

# UN atomic agency okays drastic cut in aid to Iran

AFP, Vienna

The UN atomic watchdog unanimously approved yesterday a cut of almost half its aid programmes to Iran as part of UN sanctions over Iran's nuclear programme, an IAEA spokesman said.

The International Atomic Energy Agency's 35-nation board of governors formalised cuts in technical aid that were started after a UN Security Council resolution adopted December 23.

"The reduction in aid was adopted by consensus," the spokesman said.

The Security Council resolution had imposed sanctions on Iran for continuing to enrich uranium and called for cuts in IAEA aid to Iran, which the United States accuses of seeking nuclear weapons.

Iranian ambassador Ali Asghar Soltanieh bitterly criticised the cuts in comments to the board, a diplomat said.

Soltanieh said Iran rejects the Security Council's interference in IAEA technical affairs.

Out of 55 national and regional projects that the IAEA has with Iran, 22, or 40 percent, have been either totally or partially frozen, according to IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei.

Tension is escalating over Iran's nuclear programme, particularly its production of enriched uranium — which can be nuclear reactor fuel but also in highly refined form the explosive core of atom bombs.

Iran says its programme is a peaceful effort to generate nuclear power.

The United States had called for a strict interpretation of the Security Council's resolution on Iran and cuts of

# Crackdown on corrupt

FROM PAGE 1

sought his 30-day detention under the Special Powers Act 1974, saying he needs to be put behind the bars in greater national interest.

According to the forwarding report by the police, Mosharraf amassed huge property through corruption when he was health minister of the BNP-led coalition government.

Describing as sly in nature and a threat to public safety, the forwarding letter said he caused damage to the national economy and contributed to destabilising the situation in the country.

Mosharraf and his counsel Sanaullah MA opposed the charges and sought bail.

"Earlier, the government of Ershad arrested me but I was proved innocent. Hasina's (AL) government also arrested me and put me on a 30-day detention but the High Court declared the detention illegal and fined the government Tk 1 lakh," the former health minister told the court.

Alleging that the AL foiled the parliamentary election scheduled for January 22 and forced the declaration of state of emergency, the BNP leader claimed the allegations brought against him were false and aimed at harassing him. And he sought bail.

Hearing both the sides, Metropolitan Magistrate Shafiq Anwar placed him on a 30-day detention and ordered sending him to Dhaka Central Jail.

He was later taken to the jail in a microbus.

## CTG MAYOR JAILED

Immediately after his arrest from his Chashma Hill residence in the port city at 11:00pm on Wednesday, the joint forces handed over AL leader and Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Mayor Mohiuddin to Panchlaish police.

He was later put under the custody of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) at Patenga.

Police produced him before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court around noon yesterday with a prayer for his detention on various charges including a wide range of corruption, nepotism, grabbing of public land and properties, and for his recent role in paralysing the premier seaport causing huge losses to the economy.

Over 100 lawyers led by Advocate Ibrahim Hossain Babul, former president of Chittagong District Bar Association and joint secretary of Chittagong city AL, moved a bail petition for him.

The counsels argued that there is no specific allegation against Mohiuddin and that he was arrested as part of a conspiracy to harass him. He was elected CCC mayor for three consecutive terms, they mentioned.

Hearing both the sides, Metropolitan Magistrate Moksedur Rahman rejected the bail prayer and ordered sending him to Chittagong Central Jail.

Stating that Mohiuddin could not be granted bail since he was arrested under Section 16 of the Emergency Power Ordinance 2007, the court ordered the jail authorities to grant him division in jail.

"I do politics for the people and I have no involvement in any anti-people activity," Mohiuddin told the waiting crowd while walking to a prison van.

"I've been arrested because I have always raised my voice against corruption and for the cause of the people," he said.

The defence lawyers later brought out a procession on the court premises chanting slogans against Mohiuddin's arrest.

## 1 shot dead

FROM PAGE 20

They were returning to Isahaq's house on Sultanganj Road at Rayerbazar after drawing the money from Dhanmondi branch of Islami Bank.

As the puller stopped the rickshaw, two muggers pressed two revolvers to Nurul's head while another one started scuffling with Isahaq for the bag containing the money, Nurul said.

"Failing to snatch the bag, a mugger shot my brother-in-law four times in the chest and finally took away the bag," Nurul told The Daily Star at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

After the armed hijackers left the scene leaving Isahaq in a pool of blood on the rickshaw, Nurul rushed him to DMCH where doctors declared him dead soon after arrival.

