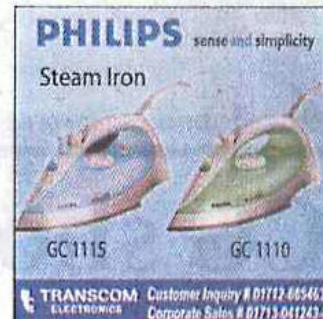




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## Ijtema ends with Akheri Munajat today

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Lakhs of devotees will join Akheri Munajat (concluding prayer) today, the final day of the three-day Biswa Ijtema, the second largest Muslim congregation after Hajj.

The concluding prayer and sermon of the 42nd annual Biswa Ijtema will start at 12:20pm.

President Iajuddin Ahmed, Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, advisory council members, two former prime ministers and other dignitaries are expected to join the prayer.

Muslims will raise hands standing on rooftops, open fields and roads stretched for several kilometres.

The authorities concerned set up loudspeakers from Uttara to Chera Ali Market and Ashulia

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## Laws approved to corporatise NCBs

Boards to be autonomous

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The council of advisers to the caretaker government yesterday approved the draft bylaws required to turn the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs)—Sonali, Janata and Agrani—into public limited companies.

An advisory council meeting at the Chief Adviser's Office gave the seal of approval to the draft Memorandum and Articles of Association, meaning autonomous boards of directors instead of the finance ministry would run the three banks.

This is the second policy decision of the caretaker government that is constitutionally mandated to carry out only routine government functions while assisting the Election Commission to hold the national polls. Last week, the interim administration signed a contract with an Indian company to set up a 240-megawatt power plant at Siddhirganj.

Earlier this year, a finance ministry proposal for converting the state-owned commercial banks into public limited companies (PLCs) was rejected in the face of strong opposition from the other

cabinet members.

Freeing the nationalised banks from government control through corporatisation is one of the major conditions that the World Bank (WB) set for the country to receive the \$200-million fourth instalment of Development Support Credit.

According to the draft approved yesterday, the government or the finance ministry would not be able to interfere in the banks' decisions on disbursement of loans, recruitment, and promotions including those to the vital posts like general managers, managing director, and

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## NEW CEC Govt shelve plan to pick Anisuzzaman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The caretaker government (CG) is considering another former bureaucrat instead of M Anisuzzaman Khan for the office of the chief election commissioner (CEC), which fell vacant on January 21 following resignation of former CEC Justice MA Aziz.

"We are looking for a man with reputation and morality for the post to form a strong Election Commission," an adviser to the CG told The Daily Star yesterday on condition of anonymity.

He however did not disclose the name of the former bureaucrat who is going to be appointed as the new CEC.

President Iajuddin Ahmed is likely to appoint the new CEC and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## Flights go haywire for thick fog

STAR REPORT

Dense fog caused disruptions of international flights as well as transportation across the country on road and river for more than 12 hours yesterday.

Air traffic officials at Zia International Airport said at least 20 international flights of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, Gulf Airlines, Emirates Airlines, and British Airways could not land at the airport at scheduled times.

No national or international flights landed at the airport during 11:51pm on Friday and 10:41am on Saturday, they said.

Heavy fog lowered down normal eyesight at only 200 metres, forcing drivers either to halt their journey halfway or to speed down. This

doubled the time to reach destinations, said drivers of different vehicles from different parts of the country.

At least 40 passenger ferries from the southern region could not reach Dhaka's Sadarghat terminal yesterday, Port Traffic Inspector Babu Lal Boidya told reporters.

Sources at Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) said about 50 launches, which operate on 28 routes from Dhaka to the country's southern region, were stranded at different places between Chandpur and Hizla on the Meghna and its branches.

Quoting BITWC officials at Paturia, our Manikganj correspondent said about 20,000 stranded

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## 1,531 more held, arms seized

Mamun being grilled

STAR REPORT

Police arrested 1,531 people on various charges and seized seven firearms across the country yesterday while the army-led joint forces detained a union parishad (UP) chairman and seized a firearm from him at Netrakona.

Meanwhile, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel picked up a Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal leader in Narayanganj.

Police arrested those people during the last 24 hours till 6:00am yesterday, said a police headquarters press release.

Sources said members of an intelligence agency continued to grill detained Giasuddin Al Mamun, business partner of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## Make public everything you know about me

Star editor invites Huda

Mr Nazmul Huda's threat (published yesterday in full), triggered by our story that the ACC has decided to investigate his alleged corruption, can best be described as pathetic and desperate. Fearful of his dirty linen being washed in public, he is trying to threaten and intimidate so that this paper desists from doing its public duty. No threat will silence us.

