

## Faridpur-1 by-polls

FROM PAGE 16  
Abu Zafar, said local sources.

Candidature of the IOJ leader has exposed a rift within the ruling four-party alliance when IOJ lawmaker Mufti Shahidul Islam participated in electioneering for Sharafat Hossain.

On Saturday, ruling BNP activists attacked an election rally of Mufti Sharafat Hossain and occupied the podium at Madhukhali.

The other candidate in the run is Krishok Mohammad Sadek, standing for his 43rd election, with a record of security deposit forfeiture in all previous elections.

The Faridpur-1 constituency comprising Madhukhali, Boalmari and Alfadanga upazilas fell vacant after Kazi Sirajul Islam, who was elected member of parliament on Awami League ticket, joined BNP on June 4 by crossing the floor.

Ruling BNP at first nominated him as alliance candidate, but the party high-ups were forced to change the decision as local BNP leader Shah Abu Zafar had declared to contest the poll as an independent candidate.

The by-poll lost its attraction after the change in nomination. Meanwhile, the Election Commission (EC) has wrapped up its preparations for the election. The voting will start at 8:00am

and will continue till 4:00pm without any break. A public holiday has been announced in the constituency to enable the voters to exercise their right to vote.

Members of the army and other law enforcement agencies will be deployed in the area, starting from today. Mobile and striking teams drawn from Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Armed Police Battalion (APBn) will constantly patrol the polling areas and be placed in important places.

Mobile and summary courts in the polling centres will instantly try the false voters during the polling. A magistrate will accompany each of law enforcers' teams.

Vehicular movement in the polling areas will be restricted during the polling hours to ensure peaceful elections. A ban has been imposed on movements of motorised vehicles, launch, and mechanised boats, taking effect from midnight today to go on till midnight the following day.

Faridpur-1 constituency has 3,22,298 voters and 146 polling centres. A total of 1,994 officers--146 presiding officers, 616 assistant presiding officers, and 1,232 polling officers--are tasked with conducting the polls, the EC sources said.

## Pickpocket's

FROM PAGE 1  
walking and the pickpocket followed him diligently. The man stopped beside a wall and put down his bag. He stood there for some time and then strolled away about 100 yards in the crowd. The pickpocket's heart started beating fast, but he was confused. He now had an easy booty, but he could still see the bearded man standing over there.

Should he make the move and take away the bag? Is the bearded man a plainclothes man setting a trap to catch pickpockets?

From the corner of his eyes, he saw the bearded man watching the other way. Now is the time, and he advanced quickly to pick the bag up. And boom. He almost fell to the ground as the bag went off with a big bang.

There was confusion and panic all around. The pickpocket knew the bag contained a bomb. This time he was more curious to know who this bearded man was. He sprang up on his feet and looked around. The bearded man was fast vanishing into the crowd. The pickpocket followed him immediately.

For two kilometers, he did not let the bearded man be out of his sight. He was now at Bakal Islampur area of the town. The bearded man entered a house there.

Satisfied, the pickpocket went straight to the police station and told his story. Police immediately rushed to the Islampur residence and caught the bearded man.

Within an hour of the serial bombings, police had a bomber in their net. Later, the bearded man, Nasiruddin Dafadar, was the first to admit that Jama'atul Mujahideen was behind the attacks.

The pickpocket still roams the court premises, hunting for prey.

## 2nd blowout

FROM PAGE 1  
29, submitted its report yesterday to Mahmudur Rahman, advisor to the energy ministry, at his office.

The first blowout that took place on January 7 this year had burned out about 1 bcf gas worth around Tk 13 crore.

The committee observed that the gas of the sun-surface level of the main reservoir was not damaged and the field has a recoverable reserve of 447 bcf gas. Of the total, 268 bcf is a risky reserve while the rest is safe for production, the committee said.

"The blowout mainly hit the gas at flare and surface levels burning it out," says the probe report. The total damages together in the first and second blowouts will be around 3 bcf.

