



PHOTO: AL  
Pakistan High Commissioner Alamgir Babar calls on Awami League President Sheikh Hasina at Sudha Sadan in the city yesterday.

# US assures CG of all help for free, fair election

UNB, Dhaka

US Ambassador Patricia A Butenis yesterday assured the caretaker government of her country's full support and all out cooperation in holding a free, fair and credible general election within the shortest possible of time.

Butenis said this when she met Agriculture Adviser Dr CS Karim at his secretariat office.

During the meeting, they discussed various issues, particularly the distribution of fertiliser in the country.

The adviser apprised the US envoy of Agriculture Ministry's preparation in this regard saying that the officials have already been asked to closely monitor the downstream-level distribution of the agri-input to make it available for the farmers at a fair price.

He also told Butenis that the farmers would be informed of the availability of gas, its dealers and prices through miking and hanging signboards. "Miking from local mosques would also be included," he said.

The US envoy expressed satisfaction over the steps taken for smooth distribution of fertilisers throughout the country.



PHOTO: STAR  
Garbage litters a road near Town Hall Market at Mohammadpur in the city, polluting the environment in the area.

## FAO concerned over flare-up of bird flu

BSS, Dhaka

FAO yesterday expressed concern over the new flare-up of avian influenza in China, Egypt, Indonesia, Japan, Nigeria, South Korea, Thailand and Viet Nam.

The number of outbreaks in the first weeks of 2007 was however significantly lower than the epidemic waves of last year, said a FAO press release.

FAO urged the countries to remain vigilant and fully cooperate with international organisations as the virus continues to kill people and damage farmers' livelihoods.

It seemed that the intercontinental spread of the bird flu virus through migrating wild birds from Asia to Europe and Africa has not taken place during this autumn or winter season, FAO added.

It said poultry trade and transport of live birds can still spread the virus as cold weather enhances virus survival.

## Japan to help hold acceptable election

Ambassador tells adviser

UNB, Dhaka

Japan will extend all possible assistance to Bangladesh in holding a free and fair general election to be acceptable to all.

Japan Ambassador Masayuki Inoue gave the assurance during a meeting with Communications Adviser Major General (Retd) MA Matin at his office in the city yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed different development projects implemented with the assistance of Japan Government.

The ambassador said the assistance for different ongoing Japan-funded development projects in Bangladesh will continue.

The adviser said the caretaker government is working hard to make the election acceptable in home and abroad, said a handout.

# AL pledges to curb corruption, crime if voted to power

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League yesterday pledged that it would curb corruption and crimes if voted to power in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

"We pledge that we would build a Bangladesh free from corruption and crimes, if we can go to power through elections," AL acting General Secretary Obaidul Quader said at a press briefing.

He was speaking on behalf of party President Sheikh Hasina after family members of two slain AL leaders of Mirpur Upazila in Kushtia--Abdur Rahman and Bashir Uddin--met Hasina at her Dhanmondi office in the city.

During the meeting, Hasina expressed sympathy to the family members of the two leaders who were killed on October 28 last year allegedly by the cadres of BNP-Jamaat. She also provided financial assistance for them, Quader told newsmen.

Describing criminals as enemy of the nation, democracy and humanity, he said the previous BNP-Jamaat government had turned the country into a safe haven for criminals during its five-year rule.

The AL leader called on the joint forces to step up their drive against criminals, corrupt people and 'black money' holders in order to create an atmosphere conducive to free and fair elections.

He also urged the joint forces to remain careful during the drive so that no innocent people are harassed.

Quader alleged that the previous four-party alliance government had turned the country into a 'death valley' by killing 26,000 'innocent' people out of political vengeance.

The BNP-Jamaat coalition also patronised the criminals, he said, adding that it released about 70,000 listed criminals from jails.

He also alleged that the BNP-Jamaat alliance is responsible for the rise of militancy in the country.

AL leaders Mukul Bose, Abdul Mannan, Abdur Rahman, Abdul Mannan Khan, BM Mozammel Haque, Dr Dipu Moni, Jahangir Kabir Nanak and Mirza Azam were present at the press briefing.

Meanwhile, Quader issued a press statement, calling on the caretaker government to take stern action against unscrupulous businessmen and their syndicate responsible for creating an artificial crisis of fertilisers and raising prices of agricultural produces.

Expressing deep concern over the fertiliser and diesel crises at the beginning of Irri-Boro season, he also urged the joint forces to intensify their drive against unscrupulous businessmen.

The AL leader alleged that several hundred dealers appointed by the previous BNP-Jamaat government and dishonest businessmen have created the artificial fertiliser and diesel crises to make quick profits.

He said the fertiliser and diesel crises have greatly hampered the cultivation in the southwestern part of the country, which may lead to severe food crisis.



PHOTO: STAR  
A joint team of army and air force knocks down an illegal market at Rokeya Sarani in the city yesterday.

## CARE-PKSF deal to fight Monga

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With a view to fighting Monga, a near-famine situation, in Lalmonirhat, CARE Bangladesh and Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) yesterday.

The MoU, signed between the Strengthening Household Ability to Respond to Development Opportunities (SHOUHARDO) programme of CARE and Programmed Initiative for Monga Eradication (PRIME) of PKSF is expected to enhance livelihoods of the poor and extreme poor to fight Monga jointly.

Faheem Khan, programme coordinator of SHOUHARDO and Mosharraf Hossain Khan, acting managing director of PKSF, signed the MoU in Lalmonirhat.

Targeting the poorest and the most vulnerable households, the SHOUHARDO is working in remote chars, haors, coastal areas and urban slums.

The programme covers chars, haors and coastal regions under 493 unions, 137 urban slums of 16 municipalities and one city corporation, and 2209 villages in 18 districts.

In Rangpur region, it has been working in Rangpur, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Gaibandha and Kurigram covering 23 upazilas, 90 unions and five municipalities.

PRIME started its work in Lalmonirhat covering the poor and extreme poor households of all villages and unions.

It provided micro credit support throughout the year for the targeted community, created wage employment opportunities during lean season, and acted to enhance their skills and resources, says a press release.

## CHEATING CASE AGAINST KAIKOBAD Hearing on charge framing today

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court will hear today on framing charges against former BNP lawmaker Kazi Shah Mofazzal Hossain Kaikobad and two others in a cheating case filed by a proprietor of a construction firm in September 2001.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Mizanur Rahman will hear on the issue from the prosecution and the defence and decide whether the charges against the three will be framed or Tnot.

Earlier on December 28 last year, the same court issued arrest warrants against them, as they had been absent from the court on three consecutive dates. Following the order, Koikobad and his brother Kazi Mojibul Haq got bail from the court.

On September 6, 2001, Mohammad Ayub Khan, proprietor of the M/s Ayub Khan & Sons, filed the cheating case against the three--Kaikobad, chairman of The Arab Contractor (BD) Limited, managing director Kazi Mojibul Haq and project manager Sirajul Islam--with the CMM's Court, Dhaka.

In his complaint, Ayub said the accused did not pay Tk 779,545 as per an agreement signed between him and the Arab Contractor (BD) Limited on June 11, 2000 for a construction work at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel even after serving of a legal notice upon them.

## Schoolboy found dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered the body of a teenage schoolboy in the city's Jatrabari area yesterday.

Local people informed the police after finding the body lying in a dustbin at around 10:00am. The boy, aged around 17, was wearing brown trousers and a white shirt. His throat was slit, police said.

The body, which bore several marks of injury, was sent to Sir Salimullah Medical College morgue.

## Bullet-hit trader dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A bullet-hit trader died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital in the early hours of yesterday.

Salauddin, 50, received bullets in his legs and chest in a gun attack in the city's Dholaiakhal area at around 2:00pm on Tuesday. He died 11 hours after the incident.

Salauddin, a tin sheet supplier, was sitting in a metal store, Haji Sobhan Steel, when a gang of

criminals appeared there and fired bullets indiscriminately.

Family sources said Salauddin often visited the metal store and he had no enemy.

Haji Rahmat Ullah, owner of the store, told investigation officer SI Zillur Rahman that he never received any threats from the extortionists.

The SI said the police are investigating the incident and a murder case has been lodged with Sutrapur Police Station.

## Chhatra Samaj new committee

DU CORRESPONDENT

Central committee of Jatiya Chhatra Samaj, student wing Jatiya Party (Ershad), was declared yesterday with Abu Jayed Al Mahmud Makhan Sarker as president and Syed Mijanur Rahman Himu as general secretary, says a press release.

Jatiya Party Chairman Hussain Muhammad Ershad yesterday formally announced the names of 16 members of the committee.

The other office bearers are: Senior Vice President Sumon Ashraf and Md Noman Mia, Additional General Secretary Aminul Islam and Organising Secretary Kazi Abul Kashem Ripon.

The other names of the full-fledged 101-member committee will be announced in 15 days, the release added.

## Car hijacked in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of criminals hijacked a private car after stabbing the driver in the city's Banashree area yesterday.

Police said driver Amrita Chandra Sutradhar, 25, drove out of the garage of the residence of his employer Suraj Ali, manager of Eastern Bank, Chakbazar branch, at around 7:30am. When he got off the car and was closing the gate of the garage, the gang of three criminals stabbed him indiscriminately.

Later, the three sped away in the car.

Amrita is now undergoing treatment at a local hospital.

A case was filed in this connection.