

# Biman prefers

**FROM PAGE 1**  
huge numbers of pilgrims to Saudi Arabia like every other year.

Due to a shortage of aircraft, Biman would be able to fly only 4,000 pilgrims for performing hajj this year, compared to the 23,000 pilgrims it ferried last year, said officials.

While Biman cancelled its loss-making domestic flights on the Dhaka-Barisal route on Saturday last, the State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism, Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin, hinted at cancelling or re-routing or decreasing frequencies in some of its other domestic flights as well as international flights.

But interestingly enough, Biman has yet to say anything regarding the possibility of cancelling its most loss-making Dhaka-NU flights, apparently because this particular slot is very dear to its heart.

Asked about the rationale behind continuing the operation of such a loss-making flight, Mir Nasir told The Daily Star yesterday, "Previous Awami League government initiated the Dhaka-New York flight via the Delhi-Brussels route, causing Tk 55 lakh loss in each flight. After taking the charge, I re-routed the Dhaka-Delhi-Brussels-New York flight to Dhaka-Dubai-Brussels-New York, and brought down the loss per flight from Tk 55 lakh to Tk 22 lakh only."

He continued, "But eventually the unusual hike in the jet fuel price last year pushed up the loss per flight again from Tk 22 lakh to Tk 35 lakh. But still we're operating to this international destination, as it's a prestigious slot for Biman."

Following last Thursday's unprecedented experience of Biman not getting fuel from BPC due to non-clearance of dues, the civil aviation minister cancelled Biman's Dhaka-Barisal flights, which used to operate just once a week. Prior to cancellation, Biman's 80-seater flight carried only 6 passengers to Barisal and even fewer - only 4 passengers - on return flight.

Biman sources also confirmed that after Eid-ul-Fitr, the airliner would decrease its frequencies from seven a week to four a week both on Dhaka-Jessore and Dhaka-Rajshahi-Syedpur routes.

Mir Nasir told The Daily Star that very soon Biman would decrease frequencies in some of its domestic routes and re-route some of its international operations.

Talking to The Daily Star last night, Managing Director-in-charge of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, Abdus Salam acknowledged that the Dhaka-NU flight has been causing the most losses to the national flag carrier.

Asked about the loss amount per flight, he said, "The operational loss per

flight will be something like Tk 28 lakh."

He said, however, that a committee headed by Biman's Director (Administration) Ahsan Kader has been working to devise a permutation and combination plan for Biman so that it could rationalise each of its domestic and international flights in a cost-effective way.

He said Biman's flight operations to London, Singapore, Frankfurt, and Paris would come under considerations in this committee's review exercise.

Asked whether the question of cancelling the Dhaka-NU flight operation would come under the committee's consideration, the Biman MD replied in the positive but added, "If the government still wants to continue the flight, Biman will do so."

Committee sources said it would be able to submit its report to the Biman authorities by October 31.

## Dying witness

**FROM PAGE 16**  
attempt there on the Iraqi leader's life in July 1982.

The defendants have all claimed their innocence.

After the first day in court on October 19 the trial was adjourned until November 28, but a special session was held for Sunday's witness because of his ill health.

The trial was adjourned for 40 days in part because several witnesses and people affected by the massacre were not present at the court, the source said.

Saddam's Iraqi lawyer, Khalil al-Dulaimi asked for an adjournment in order to examine evidence collected against his clients.

Court officials also have to correct several technical problems that bedevilled the opening day, including faulty audio and video systems.

ting that 45 percent of Iraqi citizens support attacks and fewer than one percent think coalition involvement helps improve their country's security.

The nationwide survey was commissioned by the British defence ministry in August.

## Flooding

**FROM PAGE 16**  
relations officer of the railway department.

Thousands of passengers were stranded as nearly 10 trains kept waiting on the sides of Vangura and Goyakhara, witnesses said.

A little rainfall occurred in different places of the country from 6:00am to twelve noon yesterday. Met office sources said.

# Loyal cops favoured

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Hamidul Hoq and Judge Salma Masud on sections 54 and 167 of Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) on April 7, 2003.

He alleged filing a case with any police stations depends on the concerned district minister or local ruling party leaders as from the BNP-led government assumed office.