Family sources said Isahaq, marketing manager of a micro-credit lender at Paltan, withdrew the money from his personal account to buy savings bonds from post office.

Nurul filed a murder case with Dhanmondi Police Station accusing four unidentified persons.

None could be arrested as of 7:15pm.

## Bibi yana gas

FROM PAGE 20

from Bibi yana to Muchhai (Rasidpur) via Bahubul.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed is expected to inaugurate the gas field on March 18.

The authorities expect to increase the amount of gas supply from Bibi yana Gas Field to the national grid to 600 mcmd by the end of 2008.

Bibi yana Gas Field is considered as the country's second gas-rich field with a recoverable reserve of 2.4 trillion cubic feet. However, a Chevron official claims the probable reserve is 5.5 trillion cubic feet.

In late 2004, Chevron signed a gas purchase and sales agreement with Petrobangla to develop wells and produce gas from Bibi yana Gas Field.

The development cost for the project was estimated at about \$ 200 million. The project includes a gas plant and a natural gas pipeline to connect the gas field with the national grid and a condensate pipeline.

## People happy

FROM PAGE 20

Mohiuddin was behind all obstacles to smooth port operation and improvement of the situation at the port.

Dr Zafar Ali, who came to the CCC on a personal business, told The Daily Star that criminals, who bear the stamp of political parties or hold top posts in the government, should not be spared any more.

"The law enforcement agencies must be alert to ensure that no innocent person is harassed during their ongoing drives against criminals and the corrupt," he added.

Chittagong University student Kallol Hossain came to the CCC yesterday morning after hearing the news of the joint forces' raid and expressed his support for the government in arresting "corrupt" political leaders.

"Detaining and bringing them under trial is not possible by any political party," he said, adding that the people have the right to know the details of the corruption and misuse of power practised by these persons.

Badiul Alam, owner of a phone-fax shop, however said Mohiuddin's arrest without any definite allegation might raise some questions. "It would not be fair at all if the arrest was made for the purpose of balancing alone," he said.

## EC wants

FROM PAGE 1

"The Election Commission hopes that once registered the political parties will follow their constitutions and hold elections for all levels of party leadership," Humayun said.

The name-only political parties will not be allowed to register as the EC will put some criteria for registration, he added.

## 13 killed

FROM PAGE 20

President Iajuddin Ahmed has expressed deep shock at the death of 13 people in the tragic road accident.

In a condolence message yesterday, the president prayed for salvation of the departed soul and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members.

## Sudha Sadan

FROM PAGE 1

"Sheikh Hasina and Awami League have welcomed the ongoing drive against the corrupt and criminals from the beginning but the party does not support any harassment without specific allegations, information and proof," the leaders said.

During the five years of the immediate past BNP-Jamaat rule, many AL leaders, activists and workers were killed across the country and false cases were filed against the party men.

Alleging arrest and harassment of party leaders on the basis of those cases, they demanded that the government withdraw all 'false' cases filed against the AL leaders and workers.

# How could BNP

FROM PAGE 1

Often he would tease the elders for not really understanding the sentiments of the young. According to him, all that the younger generation wanted was wealth and power. Totally devoid of any principles or ideals, he would mock those of us who would talk about our Liberation War as mere looking into the past. On one occasion, at Prothom Alo's annual reception, he told me, "Having failed to develop the country your generation only talks about the Liberation War. Can history give us jobs for the young?" He would tease and say most young people today do not care about the past, about "your struggles, about Bhasha Andolon or Mukti Juddho". Today "we want to look at the future and not the past." When I protested saying where was the contradiction between being proud of our past, especially our struggles for freedom, and building the country for the future, he said, "Give power to the younger generation and we will show you how to build Bangladesh. Your generation has failed." It was quite curious how distant he was to the greatest achievement of our nation, our Liberation War, in which his father was a major actor.

Though Tarique Rahman lies at the centre of BNP's disgrace, yet it would be wrong to hold him solely responsible for it. Obviously his mother and party chief Khaleda Zia must share a large part of the blame. She did nothing to prevent Tarique's evil influence from becoming all pervasive. On the contrary, she isolated the leaders who tried to warn her as to what was going on. In fact, the message become more and more clear that Tarique was the heir apparent and those who wanted a future in the BNP should fall in line with Tarique. The only person Khaleda Zia protected against her son's predominance was Mosaddak Ali Fala. In fact, ousting Fala from his privileged position of political secretary to the former PM was the only battle Tarique lost. As for the rest they were all left to Tarique's pleasures and we saw proof of that almost daily as one senior leader after another would desperately line up at Hawa Bhaban to seek the crown prince's grace.

