

## Govt faces music

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fuel. The hoarding along with a panic buying resulted in a scarcity and increase in fuel prices in the north.

But, following the lawmakers' censure, after the Maghrab break, State Minister for Finance and Planning Abul Hossain in a statement told the House the government has no plan at the moment to increase the fuel prices.

### THE CENSURE

BNP lawmaker Abdul Mottalib Akand first raised the issue of fuel crisis during the question-answer period, saying farmers in his constituency who have been suffering an acute fuel crisis, besieged him recently.

"I want to know from the finance minister what are his measures to keep the fuel prices within the farmers' reach," he said amid threats from his party colleagues.

BNP MP Mehedhi Hasan Rumi next said the government's efforts like providing farm loans would not bring any positive results if they were forced to buy fuel at a high price.

Another BNP lawmaker, Rustam Ali Farazi, asked the government to take action against the hoarders who gave rise to the fuel prices.

The ruling party MPs also pointed a finger at Finance Minister M. Saifur Rahman and

### Govt playing

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The AL chief said the BNP-led alliance government captured state power using the terrorists and they are patronising the terrorists and militants to carry out their design.

Referring to the prime minister's (PM) claim about the country's development, Hasina said she (PM) is only cutting red ribbons of projects taken up by the previous AL government.

Accusing the PM and her family for all the grenade and bomb attacks in the country, she said, "This is the reason the government is not interested in investigating any of these cases."

The opposition leader also accused the PM for what she said "plundering national wealth". "People will take account of all their wealth, which the prime minister and her family made illegally," she said, adding, "If I get the chance to run the country in future, I will return all the money to the people."

Referring to Shamsuddin's joining the AL, she said, "His joining AL is a protest of the killings, repression and terrorism of the Islamic regime."

Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim MP, Obaidul Kader, Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Abdul Mannan, Dewan Shafiq Arefin Tutul, Shamsuddin Ahmed MP, Asim Kumar, Golam Mohiuddin, Kamrul Huda Selim, Jalal Uddin, Awlad Hossain Harun and Dewan Abdur Rob also spoke on the occasion.

## Biswa Ijtema ends

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League chief Sheikh Hasina, senior ministers, state ministers, political leaders, diplomats of some Muslim countries, and high government officials took part in the munajat from separate stages specially erected for them.

As the area from Board Bazar in Gazipur to Azampur in Uttara turned into a human sea, the munajat was relayed to far-flung areas through loudspeakers.

Roads, sidewalks, open spaces, and rooftops of nearby houses and factory buildings were teeming with people. Some even perched on the branches of trees to participate in the munajat.

Most of the devotees who joined the Akheri Munajat had to walk several kilometres as the highway towards Tongi was virtually closed down to traffic movement from the airport on the south and Joydevpur crossing on the north since the morning.

Attendance in the government and private offices, mills and factories in Dhaka, Tongi and Gazipur was thin, as a large number of employees and officials left their workplaces to join the munajat.

President Iajuddin Ahmed offered munajat from the main stage, while the prime minister accompanied by the president's wife Prof Anwara Begum, ministers, and party leaders attended the munajat from a dais at the Bata Complex.

Awami League chief Sheikh

### Two rapists

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colleague Ekramul Haq was returning home after a walk on Mohammadpur Embankment at about 6:00pm on January 13, 2002, when a gang of criminals led by Belal and Shah Alam waylaid them, the prosecution said.

Tying up Ekram, the gang raped the victim repeatedly until she became senseless. The locals rescued her and took her to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital for treatment.

After release from the hospital, the victim filed a case against the two with Mohammadpur Police Station.

Special Public Prosecutor Mohammad Akhteruzzaman appeared for the state while advocate Khondaker Mohibul Hassan Apple defended the accused.

## 2 'graft' cases

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challenge the High Court (HC) ruling vacating its earlier orders.

Two corruption cases were filed with Tejgaon Police Station on August 7, 2002 and December 11, 2001. SA Samad, the then principal secretary to the PM, is among the other accused in the cases.

In the statements of the cases, the former PM and others were accused of causing a loss of Tk 447 crore in purchasing frigates and about Tk 143 crore in appointing lobbies for readymade garment industry.

The charge sheets were framed in the two cases.

The HC stayed the proceedings of the case regarding frigate purchase on December 6, 2003, and that on appointment of lobbies on December 18, 2002.

But a HC bench on August 16 and 21, 2005, vacated the stay orders.

### Schoolgirl dies

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around 10:30am.

"I saw Aklima standing near the road. Suddenly she ran across the road and the police van hit her, killing her on the spot," Enamul Haq said.

Locals captured the police vehicle immediately after the accident. Forces from Adabbar Police Station rushed to the spot and saved the van from public wrath.