The nation in the last four years has incurred an estimated loss of Tk 2,048 crore for misuse of the Special Powers Act and politically motivated criminal cases filed with the lower courts.

Criminals have created a crime world under direct shelter from the political godfathers, he continued. The investigation process is politically influenced and in most of the cases the complainants become the victim of harassment instead of getting justice.

The government has also made futile attempts to compel the opposition leaders and activists to join the ruling party by filing false cases against them. The prime minister has breached her oath as she failed to run the administration and police as per the responsibilities the constitution bestows on her, the paper added.

Expressing sympathy to the sacked and deprived civil servants, dissidents at the seminar said a new service rule would be formulated to determine the job conditions to safeguard employees as servants of the state, not of the government.

Yesterday's AL recommendations include bringing reforms in the existing administrative tribunal, formulating new fully-fledged conduct rules for the civil servants, bringing reforms in the Criminal Procedure, Panel Code, PRB (Police Regulation Bengal Act, 1943) and Police Act, 1861, and Special Power Act, changing the laws to make the Public Service Commission (PSC) a truly independent body, making the official secrecy act up-to-date, and creating a central wing titled 'Career Planning' for the officers in the civil administration.

Listing the misuse of the incumbent government, former home minister Mohammad Nasim accused the alliance of eliminating the honest and efficient police officers. He assured the 'eliminated' cops of reinstatement if the AL is voted back to power.

AL presidium member Tofail Ahmed said the ruling coalition is doing everything to retain power as per its 'blue-print'.

A former additional inspector general (AIG) of police, AT Ahmedul Haq Chowdhury, said politicisation in the police administration started during the caretaker government before the last general elections.

He said a sub-inspector (SI) had made and submitted a list of AIGs, deputy inspector generals of police, superintendents of police and other lower officials to a particular 'Bhaban'.

The government took action against the listed cops by axing, transferring or

forcing them to resign, he added. Ten days after assuming power, the government made 40 cops OSD (officer on special duty) and fired or transferred 80 others.

He came down heavily on the reduced training programmes of police, saying this will make them unskilled. It is a conspiracy to send loyal cops in the field during the next general elections, he alleged.

The government appointed 815 SIs against a circular for 786 posts, although only 322 candidates passed the written test. The rest were given a grace mark of 20 over-looking the rules.

Abdul Bayes, former vice-chancellor of Jahangirnagar University, said the government illegally removed three vice-chancellors soon after it came to power, destroying the image of the educational institutions.

Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, editor of the Bangladesh Observer, said the government has not only politicised the police, but also the president, chief election commissioner and the chief justice. Politicisation has engulfed even the media, he added.

Hassain Toufik Imam, former cabinet secretary, said the government has removed all the skilled, efficient and honest officials from the administration and appointed unskilled, incompatible and the corrupt, who are loyal to it.

## Bounty

**FROM PAGE 1**  
countrywide blasts. An 'unspecified bounty' was declared for information about two suspected Islamist kingpins, Bangla Bahi and Abdur Rahman. The government suspects a link between the banned Islamist outfit Jamaatul Mujahideen (JMB) and different factions of the BPBC-ML.

Identities of the informers will remain confidential and if their tips lead to the arrest of the wanted, they will be 'awarded duly', a police statement said.

The statement said the bounties were announced to motivate the people to come forward with information to the police about the suspects. Police officials in the district, however, claimed that the general people had been helping them in recent days to nab the outlawed party men.

According to BDNEWS, the list was prepared by the Cobra unit of Chuadanga Detective Branch. A bounty of Tk five lakh was declared for information about Tapan Malitha while Tk one lakh each was declared for information about Abir Hasan and Jamal. Information about the others was valued at Tk 20,000 each.

Police, however, did not provide the photos of the wanted. Asked about the lack of photographs, the police told this correspondent by telephone that photos of all the suspects were not available.

## 12 killed

**FROM PAGE 1**  
others on the way to the hospital.

The dead are Saleha Begum, 65, Arshed Ali, 35, Abdullah, 18, Fuli Begum, 50, Khushi Khatun, 12, Abu Shama, 30, and Aduri Khatun, 12.

Fifteen passengers of the two vehicles were injured in the accident. Of them, 12 were admitted to Pabna General Hospital and Bera Upazila Health Complex in a critical condition.

