

## IMF for further

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Rumbaugh told a press conference yesterday.

On how to contain the pressures, Rumbaugh who heads a visiting IMF mission said there needs to be a policy in response to the situation. For instance, he said, the central bank would have to be a little more active in terms of absorbing excess liquidity from the banking system through auction sales of government securities.

He said, if the government continues to tighten macroeconomic policies to reduce inflationary pressures and speeds up reforms at the NCBs and the National Bureau of Revenue (NBR), the IMF executive board may discuss the fourth review under the Poverty Reduction Growth Facility (PRGF) in early 2006.

Explaining why the IMF wants the government to further adjust the fuel prices, Rumbaugh said the whole world is doing it, and Bangladesh too needs to adjust it. "At current domestic prices, the state-owned enterprises like the BPC (Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation) are losing money and eventually require the government to step in and make up their losses," he pointed out and observed such huge subsidisation cannot be sustained.

The IMF adviser also told the press, "We have discussed this with the government and there is no disagreement. They know there is a need for further adjustments at some point." However, he added that the government is in the best position to decide the timing.

The IMF mission arrived in Dhaka on November 13 to review the status of fulfillment of the conditions for the fifth

PRGF tranche scheduled to be disbursed early next year. Among the conditions, three major ones are appointing a financial adviser to Agrani Bank, restructuring the NCB boards and introducing an audit cell at the NBR.

The mission met with the finance minister, finance secretary and Bangladesh Bank to discuss disbursement of the \$75 million fifth instalment of PRGF and the \$25 million second tranche of Trade Integration Mechanism (TIM) loan.

Rumbaugh yesterday also asked for policy adjustments to protect the balance-of-payment.

Yesterday the foreign exchange reserve stood at \$2.48 billion, which was above \$3 billion a few months ago. The overall balance also shows a deficit of \$195 million in July-August 2005 against a \$363 million surplus in the corresponding period of 2004.

The foreign aid inflow also went down by 89 percent in July-August this year from the corresponding months in 2004.

Though the overall inflation reduced from 7.93 percent in August to 7.01 percent in September on a point-to-point basis, in case of non-food items it rose from 5.71 percent to 6.86 percent over the same period.

The IMF mission chief praised the government for setting up the Large Taxpayer Unit (LTU) for income tax, the central intelligence cell and other relevant institutional structures in the NBR. He, however, noted that inadequate staffing and resources, particularly at the VAT/LTU, are hampering revenue collection.

"Auditing procedures and enforcement of tax collection are also in need of further improvement," Rumbaugh maintained.

To enhance Bangladesh's export competitiveness to survive in the quota-free trade regime, Rumbaugh suggested addressing infrastructure bottlenecks, improving customs administration and other aspects of trade facilitation, reducing regulatory requirements as well as addressing corruption and security concerns.

## Rejoinder, our reply

Mohammad Anwar Hossain, commissioner of Ward No. 18, has denied his involvement in filling up a part of Gulshan Lake as reported in The Daily Star on November 20 under the headline "Gulshan Lake being filled up".

The commissioner in a rejoinder yesterday said he is only helping locals build a road.

Anwar claimed he does not own a piece of land in or along the lake. He only inaugurated the construction work of a road in presence of the locality's community leaders. There is no question of filling up the lake, he added.

**Our Reply**  
Anwar Hossain has put up a signboard under his own name on the spot, declaring the launch of Gulshan Lakeview Housing Society. Workers were also seen filling up a part of the lake. We stand by our report.

## People suffering

**FROM PAGE 20**  
pro-hartal activists allegedly by police and ruling party cadres.

Hasina said, "Bangladesh has become an ineffective state" due to the "failure and misrule" of the alliance government.

The opposition leader urged people from all walks of life to oust this "failed, corrupt and anti-people government" through mass movement.

She demanded immediate and unconditional release of all opposition leaders and activists arrested during the countrywide hartal yesterday.