One can only pity a man who, in order to hit out against someone, drags in his or her parents, which in my case is my late father who passed away 28 years ago and who was a minister half a century

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

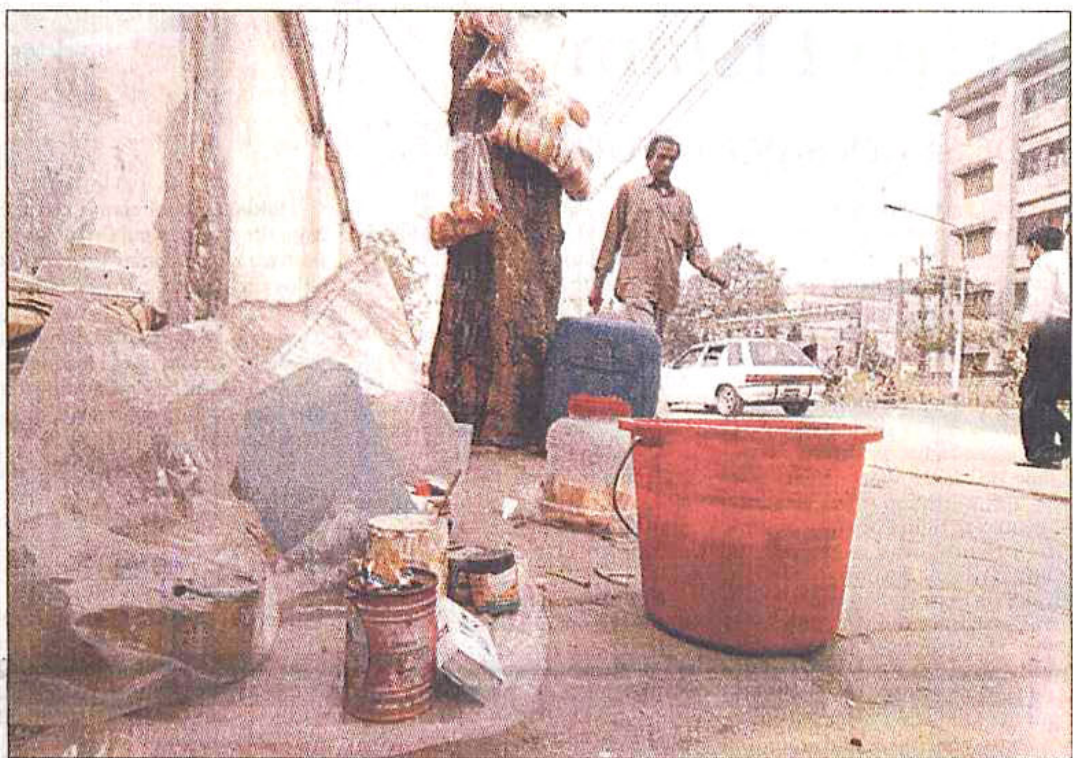


PHOTO: STAR

A tea seller at Mohammadpur in the capital leaves his small shop unattended and stands at a distance fearing eviction from footpath where he runs his shop. He returns to his stall only when there are customers.

## 17 OCs of DMP transferred

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Officers-in-charge (OCs) of 17 police stations out of the 32 of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) were transferred yesterday.

Police headquarters in an order shunted the 17 OCs out of the DMP and transferred 13 police inspectors to the DMP to replace them. The four other posts will be filled shortly.

The OCs sent out of DMP are Ziaul Alam to Dhaka range, Rabiul Haq to Dhaka range, Jahangir Alam to Dhaka range, Syed Nazrul Islam to Barisal range, Mozammel Haq to Dhaka range, Ainul Haq to Police Training College at Noakhali, Abul Khair Matabbar to Dhaka range, Arzu Miah to Highway Division Kazi Nur-e-Alam to Chittagong range, Syed Mahbubur Rahman to

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## MEGHNAGHAT-2 POWER PROJECT

## Deal with Obaidul Karim's venture faces cancellation

SHARIER KHAN

For contractual violation, the Power Development Board (PDB) is most likely to cancel, within February 22, the 490-megawatt Meghnaghat-2 power project deal that was awarded to Obaidul Karim's shell company BON Consortium.

Besides, BON Consortium is unlikely to be able to arrange bank loans to finance this project, as Karim is wanted by the police in connection with different graft and criminal cases filed against him for swindling Tk 594 crore from Oriental Bank. Charges against him

were based on a central bank investigation done at the fag end of the alliance government rule, making the case rock solid.

