

### AL to dissolve Dhaka city unit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) policymakers have decided in principle to dissolve the existing Dhaka city unit committee of the party and bring in new faces by dropping both Mohammad Hanif and Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, president and general secretary respectively of the unit.

"We have no other alternative but to keep both Hanif and Maya out of the city unit as their conflict is so naked that it is damaging party activities," a top leader of the AL said yesterday.

Asked about the fate of Hanif and Maya, he said, "They will not get any promotion in the party. It will be a bad precedence if they are given superior posts in the party central committee despite engaging in such personal conflicts."

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# Tata wants 2 TCF gas for 30 years

JASIM UDDIN KHAN

Tata Group, leading Indian industrial house, on the second day of the first-round negotiations with Petrobangla yesterday said it requires 2 trillion cubic feet (TCF) gas over 30 years for its proposed projects in Bangladesh.

"They want to be assured of uninterrupted gas supply, standard pressure and availability of quality coal before going into the final round of negotiations," said a meeting source.

The Tata representatives also discussed with the Petrobangla officials infrastructure facilities including necessary gas pipeline development for the proposed

US\$2.5 billion industrial units in the country.

"The Tata team has placed their requirements during the talks. The negotiations are still open and we are now calculating the supply and demand position," SR Osmani, chairman of Petrobangla, told reporters after the meeting.

They wanted to know about the country's reserve and supply position of coal and gas for the projects, the chairman added.

Tata Steel Bangladesh Project Chief Indronil Sengupta said wholesale calculations regarding demand and supply of coal and gas and other infrastructural facilities are going in both the sides.

"During the talks, we placed our demands while the Bangladesh government informed us of their capacity to supply coal and gas to the Tata projects," Sengupta said.

Led by Manzer Hussain, Tata Bangladesh chapter's head, Sanjay Gattani, Sreekanth, Suresh Nagarajan, Markand Desai, Alan Rosling, Sukran Singh, and Bharat Vasani were among the Tata officials who participated in the meeting.

The team will sit down again with the Bangladesh government's negotiation committee headed by Finance Secretary Zakir Ahmed Khan on Saturday morning.

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### Morshed says US has image problem in Bangladesh

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan has acknowledged that the United States has an image problem in Bangladesh in the wake of the Iraq war.

"We need to work on this issue, but the United States is still considered a good friend of Bangladesh," he told the Washington Times in an interview.

The interview with editors and reporters of the Washington Times was published on Wednesday.

On Islamist violence, Morshed said with more than 140 million people, Bangladesh is the world's third largest Muslim majority nation after Indonesia and Pakistan. "Yet it has seen little of the homegrown Islamist violence that has plagued other states in the Muslim world," he pointed out.

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BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia presides over a meeting of the party's election board at her office yesterday for interviewing party candidates for Narsingdi-1 by-election.

### Assam CM now says 'illegal Bangladeshis' no threat

UNB, Dhaka

Within weeks of informing the Indian Supreme Court that "large-scale illegal immigration from Bangladesh" was a problem, Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi changed his position and said he did not consider the influx "threatening", according to Outlook India magazine.

Claiming that infiltration was on the decline over the last three years, Gogoi also said in a television interview that Assam Governor Lt Gen (ret'd) Ajai Singh should provide

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## Waters keep rushing in from Manu river

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The flood situation in Moulvibazar district worsened further yesterday with inundation of fresh areas by gushing waters coming through some new breaches of the Manu flood protection embankment.

Meanwhile, flood related incidents claimed at least eight lives in different upazilas of the district in the last two days.

Of them, three people drowned in floodwaters, three died from snakebite and the remaining two in lightning.

The flash flood triggered by heavy rain and onrush of waters

from across the border inundated the villages in seven upazilas, marooning over two lakh people.

The worst affected upazilas are Kamalganj, Rajnagar and Kulaura.

A number of cracks have developed in the Dhalai embankment at Kamalganj and gushing waters are entering inside the embankment through breaches.

Locals alleged that the faulty construction had resulted in the breaches in the embankment.

An acute crisis of pure drinking water is prevailing in the flood-affected areas. Waterborne diseases, including diarrhoea and

dysentery, are also spreading fast.

According to Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC), the rivers Surma, Kushiyara and Dhalai, Manu and Khowai are still flowing flowing above the danger level.

The Manu was flowing 12cm above the danger level at Moulvibazar and Khowai 52cm at Ballah.

All other rivers in Meghna basin were below the red mark although registered further rise yesterday. The rivers in the South-eastern basin were flowing below the danger level.

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### Crackdown on Khulna thugs next month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) will begin in the middle of the next month a crackdown on criminals in accordance with a new list now in preparation, said a KMP source.

The list, which is being prepared on the basis of reports by intelligence agencies, will include among others drug barons, tender manipulators, and godfathers of criminals. Intelligence agencies have started working on the ground to gather information in this regard, added the source.