## 48 killed in twin

**FROM PAGE 20**  
staff. A total of 39 people were wounded, most of them civilians.

"The glass flew at us," she said as she sat up in hospital. "His nose was hit and he couldn't breathe." The body of her son, less than two years old, lay on the morgue floor at Yarmouk hospital in Baghdad, where many of the wounded were brought.

Hasna Aboud's son, who was due to get married next week, was also killed. "My 22-year-old son was killed while trying to bring me some medicine," she said. "I lost my only son."

The second suicide car bomber attacked a crowded market in Hilla, south of Baghdad, yesterday killing at least 14 people and wounding 23 others, police said.

The bombing is the latest in a series of suicide attacks and car bomb blasts that have killed nearly 200 people since last Friday, in what

## JS session

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Conditions of Services) (Amendment) Bill 2005; and The Code of Civil Procedure (Amendment) Bill 2005.

The session also held discussion on the Press Council Act and freedom of press.

## Textbooks

**FROM PAGE 20**  
communities from some of these books.

"The class V textbook mentions Mandi as the Garo language which has no written form, but the fact is that the Garo language is called Achik which has its own written form. One can even have higher studies on this language," he said.

Through seminars and meetings and letters to the authority concerned the indigenous people have protested against these misrepresentations of them in the school textbooks. They have demanded to incorporate indigenous writers and representatives into the committee for writing textbooks, but no significant result has so far come in this regard, Drong said.

However, the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) authority strongly denied the allegation of misrepresenting the indigenous people and their culture in the primary school textbooks.

"We do not think the primary school textbooks have negatively presented the indigenous people. In the books they have rather been presented in a way so that all children can easily understand them," Prof Alal Hossain, senior specialist and acting member of the NCTB primary school curriculum, said.

"We have maintained the truth about things regarding what the indigenous people eat and what they wear, and there was no bad intention," he argued.

Asked why the rich heritage of the indigenous people's struggles and culture has not been put in the textbooks, he said this has been discussed in the textbooks of higher classes.

In reply to another question, he said, "The word 'adibashi' cannot be used as it gives the impression that they have been living in the land since much earlier than the Bangalees."

Altaf also denied receiving any written complaint regarding these issues from the indigenous people. He, however, gave assurance that the textbook board must consider the issue if it has received any written complaint.

Eminent educationalist Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury also expressed his resentment over the negative presentation of the indigenous people in the primary school textbooks.

Opposing the use of both the words "upojati" and "adibashi", he preferred using the expression "khudra jatisatta", meaning small nationality, for the indigenous people.

The legacy of struggles, culture and heritage of these "small nationalities" should be put in the textbooks so that the children do not think that they are inferior, he viewed.

"The differences of the small nationality people with the majority population may be included in the textbooks, but it must be done positively," he said.

## Jalil pledges

**FROM PAGE 1**  
revealing the truth. Don't compromise with falsification."

Jalil, also coordinator of the 14-party opposition combine, said the government is out to torture the journalists, who are revealing its corruption.

AL Presidium Member Tofail Ahmed said, "Talking against the journalists in parliament and the prime minister's appreciation by thumping the desk are not good signs for democracy."

The journalists have always played a significant role in all the democratic movements in the country, but Finance Minister Saifur Rahman termed them the 'enemies of the country,' he said.

AL leaders Matia Chowdhury and Asaduzzaman Noor were present.

Meantime, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdul Hamid yesterday said Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar has lost his neutrality by supporting the media bashing in parliament by the ruling party lawmakers.

"I have been observing parliament proceedings since the Pakistan period, but not a single speaker had ever conducted the House the way the present speaker is doing," Hamid said at a press briefing at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

The speaker is violating the proceedings since the beginning of the session, the former speaker added.

Sircar nakedly expressed his hatred towards the journalists in line with the ruling party leaders' broadside against journalists in parliament. This is a sharp violation of parliament proceedings, Hamid alleged.

