

## Rejoinder and our reply

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appointing Sls on political consideration or lobbying is not based on facts.

### OUR REPLY

There are 133 circle ASP offices and the authorities were aware of it when the Sls were appointed.

Now, while the Police Headquarters admits that the Sls were supposed to be posted at the circle offices and says their practical training will be completed "in phases", the question is: How will all the 821 Sls be accommodated in the 133 circle offices, which, according to the Police Headquarters itself, is not possible?

Our interpretation is that they have been posted directly at the police stations with a political objective ahead of the general election while the fact remains that they might also be posted at courts or police lines for training as the number of circle ASP offices is less than the number of probationary Sls.

The political tilt in the selection process of these Sls strengthens our interpretation.

If the 821 Sls are posted at the circle offices, courts and police lines in phases later, why this move has not been taken initially? No question would have arisen if the 821 Sls were divided into several groups and simultaneously placed at circle offices, courts, police lines and police stations.

Regarding the appointment of the Sls also, we stand by our report that a good number of these Sls

were leaders and activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student front of ruling BNP, and Islami Chhatra Shibir, student front of Jamaat-e-Islami.

Also, some of them are accused of criminal offences and cases are still pending against them.

The Sls include Nilphamari district JCD president Mokhlesur Rahman Labhlu, former JCD vice-president of Chittagong Mohsin College unit Sheikh Khairel Bashar, Shibir leader of the same college Habibullah, Shibir leader of Kalaroa Government College unit Abu Bakar Siddiqi, Barguna district JCD member and Taltoli thana JCD president Mahibullah, school affairs secretary of Barguna district JCD Zahidul Islam, Chittagong Mohsin College unit Shibir leader Jobair Syed, Shibir leader of Godagari, Rajshahi, Bony Israfil, and Godagari Municipality unit JCD president Mahbubur Rahman and vice-president Shahidul Islam Bakul.

Bogra Law College unit JCD leader SM Amanullah Nayan, Bogra district JCD leaders Rakibul Hasan Shiron and Fazle Ashiq, Bogra district JCD leader Mithun, Majhira u n i o n J C D p r e s i d e n t Mahmudunnabi, and Bogra Azizul Haq College JCD leader Ratan and the JCD and Shibir leaders.

Former general secretary of Zia Hall (Dhaka University) unit of JCD Murad Khan, who was expelled from DU for his involvement in criminal activities, was also appointed as an Sl.

The House.

Steps have also been taken to keep the banks open at ports, particularly at the Benapole land port, on holidays to facilitate unloading of consumer goods during Ramadan, he said.

The rationing programme began on September 12 and will continue until October 17. Some 350 open market sale dealers in Dhaka, 40 in Chittagong, 25 in Khulna and 25 in Rajshahi have been employed for this purpose.

The Fishery Development Corporation and Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation will also take measures to increase the supply of fish and vegetables across the country.

**CAB MEETING**

Speakers at a meeting of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) on Saturday said extortion at different points of highways has caused the continued price spiral of essentials.

Extortions, allegedly by the police in most cases, constitute 45-68 per cent of the total transportation cost from any part of the country to the capital, they said.

The speakers observed that the measures taken by the government to rein in the prices of essentials are ineffective as they are mainly town-centred. Moreover, the government is also not taking any punitive measures against the hoarders, they said.

The CAB meeting demanded action against the syndicates that are controlling the commodity markets, creating equal opportunity for all importers, checking extortion and activities of the middlemen across the country, and immediate legislation of the Consumer Right Act.

**Fugitive**

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Nurul Haq was accused in fifteen criminal cases. He had been running from the law ever since he was sentenced to a four-year rigorous imprisonment.

Meanwhile, a report from Khulna says, a divisional operations commander of BPCB Janajuddin faction was killed in 'crossfire' between the police and his accomplices at about 3:30am yesterday at Bashital Chanditala area under Rampal upazila of Bagerhat district.

The team also seized 2,100 grenade safety-pins and 100 grenade-heads.

On March 30, Rab pressed charges against the five JMB members, showing 36 people as prosecution witnesses.

According to police, Abid was wanted in several criminal cases filed with different police stations in Jessor and Bagerhat including three murder cases.

Police recovered a revolver, one shotgun and six bullets from his possession.

The investigation officer (IO) of the case and D B Inspector Mohammad Fazlul Haq submitted the charge sheet to the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka.

The IO dropped the names of former Islamic Foundation director Maulana Fariduddin Masud and Israq Ahmad Siraji, accounts officer (part-time) of Masud's Islahul Muslimen Parishad of Bangladesh, and Sayeed Nizami, co-ordinator of the Parishad.

Following information extracted from them, Rab arrested Abdullah Al Faruq and Hanif.

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The investigation officer dropped the name of Shakil, also known as Molla Omar, from the charge sheet as he was killed in a fight with the law enforcers in Comilla on March 12.

Assistant Public Prosecutor Shahidul Islam Sardar appeared for the state while state appointed lawyers defended the accused.

**Hannan's brother**

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Ten people died and several others were injured on April 14, 2001 when bombs went off amid the crowd gathered to celebrate the Bangla New Year near the Batamul inside Ramna Park.

On September 10 and 14, Hannan and his accomplice Mamun were shown arrested in the same case and were remanded for interrogation.

In the forwarding report placed before the court, CID Inspector Abu Hena Mohammad Yusuf, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, said Mofiz gave important information about the blasts and he needs to be interrogated intensively to find out more information about the blasts.

After the hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate Zahangir Alam granted a four-day remand.

The police so far arrested 12 people in connection with the Ramma Batamul blasts but all of them obtained bail from the High Court.

JP Secretary General ABM Ruhi Amin Hawlader presided over the function which was addressed among others, by JP presidium member Abdus Sattar, MA Hannan, Syed Abu Hossain Babu, Golam Kibria Tipu, Sheikh Shakir Hossain Nilu and Abdur Razzak Khan.

British commanders have called for more troops and equipment to deal with the stronger-than-expected resistance.

British Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett said Sunday the troops were "stretched but not over-stretched".

## 2 gangsters lynched

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Four people went to the timber shop around 2:00pm yesterday and asked for Dilip. "As Dilip gave his identity, two of the criminals drew their firearms and shot Dilip six times," Idris, who was inside the shop during the attack, told The Daily Star. He said they fired indiscriminately inside the shop injuring three employees of the shop.

The employees of the shop cried out for help, he said adding, a few hundred people hearing their cry came to their rescue.

"The criminals were firing relentlessly as a few hundred locals and policemen chased them through Farashganj road," said another victim Monir Hossain who was bullet hit when the gang was trying to escape.

The gangsters got on a boat to cross the Buriganga but boatman Shahjahan refused to ferry them. The criminals shot him without hesitating and started rowing across the river, witnesses said.

Locals and police continued to chase them on boats and since they were catching up the criminals' boat fast, one of the gang member jumped into the river. The police and locals were unable to find him.

Locals on the other side of the river started chasing them after the remaining three criminals crossed the river, witnesses said.

They had the criminals surrounded at Khajurabagan Bastuhrana slum when the three opened fire again injuring four people.

The locals, however, managed to catch them and beat them up mercilessly. Two of them died on the spot while police rescued the third.

## 60 Talibans

FROM PAGE 16

southern and eastern Afghanistan, the ministry said in a separate statement.

Nato's International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) announced that it had killed 15 insurgents in the province's Now Zad district on Friday after the troops called in air support when they came under fire from about 20 men.

Eight more insurgents were killed on Thursday in neighbouring Sangin district after they attacked a helicopter with rocket-propelled grenades as the aircraft was lifting off, another Isaf statement said.

Helmand, Afghanistan's top drug-producing province, has seen an escalation of violence this year as Isaf troops have moved into remote areas and confronted rebels and drug lords who have operated for years outside the river, witnesses said.

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## No relief for Barapukuria

FROM PAGE 1

has said it will not arrange any loan for Petrobangla for the repayment. Instead, the BCMCL will have to make the repayment from its own earning.

Besides, some accused in cases under trial were also appointed as Sls.

Of them, Barisal district JCD president Mainul Islam Pulak is a chargesheeted accused in a criminal case. Godagari Municipality unit JCD vice-president Shahidur Rahman Bilu is an accused of Chhatra League leader Firoz killing case which is under trial.

An accused of the Ramma Batamul bomb blast case Mizanur Rahman Swadhin who was arrested and remanded has also been made an Sl. A former JCD cadre, Mizanur joined the post in the first week of April and was posted at Patuakhali Sadar Police station.

Moreover, there is no precedence of awarding examinees with grace marks in any competitive examinations, but this time the authorities gave 20 per cent grace marks to the Sl candidates to qualify the relatives of ministers and MPs and the JCD and Shibir leaders.

It is a partial account of the fact. We could not put up all the substantial information due to shortage of space.

The power plant was supposed to start operation early this year but till date it could not properly start full operation as it has been tripping frequently.

The plant is designed to consume 85 percent of Barapukuria coal. But due to its faulty functioning, a huge quantity of coal has been piled up at the mine site.

"The mining authorities now has an inventory of 1.20 lakh tonnes of coal on the surface and has stopped further production of coal," said one source.

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The Power Development Board (PDB) which owns the coal-fired power plant owes the BCMCL Tk 64 crore for coal consumed by the power plant. In addition, the plant should pay another Tk 60 crore for the 1.20 lakh tonnes of coal in the inventory. If the PDB pays the BCMCL this amount, Petrobangla can repay the CMC the fifth instalment of the Supplier's Credit.

As this is not happening, the CMC-Hosaf consortium told Petrobangla in their letter that since it is unable to pay the instalment, it should consider giving it the mining lease.

Petrobangla officials however rule out the unsolicited proposal.

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Meanwhile, the global price of coal, which was barely around \$25 per tonne in the early nineties, has shot up to \$70-75 now.

In 2004-05, the BCMCL produced 87,000 tonnes of coal and in 2005-06, it produced 2,39 lakh tonnes. The company sold a portion

"The government is in deep trouble with this mine. But the mine has 303 million tonnes of coal in place with 200 million tonnes recoverable, if designed and handled properly. It has high financial value if everything is done anew, properly and protecting the national interest," one official said.

"There should not be any question of any more of unsolicited deal," he said. "Besides, whichever company takes over the mine should also pay for the project cost of Tk 1,600 crore first. The equity between the government and the mining authority should be designed in the light of the present international coal price."

### WHAT'S SO LUCRATIVE ABOUT THE MINE?

The Ecnec approved Barapukuria project proposal in March 1992 with the target of completing it on July 31, 2001. But the project was kept suspended when sub-soil waters started gushing in at a rate of 700 cubic metres on April 5, 1998 at a depth of 1,100 feet. This happened because of design flaws, according to official sources.

Redesigning of the project involved relocating the mine's shaft half a kilometre to the south where coal seams lie at a greater depth. As a result, the mine's annual production capacity has been officially reduced to 700,000 tonnes from the original target of 1.1 million tonnes.

Unofficial sources however say the present mining design will give a maximum annual production of 500,000 tonnes.

Besides, the CMC did not provide mining equipment as per the agreement, yet the government accepted the mine in its half-baked condition.

Combined with the doubling of project cost and reduction of annual production capacity, cost of coal production has nearly doubled from \$ 35 a tonne initially to nearly \$60 now.

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