The duty officer at Adabbar Police Station said the driver, constable Mizanur Rahman, is in their custody.

"We will decide whether Mizan will be arrested or not after filing of a case, which is under process, in this connection," the duty officer added.

On Saturday, nine-year-old Radib Raihan Alis Digantha, a class II student of Motijheel Ideal School and College, was killed as a passenger bus hit a motorcycle, in which he was going to school with his father.

### Govt to seek

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time for them to appeal for an extension of the deadline, he said, "That I cannot say."

On whether praying for time to separate the judiciary from the administration has become a routine job for the government, Moudud said the previous Awami League government was not successful in separating the judiciary though the court had granted them one and a half years for the task.

"The issue should be handled with care," Moudud told the journalists, adding that the government does not lack sincerity in this regard, as it is an electoral commitment of the four-party alliance.

Once the judiciary is separated, it would need a separate secretariat, more spaces for the judicial magistrates in the bar associations. Especially during the transition period, things should be dealt with extreme caution, he added.

Moudud said the judicial Service Commission has recommended names for the 140 posts of assistant judges, and 25 of them have already been appointed.

Asked if the government will form a supreme judicial council against one of the election commissioners for 'breaching the secrecy rules' of the Election Commission, he said no such decision was made.

### NCBs asked

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finance ministry and they (NCBs) will not refuse to open LC for fuel import by Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) in future, the minister added.

Mahmudur Rahman, adviser to the energy ministry, said the finance minister has directed the BB to do so there be no problem in LC opening.

A meeting source said the central bank will provide loans in the form of overdraft to the NCBs, who are facing dollar crisis, so that they do not face any problem in LC opening for petroleum import by the BPC.

The BB and NCBs will later decide the rate of interest on the loans.

BPC owes around Tk 9,000 crore to Sonali, Janata and Agrani banks. Sonali bank alone has Tk 5,500 crore in dues with the BPC and it has stopped LC opening for the BPC.

They have to explain why legal and departmental actions should not be taken against them and why the matter should not be forwarded to the Supreme Court for further action, the judge said.

ABM Fakhruddin, an advocate of Barisal Bar Association, had filed a criminal case against Gopal and Hamid and two others in the District and Sessions Judge's Court, Barisal on the allegation of non-compliance of court order on Wednesday.

The petition stated that the district judge of Barisal had cancelled the bail of Abul Bashar and Chandu Khan in a criminal case and had sent the order to the 1st class magistrate's court for compliance.

The complainant also said he had the magistrate's and the ASI's attention to execute the higher court order on October 19, December 15, 2005 and January 16, 2006.

It was also alleged in the petition that the ASI had said the order of the district judge was wrong and that he had even threatened Fakhruddin of serious consequences if he proceeded with the matter any further.

The BB governor, finance secretary, managing directors of the NCBs and high officials of finance and energy ministries were present in the meeting.

## Boro farming

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Farmers require 12 lakh tonne diesel during the peak Boro season in January to run over one million pumps to irrigate the Boro crop, which constitutes 55 percent of the country's total yield of rice. The Aus and Aman crops constitute the rest. This year's projected target of Boro production is set at 140 million tonne.

Farmers could not plant Boro in early January due to dense fog. There was also a shortage of labourers during Eid-ul-Azha in mid-January.

Officials speaking on condition of anonymity at the agriculture ministry, acknowledged the farmers' plight due to the rise in diesel price by Tk 4-8 per litre but once again passed the responsibility on the finance ministry for shelving its proposal of subsidising diesel for irrigation two years now.

Since the BNP-led coalition came to power in 2001, diesel prices have risen from Tk 15 to Tk 33 per litre, increasing farm output costs and in effect forcing the consumers to pay much higher price for rice now than four years back.

Aggrieved people blocked the road leading to the Chilmara river port in Kurigram district yesterday, demanding diesel and petrol. Police were deployed at the filling stations in Panchagarh to thwart agitators while people laid siege to a filling station at Taraganj in Rangpur.

Local DAE officials said at least 5,000 out of 30,000 diesel-run pumps in Kurigram remained inactive due to the fuel crisis. The DAE projected Boro cultivation on 71,805 hectares of land in this northern district but half the area still is not ready for Boro transplantation.

Magistrate Enamul Haq had to intervene and assure the agitating people of rationing diesel.

Alauddin Mondal of Atrai in Naogaon district said he had been

trying to collect some diesel for the past few days but in vain. "Ultimately, I will have to stop operating my irrigation pumps and opt for non-Boro crops that can be done without irrigation," he said.

Experts fear such options by Boro farmers would mean less rice production in the country in 2005-06, which will strain the country's foreign reserve for importing more rice.