Journalists have become the "worst enemy" of the government by uncovering all its misdeeds, Hamid observed.

## 3 foreign criminals'

**FROM PAGE 20**  
criminal gangs used to set up temporary tents and gather heavy arms and explosives there.

They also used to take away cattle, poultry, rice and vegetables forcibly from the locals.

The army however claimed that there is no possibility of existence of any terrorist group in Bangladesh land after the frequent operations of the security forces.

In the face of massive operation of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) in Naikhongchhari area, the Myanmar criminals have taken shelter near the zero lines of the border in Alikadam and Thanchi, a government source said on condition of anonymity.

## Trade gap widens

**FROM PAGE 1**

According to EPB statistics, in the first two months of the current fiscal year, export in woven garments went down both in terms of volume and value. The volume decreased by 6.51 percent and value by 9.14 percent from that in the corresponding period in FY05.

Meanwhile, the World Bank (WB) in a report titled 'End of Quotas: Strategic Options for the Readymade Garment (RMG) Industry' suggested a six-point strategy, including CBWs, endorsement of Saarc cumulation and permitting yarn and fabric import through land ports, to help the apparel sector survive in the free trade era.

The report is yet to be officially launched but its salient points were tabled at the 3-day PRSP Implementing Forum meeting on November 15-17. It identified the unnecessarily long lead-time, of 90 to 120 days, as a major problem impairing the market competitiveness of the woven sector, and said CBWs to stock fabrics and other inputs at the EPZs would reduce the 'time to market' substantially.

The report observed that the government has been "concerned about possible leakage of duty-free materials into the domestic market (depriving govt of revenues), and has not therefore supported the proposal" for setting up CBWs. To address that concern, it suggested setting in place safeguards, like computerisation of record keeping, and reducing anti-export bias.

It also advised the government to cut the protective tariff on textiles and garments by no more than 30 percent in order to minimise the incentive for leakage from the bonded system.

The donors pledged to support the government in carrying out these lead-time reduction measures.

The WB also prescribed to remove the current ban on importing yarn and fabric through land ports and strength-

ening monitoring systems at border customs to prevent smuggling of these items.

The report argued Bangladesh woven garments are losing out substantially on the export potential of the EU market, which provides preferential and zero-tariff access to the RMG of the developing countries, subject to some local-value-addition criteria.

"Unlike Nepal, Laos and Cambodia, the government of Bangladesh has not yet taken advantage of the EU offer of regional cumulation and relaxation of value-addition criteria, possibly due to pressures from the domestic textile groups who may feel that such relaxation might work in favour of other regional inputs," it observed. According to the WB, "In fact, a competitive textile sector should have nothing to fear and can only benefit from a faster growth of RMG in EU markets."

Following those arguments, the WB advised the government to endorse Saarc regional cumulation and relax the value addition criteria to promote RMG exports to the EU by taking advantages offered by its 'Everything but Arms' programme.

The six-point strategy put forward by the WB also include creating a technology 'upgradation fund', a refinancing facility to reduce capital cost of installing a positive list of new machinery in textile industries.

Sources said the government has agreed in principle to act in line with the WB prescription.

Reflecting on the WB suggestions, Mustafizur Rahman said the government should undertake a comprehensive policy-measure, encompassing both the textile and the RMG sectors, and ensuring that neither is affected by interventions to develop the other.

## 14-party hartal

**FROM PAGE 1**  
opposition activists, injuring AL lawmaker Asaduzzaman Noor.

Photojournalist of the Associated Press (AP) Pavel Rahman, Channel-i cameraman Billal Hossain, police constables Masum and Mahfuz, and at least 12 Awami League workers, including a woman, were injured during the clash.

The 14-party opposition combine comprising AL, 11-party alliance, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) and National Awami Party (NAP) enforced the 12-hour shutdown to protest the government move to foil the opposition grand rally at Paltan Maidan on Tuesday.

