

## Bureaucrats' rat race for 4-party tickets

### Violation of service rules angers coalition leaders

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

In flagrant violation of service rules, a good number of top bureaucrats including the cabinet secretary have joined a rat race to consolidate their position for getting BNP-led four-party coalition ticket to contest the next general election.

These officials are involved in political activities under cover of official visits to their areas and attended public meetings and rallies in the last few months.

Most of these officials are already facing protest from the ruling alliance leaders and lawmakers from their constituencies. In some cases, such protests led to violent clashes.

The lawmakers and other leaders have also complained to alliance top brass and government high-ups about these officials' meddling in political activities.

The Government Services (Conduct) Rules, 1979, bars any government employee from taking

part in any political activities. Those who do so also violate the Government Employees (Appeal and Discipline) Rules, 1985, which is a punishable offence.

"According to rules, they (bureaucrats) cannot resort to such practice (involvement in politics). It is not only illegal but also unethical," former adviser to caretaker government Hafiz Uddin Khan told The Daily Star yesterday.

Bureaucrats may have liking for different political parties but they

cannot do politics as long as they are in service, added Hafiz, also former comptroller and auditor general.

The then Dhaka Division special judge Rezaul Karim Khan Churnu (he resigned later) had announced at public meetings in his locality (Kishoreganj) that he would contest the next election as BNP nominee. This drew flak from various sections of the society.

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## Fresh discontent over Kansat compensations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Fresh discontent stirred up among the people at Kansat of Chapainawabganj over distribution of compensations to the people injured in police excesses.

Many of the injured people who did not find their names on the list staged demonstrations at Abbas Bazar and Kansat intersection on Thursday night and yesterday afternoon.

They complained Palli Bidyut Unnayan Sangram Parishad (PBUSP) leaders and their close ones are enjoying the compensation money even though they were not injured.

They chanted slogans against PBUSP Convener Golam Rabbani and leaders who played important roles in preparing the compensation list.

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## President's cardiac surgery successful

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ailing President Prof Iajuddin Ahmed had a successful cardiac surgery at Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore yesterday.

The operation that began at 5:50am (Bangladesh standard time) took four hours and ten minutes, the Press Information Department (PID) said.

"The physicians expressed satisfaction over the operation. There was no complication during the surgery," M Mokhesur Rahman Chowdhury, press secretary to the president, said quoting the physicians.

Cardiac surgery specialist Dr MC Tong conducted the operation on President Iajuddin. Consultant

physician of the hospital Morris Chu and personal physician to the president Col Sheikh Bahar Hossain were present, said a PID handout.

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## Murdering Blair morally justified

Says Galloway

AFP, London

Killing British Prime Minister Tony Blair in a suicide bombing would be morally justified as revenge for the war in Iraq, firebrand lawmaker George Galloway has said.

In a magazine interview that was widely reported on Friday, the MP for the anti-war party, Respect, was asked if it would be justifiable for a suicide bomber to blow up Blair provided there were no other casualties.

Galloway told GQ magazine: "Yes, it would be morally justified. I am not calling for it -- but if it happened it would be of a

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PHOTO: HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU

Photo of a 1,200-year-old brick-built road that was discovered under an ancient structure at Mohasthangarh in Bogra district along with other antiquities from the Gupta and Pal eras during a recent France-Bangladesh joint excavation.

## Lightning kills 5 in Satkhira

AGENCIES, Satkhira

Five people were killed and six others injured in separate incidents of lightning in Assasuni, Kaliganj and Sadar upazilas of Satkhira district yesterday and on Thursday night.

The dead are, Dulal Sana, 24, son of Chittya Ranjan Sana, and Uttam Kumar Sana, 35, son of Basudev Kumar Sana, of village Khajra, and Saheb Ali, 40, of Kapsanda village under Asaasuni upazila; Manindra Sarkar, 45, of Kumarkhali village in Kaliganj upazila, and Abdul Mannan, 36, of Talbari village in Sadar upazila.

Police and family sources said Dulal Sana and Uttam Kumar were struck by lightning while standing under a tree at Khajra Bazar at about 8:00pm on Thursday. They died on the spot.