Intelligence reports have it that extremists, who had gone into hiding in the face of Rapid Action

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## Inefficient judiciary holds back good governance

Says Moudud, stresses permanent posts of govt attorneys as remedy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed yesterday said inefficiency of the judiciary is a major obstacle to establishing good governance in the country.

Judiciary, the key institution that keeps balance among the various wings of a state, unfortunately is not that much efficient yet, he told the inaugural session of the second day of a consultative meeting on introduction of a proposed government attorney service.

The law ministry in association with Canadian International Development Agency (Cida) organised the convention at the old High Court auditorium in the city.

Speaking as the chief guest of the session, the law minister said

two strong reasons are behind the inadequacy of the judicial system. One is the temporary nature of appointment of government lawyers and the other is the weak investigation system of the police.

"Government lawyers at the district level are routinely changed in line with the changes of government, a practice that also offers them a wide scope for corruption and politicisation," Moudud observed, adding the short-term tenure also prevents acquiring skills, efficiency and experience.

There also is no system for making the government lawyers accountable.

To rectify the malady, he said, appointment of government attorneys should be made permanent and their remuneration including allowances and other facilities

should be good enough for a comfortable living. Otherwise, they would be forced to carry on private practices, which would hamper the prosecution and conviction process, he argued.

"To stay neutral, government prosecutors must not have any link with the administration or political parties. But, in many cases, the prevailing reality is exactly the opposite," he added.

Moudud said, compared to the above 90 percent rate of conviction in many countries, in Bangladesh it is below 15 percent. "We want to raise it to at least 85 percent through introducing the government attorney service."

He lamented the fact that no legal expert was found who could take part in water sharing and World

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### Satkhira rally vows to resist bigots

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Speakers at a rally here yesterday called upon all pro-liberation forces to unitedly resist anti-Ahmadiyya bigots in the country.

They also pledged all support to Ahmadiyyas to undo the zealots' activities against them.

The rally was organised by Samprodaik Sampriti Rakkha Committee (communal harmony protection committee) at Abdur Razzak Park in the district town.

Repeated attacks on members of the Ahmadiyya community in different areas of the country are also a severe blow to pro-liberation forces, justice KM Sobhan said.

Islamic bigots have now become very active as they are sheltered by the present government, Sobhan

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The family members of slain former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria take part in a human chain at Dhanmondi in the capital yesterday, demanding immediate arrest and trial of the killers.

KIBRIA KILLING

### Peaceful protest to continue, says Reza Kibria

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Reza Kibria, son of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria, yesterday said the "Blue for Peace" campaign to protest the killing of his father in the January 27 grenade attack will continue until the real killers are arrested and brought to justice.

"We want to make an impact on the people's senses through our peaceful protest and thereby we want to put an end to all such killings in the country," he said.

Reza Kibria was addressing a protest programme arranged as part of the "Blue for Peace" movement initiated by Asma Kibria, widow of slain Kibria, in front of the former minister's Dhanmondi house in the capital.

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### 'Crossfire' kills outlaw leader in Chuadanga

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A regional leader of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) was killed in "crossfire" during a gunfight between Cobra unit of the police and the PBCP cadres at village Sailgari in Chuadanga Sadar upazila early yesterday.

The gunfight ensued when a team of anticrime force Cobra raided Sailgari area where the PBCP leader Foroj Ali and his men were holding a secret meeting. Foroj Ali died on the spot during the hour-long shootout while his accomplices managed to escape.

Five members of Cobra, including Sub-Inspector (SI) Zaman Ali and four constables, were injured in the incident, Cobra sources said. The anticrime force seized a shutter-gun and 20 bullets from the spot after the gunfight.

Police said Foroj Ali was a regional leader of the PBCP and a listed criminal, accused in 20 cases including eight for murder charges.

Prayer Timing		
May 27		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-43	6-47
Esha	8-05	8-35

Source: Islamic Foundation

### CRACKDOWN BACKFIRES

## Malaysia eases rules for foreign workers

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Under pressure from an acute labour shortage caused by the expulsion of hundred of thousands of illegal workers, Malaysia has eased its rules for employing foreigners, saying they can seek jobs after entering the country on tourist visas.

The major turnaround was welcomed Thursday by employers who have lost hundreds of millions of dollars since a crackdown saw

400,000 illegal migrants, mainly from Indonesia, sent home during a four month amnesty which ended in March.

Malaysian Employers Federation executive director Shamsuddin Bardan said the move was "very much appreciated" as small and medium enterprises were facing a shortage of 100,000 workers.

Overall, the departure of illegals

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## US ENVOY ON MILLENNIUM FUNDS Dhaka has to take steps to qualify

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has to take certain measures to qualify for development assistance from the United States' Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), a special aid programme for developing countries, US Ambassador in Dhaka Harry K Thomas said yesterday.

"Bangladesh has to take steps to address certain recommendations

that we have made," Thomas said responding to reporters' queries after inaugurating an internet learning centre (ILC) at Rani Bilashmoni Government Boys' High School in Gazipur.

"We are having discussions at private level with the Bangladesh government as to what does it require to qualify for the MCA funding assistance," he added.

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