At Lalbagh, police charged batons on a procession, led by former lawmaker Haji Mohammad Selim, at noon, leaving several AL workers injured.

In the morning, police picked up two women pickets from a procession near Noor Hossain Square led by AL leaders Motia Chowdhury and Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya. The two AL activists, Shilpi and Dipti, were released later.

The police also clubbed women opposition activists in a procession near the Dainik Bangla intersection in the morning, injuring two, Aleya Khatun Doly and Hasina Alam Baby.

Most buses and minibuses stayed off the roads in the capital but rickshaws were seen during the hartal hours. Long-route buses did not ply anywhere in the country. Yesterday's hartal coincided with a transport strike called by Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samik Federation to press home its three-point demand.

However, launches, trains and flights operated normally during the hartal.

Educational institutions and most business establishments remained closed. However, bank transactions took place on a limited scale.

The AL lawmakers staged demonstration at Russell Square in the capital under police cordon. Besides, senior AL leaders addressed a rally at Muktangan.

AL leaders Abdul Jalil, Tofail Ahmed, M Akhtaruzzaman, Asaduzzaman Noor and his front organisations' leaders Jahangir Kabir Nanak, Pankaj Debnath, Roy Ramesh and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) leaders Hasanul Huq Inu, Mainuddin Khan Badal and Workers Party leaders Dipankar Saha Dipu spoke at the rally.

The opposition leaders then brought out a procession that ended at the AL central office.

In Netrakona, some 20 AL leaders and workers were injured when police charged baton on a procession. Led by district AL

## 52 smugglers

**FROM PAGE 20**  
goods being smuggled from Myanmar.

Of the goods, 1,260 tonnes are salt loaded in six boats and 148 tonnes are sugar loaded in one boat, the duty-officer of the Patenga PS told this correspondent yesterday evening.

Bangladesh Navy also filed a case with the Patenga Police Station.

## OC Rafiq

**FROM PAGE 20**  
was gunned down in front of his Ibrahimpur home on September 13.

His father Abdur Razzak filed a murder case with Kafrul Police Station accusing Rafiqul and 27 others.

Hasibul Haque Johnny, one of the 13 arrestees in the case, confessed before a magistrate to his involvement in the killing on September 22.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police closed Rafiqul on September 15 and suspended him on October 2 for not reporting to Rajarbagh Police Lines.

## Aug 17 blast case

**FROM PAGE 1**

Moulana Masud was arrested at Zia International Airport (ZIA) on August 22 for suspected links to the August 17 blasts. He was shown arrested in the bomb blast case and placed on remand on several occasions.

Immediately after his arrest, he had accused Jamaat-e-Islami Amir and Industries Minister Motiur Rahman Nizami of having a direct role in the countrywide explosions.

In the charge sheet, the IO said he did not find any evidence of the three having links to the August 17 blasts at Airport area. Moreover, there was no conclusive proof that Masud had channelled money to the militants for staging the countrywide blasts.

Earlier the IO in his forwarding report placed before the court on August 23 had described Masud as bearing links to the blast near a dustbin adjacent to ZIA Concourse Hall at around 11:25am on August 17. The report also portrayed Masud as a central leader of banned JMB and accused him of providing funds for the countrywide blitz of handmade bombs.

The charge-sheeted accused include Mohammad Rezaul Haq alias Reza, 25, of Jamalpur, Musa alias Mustafizur Rahman, 22, of Naogaon, Habibur Rahman alias Habib, 23, and Mohammad Sagir Hossain, 35, of Dhaka.

Of them, Reza is behind bars while the others are on the run. Reza had given a confessional statement to a magistrate, naming the other JMB members involved in the August 17 blasts.

The IO petitioned for arrest warrants to be issued against them and attachment of their moveable properties.