Saheb Ali was struck by lightning while returning home from a market at around 9:00pm. He died instantly.

Lightning struck Manindra and Mannan yesterday when they were working in their croplands. Both died on the spot.

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## Six killed in 'encounters' with law enforcers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six criminals and robbers were killed in separate encounters between law enforcers and their accomplices in Dhaka, Chittagong, Satkhira and Khulna early yesterday.

The dead are Wasim alias Wasi, 32, and Zakir Hossain alias Tunda Zakir, 30, in Dhaka, Mohammad Siraj, 40, and Mohammad Feroz, 30, in Chittagong, Shyamal Kumar Sarkar, 28, in Satkhira and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto in Khulna.

Rab said Wasi and Zakir were listed criminals in Hazaribagh and Dhanmondi areas of the capital.

Rab arrested Wasi with two cartons of phensidyle and two-kilogram marijuana in front of his house at Hazaribagh Thursday afternoon. He was accused in 12 criminal cases filed with Hazaribagh and Lalbagh police stations, Rab sources said.

On his statement, Rab-2 members, taking Wasi with them, raided

Hazaribagh area early yesterday to arrest his cohorts and recover firearms.

Sensing the presence of the Rab men, the accomplices of Wasi opened fire, forcing the members of the elite force to retaliate. Wasi received bullets during the shootout and died on the spot, the sources said.

Two bullets were recovered from the spot.

Rab arrested Zakir at Boubazar in East Rajabazar area on Wednesday afternoon from a BNP procession, his brother-in-law Shajahan Howladar told reporters.

Following his statement, Rab men along with Zakir went to the Dhanmondi area early yesterday to arrest his accomplices and recover firearms.

Rab sources said Zakir was shot in an encounter between Rab and his accomplices in the area.

Sub-Inspector AB Siddique of Dhanmondi Police Station took Zakir to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital at 3:00am where the doc-

tors declared him dead.

Zakir gave up terror activities after local goons cut off his fingers in 2002. He was later arrested and came out of jail a couple of months ago, his brother-in-law said.

CHITTAGONG

Two robbers--Mohammad Siraj, 40, and Mohammad Firoz, 30--were killed in an encounter with Rab at Hathazari upazila of the district on Thursday night, according to our staff correspondent in Chittagong.

The members of elite force also arrested two of the gang and recovered five firearms and 20 bullets from them.

Acting on a tip-off, a squad of Rab-7 raided Rajarhat village of South Burishachar under Hathazari upazila at about 11:00pm where a gang of nine robbers were preparing to commit a robbery.

The robbers were laying in ambush near the cowshed of one Gunu Mia of the village when the

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## AL blames minister, lingering discontent for garment unrest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) Parliamentary Committee yesterday blamed State Minister for Labour and Employment Amanullah Aman's lack of foresight, and workers' accumulated discontent for the recent ransacking of garment factories.

"If the government sat with the owners and workers of the garment factories and realised the workers' just demands, such incidents would not happen," said AL Parliamentary Committee Member Faruk Khan at a news briefing at the party's Dhanmondi office.

The comments came following the parliamentary committee delegation's visit to the ransacked factories and discussions with the factory owners and workers on

Thursday.

The outburst was an expression of workers' discontent at the deprivation, repression by the owners, and their indifference to the workers' long-standing demands, Faruk Khan MP said.

He also said conflicts among the readymade garment industry's waste-product traders, and dismissal of some workers in Savar EPZ contributed to the outburst.

The committee alleged that there had been problems brewing in Universal Garments factory for the last one month where workers had been beaten up, repressed by the goons and extorted. The recent unrest originated in Universal, the committee said.

"Most of the factories did not

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## Hasina's remarks about president's illness indecorous

Says Mannan Bhuiyan

UNB, Dhaka

LGRD Minister and BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan criticised the opposition leader and her party colleagues yesterday for what he termed their outrageous, indecorous and imbalance remarks about the illness of President Iajuddin Ahmed.

"These deliberate lies and propaganda by the main opposition is nothing but the reflections of bankruptcy of a political party," he told a press briefing at his official Baily Road residence.

He said falling miserably in its anti-government movement, the Awami League (AL) has lost bal-

ance. "They are lying relentlessly and uttering indecorous speeches," he added.

In his harsh criticism, Bhuiyan said the AL has become desperate "to catch fish in the troubled water" capitalising even on the president's serious illness.

Referring to AL President Sheikh Hasina's statement that the prime minister wants to be the president herself by pushing Iajuddin towards death, Bhuiyan said only a bankrupt political party could make such fun of the illness of a respected and aged head of the state.

The entire nation was shocked

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## Fourth regional dialogue in Barisal today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Prothom Alo, The Daily Star and Channel I jointly organise their fourth regional dialogue on 'National Election 2007: Civil Society Initiative for Accountable Development' in Barisal at 9:00am today.

Eminent academics and professionals, development and cultural activists, and public representatives of Barisal will speak on the occasion.

Distinguished members of the Nagorik Committee 2006 who are preparing a vision paper for Bangladesh will also be present in the meeting to receive public feedback.



PHOTO: STAR

Nagorik Sanghati holds a sit-in programme near the Institute of Fine Arts yesterday demanding elimination of 'bond-labour system' from the country's garment industry.

## Uncertainty, fear still haunt them

Most Universe garment workers leave Dhaka

PINAKI ROY

The closure of Universe garment factory in Savar has affected the daily life of its workers who cannot even buy essentials as shopkeepers refuse to sell items to them on credit.

"The grocers are willing to sell essentials but only in exchange for our valuables as security for the credit. But many of us do not have anything that could be kept with them. We do not know what to do now," said Nur Uddin, a worker of the factory where a violent protest erupted on May 22.

At Savar yesterday, most workers of the Universe garment factory were found to have left Dhaka as

their rampaged factory was declared closed until June 10. Some were still staying at their messes but were fearful of police harassment.

"We do not know when the factory will open and how the management will treat us," said another worker, Habib.

Fearing further harassment by the Korean owners of the factory, he said, "Nobody is now talking about the 11-point demand. If we start working there, we fear the management will start harassing us again."

The Universe factory was rampaged on the second day of the workers' protest and workers of

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## Anti-crime leader gunned down for not paying toll

### 7 open fire on Torab in front of mosque in Tejgaon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criminals gunned down the vice-president of a crime resistance committee and also a leader of local BNP reportedly for refusing to pay toll at Tejgaon in the capital yesterday while another person was bullet-hit during the incident.

The deceased, Torab Ali alias Taru, 65, was vice-president of BNP's ward no 39 unit, while the injured was identified as Abdul Halim, 70, owner of a rickshaw garage in the area.

Torab, a trader, was also the vice-president of Nurani Jam-e-Masjid committee on Tejgaon Railway Station Road.

As Torab came out of the mosque after saying his Jum'a prayers at about 2:00pm, seven

assailants, who were seen waiting on three motorbikes near the mosque, sprayed him with bullets, witnesses said.

"I saw Taru bhai [Torab Ali] falling on the ground while the bikers raced towards Tejgaon Railway colony," said a witness, adding that he had heard around eight to ten gunshots.

Halim, who was walking with Torab, received a bullet in his back.

Bullet-riddled Torab was rushed to a local hospital and later transferred to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead. Halim is undergoing treatment at the DMCH.

Torab's family suspect that

masterminded the killing.

In last Ramadan, extortionists demanded Tk 5 lakh and Torab held Dipak, an associate of Ashiq who came to collect the money, and handed him over to police after a beating.

Ashiq's associates, who recently came out of jail and demanded tolls from several other residents in the area, might have committed the revenge murder, said his family.

Another source said feud over formation of the mosque committee might have led to the killing.

Hailing from Tulatoli in Raipura upazila in Narsingdi district, Torab Ali was a resident of Tejgaon Station Road.

He left behind seven sons and a daughter.



PHOTO: STAR

Relatives wail over the death of anti-crime leader Tobarak Ali who was gunned down at Tejgaon in the capital yesterday. Inset, the slain leader.