

**Morshed off to Sana to attend OIC FMs' meet**

**REZAUL KARIM**

The 32nd session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) begins today in the Yemeni capital of Sana to discuss the situation in the Islamic world and various challenges of the new era in the context of the global scenario.

Foreign Minister M. Morshed Khan along with a delegation including Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin left for Sana yesterday to attend the three-day ICFM.

Morshed will deliver a speech at the plenary session and hold bilateral talks with his counterparts.

The conference will address a wide range of issues including reforms in the United Nations, expansion of the UN Security Council and representation of the Islamic world in it.

OIC Secretary General

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**MONEY WHITENING**

**Saifur says it is needed to check price spiral**

**MCCI strongly condemns provision**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday came up with a new explanation to defend his stance on the opportunity for whitening black money. He said discontinuation of the provision would have negative impact on the prices of essentials.

The minister, who is facing widespread criticism even by his party lawmakers on the much-debated issue, also said the opportunity will reduce the bank interest rate.

"That [black] money goes to

Khatunganj, Sadarghat, Karwanbazar...and affects the price level," he said, hinting at the black money holders' manipulation of commodity prices in the wholesale markets.

He made the comment after Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) President Kutubuddin Ahmed strongly criticised the black money whitening provision at a post-budget meeting with the minister.

"Whitening black money is not only unethical and discriminatory

against honest taxpayers, it also encourages amassing more black money. The provision for concessionary tax rate should be dropped," he said.

But Saifur said the government has introduced floating exchange rate and is going to toughen the anti-money laundering law that will make it difficult to keep black money in banks. If the opportunity was not given, the black money would be invested in various sectors, which would destabilise the

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**Thousands join show of no-trust in govt**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Thousands of people yesterday demonstrated their no-confidence in the coalition government by forming "human walls" in Dhaka and elsewhere in the country, demanding that the government implement a 13-point proposal for revision of the proposed budget for FY 2005-2006.

Organised by main opposition Awami League (AL) and its ally Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), the demonstrators carried banners and placards inscribed with anti-government slogans and stood hand in hand from Gabtoli to Demra.

They also asked the government

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PHOTO: STAR

The Awami League top brass line up in a human wall to show no-trust in the four-party alliance government at Muktagong in the capital yesterday.

**PM asks cops to get tough with crimes**

**UNB, Dhaka**

Opening six new police stations in the capital yesterday, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia asked the cops to go tough with terrorists, extortionists, criminals and anti-social elements to ensure a secure civic life.

"Remember, the terrorists, extortionists, criminals and anti-social elements are the enemy of people and society. None of them will be spared," she told the rank and file of the police.

Announcing a fresh government plan to redouble the police strength to deal with the situation in the city, the prime minister asked the law enforcers to act carefully so that the

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**Mahmud pulls for risky open mining**

**Tata may get Barapukuria job if safe shaft method abandoned**

**SHARIER KHAN**

Energy ministry adviser Mahmudur Rahman yesterday told Petrobangla if 'open pit mining' of Barapukuria coal mine is found less costly than the 'shaft mining' at present, Indian giant Tata may be given charge of the country's biggest coal mine.

Discussing mining issues at a meeting with energy ministry and Petrobangla high officials yesterday,

Mahmud asked Petrobangla to hire an international consultant to see if open mining is more profitable, meeting sources said.

Barapukuria mine is now under a 71-month contract for operation and development with Chinese company CMC. As the coal reserve is located very deep (more than 300 feet under the surface), the mine uses vertical shafts, leaving the surface intact and environment unaffected.

Open mining takes place where coal is located very near the surface, but it is not environment friendly.

"Such mining affects arable land and wastes vast space. Besides, open mining contaminates groundwater and causes massive air pollution. It saves a maximum of 20 percent of the cost of shaft mining. Except for some developing countries

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**Ombudsman on tax likely by Dec**

**Cabinet okays proposal**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The cabinet yesterday approved the finance ministry proposal for the appointment of a tax ombudsman who will deal with the taxpayers' complaints in the payment of tax.

"We hope the bill on the tax ombudsman will be passed in the ongoing budget session and by December we will get a tax ombudsman," National Board of Revenue (NBR) Chairman Khairuzzaman Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday.

According to the draft bill, the

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**Armed Bangla Bhai men raid houses, demand tolls**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi**

Armed cadres of notorious Bangla Bhai's Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) yesterday marched the roads and raided some houses in the villages of Bagmara upazila of the district creating fresh panic among the locals.

Several JMJB groups led by some leaders recently released from the Rajshahi Central Jail were seen marching the roads of Shikdari, Hamirkutsa, Jhikra, Goalkandi and Jugipara areas.

They were carrying firearms and demanded toll from a number of houses.

Led by Mustaque, a group of JMJB cadres raided some six houses in Ramrama village and looked for the house-owners showing arms, sources said. In a few houses, they even identified themselves as sources employed by the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and demanded toll from them.

They told the locals that "no one in the government dares to arrest Bangla Bhai and his followers, what

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**INTERCONNECTIVITY**

**Pvt operators refusing deal with Teletalk**

**Cellphone firms owe govt Tk 58cr, JS body told**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Private cellphone operators are unwilling to enter into interconnectivity agreement with the state-owned Teletalk mobile company, while the private operators owe the government about TK 58 crore in outstanding revenue, says a report of the telecoms ministry.

The report, placed before a meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on the Ministry of

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PHOTO: STAR

A market on Basila Road in Mohammadpur demolished by Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha as part of a drive against illegal structures yesterday.

**2 boys drown in Dhanmondi Lake**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Two class ten students of Dhanmondi Boys' High School drowned in Dhanmondi Lake in the capital yesterday afternoon.

Jubaer-ul-Karim Sourav, 16, son of Jahangir Kabir Farukh of Sobhanbagh, and Jabir Alam, 16, son of Mohammad Jahangir Alam of Sukrabad went to a coaching centre in Kalabagan and on their way back home, went to the Dhanmondi Lake

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**2 injured in train-bus collision die**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Two more persons injured in Sunday's train-bus-taxicab collision at Badda in the capital died at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) yesterday, raising the death toll to five.

The dead are Tara Miah, 32, yellow-cab driver and resident of Tongi Mill Gate, and Tajul Islam, 55, a senior officer of the Bangladesh Shilpa Bank.

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**Top criminal Joseph gets 19 years**

**COURT CORRESPONDENT**

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced top listed criminal Tofael Ahmed alias Joseph and two others to 19 years' rigorous imprisonment (Ri) for possessing illegal firearms and ammunition.

Judge Abul Kashem of the Special Tribunal-11 handed down the verdict in presence of convict Joseph while his accomplices Islam alias Munna and Shariful Islam alias

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**Differences in left cloud AL bid for common reform agenda**

**REAZ AHMAD**

Sharp differences of opinion within the left-leaning 11-party alliance have created uncertainty over the Awami League (AL) and its allies' move to put forward a common agenda for reforms in the electoral and caretaker government systems

ahead of next general elections. Fourteen opposition parties -- the AL, JSD (Inu), NAP (Mozaffar) and 11-party alliance-- have long been trying to formulate common reform proposals. But the left alliance now faces a rift within it over the vital issue.

The 11-party conglomerate at a

meeting on Saturday failed to agree on a common agenda. Against this backdrop, leaders of the main opposition party AL, 11-party, JSD (Inu) and NAP (Mozaffar) met at AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil's Gulshan residence in the capital on Sunday night. But the

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Prayer Timing		
June 28		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-54	6-57
Esha	8-17	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation