

## 2 ex-MPs sued

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from local BNP office and chanted slogans against the convention organised to protest filing of two false cases against four Kushtia journalists by former BNP lawmaker Sahidul Islam and one of his close associates.  
About a hundred journalists from Dhaka and other districts were attending the convention.  
The cadres threw brickbats at the journalists and beat them up mercilessly on orders from Sahidul and another former BNP lawmaker Syed Mehedi Ahmed Rumi leaving at least 25 newsmen including journalist leaders injured.  
They also vandalised furniture, a motorcycle and two minibuses, alleging the plaintiff abused the police remained inactive during the attack.  
The complainant also alleged

## Charges pressed

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president Rafik Uddin, Godagari BNP secretary and municipality chairman Anwarul Islam, Godagari Banik Samity president Ashraful Haq, Tarikul Islam, Mofazzal, Tofazzal, Ahmed, Tarikul, Nazrul and Eltaz.  
Golam Mostafa, a homeopath from Ramnagar village, lodged the case alleging that on April 13 last year, the accused individuals forcefully encroached on a piece of land that belonged to him. The land measuring 13 decimals is located at Dayingpara.  
Meanwhile in a separate case, SI Abdur Rahman submitted charge sheet against Nadim Mostafa and three of his cohorts for swindling a person out of Tk 1 lakh in the name of getting his son a job.  
Haji Moksed Ali from Bhallukgachhi village in Puthia filed a case alleging the four on April 2 this year.  
Three other accused in the case are upazila BNP vice president Abdul Hamid's brother Abdul Mazid, Bhallukgachhi union BNP secretary general Nazmul Gani Pintu and Omar Ali, principal of Dharampur

## No barbed-wire

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frequent shootouts that leave innocent villagers killed in bordering areas, smuggling of fire-arms and drugs and trespassing.  
"We have discussed various bilateral border issues in a very cordial way and talked about steps to establish peace and security in the bordering areas in both the sides, particularly in the areas bordering Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura," PK Mishra said while talking to the reporters after the meeting.  
Brig Gen SM Golam Rabbani told the journalists that they have pledged to help each other in keeping the long border between the two countries free from dispute and violence. While border problems cannot be solved overnight, steps have been decided upon to solve them gradually, he added.  
"Both sides in the meeting agreed to bring the barbed-wire fencing within a limit and send back the terrorists as well as trespassers to their respective countries," Brig Gen Rabbani said.  
Meanwhile, sources present in the conference said that the meeting, which was actually a follow-up of the DG level meeting last month, focused mainly on confidence building between the BDR and the BSF. As part of it, football and volleyball matches and exchange of teams between the two sides are already taking place.  
"Our Indian counterparts have invited us for a volleyball match and we would be accepting the invitation

## Biman set to become

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Debapriya Bhattacharya, executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, and economist Abul Barakat, who were present at the meeting on behalf of the civil society members, blamed the corporation's incurring huge loss every year mainly to corruption and mismanagement.  
Former secretary Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury, Deputy Governor of Bangladesh Bank Ziaul Hasan Siddiqui, Chairman of Securities and Exchange Commission Faruque Ahmed Siddiqui, President of FBCCI Mir Nasir Hossain, acting Secretary of the Ministry of Civil Aviation Sheikh Altaf Ali were also present at the consultation meeting.  
Debapriya Bhattacharya suggested that the government undertake the re-structuring plan at least in two phases. In the first phase, the government should formulate the documents for turning the corporation into a public limited company and take preparation for inviting foreign direct investment (FDI) and strategic partners.  
In the second phase, the financial balance sheet would be restructured and shares off loaded through initial public offering (IPO). The huge liabilities of the corporation amounting around Tk 700 crore could be also transferred into a

## Unscientific restoration

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the conservation project without any proper and authentic documentation, which is a prerequisite to conservation of a heritage site.  
An office assistant at the site office of DoA, Md Anisur Rahman, told this correspondent, "We are carrying out the restoration work hiring masons on a daily basis. The masons know how to do the job."  
According to conservation architects, friezes and other ornamental features of the old buildings are all being replaced with dissimilar and odd-looking features.  
The original lintels of these buildings were made of bricks and of semi-arch shape.  
Details of the ornamental works, their sizes and proportions are lost in the present intervention. The decorated plasters in the original buildings had molded curves on the capitals.  
The masons who had built the buildings left a lasting imprint of their craftsmanship creating aesthetic beauty in the decorative moldings on the walls, which are strikingly missing in the restored buildings, making them flat and dull, the experts said.  
Original cornices were styled with moldings on the surface but the repaired ones are now flat with plain surfaces.  
Shockingly, for example, the original features of one of the two frontal columns of Poddar Bari have been totally spoilt with a thick plaster coating creating a stark dissimilarity between the original and the restored.  
Another building called Gate House of Sonargaon, built towards 1650, also has fallen prey to distortions under the same project.  
Proportions and scales of many interior arches have been altered. Distortion has marred the shapes and patterns of the arches.  
"The government agency is actually destroying the fundamental heritage features of the site in the name of restoration, engaging mere masons and construction contractors in the job," said Ahmed, who is also a member of the advisory committee on the project.  
The DoA is not going by the recommendations of the advisory committee, instead they have bypassed the committee, he said adding, "What they are doing is just a waste of public money."

The advisory expert committee held only three meetings including the latest one on December 30, 2004, Sayeed Ahmed said adding that the archaeology department did not maintain any correspondence with the committee.  
Documentation is a comprehensive work -- compiling historical, architectural and archaeological information is a must before launching any intervention on heritage edifices, he said. Conservation work of such a historical site must involve conservation architects, general

## EC opens talks

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sit with the major political parties as soon as the embargo is withdrawn. The EC cannot finalise the proposals without holding talks with the political parties.  
Two election commissioners -- Sahul Hossain and Brig Gen (ret'd) Sakhawat Hossain -- yesterday reiterated that the draft proposals for electoral reforms will be finalised after consulting with the major political parties and eminent personalities.  
Decision on the introduction of transparent ballot boxes will be taken on consultation with them, they said.  
After holding talks with the eminent personalities, the EC will sit in dialogue with senior journalists and editors of different daily newspapers to seek their opinion on the issues.

Meanwhile, Danish Ambassador in Dhaka Einar H Jensen, yesterday at a meeting with the CEC and two other election commissioners discussed the preparation of transparent ballot boxes. The ambassador informed the EC that a Danish private company prepares transparent ballot boxes and the EC can consider using the company in preparing ballot boxes.  
The Danish embassy also gave a sample of transparent ballot box to the EC.  
Election Commissioner Sakhawat Hossain however said the EC is considering a proposal of Bangladesh Army for preparing the transparent ballot boxes at Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory. The EC has already visited the organisation, he said.

## Ex-BNP MP

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Match Factory at Shyampur in April 2004 and demanded Tk 10 lakh as toll for Salahuddin Ahmed.  
They also threatened to kill Shahin if he did not provide the money.  
Apprehending serious consequences, he went to Salahuddin's house and provided Tk 7 lakh on April 19, 2004, the complainant said.  
Salahuddin is already in jail on charge of corruption.

historians, geographers, archaeologists and historians of art and heritage.  
The DoA undertook a Tk 5 crore restoration and conservation project in the first phase of 2005-2006 fiscal. Allocation for the ongoing phase has to be spent within June 2007. The DoA has intervened in 16 out of 51 buildings of Panamnagar.  
A group of Hindu merchants chose Panamnagar as their residence in the nineteenth century and set up this urban settlement of cluster buildings bearing the influence of architecture of the colonial era.  
Eminent archaeologist and former director of DoA Dr Nazimuddin Ahmed said, at a seminar on Panam city organised by the DoA on April 13, that influence of classical, Greco-Roman and renaissance architecture is noticeable on the monuments of Panam city.  
"To my knowledge, the country's lone building with Petra-Dura style decorative work of precious stones is in Panam," he said, "So, the authorities have to restore and conserve the site with utmost care and caution."  
Noted historian and former vice-chancellor of National University, Prof Abdul Momin Chowdhury, said a conservation process has to have a 'long-term perspective and vision' for the sake of history.  
"It will cause defacement, instead of enhancing the glory, if the conservation is done carelessly," he said.  
He also said construction materials like timber, iron casts, tinted glasses and plaster casts might be manufactured in the original form.  
Secretary to the Cultural Affairs Ministry ABM Abdul Howk Chowdhury, present at the seminar, said it is difficult today to procure old day building materials. He admitted that distortion occurred in the name of heritage conservation in the case of Satgambur Mosque in Bagerhat.  
While the original ornamental works on the ceilings, walls and cornices of the buildings were fine, detailed, elegant and aesthetic in nature with presentation of artistry and workmanship, it is shockingly absent in what is being touted as a restoration.  
Cast iron brackets, ventilators, window grills, and balusters were extensively used in the original decorations of the buildings.  
The original coating of plaster was of conch shell powder, which would create a smooth and pleasant look of white marble. But now the masons are putting a thick coating of lime and surki of a different colour.  
A group of top architects including Dr Sharif Shams Imon, who is an expert in heritage management and teaches the subject in Macao, visited Panam city on March 19 along with the DoA officials.  
Panamnagar is an architectural heritage site, said Dr Imon, and what DoA is doing is renovation and