Dr Tamim said his committee made the loss-assessment on the basis of scientific data and pragmatic method. He assured that the government will win if it claims compensation from Niko.

He, however, said the damages were estimated keeping it in mind that the drilling for a relief well will be completed by October 15 and the gas leakage will be sealed by this time. But if the relief well is not ready within the stipulated timeframe, the amount of damages will increase, he added.

Earlier, another enquiry committee, headed by Dr Anwarul Azim, had held the Canadian operator, Niko, solely responsible for the second explosion.

Mahmudur Rahman said if the loss is calculated in a conservative manner, pricing per mcf (1000 cubic feet) gas at US\$ 2.00, the loss in the second blowout will be Tk 20 crore.

But the ministry has to wait for getting the report of another enquiry committee, assigned to assess the environmental costs of the blowout, which will submit its report by October 30.

Rahman said they will move for compensation claim by October 15.

## Media gag

FROM PAGE 1  
orders from BNP leaders yesterday. A number of young BNP lawmakers and leaders accompanied the women aspirants to parliament at the EC and asked them not to talk to the press.

"Don't talk with journalists further... you have already damaged the party's image by talking to the media over the matter," an angry BNP leader shouted at the candidates at the EC conference room.

"Do you want to be an MP or grab a car.... why did you speak on the matter to the media?" the young leader asked the party nominees.

"You have broken the chain of command in the party... you shouldn't do that... only Selima Apa (Selima Rahman) will brief the media over any issue," the leader said.

Responding to the young leader, State Minister for Cultural Affairs Selima Rahman, who is also a candidate, said, "I repeatedly asked them not to talk to the media... but they defied it."

She also directly pointed an accusing finger at Helen Jerin Khan, Sultana Ahmed and some others in this connection.

The accused leaders, however, blamed the press for raising provocative questions to extract words on such a contentious issue from them.

Meanwhile, the returning officer after scrutinising yesterday declared valid all the 36 nomination papers filed by the candidates of three components of the ruling alliance and Jatiya Party.

## Dr Kamal for unity

FROM PAGE 16  
Kibria joined politics to fight against wrongdoing and for a positive change in line with the spirit of the Liberation War, he added.

"We, the Bangalee nation, got a great opportunity after the Liberation War to the change fate of the country's common people. But the evil and defeated forces thwarted the chance through conspiracy and taking the path of criminality," he said.

Poet Shamsur Rahman, who presided over the programme, said, "Our movement will not stop until the killers of Kibria are brought to book."

National Professor Kabir Chowdhury said, "Ouster of present BNP-Jamaat-led coalition is a prerequisite to root out violence from the country."

"We can't hope that violence and criminal activities will be eliminated keeping the present government in power as they are protectors of criminals," he said.

He urged progressive and pro-liberation democratic political parties to form a greater alliance and formulate national agenda on minimum programmes.

"The parties that already formed a platform under the banner of 14-party have to commit before the nation on what they will do if they come to power," Kabir Chowdhury said.

"These parties will have to pledge that they will establish a secular society in the country," he said.

Former Dhaka University vice chancellor Prof AK Azad Chowdhury said political killings and other types violence have been increasing in the country day by day due to the culture of impunity for the culprits.

"Killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and four national leaders was the beginning of political killing in the country and at the same time the beginning of declaring impunity for the killers," he said.

He urged the political leadership to wage an all-out movement in a bid to form a violence-free Bangladesh.

Journalist and writer Shahriar Kabir blasted the political parties, mainly the opposition, for their

## Terrorism

FROM PAGE 16  
The two-day talks begin today. The fate of Sarajit Singh, held prisoner in Pakistan for the past 15 years after being convicted of spying, became headline news in India after Pakistan's Supreme Court upheld his death sentence this month.

Pakistan says Singh was an Indian spy who carried out four bomb attacks in the northern Pakistani city of Lahore.

His family says he is a farmer who crossed the border while he was drunk and has urged Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf to grant him clemency.

Indian political leaders, including Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, have taken up the case.

## Jamal Uddin

FROM PAGE 16  
-are likely to be produced before the magistrate today for confessional statements required to net the main culprits behind the abduction of Jamal Uddin on July 24, 2003, sources said.

Both the accused during an interrogation at the Patenga headquarters of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab)-7 confessed that Maruf Nizam, brother of ruling BNP MP Sarwar Jamal Nizam of Anwara, orchestrated the abduction and killing.

Earlier, the CID had sent video recording of the confessions made by Kala Mahbub and Shahid Chairman at the Rab interrogation and Kanchan Nagar spot from where the skeleton was recovered to Dhaka.

State Minister for Home Lutfuzzaman Babar saw the video recording yesterday afternoon, sources said.

failure to initiate any vigorous protest in the country even after the nation-wide bomb blasts on August 17.

"It's a matter of regret that opposition parties have failed to act properly to raise public voice," he said.

Asma Kibria, widow of Shah AMS Kibria, said her protest against violence will continue. She made a call to all to stand beside her in the peaceful protest against bomb blasts and political killings.

Economist Dr Kholikuzzaman also addressed the programme.

Prior to the discussion, three competitors --Mahbubul Alam Toha, Rajib Kumar Sarker and Muhammad Nizam Hussain --received first, second and third prizes in the essay competition in which 438 took part.

## Substandard

FROM PAGE 16  
issued a warrant against the owner of the factory.

Based on an allegation of producing substandard products, the same court collected samples from Nilgiri bottled water manufactures and sent them for testing.

Another mobile court raided 12 fast food shops in the Bashundhara City shopping mall. The court filed 12 cases against the fast food shop owners and collected a total of Tk 1,15,000.

"We found rotten food items in those fast food shops. None of them care to maintain hygiene standards," said Md. Mizanur Rahman, the magistrate of the court.

The same court also fined Shahana restaurant at the Bangla Motor area and fined them Tk 5,000.

Another mobile court led by ABM Abdul Fattah raided different restaurants and bakeries in the Gulshan area, filing three cases against the accused food traders and collecting Tk 30,000 in fines.

## Iraqi constitution

FROM PAGE 16  
was read out in front of lawmakers in the Kurdish and Shia dominated chamber.

The text was signed by Iraq's three-man presidency, which includes Sunni former president Sheikh Ghazi al-Yawar. The parliamentary session ended without any vote on the text.

The ceremony drew a line under weeks of talks to thrash out the text but paves the way towards the potentially even more awkward obstacle of an October 15 referendum on the draft that could see the process go back to square one.

## Maj Moin

FROM PAGE 1  
by, it will be very difficult to get hold of the witnesses and evidence necessary to put him on dock at a martial law court for the killing, they added.

"According to Section 36 of the Manual of Bangladesh Military Law, Moin is liable to punishment for desertion. The sections 91 and 92 of the law empowers the army to try such an offender at a court martial, if he is caught at any time before his death," one of the sources said.

Such an offence merits a maximum of two-year rigorous imprisonment, he added.

But, if the offender apologises, confessing his misdeed, the army may also go for departmental action against him, instead of sending him to a court martial, the sources said. The departmental actions may include dismissal of his job and his commission, in which case he will lose the right to name himself as a former major. The army also can deny him all post-service benefits.

Meanwhile, when contacted, Moin's wife Rousan Ara Islam told The Daily Star last night that she had talked with his husband over telephone at around 12:30pm. Since then she had not heard from him until filing of the report at 8pm.

## PM hopes more

FROM PAGE 1  
years of his stay here.

Sweden imported jute, leather, shrimp, handicrafts and readymade garments worth \$140.64 million during 2003-04 fiscal year while import from Sweden during the period stood at \$63.02 million.

The envoy informed the prime minister that 10 investment projects with a total outlay of \$23.83 million had recently been registered with the Board of Investment.

The proposals are for agro-based industry, textile, printing and publishing, engineering, chemical and service sectors, he said.

The prime minister said her government is implementing various programmes to achieve self-reliance by developing human resources in this country of huge population.

She mentioned some of the programmes undertaken by the present BNP-led four-party alliance government in education, health and socio-economic sectors.

The prime minister said the government has given importance to the education sector to turn the country's huge population into human resources.

She said the present government has resolved a number of problems and referred to the eradication

## Saarc

FROM PAGE 16  
meeting of the information ministers at Birendra International Convention Centre, official sources said.

The ministers are scheduled to hold discussions on airing weekly Saarc news and monthly news programme called FOCUS on state-run radio and TV.

They will also discuss means of enhancing new technology for disseminating information about Saarc (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) activities in the seven member states.

Besides preparing the common agenda for information technology (IT) developing globally, the fifth meeting of the Saarc information ministers will also discuss other IT related topics.

The meeting will discuss the plan of action for the development of information sector, which will forward recommendations to the 13th Saarc Summit to be held in Dhaka on November 12-13.

The first ministerial meeting held in Dhaka in 1998 came up with an 18-point action plan for development in the information sector.

Another meeting held in Pakistan last year agreed to implement the plan that calls for observing 2007 as the Saarc Media Year in addition to enhancing multilateral media cooperation to ensure free flow of information.

Bangladesh Information Minister M Shamsul Islam is not attending the meet as he has just returned from abroad after a medical check-up. Information Secretary Mahbubur Rahman is leading the Bangladesh delegation at the meet, officials said.

According to a message received from Kathmandu, the information ministers from Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Pakistan have already arrived in the Nepalese capital, while their counterparts from India and the Maldives arrive today.

Union Minister Jaipal Reddy will lead the Indian delegation at the meeting. Reddy would be the highest-ranking Indian official to visit Nepal since the royal takeover in February.

## DCC undertakes

FROM PAGE 16  
officials at a meeting of the Cleanliness and Mosquito Control Advisory Committee (CMCAC) held yesterday at the DCC conference room.

The civil society representatives at the meeting underscored the need to involve female ward commissioners of the respective areas in the drive so that they can make the housewives aware of the danger dengue may pose.

If the housewives can be made aware to keep their houses and the surroundings clean specially flower-pots, coconut shells and unused tires of vehicles, which are believed to be potential breeding ground of aedes mosquito, dengue can be contained to a great extent, the speakers observed.

Aedes mosquitoes lay eggs in fresh water that is often available in containers like thrown away plastic containers, flowerpots and food cans.

CMCAC President advocate Khandokar Mahbub Uddin Ahmed MP presided over the meeting.

DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka said, "The dengue situation is under our control this year. We have almost passed the most dangerous season for dengue." He however acknowledged that he had seen newspaper reports on some dengue patients being admitted to different city hospitals but there was no news of casualty yet.

The mayor said the DCC has enough stock of both larvicides and adulticides to run the mosquito control drive and does not have any financial constraints in this regard.

Among others, State Minister for Labour and Employment Amanullah Aman,

environmentalist Prof Nazrul Islam of Dhaka University, writer Emdadul Hag Milon, NGO activist Rafiqul Islam Sarkar and DCC Chief Executive Officer M Saifuddin Ahmed, Chief Health Officer Colonel Azizul Haque, Chief Conservancy Officer Soheli Farouque spoke in the meeting.

## JS body

FROM PAGE 16  
holding a discussion adjourning other businesses of the House to which the ruling party did not agree. A general discussion however was held on the attack, which was boycotted by the AL lawmakers.

The present state of enquiry into the grenade attack and the status of the judicial probe report will also be discussed at the committee meeting.

The parliamentary standing committee on law, justice and parliamentary affairs also held a brief discussion on the present state of the judicial probe report on the grenade attack last month following the demand of the opposition lawmakers.

The law minister at that meeting suggested the AL deputies and the members of the committee raise the issue at the parliamentary standing committee on home ministry as the law ministry does not have the probe report.