The bus driver and his helper managed to flee the scene. Police seized both the vehicles.

The private news agency, BDNEWS, reported that three people died and four others were injured when a passenger-bus collided head on with a tempo in Joypurhat yesterday.

The identity of the dead and injured could not be known.

In Brahmanbaria, a truck collided with a tempo at Brahmanbaria in the morning, leaving tempo driver Shawkat dead on the spot and five others injured.

A child named Tanuha, 8, was crushed under the wheel of a Jessore bound bus from Narail on Narail-Jessore road at Sitarampur in Narail district.

Protesting the death of the child, locals put up a barricade on the road, disrupting traffic for half an hour.

## Faridpur blast

**FROM PAGE 1**  
police stations -- Kotwali, Panchlaish, Pahartali, Bakalia and Halishahar -- submitted final reports with recommendation for release of 15 arrestees.

On information, Kotwali police raided Mukul's South Jhiltuli house in the town, arrested him and seized over 100 books on jihad, letters, and CDs on wars in Afghanistan, Chechnya, Kashmir and Palestine, reports A Correspondent in Faridpur.

One of books was authored by Mullah Mohammad Umar, head of the then Taliban-led government in Afghanistan.

Police said the bombs exploded in Faridpur were brought from Dhaka through a courier service. They claimed to have seized the cartons in which the bombs were sent to the district.

Police sources said Mukul used to take local youths to Ukhiya in Cox's Bazar and other JMB dens in Chittagong in the name of study tours.

The officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station said they were hunting for Mukul since August 17, adding that they have important intelligence report on Mukul's activities.

Mukul, son of Wadudur Rahman, a retired teacher of Government Yasin College in Faridpur, told reporters he studied at Darul Qur'an Madrasa in 1995 after failing to pass the HSC examinations.

Meantime, investigation officer (IO) of Bandar Police Station yesterday pressed charges in the August 17 blast case, writes our Staff Correspondent in Chittagong.

Police sources said Sub-inspector AKM Golam Kibria submitted the charge sheet accusing two JMB activists Arshadul Alam and Abdus Sattar M o l l a h .

The other five police stations in the district yesterday submitted final reports with recommendations for releasing the 15 arrestees.

Sources said involvement of the 15 in the August 17 blasts could not be proved.

Khulshi police are likely to submit a charge sheet today accusing eight people including Bangla Bhai, Shayak Abdur Rahman, Arshadul Alam and Abdus Sattar Mollah. Doublemooning police may press charges by tomorrow, sources said.

Eight cases were filed in connection with the blasts attacks in the city with eight police stations.

## Pirates loot

**FROM PAGE 16**  
The deputy commissioner and superintendent of police in charge of Bhola confirmed the incident and said police and coastguards have been directed to take action immediately.

## 8,450 tonnes

**FROM PAGE 1**  
government's Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programme.

The formal distribution of the food will start very soon, a high official at the ministry said. The allotment of food was given in addition to government's earlier allotment for the poor section of the people.

## Another HC

**FROM PAGE 16**  
tioning of ACC's October 2 letter that requested the government to withdraw 263 former Bac employees who do not qualify in its recruitment criteria.

Besides, the court stayed June 29 appointment of 20 anti corruption officers (ACOs) at the ACC.

Following a writ petition by some former ACOs of the Bac, the court also asked the ACC to explain why its appointment of 33 ACOs, the screening criteria and the October 2 letter will not be declared illegal.

Earlier, following separate writ petitions filed by two batches of former Bac staff, the HC stayed the screening criteria and the October 2 letter, and sought the ACC's explanation about the legality of both these matters.

# Conflict within power

**FROM PAGE 1**  
the officials of the power division to explain the reasons for electricity crisis. In reply, the power officials said the power generation has been hampered due to shortage of gas supply to the power plants. But the officials of the energy divisions rejected the argument and said the production has been disrupted for technical fault, not for gas supply, said meeting sources.

The parliamentary body was informed that in last fiscal year, shortage of gas supply accounted for generating 185 million kilowatt-hours less than the capacity of the power plants while technical fault was responsible for generating 76 million kilowatt-hours short of the maximum productivity.

