

## Hasina for poll at the earliest possible time

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina has said they want holding of the stalled parliamentary elections at the earliest possible time as the Election Commission (EC) has already been reconstituted.

"We demanded reconstitution of the Election Commission and since the commission has been reconstituted, we want election as soon as possible," Hasina was quoted by her Political Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury as telling Baroness Paowla Uddin and Lord Ahmed, two members of the House of Lords at Sudha Sadan yesterday.

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## BDR, BSF trade gunshots on Satkhira border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) traded gunfire on Madra and Charabari borders under Kalaroa upazila early yesterday.

BDR sources said the BSF troops of Daharkanda camp under Swarnnagar Police Station in 24 Parganas district fired five bullets targeting the Madra BDR camp at about 2:30am, forcing the Bangladesh border guards to retaliate by firing over 15 shots.

On Charabari border, the BSF personnel of Tarali camp under the same police station fired seven

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## Outlaws kill 2 in Meherpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Outlaws slaughtered two people at Bholadanga village of Gangni upazila in Meherpur yesterday.

The dead were identified as Sajib Ali, 35, and Mashiur Rahman alias Hasan, 32, from Haridah village of the same upazila.

Notun Lai Juddho, a new faction of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-ML), telephoned Gangni police and local journalists to claim responsibility for the killings.

Dilip Biswas, introducing himself over the phone as a top leader of the faction, claimed that his party eliminated Sajib and Mashiur for their 'anti-social' activities.

Gangni police recovered the bodies and sent them to Meherpur general hospital for autopsies.

# \$7.7b needed for gas exploration in 18yrs

## States Petrobangla report placed before advisory council

UNB, Dhaka

The country will need to invest \$ 7.7 billion in the next 18 years up to 2025 for the exploration of natural gas to meet its growing demand in line with the seven per cent GDP growth.

This was revealed in an exclusive report presented recently in the meeting of the council of advisers, a highly placed source said.

The report said the country will

need 24 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of additional gas to meet the national demand in the next 18 years.

Petrobangla, the state-owned hydrocarbon corporation, prepared the report while the energy division presented it to the council of advisers, aiming to give a thorough idea about the country's present state of natural gas and mineral resources and their future prospects.

Referring to the recently prepared "Gas Sector Master Plan

2006", the report said the country may meet the growing demand up to 2015 with the existing reserves.

"After that, the country will require new reserves to meet the growing demand. To ensure the availability of gas to meet the future demand, the country has to intensify exploration activities by 2010," suggested the report.

About the present state of gas  
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## CHITTAGONG PORT

# CA seeks precise plans to improve services

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday directed the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) to take necessary steps to improve the commercial services at the seaport, the lifeline of country's economic activities.

He asked the port authority to place specific plans on short, mid and long-term basis at the next meeting of the council of advisers

for making the port operations more competitive, cost-effective and transparent.

The head of the interim government gave the directives at a meeting of the council of advisers that discussed the present scenario and ways of removing hurdles to smooth functioning of the main seaport.

The port-development move is apparently being geared up as businesspeople have long been complaining that the seaport is

riddled with multifarious problems and falls far short of capacity and efficiency to handle growing volumes of export-import trade.

At the beginning of the meeting, chairman of the Chittagong Port Authority made presentation on the overall scenario of the port. Communications and Shipping Advisor Maj General (ret'd) MA Matin also gave his views.

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PHOTO: STAR

A huge placard with the portrait of former prime minister Khaleda Zia still remains on a wall of Dhaka Shishu Park in the capital even though Dhaka City Corporation is on a campaign against graffiti on walls.

## Rajuk knocks down 600 structures

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) yesterday demolished around 600 illegal structures on Rokeya Sarani in Mirpur area yesterday.

Two magistrates led the Rajuk drive that lasted over four hours. The eviction drive was halted at one point when brickbats hurled by business owners and locals damaged a Rajuk vehicle. Police arrested at least three people from the area. The drive ended successfully without further hostility after the army arrived at the scene.

Many illegal shop owners removed their belongings and demolished their shops themselves before the drive started.

During the drive, Rajuk also demolished top floor of a 13-storied building, Al-Helal Hospital,

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PHOTO: STAR

Shop owners on Rokeya Sarani in the capital yesterday demolish parts of their shops that occupied the footpath after Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha served them a notice to do so.

# Putin attacks 'very dangerous' US

## Accuses it of imposing itself on other states

AFP, Munich

Russian President Vladimir Putin launched a full-frontal attack on the United States yesterday, saying it had made the world a more dangerous place and left successive conflicts unresolved.

Addressing an audience of senior officials and politicians including many from the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty

Organisation (Nato), Putin said the United States had "overstepped" its borders with disastrous results.

The Russian leader, who spearheaded opposition to the 2003 invasion of Iraq by the United States and its allies, accused Washington of operating by "separate norms."

"The United States has overstepped its borders in all spheres -- economic, political and humanitar-

ian and has imposed itself on other states," he told delegates at the 43rd Munich Conference on Security Policy.

"One-sided illegitimate action hasn't solved a single problem and has become a generator of many human tragedies, a source of tension," Putin said.

"Local and regional wars didn't get fewer. The number of people

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## More reshuffle in admin

UNB, Dhaka

As part of the ongoing reshuffle in the civil administration, the government yesterday transferred and made OSDs a number of high officials.

Textiles and Jute Secretary Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman has been appointed communications secretary, while acting member of Planning Commission Mohammad Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan made acting secretary of the Ministry of Primary and Mass

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## 14TH SAARC SUMMIT

# India to press for transport networks

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India will play a positive role in establishing new trans-border transport networks, energy corridors and freer flow of people and ideas in the Saarc region, Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee said here yesterday.

"We will play a positive role in the

establishment of new trans-border transport networks and energy corridors so that the upcoming 14th Saarc summit gives a clear signal for improving the connectivity within the subcontinent by ensuring free flow of trade, commerce, goods, people and ideas," Mukherjee said.

Being the host of the next summit slated for April, India would

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## Fire damages goods in Square factory

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A devastating fire at Square Consumer Products Ltd at Shalgaria in Pabna town Friday night damaged a huge amount of goods and machinery.

Sources said the fire originated from an electric short circuit around 10:00pm and quickly spread across Square's crisp and chana-chur factory and surrounding buildings in the compound.

The fire gutted valuable machinery, raw materials and the goods worth Tk 40 crore, firefighters and company sources said.

Firefighters from Pabna Fire Station rushed to the spot but failed to control the blaze. Later, a joint effort of the firefighters of Pabna Fire Station, Ishwardi Fire Station, Bera Fire Station and five other fire engines managed to get the fire under control around midnight.

Prayer Timing		
February 11		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-25	6-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	5-57	6-01
Esha	7-15	7-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		