Today as layer after layer of corruption is being peeled off destroying the party's residual credibility (residual because by the time her regime ended Khaleda Zia greatly compromised the party's image by her tolerance of unbridled corruption), the former Prime Minister must take her due responsibility for having literally destroyed the party that propelled her to the highest elected office twice. What an irony, instead of being humbled by the honour, respect and dignity that the poor and underprivileged people of this country so generously gave to her, Khaleda Zia became arrogant, high-strung, imperious, proud and pompous. Her attitude was that of an uncrowned queen who had deigned to rule us for which we must be only grateful and not demand the implementation of what she promised in elections.

In our view there are two specific points in her second term from when the rot can be said to have become uncontrollable. First was the expansion of number of ministers (including state and deputy) from 35-40 to nearly 60 during the first days of government formation in the second term. This single decision created the ground for crippling the government from functioning with any semblance of discipline, becoming an open field for illegal or extra legal decisions that would lead to ever expanding corruption. As it became clear that while all cabinet ministers were nominees of the party leadership, nearly all the state and deputy ministers were nominees of Tarique Rahman. Thus began his disruptive influence on the functioning of government, which soon led to the dismantling of all checks and balances within the administration. The multilayered cabinet with dual loyalty was a recipe for disaster and that is precisely what happened—utter disaster. Governance failed and politicisation of every aspect of the administration became the order of the day.

The second incident that speeded the rot was the dismissal of Prof Badruddoza from the position of the President. The country still does not know why it happened. Why was the founder secretary general of BNP suddenly found unacceptable even in as decorative a post as that of the President. What Dr B Chowdhury's removal showed was that nobody could expect to survive in the government or in the party without the pleasure of Khaleda Zia and her son. If a lifelong BNP man, the founding secretary general, the man who built the party from scratch along with Ziaur Rahman could be removed without the slightest of provocation then how could any lower level leader survive? Even a suspicion of disloyalty would cost anybody's political career. This one act destroyed whatever little party democracy there was, depriving Khaleda Zia of any chance of getting any independent information or advice.

The two above acts—one destroying the government and the other destroying the party—committed at the beginning of Khaleda Zia's second term sowed the seeds of corruption, abuse of power, politicisation of every branch of the administration, especially law enforcement agencies and the bureaucracy.

Leaders like Saifur Rahman, Khandaker Mosharraf, Mannan Bhuiyan, Moudud Ahmed, and others of the same seniority bear a lot of responsibility for the present condition of BNP. They allowed the rot to continue without any protest. They too were eager to either please the crown prince or to stay out of his wrath without taking any position that would save the party. They miserably failed to take any stand when the cabinet was infiltrated by Tarique or when Badruddoza was dismissed in such humiliating circumstances. Thus they were partners in the demise of BNP when the party transformed itself from a political party to a family polity.

Let us all learn from what has happened to BNP. We cannot expect democratic governance from political parties that do not practise inner party democracy. In the future let us not accept any political party that does not permit democracy to flourish within its fold. This is a lesson that Awami League can only ignore at its own peril.

More than 50 sacks of old papers from the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) headquarters were reportedly sold on Wednesday night, but those were brought back to the commission's office yesterday.

The sacks containing old papers were sold to a shop at Segun Bagicha for about Tk 8,000. These papers were reportedly sent to a paper mill in Narayanganj.

After hearing the news, the commission officials took measures to bring the sacks back to the ACC.

An official said these papers had been stored on the third floor of the ACC office for a long time. "After joining the Commission, ACC Chairman Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury ordered to clean the office. Therefore, I told some of the staff to keep the papers somewhere else," the official said.

Replying to a query, he admitted, "It was a blunder and it should not have happened."

Asked what is done to the old papers, the official said, "The old papers should be destroyed following a proper procedure."

ACC Chairman Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury, who returned home yesterday from a private tour of Pakistan, told the news agency over phone, "I was on leave...I will attend the office on Sunday and see what has happened. If necessary, there will be an inquiry."

Commissioner Habibur Rahman told reporters he is not aware of this. "We will investigate the matter and action will be taken against the persons responsible."

## Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 20

runs. Those three quick wickets cost Razzak 22 runs in his eight-over first spell.

Mohammed Rafique then made it 96-6 in the veteran spinner clean bowled Dougie Brown for three. He claimed another wicket while Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Shakib Al Hasan took one apiece.

Scotland were 130-9 after 41 overs but managed to bat through their quota of 50 overs without any further damage.

Each team are allowed to use 13 players as this is not treated as an official ODI. Rajin Saleh and Shahadat Hossain were not in the Bangladesh 13.

## 73 expelled

FROM PAGE 20

Accompanied by a group of senior officials, the adviser went round Govt Laboratory High School, Bakshibazar Alia Madrasa, Dhanmondi Govt Boys High School, Aminnagar Matf-e-Am School & College, Savar Cantonment Public High School & College and Savar Adhar Chandra High School centres.

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# 50 sacks of old papers of ACC office sold

UNB, Dhaka

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## BNP demands

FROM PAGE 1

lawmaker Sardar Shakhawat Hossain Bakul yesterday met Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan at his Gulshan residence.

Several party leaders including Vice-Chairman MK Anwar, Adviser to the Chairperson Mofazzal Karim Chowdhury and party Joint Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan visited the Hawa Bhaban.

Protesting the detention of Tarique Rahman, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) brought out a procession on the Dhaka University campus yesterday morning, violating the emergency rule in the country.

However, they left the scene within minutes as police chased them.

The police and intelligence men cordoned the campus after the incident.

Jatiyatabadi Mohila Dal Bogra district unit formed a human chain and brought out a rally in the town to protest Tarique's arrest.

# RCC MAYOR'S SUIT Court summons Prothom Alo editor, publisher

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A Rajshahi metropolitan magistrate yesterday summoned daily Prothom Alo Editor Matiuur Rahman, Publisher Mahfuz Anam and Reporter Kamrul Hasan to appear before the court on April 19.

The summons issued by Metropolitan Magistrate Fazlul Karim came over the defamation suit of Rajshahi City Corporation Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu after a police investigation found that a Prothom Alo report defamed him.

Minu filed the suit on January 31 as the Prothom Alo had run a report headlined "8 BNP ministers-lawmakers sponsors of militants" that was published the day before identified Minu as one of the sponsors of Islamist militants, said Minu's lawyer Ankur Sen.

The Prothom Alo report quoted militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen, Bangladesh leader Siddikul Islam Bangla Bhai's statement that identified Minu as their sponsor during the militants' operation in Rajshahi region in 2004.

The court asked the police to investigate the matter and on February 25, Sub-inspector Zahidur Rahman of Boalia Police Station submitted the investigation report that said no evidence was found to prove the Prothom Alo report to be true and so, primary investigation found the report to have defamed the plaintiff.

## Open market sale

FROM PAGE 20

chairmen are in hiding fearing arrest, the finance adviser said there are UP members who will coordinate the programme. "However, if we don't find any local government representative, the food ministry will take alternative steps," he added.

The government decision of starting OMS and cutting import duties on rice and wheat came at a time when prices of essentials have been increasing continuously, in some cases, almost doubling compared to previous week.

The government also took a number steps to check the price hike that included ensuring increased supply of commodities in market and directing the joint forces to coordinate their drives so that those do not affect genuine businessmen.

## Barapukuria

FROM PAGE 20

million of the Supplier's Credit due in March.

CMC was also seeking other financial benefits of around another \$15 million. But the BCML's legal adviser strongly opposed any such payments because the Chinese company has repeatedly failed to meet contractual obligations.

Earlier this week, CMC officials along with Chinese embassy diplomats held a meeting with the energy adviser to discuss the outstanding issues. The adviser told CMC it must resume production first and that the government would then take up the repayment issue.

The government has already paid China Tk 662 crore in five instalments but CMC has failed to complete the project even eight years after the original schedule.

## Power projects

FROM PAGE 20

while a land-based plant demands land allocation and land lease agreement (LLA). This means this small power plant is going to block precious power plant site and prevent installation of bigger projects.

Hosaf also sought a five-year rental contract instead of three years', keeping the power tariff the same. It sought undue benefits for both its Feni and Barabkundu projects (each of 20-megawatt capacity).

Hosaf and GBB also asked for huge additional time to commission the Barabkundu and Bogra power projects.