## Transport strike

**FROM PAGE 1**

He said, "The communications minister has issued a letter pledging to discuss and meet our demands and to implement other agreements that had signed earlier between the government and the transport leaders."

He said, "The bilateral meeting with the communications minister will be held at the Railway Building at 4:00pm on Sunday and if our demands are not met, we will decide what to do next."

The opposition-supported section of the federation on Monday threatened to enforce an indefinite transport strike if the government-backed transport strike that started Monday morning apparently to prevent opposition supporters from attending the Tuesday's grand rally was not withdrawn.

The transport strike was withdrawn on Tuesday night.

Our Dinajpur correspondent reported that the district transport owners yesterday enforced an indefinite strike on 52 routes of the district protesting the attack on Subal Ghosh, a member of Dinajpur District Bus Owners Association, allegedly by Mujibur Rahman and his associates on Wednesday night.

Immediately after the incident, the district transport owners held a press conference at the local press club and gave the strike call demanding arrest of Mujibur Rahman, secretary of North Bengal Transport Workers Union, and his associates involved in the attack on Subal Ghosh.

They also filed a case with Dinajpur Sadar Police Station, accusing Mujibur Rahman and his two associates -- Mohammad Jabbar and Bulu.

Mujibur Rahman was arrested in Dinajpur on November 20 in three criminal cases and was released on Tuesday night under pressure from the government-backed transport workers.

## C'wealth agenda

**FROM PAGE 20**  
legitimate right and a responsibility to show leadership."

Foreign ministers were due to deliver a communique late Thursday on their two days of talks, which focused largely on the trade issue.

"I am sure that the damage of the round failing will be significant and it will hold up the development agenda in a way that we'll live to regret," Britain's Africa minister David Trieman told journalists.

"That should give us the impetus to carry on and try and get a solution to the round."

In an apparent effort to head off a row at the summit, which brings together G8 members Britain and Canada with some of the world's poorest nations who are denied access to rich country's markets, he said developing nations had understood that Britain, as current EU president, had pushed for the gradual lowering of trade barriers.

"We are arguing for a long transition period, as well as for as much aid as can be achieved across that transition period," the British minister said.

"Even if they (developing states) didn't know we were arguing it from us, they would know it from the French because they keep telling us off for it."

France is a major beneficiary of EU agriculture programmes and has come under fire from Britain in particular for refusing to give ground on subsidies.

Agriculture has proved the main stumbling block to wrapping up a round of trade talks, which began in the Qatar capital Doha in 2001.

## BNP sacks Hena

**FROM PAGE 1**

Hena, a lawmaker from Rajshahi-3, from the party and cancelled his primary membership for violating party discipline and tarnishing its image.

In his instant reaction to the party decision, Abu Hena said the expulsion proved that the government and the BNP want to establish the rule of militants in the country. "The leaders who expelled me from the party," he said.

Sources said the BNP chairperson and prime minister took the decision to axe Abu Hena from the party in an apparent bid to defuse the grievances of its alliance partner Jamaat-e-Islami, which is blamed for its alleged link to the militants.

The BNP chief called party General Secretary Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan a couple of days ago to her office and discussed the issue relating to Hena's comments.

Yesterday, the PM summoned Post and Telecommunications Minister Barrister Aminul Haq, who is also the minister in charge of Rajshahi and Naogaon districts, to her office and asked for his opinion about Hena's allegations against him.

The BNP policymakers did not discuss the issue in a formal meeting but the party chairperson was learnt to have talked to a number of senior leaders about the issue. The leaders reportedly suggested taking drastic action against Hena.

The top leaders of BNP told the party chief that if the high-command goes lenient about the issue now, the party may face further disunity in future.

Party insiders said BNP expelled Abu Hena under the pressure of Jamaat-e-Islami as the lawmaker has annoyed the Islamist party through his remarks.