While the two divisions were locked in trading blame with each other, the members of the parliamentary body concluded that a sheer lack of co-ordination between the two is one of the key reasons for the power crisis.

"The power generation has been hampered because there is no co-ordination at all between the power and energy divisions," Committee Chairman Shahidul Islam told journalists after the meeting held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Members of the committee and ruling BNP lawmakers Nazim Uddin Alam, Ilias Ali and Habibul Islam Habib echoed the chairman's view.

They, however, supported the statement of the energy division that blamed the disruption in power generation on technical faults.

"The power division always attributes load-shedding to the poor supply of gas. But shortage of gas supply accounts for at best 100 MWs of short-fall, whereas the country experiences up to 700 MWs of load-shedding every day," Nazim Uddin Alam told reporters.

"We don't want this blame-game on the power crisis to continue, we are rather interested in getting the real picture," he added.

While discussing the gas crisis, the parliamentary body blasted the chairman of Petrobangla for delaying the implementation of different projects taken up to improve the situation.

"The Petrobangla chairman is providing misleading information about the gas supply and implementation of the projects," the committee chairman told reporters.

The members berated the Petrobangla chief for delaying the installation of gas pipeline from Ashuganj to Monohordi.

They said the government might incur a loss of several crore taka as the Petrobangla has yet to detect properly the people who would have to leave their rights to the lands to be used for installing the pipeline.

"At first, the number of people to lose houses and lands due to installation of the gas pipeline stood at 125. But lately the Petrobangla officials have allowed the number to rise dramatically to 300," Committee Chairman Shahidul Islam told reporters.

The energy advisor however assured the parliamentary body that he would look into the matter.

The Petrobangla has already handed over Tk 30 crore to deputy commissioners of different districts to distribute among the aggrieved as compensation for the loss of lands, said the committee chairman.

Energy Advisor Mahmudur Rahman declined to comment on the discussion at the meeting while State Minister for Power Iqbal Hassan Mahmood left the meeting earlier to attend another programme.

without government support, sources mentioned.

The condition of unregistered Rohingya is miserable and many of them died from starvation. About 30 Rohingyas died from starvation just in one month, some locals said without giving details.

These distressed people somehow survive on small earnings as day labour. Many of them suffer from various diseases due to lack of medical facilities. Their children are malnourished due to lack of food.

Rahimul Haq, an unregistered Rohingya, said Bangladesh government made a list of them but they are yet to get any relief or assistance.

"We are forced to live a miserable life because if we go back home without government support, Myanmar forces would catch us and send us to jail for long. As we are absent from our areas for long, they would not recognise us as citizens of Myanmar," he added.

"In Myanmar, we could not sleep at night fearing torture by government forces," said Imam Hossain, an elderly refugee at Kutupalong camp. He has been at the camp for 14 years.

The Myanmar government confiscated their land and property, he said. Besides physical torture, Myanmar forces also resort to mental torture on Muslims. The Muslims cannot move freely and they face lot of difficulties in arranging marriages of their sons and daughters, Imam alleged.

According to locals in Cox's Bazar and Teknaf, Rohingyas still continued to come to the areas. Many of them got married to locals and merged into them. Their number is around four lakh.

A section of Rohingyas work here, earn a lot and send money to their families and relatives back home. Devaluation of Myanmar currency is an advantage for them, locals said.

"If a Rohingya earns Tk 100 here, it means 1,500 in Myanmar currency. This is another reason for their reluctance to go back home," one local mentioned.

## Conspiracy

**FROM PAGE 16**  
ments industry so that we can not be competitive in the international market," BGMEA President Annisul Huq said at the press conference.

The incidents, including the recent violence at some garment factories in Savar and Kanchpur, might be a part of "blueprint" by the NGOs and foreign organisations to destroy the garment industry, he said.

Such incidents disrupt the production and lead to the industry's losing competitiveness in the international market, he said.

The BGMEA leader urged the government to take actions against those who were involved with the ransacking of garment factories in Savar and Kanchpur.

Incident Bangladesh is one of the NGOs that staged a demonstration with garment workers on different issues, said Selim Reza, president of the National Garment Workers League.

"In exchange, the NGO entertained each worker with a packet of biryani and Tk 300," he said, adding, "Incident Bangladesh gets money from Oxfam for doing such activities."

