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## PM flies to Pakistan today

REZAUL KARIM

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia flies for Islamabad today on a three-day state visit to Pakistan to conclude several deals in diverse areas to promote bilateral cooperation in trade, agriculture and tourism.

Highly placed sources said Bangladesh and Pakistan are expected to sign Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) on agricultural cooperation, promotion of tourism, cooperation between two export promotion bureaus and on standardisation of weights and measures. A bilateral agreement on visa abolition of diplomatic and official passports is also on the cards.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## AL returns to JS today

Hasina to place reform proposals for caretaker govt system, EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ending a prolonged boycott, the main opposition Awami League (AL) returns to parliament today to place proposals for reforms in the caretaker government system and the Election Commission (EC) that may witness heated debates in the House.

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina will place the opposition's reform proposals in her address to parliament but Leader of the House Khaleda Zia will not be present at the time of her speech. She leaves for Pakistan on a three-day visit in the afternoon.

This is for the first time in the

last 16 months that the ruling and the main opposition parties are set to face each other in parliament not only over the crucial reform proposals, but also the issues like militancy, price hike, and the crises of power, fuel and fertilisers.

The opposition will also protest strongly the much-talked-about bill to amend the Telecommunication Act, which will be passed in the House today allowing the law enforcement agencies to tap telephonic conversations of users.

The main opposition party walked out of parliament on September 15, 2004 as its demand for holding a discussion on the August 21 grenade attacks adjourn-

ing the scheduled business of the House was ignored by the speaker. Since then it did not join the parliamentary proceedings.

AL chief Sheikh Hasina has already prepared her speech and will issue an ultimatum to the government to meet the opposition's demand for reforms. The government is however rigid on its negative stance on the caretaker government reforms.

Several AL lawmakers have submitted notices demanding discussions on fuel and power crises, price hike of essentials and the appointment of two election commissioners.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## JS to discuss cartoons on Prophet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Sangsad holds a general discussion and adopts a censure motion today on the issue of the Danish cartoons satirising the Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM).

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdul Hamid told The Daily Star yesterday that they would participate in the discussion if they join the House today.

Sources in the Parliament Secretariat said the one-hour discussion has been included in today's business. BNP lawmaker Nurul Islam Moni will table the motion as his notice demanding discussion on the issue has been

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## Govt's fate depends on power ministry's job

Businesses say about next polls in view of electricity crisis

UNB, Dhaka

Present government's fate in the next general election largely hinges on the performance of the power ministry, business leaders said in view of an impending crisis in the sector in the upcoming summer.

Top leaders of the country's business community expressed this view yesterday at a discussion on the already-felt power crisis. It was organised by the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of

Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) at its auditorium.

"People are hungry for electricity... they are greatly concerned as to how the government will manage the coming summer," said Sharuzzaman Mortuza, president of the Khulna Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI).

He said the industries as well as residents of other major cities like Khulna, Rajshahi, Barisal and Sylhet are severely affected by power shortage.

Admitting the persisting power crisis, State Minister for Power Iqbal Hassan Mahmood sought cooperation of the business community in tiding over the grave situation in sight through holiday staggering and implementing a load-management system.

According to officials of the Power Development Board (PDB), the country will experience the highest-ever amount of power shortage in the coming summer-

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

## Govt loses crores of taka to sluggish ADP

34 donor-aided projects spent only 16pc fund in Jul-Dec as govt counts the costs

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The implementing agencies of 34 donor-aided development projects could spend just 16 percent of their annual allocations in the first half of the current fiscal year (FY).

Of a total Tk 2,543 crore allocation for FY06, they so far have expended only Tk 395 crore, with as many as 18 projects spending nothing at all, says a report of the Economic Relations Division (ERD) and the planning ministry.

The ERD and the planning ministry have identified these 34 sluggish projects under the Annual

Development Programme (ADP) as 'problematic and low utilised foreign aided investment projects'. The report also identified delays in consultant appointment, NGO selection, and getting approval from the Cabinet Committee on Purchase and clearance from the donors as some of the major obstacles to speed up the projects.

For four of these projects, the government is already paying huge commitment charges to donors in addition to interests on their funds.

"Because of inefficiency of the health ministry and the Rural

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



Flocks of migratory birds linger in spite of the withering winter to add to the natural beauty of Jahangirnagar University campus.

PHOTO STAR

## RU Teacher Killing Mohiuddin confesses to involvement

Names Shibir leader as his accomplice, say police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi University teacher Mia Muhammad Mohiuddin yesterday confessed to his involvement in the killing of Prof S Taher Ahmed and named RU unit Islami Chhatra Shibir President Shalehi as his accomplice, police said.

The police started a hunt for Shalehi after the arrested teacher's confession during interrogation.

Police sources said several teams of detective and special branches of police are trying to trap

Shalehi. The police are ready to pay up to Tk 30,000 for information leading to his arrest, they added.

Jahangir and Nazmul, two arrested suspects, have in their confessional statements before a magistrate also named Mohiuddin and Shalehi as the masterminds of the killing.

The absconding Shibir leader, heavily guarded by cadres, showed up during a huge showdown in Shahab Bazar on February 10 and went into hiding again.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## Erratic power supply serves another blow to boro

RAFIQUE SARKER, from Rangpur

Erratic power supply for about 15 days coupled with supply shortage and high price of diesel has thrown out of operation a large number of power pumps for irrigating farm land in eight northern districts, posing a serious threat to boro cultivation this season.

Frequent voltage fluctuations and a nagging low voltage of electricity have created widespread frustration among farmers about irrigating their boro fields.

Rangpur Chief Engineer of Power Development Board (PDB) Rabindranath Ghosh explained that excess load on the national

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

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## THE 5 STAR RADISSON WATER GARDEN HOTEL DHAKA OPENS ITS DOOR

The Radisson Water Garden Hotel Dhaka is the first Radisson hotel in Bangladesh. Like the existing 410 Radisson hotels operating in 61 countries, the Radisson Water Garden Hotel Dhaka is also committed to provide world-class hospitality services.

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