

## AL to join parliament,

FROM PAGE 1  
opposition lawmakers' attending the House to table the proposals," Hasina said, calling a countrywide day-long hartal for February 15.

Marchers from different districts started to enter the city through Gabtoli, Uttara, Sadarghat, Kamalapur, Syedabad and Jatrabari early in the morning amid police obstructions in places.

They waved banners and chanted slogans like "let's go to Dhaka" and "no election without reforms".

People from different parts of the capital started joining the marchers at around noon. With small processions streaming into the rally venue, the historic Paltan Maidan was filled to overflowing with people by 2:00pm.

The long march began Thursday in places furthest from the capital. Over the next three days opposition supporters from the other parts joined the march that culminated into a huge gathering yesterday.

The government deployed around 8,000 security personnel including those of police, Rapid Action Battalion, BDR and Armed Police Battalion at all the entrances to the capital as well as in and around the rally ground.

## HASINA'S SPEECH

The AL chief said despite all possible sorts of obstructions by the government, people from the four corners of the country flooded Dhaka to say 'no' to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

Accusing once again the ruling parties of harbouring the Islamist militants and turning the country into a failed state, she demanded the government step down immediately for its failures.

The AL chief blasted the ruling alliance for harassing the opposition leaders and workers all over the country. "Khaleda Zia has exploited the state mechanism to the maximum to resist people marching towards Dhaka, but failed," she said.

In her speech, the former prime minister alleged that over 10,000 leaders and workers of the opposition alliance have been arrested in the last few days. She accused the government of engaging Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and other law enforcement agencies to persecute the people with allegiance to the opposition parties.

Hasina called on the administration, police, Rab and others to dissociate themselves from the 'failed and terrorist government' whose 'days are numbered'.

Speaking on rampant corruption, she said she wonders how the prime minister's family has become one of the richest families in only a few years when it is widely publicised that Ziaur Rahman left behind nothing for his family.

## WHAT OTHER LEADERS SAID

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain said, "Now is the time to say goodbye to this government. Turn this unity into a sheer force that will oust this tyrant government."

He said the people would not stand any election engineering.

In reference to a recent statement by the prime minister, AL General Secretary and 14-party co-ordinator Abdul Jalil said, "People won't give you a chance to materialise your blueprint for grabbing power."

Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon said ouster of the present government is now a matter of time and the countrymen will never allow it any opportunity to return to power.

JSD President Hasanul Haq Inu asked the government to quit, admitting its failure to deliver.

Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Abdur Razak, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Motia Chowdhury, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Mohammad Nasim, Obaidul Quader, Mohammad Hanif,

## Cartoon Uproar

FROM PAGE 16  
In a statement under rule 300, the government lodged a strong protest with the Danish government through its mission on November 7 for publishing the cartoons by Danish daily Jyllands Posten, Khan said.

He said it is the responsibility of Denmark and certain other western countries to reduce tensions created by the publication of the cartoons on the holy Prophet.

Khan said such act has been done on a very well planned manner to provoke hatred and malicious feelings among Muslims against other religions.

"We've also told the Danish government that religion of Islam was seriously ridiculed through drawing of the cartoons that insulted the profound faith of the Muslims who constitute one-fifth of the global population," the foreign minister said.

Khan said excuse is being made for the cartoons on the plea of freedom of expression. "It's very painful and disappointing that some major western newspapers have reprinted the cartoons tormenting the religious belief of the Muslims."

The foreign minister said Bangladesh as a democratic country believes in freedom of expression. At the same time it believes that this freedom of expression will not cause any hatred, intolerance or ridicule against any faiths or followers of other religions.

## USS Cole attack planner escapes, says Interpol

AP, Lyon, France

A man considered a mastermind of the USS Cole bombing that killed 17 sailors in a Yemeni port in 2000 was among 23 people who escaped from a Yemeni prison last week, Interpol said yesterday.

Our correspondent from Comilla reports: At least 20 people were injured and some 25 vehicles were vandalised when ruling BNP activists attacked the Dhaka-bound long march at the eastern side of Gunti Bridge in Daudkandi upazila yesterday noon.

Of the injured, the condition of Bangladesh Chhatra League activists Adnan, Tipu, Wasim, Raju, and Shechwashebok League leaders Subrata, Warin and Haji Monir was stated to be critical.

## Taher killed

FROM PAGE 16  
insisted on Taher's going to Rajshahi for the meet.

"They were sure Taher will join them, but they did not ask me anything when he was absent from the meeting," Zia Uddin Ahmed, Taher's relative, quoted Sultana as saying.

"My father was under treatment at a Dhaka clinic for heart ailments and was supposed to return to Rajshahi in week. But he went there in the wake of repeated requests," Himesh told The Daily Star over phone.

He quoted his mother as saying that a number of influential teachers pressed Taher for playing an active role in the teacher's promotion.

Taher did not agree with the teachers about the promotion as the concerned teacher "is lacking in his academic efficiency to be a full-time professor," said an RU high official.