The NGOs do not bother about trouble-torn sectors such as the jute sector, said advocate Delwar Hossain Khan, president of Bangladesh Jono Swadhin Garment Samik Federation.

"Why are they meddling with the garment sector, which is performing very well?" he asked.

The BGMEA president said prior to the MFA phase-out, it was feared that lifting of quotas in the textile and clothing industry would mean a labour and trade disaster for developing countries, including Bangladesh.

"But we have managed to be in an advantageous position despite strong competition in the international market," he said, adding, "In the first six months of the quota free market, our knitwear export is experiencing more than 25 percent growth compared to the previous corresponding period."

## Khulna BCL

**FROM PAGE 1**  
meeting with his accomplices."

Later, following his confessional statement, a Rab team took him to the area again to recover illegal firearms. As they reached the spot, the BPBC cadres opened fire on the Rab members who returned fire, triggering a 15-minute gunfight.

Hasanuzzaman was killed in "crossfire" during the shootout while his accomplices fled the scene, the Rab press release said.

The BPBC operatives while fleeing left one pipe gun, one locally-made gun, four bullets and four used shells of shotgun.

Rab sources said Hasanuzzaman, hailed from Joarbadal village under Rupsha upazila of the district, was accused in many criminal cases filed with Khulna and Rupsha police stations, including for the murders of Bulbul and Bony Jamaddar, and bomb attacks.

Meanwhile, Khulna district and city AL in a press release claimed Hasanuzzaman to be the general secretary BCL's Rupsha upazila unit and joint secretary of Khulna district unit.

The AL, BCL and Jubo League leaders and activists thronged to the party office in the city when the coffin of Hasanuzzaman was brought there yesterday noon. They brought out a procession carrying the coffin to protest the killing.

Later, a rally was held in front of AL office presided over by district BCL President Abu Hanif. Former whip Mostafa Rashidee Suja, city AL President Talukder Abdul Khaleque MP and district AL President Sheikh Harun-ar-Rashid addressed the rally.

## Charges

**FROM PAGE 16**  
warrant against Haji Yakub, who jumped bail.

Police on April 2 last year, seized 10 truckloads of sophisticated weapons and a huge quantity of ammunition from Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Limited jury. The two separate cases were filed following this seizure.

Of the 44 accused, 12 including the five prime accused are absconding and 27 are on bail. Saifuddin Ahmed, Firoyz Ahmed, Saleh Jahur, Osman Mistri and Manir Ahmad are in jail.

## Challenge ahead

**FROM PAGE 16**  
regional trade is a paltry 3-4 percent, Saarc members have a 450-million-strong middle class -- bigger than the combined population of the US and Canada or of the European Union.

Citing an example of trade in regional groupings, he said the EU trading is 66 percent among its member states and the Asean has 28 percent.

"We have market of our own... we are working to get into substantial partnership to achieve the economic integration of South Asia," he said. He expressed the hope someday the economic integration will lead to South Asian union like the EU or the Asean.

The minister regretted the fact that so many decisions had been adopted at previous summits but not been implemented, "maybe by default or by design".

Bangladesh is poised to assume the next Saarc chair, Morshed said, adding that the upcoming summit will mark the beginning of Saarc's third decade, and "we would like to see it as a decade of implementation."

# Wilma lashes Florida

**FROM PAGE 16**  
through the Caribbean.

At one point the most intense hurricane on record in the Atlantic, Wilma weakened after hammering Cancun and Cozumel for three days with punishing winds and rains, destroying homes and ruining luxury hotels.

But the vast and menacing storm's maximum sustained winds strengthened to 120 mph (193 kph) overnight as it roared toward Florida, where storm-weary residents largely ignored evacuation orders. Wilma was a Category 3 storm, capable of causing extensive damage.

"We were hoping that it would weaken some before it makes landfall," Max Mayfield, director of the US National Hurricane Centre, told Miami's WFOR television. "We're not certain that will happen now."

The centre of the storm was expected to come ashore in Florida around daybreak near the wealthy city of Naples on the southwest coast.

Hurricane-force wind gusts from the large storm were already hitting parts of the lower Florida Keys, with a gust of 76 mph (122 kph) reported at Key West, the hurricane centre said.