The parliamentary watchdog on home ministry held its last meeting on April 28 and did not hold any meeting in the last four months, though the rules of procedure of the Jatiya Sangsad says each committee will sit at least once in a month.

Irked by the indifference of the committee chairman to convene a meeting, committee member AL lawmaker Mohammad Nasim wrote to the speaker earlier to take steps for convening the meeting.

A delegation of the AL lawmakers recently met the speaker to talk about the issue.

## Bomb making

FROM PAGE 1  
Police said Nasir had made five bombs in 15 days before the attack. He assigned Sagar, a rickshaw-puller, with planting those at five points across the town.

In exchange for Tk 400, Sagar placed the bombs at the deputy commissioner's office, court premises, Shapla Square, Mukta Mancha, and Shahid Quader Road at dawn on August 17.

**TANGAIL**  
Our correspondent from Tangail reports: Police arrested seven suspected extremists of JMB, raiding Barpakhia Kwami Madrasa in Delduar sadar upazila and adjoining areas around midnight Saturday.

The arrestees are Mazharul Haque alias Yaqub, 48, Shahidur Rahman Khan, 54, Moulana Ishaq, 45, Zillur Rahman, 20, Abdus Sobhan, 36, Yamin Miah and Rahmat Ullah alias Mamun.

Local sources said that in some madrasas of Delduar the JMB members were given a month-long training in military operation, and bomb manufacturing and using prior to the near-simultaneous blasts.

Police knew nothing of the training until Shahidul Islam and Emdadul Haque were arrested at Chandrabati in Dighinala of Khagrachhari on Friday. The two had told the law enforcers of the training.

Superintendent of Police in Tangail himself interrogated the seven at Delduar Police Station yesterday morning.

### BOMB INJURED DIED

Sultan Hossain, 35, who sustained injuries in the August 17 blast at Joypurhat, died at Mohakhali Infectious Diseases Hospital in Dhaka early yesterday. A rickshaw-puller by profession, he was in police custody.

Police said seven bombs went off simultaneously across four places in Joypurhat town on August 17 between 11am and 11.30am, leaving three rickshaw-pullers--Sultan, Moznur Miah, and Ataur Rahman wounded.

Police took them into custody the following day, suspecting their involvement in the blasts. They were later taken on seven-day remand each and sent to the Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC) in the capital.

The three were brought back to the district on August 24 and admitted to the Modern Hospital. They were sent to Rajshahi Central Jail on Thursday and later shifted to Dhaka Central Jail on Friday.

Of them, Sultan was taken to Mohakhali Infectious Diseases Hospital as his condition worsened.

### CID INVESTIGATION

Criminal Investigation Department (CID), tasked with probing the blasts on August 17 in three districts, started recording statements of the two Sathkira arrestees.

Mohammad Nasiruddin and Moniruzzaman Munna, who are now on a second spell of remand, have already admitted involvement in the blasts in Sathkira.

## 3 entrances

FROM PAGE 1  
at an inter-ministerial meeting at the Ministry of Communication chaired by Minister Nazmul Huda.

The meeting said the project for widening the Airport Road will be completed by this year and discussed the progress of 174 development projects under the ministry in annual development programme, sources said.

As 22 major bridges in the country are at different stages of construction now, the meeting asked the officials concerned to implement 10 of them on priority basis.

Observing that the government's failure to implement these development projects will make a negative impact on the next general elections, the communication minister asked the officials to expedite the implementation of the projects through advance tendering and procurement.

He also asked the contractors to spend money in advance, if necessary, which will be adjusted from allocation of the next financial year, the sources said.

Huda expressed dissatisfaction over lack of coordination among various agencies involved with the development of roads, highways and bridges, and observed that the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) often fails to send necessary documents and letters to the ministry in time.

He sought co-operation of the External Resource Division (ERD) and the Ministry of Finance and Planning for quick release of funds and asked the RHD officials to monitor the progress of road construction regularly.

Huda also expressed discontent over the performance of Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) as it failed to procure 200 CNG-run buses with financial assistance from the Asian Development Bank and asked it to complete the procurement quickly.