The past government's initiative for small power schemes started amid a serious controversy where up to 45 small power schemes were about to be offered to ministers, lawmakers and individuals close to the Hawa Bhaban.

But the then government had to shelve the initiative under pressure from the World Bank and resorted to a smaller scale scheme.

"This whole exercise killed precious time for the nation and by this time the load-shedding has reached such a level that we cannot address the problem now through some small power schemes," said a PDB official.

The advisory committee on purchase yesterday approved procurement of two lakh metric tons of diesel from Singapore through open tender. The purchase will be cheaper than that from Kuwait.

The committee also decided to buy one lakh metric ton wheat at the rate of \$259.37 per ton from the international market. The wheat will be supplied to stabilise the country's food market situation.

The committee approved a Tk 31-crore budget for assigning three non-government organisations (NGOs) to provide health care services under the second urban primary health care project. In Sylhet, the job has been awarded to Shimantik while in Rajshahi and Bogra, it was awarded to Khulna Mukti Sheba.

# Indo-Pak talks yield positive results Manmohan Singh says

AFP, New Delhi

India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said yesterday peace talks with rival Pakistan had brought "positive results."

The nuclear-armed neighbours launched a peace process in January 2004 to improve ties, but negotiations have often been hit by mutual suspicion and allegations of supporting terrorism on each other's soil.

However, Singh said the dialogue was yielding results.

"We have been working purposefully for all-round improvement of relations with Pakistan," he told parliament.

"Efforts we have made are beginning to bring positive results. We will work resolutely."

Singh said New Delhi wants "long-lasting peace, friendship and amity" with Islamabad, and that "peace and security in the region is the key objective of our foreign policy."

Singh's statement came a day after the two countries concluded

their first meeting of a panel set up to fight terrorism jointly, amid charges by Pakistan that India was fuelling a tribal insurgency in its Baluchistan region.

New Delhi Wednesday denied the charges, and said it handed over to Islamabad evidence of Pakistan's involvement in terrorist activities on Indian soil.

The joint initiative to fight terrorism was launched in November when the two sides resumed peace talks in New Delhi following July 2006 train bombings in Mumbai in which 186 people died.

India said Pakistani intelligence was involved in the blasts, but Islamabad denies involvement.

New Delhi, however, responded with restraint in the aftermath of the firebombing of a Pakistan-bound train in northern India last month in which 68 people were killed, and did not hurl the usual allegations against Pakistan.

Nuclear-armed India and Pakistan each hold part of Kashmir but claim it in full.

# Taskforces handed

FROM PAGE 1

ultra-crime bust forces— one central, seven regional/city and 64 district-based—will have the right to detain any person without warrant for interrogation or collecting information involving any case.

Each of the taskforces will thrive on the authority to getting back illegally transferred money to foreign banks and amassed wealth abroad through related institutions.

The sweeping powers of the taskforces will compel any government and non-government organisations to provide information about persons linked with different crimes.

When asked, MA Matin admitted that he will head the mighty committee, which is to be floated soon. "The task of these taskforces will be to assist the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) as the organisation runs short of manpower."

But, as per the plan the ACC will in fact become one of a few helping components of the taskforces, sources argued.

They hinted that the taskforces are already out in action and Wednesday's high profile raids that also arrested Tarique Rahman, the senior joint secretary general of the BNP and eldest son of former prime minister Khaleda Zia, were supervised by the new-born units.

"From now on, the taskforce will be at the helm of all major hunts for corruption and criminal suspects," said a source.

The new list of 50 top corruption suspects was drawn up by the taskforces, and inquiry will be done by the ACC with the taskforces playing pivotal role in the outcome.

Before the Wednesday crackdown started, the ACC only prepared a proposal for inquiry into corruption allegation against former health minister of BNP Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, sources pointed out.

"We are not aware of this list. We also did not get any list from the government," ACC acting chairman Habibur Rahman told the press yesterday.

However, the taskforces will be bound to complete investigation within seven days after filing of a case linking people bracketed by the central body of the National Co-ordination Committee.

One of the eight responsibilities of these units outlined in the draft notification of the Cabinet Division recently is to list and freezing or attaching of all movable and immovable properties of accused persons.

In case of inquiry, investigation and

## Hasina

FROM PAGE 20

country towards development.

The AL president pledged that if voted to power her party would bring down the prices of essentials within the ordinary people's reach and work for economic empowerment of women.

She also promised that they would opt for direct election to the women's reserved seats like, she added