Another farmer from Bogra said he could manage only five litre diesel yesterday and that too from several pumps, while he required 20 litre.

Our staff reporter Anwar Ali reports from Rajshahi that paddy growers from different upazilas in the district came to the divisional headquarters for diesel but had to return empty handed in most cases.

The situation remained unchanged yesterday with all the 30 fuel stations in the district remaining closed as the pump owners could not buy oil from the Baghabari depot.

Quazi Anwar, a paddy grower from Mohishbari in Godagari, said an unknown person promised him to sell diesel at Tk 15 higher than the regular price. Anwar said he readied seedbeds for cultivating Boro on 12 bighas of land but could not irrigate the land for want of diesel.

Our Netrakona correspondent Jahangir Alam reported that retailers sold diesel and kerosene at Tk 50 and petrol at Tk 100 per litre.

The artificial fuel crisis gripped the district town and ten upazilas of the district as all the filling stations refrained from selling fuel yesterday.

Our Pabna correspondent Shokat Afroz Asad reports: A temporary pontoon was set up at Naragarbari-Kazirhat Ghat in Sujanagar upazila of Pabna yesterday to help ease the crisis of fuel in the northern districts.

**Cops asked to execute arrest warrant against Inquilab publisher**

**COURT CORRESPONDENT**

A Dhaka court yesterday directed the officer-in-charge (OC) of Sutrapur Police Station to execute an earlier issued arrest warrant against former publisher of Inquilab ASAM Baklibillah.

The Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka also directed the OC to execute the order of confiscating Baklibillah's removable property.

Following the hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate Syed Mohammad Mujibul Haque issued the order.

According to the complaint, the daily Inquilab ran a write-up of Obed Jagirdar on December 15, 2001 in favour of declaring August 14 as the independence day of Bangladesh.

After publication of the write-up, Advocate Iqbal Hossain filed a case against the writer, editor of the newspaper AMMAB Baklibillah and publisher Baklibillah on January 1, 2002.

Among them, the writer and the editor had earlier obtained bail from the lower court, while Baklibillah has been absconding.

The court had issued an arrest warrant against him and ordered to confiscate his property.

**Law on financial reporting by corporate bodies on the cards**

**BDNEWS, Dhaka**

Consultants have been selected to formulate the Financial Reporting Act and the Financial Reporting Council, an independent regulatory body, to regulate accounting practices in the corporate sector, World Bank officials said yesterday.

The regulatory capacity relating to financial reporting by regulated entities will be strengthened for three agencies -- Bangladesh Bank (BB), Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and Insurance Department," said a BB statement.

Strengthening of the auditing and accounting practices in Bangladesh is one of the major components of the Economic Management and Technical Assistance Project (EMTAP) launched by WB in 2004.

This component titled "Strengthening Auditing and Accounting Practices" also aims to strengthen the capacity of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) and the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Bangladesh (ICMAB), and also improve the curricula and quality of teaching of accounting and audit by universities, colleges, ICAB and ICMAB.

The other important components of the EMTAP project include modernising tax administration, improving and implementing a sound information and communication technology (ICT) system in the government and strengthening communication between government and external stakeholders.

**3 Kansat leaders**

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fresh confrontation between police and agitators.

Rajshahi district and city units of Workers' Party of Bangladesh submitted a memorandum to Deputy Commissioner Sayed Ahsanul Haque demanding compensation for the victims of police firing.

Party leaders Liaquat Ali Liku, Rafiqul Islam Piarul and Juba Moitree leader Ashraful Haque, among others, were present.

Meanwhile, Belal-e-Baki, grandson of prominent educationist late Idris Ahmad Mia of Shibganj visited the injured at Rajshahi Medical College and Hospital. He donated Tk 1,000 each to all the 15 injured.

**Federer wins**

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to win three successive Grand Slams since Pete Sampras won at the 1994 Australian Open. The Swiss went into this year's Open having won last year's Wimbledon and US Open.

He now joins other tennis greats John McEnroe, John Newcombe and Mats Wilander with seven major titles and is closing in on all-time leader Sampras with 14.

It was the 24-year-old's 35th title and his fourth win over 20-year-old Baghdatis, who beat three top-10 players to reach his first Grand Slam final and only second tour final overall.

Federer pocketed 900,000 US dollars for his Australian victory, swelling his career prizemoney to 21,274,573 US dollars.

Baghdatis was bidding to become the first unseeded player to win the Australian Open since 212-ranked Australian Mark Edmondson won here in 1976 and his ranking has now climbed to 26.

The security institution is a red line. We will not allow anyone to tamper with it," Gaza police chief Ala Hosni said. "It will remain a powerful and impartial arm that carries out

## 66 killed in Poland</