State Minister for Communication Salahuddin Ahmed, representatives from the ERD, Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Department, the finance ministry, BRTC and RHD were present at the meeting.

"Once we are done with recording their statements, Nasir and Munna will be taken to court for giving confessional statements," said a top CID official seeking anonymity.

The CID officials said so far the detainees have linked 12 people to the blasts in the district.

Meanwhile, JIC in Dhaka continued interrogating some 20 people arrested in connection with the August 17 bomb attacks.

### FIVE RELEASED

Five out of the seven people arrested on the premises of Zia International Airport were released yesterday.

The Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka discharged the five after Investigation Officer of the case Sub-Inspector (SI) Farid Uddin submitted a report mentioning that charges against them were not proved.

The five are Hafez Moulana Rabiul Islam, Mohammad Shahjalal, Hamidur Rahman, Hafez Mohammad Kawser Ahmed, and Hafez Mohammad Jahidul Islam.

The IO however submitted charges against the other two--Shah Alam and Anwar Hossain--under section 77 of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Ordinance. The two have been accused of behaving insolently with some people over sale of dollars and Saudi Riyal.

### JESSORE

Our Jessore correspondent said police recovered a live bomb resembling to those used in the August 17 attacks from a madrasa at Abhoyanagar yesterday.

Police said a teacher of Hijbullah Dakhl Madrasa near Noapara Rat Station found the bomb wrapped in red tape at the corner of a class room while an examination was underway at about 1:30pm.

Informed, police rushed to the spot and recovered the 8" by 8" bomb fitted with four pencil batteries and a switch.

Later bomb experts defused the bomb.

### KHULNA

Our Staff Correspondent from Khulna adds: Intelligence agencies have listed some NGO's and 31 Kwami madrasas and 34 Alia madrasas in Khulna city and been keeping watch on them.

Police sources said members of intelligence agencies have undertaken the surveillance campaign to find out if the NGOs and the madrasas bear any link to JMB. The steps have been taken following the allegations that some JMB activists are working under the cover of the NGOs in the city.

## 4,000 tola gold

FROM PAGE 1  
employee of Venus Jewellers.

A rope was found hanging from the shaft using which the burglars slipped into and got out of the room.

Other bits of evidence show the thieves tried to break open the vault in the showroom, the fourth branch of the famous jewellery outlet, but failed. "They could loot more ornaments worth several crore taka," said owner Gangacharan.

The staff failed to give a specific account of the looted ornaments but said the amount would be no less than 4,000 tolas.

The owner and some employees of Venus Jewellers told reporters that decoration work was going on at the showroom and some labourers were engaged in the work.

Although the market remains closed on Saturday for weekly holiday, the showroom was open on this Saturday for the decoration work. The labourers closed the showroom after finishing their day's work in the evening.

The market authorities said the heist took place sometime in the dead of the night. "All the traders had shut down their shops Friday night and did not open yesterday [Saturday]," said an official of the market.

"No such incident took place earlier," Gangacharan said adding that the employees have been working for a long time and are faithful.

The police started investigation on the basis of primary information. They, however, said the security guards and the employees of the shop might have been involved in the theft. "They know better how one can slip into the shop," said a police officer.

Sub-Inspector (SI) Golam Rahman, also the investigation officer, said, "We have learnt that some decoration employees worked on Saturday afternoon when some of the staff of the shop were also present. Six security personnel were there at night besides the usual night guards."

There is also a closed-circuit camera in the shop but it is kept off at night.

It is a mystery how the burglars made their way out successfully despite the security arrangement, many said at the spot.

Meanwhile, the security men provided contradictory information, SI Rahman said adding, "Quizzing them will give a clear idea about the incident."

As the news spread, jewellers and leaders of the Bangladesh Jewellers' Association rushed to the Venus showroom. After discussion with other traders, they called for a shutdown today to protest the theft. They will also hold a demonstration in front of the Baitul Mokarram Market in the afternoon.