Abu Hena in his interviews said the activities of Islamist militants spread across the country after the Jamaat-e-Islami came to office in 2001 as a coalition partner of BNP. The lawmaker also

said the Jamaat-e-Islami has reduced the dominance of BNP.

A highly-placed source in the BNP said grievances and difference of opinions among the rank and file of party leaders are rising on the militant issue. Four MPs from Chittagong, greater Jessore and Rajshahi are aggrieved at the matter, he said.

Other sources in the party said a section of BNP leaders, known to be the liberal group, believes Jamaat is responsible for the rise of militant outfits in the country.

They also hold a number of ministers responsible for patronising Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai and his men in Rajshahi region last year.

Former bureaucrat Abu Hena, who joined BNP on May 3 in 1996 after retiring from government service, was elected MP twice from Rajshahi-3 constituency, defeating the AL candidate by huge margin on both occasions.

Talking to The Daily Star last night, the lawmaker said he would launch a campaign across the country against the militants. "I am not alone. The countrymen who do not believe in militancy are with me," he said.

In the last parliament, rebel BNP lawmaker Major (ret'd) Akhtaruzzaman lost his membership for joining parliament ignoring the party decision.

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar said Akhtaruzzaman had violated the party decision and joined parliament when the then opposition BNP was boycotting the House.

"But Abu Hena did not violate the party's decision. His membership from parliament could have been vacated if he resigned from the party. But he did not resign," the speaker said.

"He has been elected by people and he is still a member of parliament," Sircar said.

The speaker said he has not received any letter from the BNP seeking his directive to vacate the membership of Abu Hena.

## SP, 5 NGOs

**FROM PAGE 1**

working as an informant of the banned Islamist militant group.

The suspicion of police link to the JMB became more evident as the law enforcement agency concealed and did not include the JMB hit list recovered from the Rangpur hideout in its seizure list.

The police have in fact denied recovering any JMB hit list from the rented house of Abdul Awal, detained son-in-law of JMB chief Abdur Rahman. But sources in the law enforcement agencies confirmed the seizure of one such list, naming the next targets of the JMB.

Our Rangpur correspondent reports: The slow pace Rangpur police in conducting any drive to arrest any local militant has raised doubt about its link to the militants.

The law enforcers in Rangpur have been mysteriously inactive to launch further drive to detect militant network in the district after its Rangpur den was busted on Tuesday night.

Question of involvement of a part of the police administration with JMB activities further deepened following the recovery of a handwritten letter of Awal's wife, which was supposed to be delivered to Awal, who is now being interrogated in the joint Interrogation Cell (JIC).

The letter reads, "Bangla Bhai is trying to negotiate with the authorities concerned for your case. Don't worry about it."

Meanwhile, the recovery of an identity card (ID) of one Abdur Rahman, showing him as an employee of the Saudi Arabian embassy in Bangladesh, created speculations inside the police administration.

The police wondered that this Abdur Rahman is the absconding JMB chief himself as the photo has resemblance with a young Abdur Rahman.

The suspicion of police link to the JMB got stronger as an SP from Nilphamari was tasked with carrying out the operation in Awal's den at Noorpur in Rangpur, bypassing the Rangpur police.

Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of police Baharul Alam told The Daily Star that the Nilphamari SP conducted the operation because he got the clue first.

A police source said the DIG did not inform the Rangpur police about the operation, fearing disclosure of information from them.

**THREATS IN NETRAKONA, BARISAL**

Our Netrakona correspondent writes: SP Al Hossen told The Daily Star yesterday that some JMB cadres have been threatening him for the last three days over telephone that if the further "disturbs" the JMB cadres, they will kill him and his family members.

Ali Hossen, however, expressed hope that the militants threatening him will be arrested in three or four days.

Meanwhile, Netrakona police for the first time admitted that the district's people are involved with the JMB.

Following the threats, additional police forces were deployed at different points of the main roads, bus stands, railway stations, and the offices and residences of DC and SP.

Meanwhile, some reliable sources informed that many