On February 1, Taher went missing just after he reached Rajshahi from Dhaka. His body was found in the sewer behind his campus house in the morning of February 3.

Jahangir told the police a teacher asked him in mid-January if he would kill Taher, adding, the teacher planned the murder at Taher's house.

Jahangir orchestrated the killing with his relative Nazmul and brothers Salam and Sohrab Hossain after he was offered job and money.

Jahangir said in his statement he met Taher when the latter reached his Rajshahi residence and killed him between 8:00pm and 10:00pm during load shedding.

He said they were lurking in the house and Salam hit Taher on the head with an iron rod on the second floor and dragged the badly wounded teacher to Jahangir's ground-floor room.

They confirmed his death by strangling him with a pillow and stabbing the wound by a knife, he confessed.

He said the mastermind teacher and another masked man turned up to be sure that the crime was done. The body was dumped into the sewer at the teachers' diktat.

## RU PROTESTS

The university yesterday came to a standstill as all academic activities were suspended on the second day of the strikes by teachers and students demanding speedy trial of the murderer.

Regarding appointment of the chief adviser, the article says the president will at first call the last retired chief justice to become the chief adviser. In case of his unwillingness, the president will ask the ex-chief justice who retired before the last retired chief justice.

If no retired chief justice is available or willing to hold the office of chief adviser, the president will appoint the person who among the retired judges of the Appellate Division retired last.

If such retired judge is not available or is not willing to hold the office of chief adviser, the president will appoint the person who among the retired judges of the Appellate Division retired last.

Addressing the function, the Prime Minister expressed her happiness knowing that small contributions made by the members of Bangladesh Army from the money earned through participation

in UN Peacekeeping Missions have been pooled together by Sena Kalyan Trust for building this imposing five-star hotel.

SHDL was formed in 1995 by the joint-venture partners Bangladesh Army Welfare Trust and UK-based Associated Building Design Limited to build and operate hotels and other businesses in Bangladesh.

In 2000, the company was made a fully Bangladesh Enterprise of Army Welfare Trust (AWT) and Sena Kalyan Sangstha (SKS) with 80 percent and 20 percent shares respectively, according to the Radisson Hotel brochure.

The hotel offers 30,000-square-foot function space, including Grand Ballroom, which is the city's largest ballroom measuring 9,900 square feet that can accommodate more than 1,180 guests in theatre style.

Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Mosen U Ahmed, who is chairman of the board of directors of SHDL, Paul Kirwan, president, Carlson Hotels Asia Pacific, and Army Adjutant General Maj Gen Md Matir Rahman, vice-chairman of the board of directors of SHDL, also attended the inaugural function.

Ministers, diplomats, Chiefs of Navy and Air Force, civil and military high officials and distinguished personalities attended the inaugural function.

Addressing the function, the Prime Minister expressed her happiness knowing that small contributions made by the members of Bangladesh Army from the money earned through participation

waging a low-key insurgency for decades seeking more autonomy and benefits from the oil and gas. They have intensified attacks in the past year.

The latest violence came after President Pervez Musharraf on Friday demanded that Baluch tribal leaders disband their "private militias".

The military launched a major crackdown on militants in Baluchistan after a rocket attack on December 14 during a visit by Musharraf to Kohlu. The crackdown coincided with the announcement of plans to privatise two gas distribution firms in Baluchistan.

Baluch nationalists say hundreds of people have been killed. Analysts say this could be an exaggeration, but the independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan has accused the government of "gross human rights violations" in Baluchistan.

"BNP also wants to see a strong Election Commission for holding free and fair elections," he said.

The prime minister and BNP chairperson has already rejected the opposition's demand for reform of the caretaker government system from a number of political rallies.

As all the accused are policemen, permission for filing a case against them was sought from the police headquarters.

The Inspector General of Police yesterday gave approval order for filing the case.

## Urea output hiccups

FROM PAGE 1

As against 28 lakh tonnes of urea demand in the current fiscal year, BCIC had projected that its factories would be able to supply 19 lakh tonnes. But repeated production halts at urea factories now cast a long shadow over meeting the target.

BCIC factories produce per tonne urea at Tk 6,000 and market it at Tk 4,800 while the gap is supposed to be met by government provided farm subsidy.

Attributing the frequent production drops at its factories to serious liquidity crisis, BCIC sources said there have been lapses in proper maintenance of the aging urea factories.

BCIC is handicapped in proper repairing and overhauling of its factories because of government's failure in paying off its Tk 1,000 crore outstanding dues accumulated over the last five years as unmet subsidy bills.

Yemeni officials confirmed to Interpol that a man considered a mastermind of the Cole attack, identified as Jamal al-Badawi, was among those who escaped.

Al-Badawi was among those sentenced to death in September 2004 for plotting the USS Cole attack. Two suicide bombers blew up an explosives-laden boat next to the destroyer as it refueled in the Yemeni port of Aden on Oct. 12, 2000.