Karim has disappeared since last week. His disappearance is most likely to affect other projects and businesses awarded to him including the Gulistan-Jatrabari flyover and the operation of Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre.

A Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) source said that work related to the eight-kilometre-long Gulistan-Jatrabari flyover project has slowed down significantly, even though it has not stopped. He

said two Chinese contractors, on behalf of BON Consortium, were present at the site but their works were lagging far behind the schedule. This project demands a cost of over Tk 500 crore.

"We have a foreign consultant and a Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) team overseeing the implementation. We are expecting the monthly report from the consultant by February 7 and then we would be able to understand how uncertain this flyover project has become," he added.

The BON Consortium, which

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SUPERCRETE CEMENT

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## 29th Death Anniversary

(Abul Company) The founder of Abul Khair Group noted industrialist and social worker  
**Late Janab ABUL KHAIR**



Death: 4th February, 1978

In accordance with the will of almighty Allah the beneficent, you left this mundane world, leaving us and many of your relations overwhelmed by grief. In our everyday life your bright ideals serve as veacom. You are immortal in your death. We pray to Almighty Allah for the salvation of your departed soul.

May Allah the beneficent bless you with the eternal bliss of paradise. Ameen.

Your loving  
Son, Daughters and Relatives.

## Big guns stay out of dragnet

Mamun only remarkable arrestee in 41,000 held so far

SHAMIM ASHRAF

Most of the listed top criminals, their patrons and the corruptionists still remain out of the dragnet of joint forces although the forces arrested a staggering number of people across the country since the declaration of state of emergency.

A large number of the absconding criminal suspects, their godfathers and corrupt businessmen, who had established a reign of terror, monopolised different business sectors, and misappropriated public property during previous governments' regimes, either went into hiding or fled the country in absence of an anti-crime drive during the 76-day rule of the caretaker government led by President Iajuddin Ahmed.

The joint forces comprising the army, police, and Rab (Rapid Action Battalion) arrested over 41,074 people since the anti-crime crackdown had been launched after the new caretaker government (CG) of Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed had taken over the charge of the country, but they failed to arrest most of the godfathers and high-profile criminals.

Although they succeeded in capturing a number of allegedly corrupt ward commissioners and union parishad chairmen, some local criminal godfathers, some leaders of business syndicates, and several listed criminals, and busted a number of illegal VoIP business dens and fake fertiliser and insecticide factories, they failed to apprehend most of the top offenders.

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## More fertiliser, cement, commodities seized

STAR REPORT

Joint forces in separate operations all over the country yesterday sealed off 16 warehouses, arrested five people, seized around 12,000 sacks of fertiliser, 654 sacks of fake cement and over 2,500 sacks of various types of spoilt basic commodities.

They seized 10,400 sacks of urea at Bhairab upazila, reports our Kishoreganj correspondent.

Of those, 10,000 bags were seized from Bhuiyan Enterprise at Bhairab Bazar, Officer-in-Charge of Bhairab Police Station Zamir Uddin Ahmed said.

Bhairab upazila Awami League Vice-President Naziruzzaman, also vice-president of fertiliser dealers' association of the district, owns the store.

Another 400 sacks of urea were recovered from his younger brother Monjil Bhuiyan's store in the same area.

Police sources said Liton, 25, and Raju, 26, both employees of the stores, were detained during the raid but the owners managed to escape the scene.

In the capital, the joint forces seized fake cement, fertiliser and potash from a warehouse at Mirpur and arrested its manager.

Acting on a tip-off, they raided a warehouse on 37 Mazar Road in Mirpur at around 4:30pm and found fake items including 654 sacks of cement, 111 sacks of fertiliser and 78 sacks of potash.

The law enforcers arrested Khaledur Rahman Milon, manager of the warehouse, but could not catch its owner Nazir Rahman Nazir.

Khulna sadar thana police yesterday seized 1,000 sacks of urea fertiliser and 545 sacks of spoilt basic commodities including fish feed, reports our staff correspondent in Khulna.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

# GUARANTEE TO GO AHEAD

Introducing new Lucas Hybrid, a range of automotive batteries that has the same mark of trust combined with new technology and benefits:

- Lead-calcium Hybrid battery gives better performance than conventional lead-antimony batteries.
- It has lower water loss, which reduces the frequency of topping up.
- The "Magic Eye" helps you to diagnose the state of charge (S.O.C) of the battery.

**Lucas HYBRID**

Long lasting, high performance battery

RAHIMAFROOZ

Bitopi/Leo Burnett/RA/Lucas Hybrid/Feb/07