The streets of the Keys, a 110-mile (175-km) island chain no more than 16 feet above sea level at its highest point and connected to the Florida mainland by a single road, were deserted and dark as the winds and rains picked up overnight, and power went out block by block.

Seawater sloshed into downtown streets in Key West.

Fatigued after having been forced to evacuate for three earlier hurricanes this season, and after waiting many days for Wilma to near the United States, no more than 7 percent of the Keys' 80,000 residents fled ahead of Wilma, officials said.

The last city evacuation bus left Key West on Sunday morning with only the driver and one passenger despite fears that Wilma's storm surge could wash out the Overseas Highway and strand residents without power, water or telephone lines.

"The storm had meandered around so long that it lured me into a false sense of security," said Key West resident Warren Benjamin.

In southwest Florida, residents crowded restaurants and bars on Sunday evening in Naples and seemed to pay little heed to warnings the hurricane could bring a tidal surge of up to 17 feet to the area.

Wilma was the eighth hurricane to strike Florida in a little over 14 months, an unprecedented display of nature's fury.

The 2005 Atlantic hurricane season, which ends on November 30, became the busiest since records began 150 years ago with the formation on Saturday of the 22nd named tropical cyclone, Alpha.

It also boasts three of the most intense Atlantic storms on record, with Katrina, which devastated New Orleans in August and killed 1,200, Rita, which hit the Texas-Louisiana border a few weeks later, and now Wilma, the storm with the lowest barometric pressure reading ever observed in the Atlantic.

Wilma caused severe damage in Cancun and on the island of Cozumel off Mexico's Yucatan.

Many of the 20,000 or more tourists stranded on the "Maya Riviera" were short of food and water and becoming increasingly frustrated on Sunday as

they faced a fourth night in cramped shelters with no electricity or running water.

The storm killed seven people in Mexico, fewer than many had feared. It killed 10 people in Haiti last week after spawning mudslides in the impoverished Caribbean country.

"There is huge devastation. This hurricane has provoked a tremendous impact. But Mexico has experience and it was demonstrated right from the beginning, saving lives," Mexican President Vicente Fox told Reuters in Cancun.

By 3 a.m. (0700 GMT), the centre of Wilma was about 75 miles west-northwest of Key West and 95 miles southwest of Naples and moving northeast at a brisk 20 mph (32 kph). Hurricane-force winds extended up to 85 miles, while tropical storm-force winds stretched out 230 miles (370 km) from the centre.

Wilma was expected to accelerate and shoot across the Florida Peninsula like "a rocket," Mayfield said.

Some of its strongest winds were likely to be felt in the area from Miami, through Fort Lauderdale to Palm Beach, where 5 million people live.

In Cuba, 86-mph (138-kph) wind gusts howled through the deserted streets of Havana, knocking down lampposts and smashing windows in some tall buildings. The city's 2 million inhabitants hunkered down in the dark, listening to battery-powered radios after authorities cut power to prevent electrical accidents.

Rough seas stirred up by Wilma crashed over Havana's famed Malecon sea wall after midnight, turning streets into rivers of knee-deep floodwater. About 15 blocks were under water.

Firefighters rescued residents from flooded homes near the seafloor, carrying some elderly people to safety.

"We haven't seen it this bad in years," said resident Alfredo Saurez.

## Colleges too

**FROM PAGE 16**  
campus at Sheorapara.

Lack of classrooms and very poor facilities were also seen at Bangladesh Teachers Training College in the same area.

The students of the private TT colleges also seemed little concerned about the poor academic facilities, as they can get their B.Ed. certificate without attending classes regularly, which is not possible at the government colleges. They also can carry on doing jobs, one of them said.

NU Inspector of Colleges Professor M Abdul Hamid acknowledged the grim condition of the private TT colleges. "Whenever we get allegation against a college, we instantly take stern action against it," he said.

When asked how so many colleges received permission from the NU without meeting the bare necessities, he said, "When the National University finds a private teachers training college almost fulfils the basic requirements, it generally gives it permission to establish, setting a certain deadline for fulfilling the other criteria."

But another NU official said, requesting anonymity, the NU authorities are often forced by political pressure to give permission to a private TT college.

The official, however, emphas