Another of the 23 escapees was identified as Fawaz Yahya al-Rabeiee, considered by Interpol to be one of those responsible for a 2002 attack on the French tanker Limburg off Yemen's coast. That attack killed a Bulgarian crew member and spilled 90,000 barrels of oil into the Gulf of Aden.

Seeing no prospect of the finance ministry's paying off BCIC's dues, industries ministry in late last year forwarded a proposal to the former asking for raising the market price of urea so that BCIC's loss is minimised.

But the government is sitting

on that production and market price adjustment proposal considering severe backlash from farmers as well as from urban consumers in the election year.

In 2001-2002, BCIC factories produced 15 lakh tonnes of urea and incurred a loss of Tk 180 crore as price gap due to non-payment of the subsidy, in the following FY it produced 20 lakh tonne to incur a loss of Tk 240 crore and as this FY's projected

output is 19 lakh tonne, BCIC is set to incur a loss of Tk 228 crore.

Shortfall in domestic urea production is a costly affair, as the government has to import urea at Tk 18,000 a tonne compared to BCIC's production cost of Tk 6,000 only.

## High Court

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh Bar Council, the statutory body regulating the lawyers, to stop large-scale arrests.

The Public Interest Litigation (PIL) writ petition was filed challenging the validity of the 'arbitrary mass arrests' across the country since February 3 ahead of the 14-party opposition alliance-convened long march towards Dhaka.

"...the widespread, random and wholesale arrests of citizens by the law enforcement agencies in the absence of any definite knowledge of the facts concerned is clearly arbitrary and without lawful authority and of no legal effect," the petition reads.

...the failure by the law enforcement agencies to inform citizens, who have been arrested or detained during this process of 'mass arrest,' of any information regarding their grounds of detention or of their right to consult a legal practitioner render such arrests and confinement in custody beyond the authority of the constitution..."

Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain, assisted by advocate Mahbubey Alam, Tobarak Hossain, Idrisur Rahman and Barrister Tanjib-ul Alam, appeared for the writ petitioner.

In 2004, the HC issued similar injunction on 'mass arrest' ahead of an opposition programme following a writ petition which is still pending.

## Bill seeking 2-yr

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile, Health and Family Welfare Minister Khandaker Mosarrat Hossain, on behalf of the state minister for home, told the House the government has already approved the draft of the anti-terrorism act.

The minister who was replying to lawmakers' queries about the recent spate of bomb terrorism said police are investigating the sources of the bomb and arms of the militants.

"We will inform the nation about it once the investigation is completed," he said. He also informed the House about the government's steps to check militant activities.

Replying to another written question by Awami League lawmaker Faruk Khan, Foreign Minister M. Morshed Khan said 5,866 Bangladeshis are now detained in different countries.

The foreign minister however said initiatives are on to bring the citizens back.

## Cops release

FROM PAGE 16

carry those away on Saturday night. But locals ran to the spot, seized the truck and beat up Mojibar.

Later the highway police arrested and took him to the Shibganj Police Station, but the Shibganj police released him without lodging any case.

Contacted, Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Shibganj Police Station Abdur Rashid admitted the incident of tree felling. When asked why Mojibar was released he, however, refused to make any comments.

Upazila BNP President ABM Kamal Selim and General Secretary Motiur Rahman told The Daily Star that they had no knowledge of the incident offelling trees.

## Three Rab

FROM PAGE 16

stand area at about 11:00pm on Saturday looking for a Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) member.

They picked up a bearded man, identified as a pir (religious leader), and allegedly threatened to arrest Khaleq too. Later the Rab men took Tk 11 lakh in cash, a mobile phone and gold ornaments from the house and left.

Acting on a tip-off, a Savar police team led by SI Saifur, caught the Rab personnel at about 1:30am yesterday near Savar bus stand area.

A huge amount of money, a mobile phone set and gold ornaments were recovered from their possession, the police said.

On information, a team of Rab-4 led by Major Zabed visited Savar Police Station and returned the cash and other valuables to Khaleq.

A Rab high official told UNB yesterday afternoon that the three Rab men were closed and a "court of inquiry" will investigate the matter.

## Tata investment

FROM PAGE 16

major issues except pricing of gas and coal have been settled," said a senior energy ministry official yesterday after a preparatory meeting for today's negotiations held at the ministry with Adviser Mahmudur Rahman in the chair.

"We have concluded three rounds of negotiations and we are hoping to conclude the investment proposal. There are some fundamental issues like coal mining, gas supplies and gas pricing which are likely to get high priority in this round of talks," said a Board of Investment (BoI) official.

The preparatory meeting discussed how the Tata Group would be given gas and coal, a meeting source said.

He said the government developed the Barakurukia coal mine with its own resources. "The government should think twice about the price before giving coal from a ready-made mine," the source said requesting anonymity.

Sources said the national board of revenue (NBR) is ready to give Tata a five-year tax-holiday as per the existing government policy.