.

Nur was shot in the stomach and died seven hours later at a Bunia hospital. The UN peacekeeping force known by its French acronym Monuc paid formal military farewell to him Friday evening.

He will be buried at his village Tattarkanda in Raipura upazila of Narsingdi with full military honour.

His father Abdul Gafur is a retired soldier. Besides his mother Rokeya Begum and wife Parashmoni, Nur left behind a brother and three sisters.

The lone breadwinner of the family, Nur went to DR Congo on August 12 last year and was due to return on August 11.

# BCL may dissolve DU unit

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing of the main opposition Awami League (AL), is likely to dissolve its Dhaka University (DU) unit committee within a couple of days following an intra-party feud on Saturday.

The feud on the DU campus left at least seven leaders and activists, including DU unit general secretary injured, which prompted the BCL high-ups to suspend the activities of the unit.

BCL is likely to expel at least 10 of its university unit leaders and activists, including president Delwar Hossain, for their involvement in anti-organisational activities, sources said.

Meanwhile, the BCL factions also clashed yesterday at the Jagannath Hall. A group of activists led by hall

unit General Secretary Ripon Podder loyal to DU unit General Secretary Hemayet Uddin Khan Himu beat up Shyamol, a hall unit activist loyal to Delwar.

Panic gripped the hall students when the two factions chased each other which continued till 2:30am from 10:30pm.

Pro-Himu activists ousted their rival leaders from a room at the hall. They also put the main gate of the East Side of the October Memorial Building of the hall under lock and key.

Meanwhile, Delwar and Himu along with their activists yesterday roamed on the campus separately creating panic among the students.

Talking to The Daily Star BCL General Secretary Nazrul Islam Babu said they have started the investigation and will submit a report to the Awami League high command by May 19 in this regard.

### DHAKA TODAY

**Discussion**  
Sammito Samajik Andolon will hold a discussion on 'Democracy, human rights: Bangladesh perspective 2005'. Venue: Liberation War Museum Auditorium, Segun Bagicha. Time: 3:30pm.

**Condolence meeting**  
Bangladesh-Bharat Maitree Samity organises a condolence meeting at the death of Lt General Jagjit Singh Aurora, commander of Bangladesh-India Joint Forces in 1971. Venue: Shaheed Tajul Auditorium, 21/2 Purana Pallan. Time: 4:00pm.

**Discussion on rivers**  
The Directorate of Public Library organises a discussion on the Rivers of Bangladesh. Venue: Seminar room of the Central Public Library, Shahbagh. Time: 4:00pm.

**Farakka discussion**  
Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Mukti Andolon will hold a discussion to mark the historic Farakka Long March Day. Venue: 26, Chamei Bagh, Shaninagar. Time: 4:00pm.

**Inauguration**  
The Web Site of the water resources ministry will be held with Minister Hafiz Uddin Ahmed as chief guest. Venue: Conference room of the ministry, Bangladesh Secretariat. Time: 11:00am.

**Investment seminar**  
Uttara University organises a seminar on 'Investment potentials in energy and textile sectors in Bangladesh'. Venue: House-24/A, Road-13/A, Sector-6, Uttara. Time: 3:00pm.

**Film show**  
Academy Film Society will screen two films titled 'Raincoat' and 'Demonlover'. Venue: Academy Auditorium, 21/C Jigatola. Time: 6:30pm and 8:30pm.

### DHAKA TOMORROW

**Launching ceremony**  
Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association organises the launching ceremony of a published research and video drama on the issue of Wife Abuse in Bangladesh with Law Minister Moudud Ahmed as chief guest. Venue: VIP Lounge of the National Press Club. Time: 11:00am.

**Film show**  
Academy Film Society will screen an American thriller titled 'The Rich Man's Wife'. Venue: Academy Auditorium, 21/C Jigatola. Time: 6:30pm.