## Account details

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daily Janakantha Atiqullah Khan Masud.  
In a letter, NBR, the central authority for tax administration, asked the banks for the account statements of the listed persons for the period since July 2001 till the last printout in the audit trail. The banks were asked to provide the information by May 10.  
As per the directives, banks will have to come up with detailed information on transactions made through personal accounts, joint accounts, current accounts, foreign currency accounts, savings accounts, credit accounts, and credit cards.  
Sources said the revenue board will compare the tax returns of the listed persons with their transaction reports. NBR will do so to know about the sources of income of these persons and to see if they were involved in tax evasion.  
Earlier, on April 15, the government had asked for the bank account information of 71 corruption suspects and their relatives. In March, banks and non-banking financial institutions froze bank accounts of 53 individuals and their relatives on instructions from NBR as Tk 120 crore was found to have been undisclosed.  
The 83 names on the latest list are the following:  
Former chief conservator of the forest department Munshi Anwarul Islam, his wife Fayzunnessa Anwar, his sons Ishiaq Anwar, Imtiaz Anwar, Ishifiah Anwar, Munshi's daughters Sonya Farzana, Sadia Farzana, and his granddaughter Shamima Nargis.  
Businessman and the daily Janakantha editor Atiqullah Khan Masud, his wife Shamima A Khan, his sons Zishal A Khan, and Mishal A Khan.  
Ward Commissioner Mirza Khokon (Mirza Ekramul Hossain) who is also a brother of former public works and housing minister Mirza Abbas, Khokon's wife Masuda Hossain, and his sons Kaynath Mirza and Kashfa Mirza.  
Khaleda Zia's son Tarique Rahman, his wife Zubaida Rahman and his daughter Zaimar Zarnaz Rahman.  
Former NBR official ATM Sarwar Hossain and his wife Nazma Sarwar.  
BNP's Commercial Adviser Barkatullah Bulu, his wife Shamima Akhtar aka Shamima Barkat Lucky, and his sons Sanayaz Barkat, Salzid Barkat and Shahid Barkat.  
Former state minister Ziaul Haq

reconstruction 'but not conservation in any way'.  
They are reconstructing a simple brick-built flat roof with reinforced concrete and iron rods, he said adding that maintaining the original technique is important there.  
"The conservation will have no authenticity, as the materials and techniques are different in the restoration."  
"An irreparable damage has been done to the heritage of the site," he said.  
The masons are removing the entire old plaster destroying the exquisite and stylish workmanship. Imron said adding that they are instead putting new plaster of different material compromising the artistry of the original workmanship.  
President of the Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB) Mubasshar Hussain said, "The architecture of the buildings manifests an aesthetic pride of the affluent Hindu merchants but no effort is in sight to conserve the aesthetic manifestation of the edifices."  
"What the DoA is doing is destruction of a heritage site by government officials with public money," he said.  
Director of DoA Dr Md Shafiqul Alam claimed they have documentation of the site in forms of drawings and photographs.  
"In fact, whatever we have done so far is a temporary work," he said adding, "Following the death of a mason, we had to do temporary work. We will, if needed, remove the temporary repairs to bring the original features back."  
He said it was not possible to restore the detailed, fine and intricate ornamental works of the edifices, as they could not avail a suitable mason.  
Responding to whether reconstruction of cornices, walls and other aesthetic features of these historic buildings with dissimilar and deformed motifs and roofs with reinforced concrete (RCC) are acceptable, he said, "Not at all."  
"I have to go to the spot and see for myself actually what has happened and how," said Alam.  
World Monuments Watch rated Sonargaon-Panam City as one of the most endangered heritage sites in 2006.  
UNESCO refused to declare Lalbagh Fort as a world heritage site because of wrong restoration, said Sayeed M Ahmed adding that Panamnagar too is running the risk of facing a similar fate.

Zia, his wife Nasima Haq, and their son Mashfiqul Haq Joy.  
Awami League Joint General Secretary Md Obaidul Quader and his wife Ishratunnessa.  
Ward Commissioner and film star Manowar Hossain Dipjol, his wife Romana Manowar aka Romana Akhtar, his daughter Aliza Manowar, and his sons Sadman Manowar and Shadab Manowar.  
Former BNP minister Barrister Aminul Haque, his wife Ava Haque, his brothers Asaduzzaman, Enamul Haque, his daughter Shabnaz, and his son Md Quaiyum.  
Former BNP minister Shahjahan Shiraj, his wife Rabeya Haider, his sons Rajib Siraj and Sarowad Shiraj, and his son-in-law Omar Sadat.

Khaleda Zia's younger brother Shamim Iskandar and his wife Kaniz Fatima.  
Former Awami League (AL) state minister Syed Abul Hossain, his wife Khwaza Nargis Hossain, and his daughters Syeda Rubaiyat Hossain and Syeda Iffat Hossain.  
AL's Religious Affairs Secretary Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, his wives Roksanah Abdullah and Advocate Rashida Parvin, his son Sheikh Md Abdullah, and his daughters Syeda Siddiqui Lucky, Latifa Siddiqui Lina, Rehana Siddiqui Liza, Farhana Siddiqui Elora, Afroza Siddiqui Flora, Mohsina Siddiqui, Munira Siddiqui, and Lamiya Siddiqui.  
Former AL lawmaker Habibur Rahman Mollah, his wife Rezia Begum, his sons Mahfuzur Rahman Mollah, Md Manibur Rahman Mollah, Md Mashiur Rahman Mollah, and his daughter Alpana.  
Former BNP leader MAH Selim, his wife Amena Begum, his daughter Sahara Selim, his son Mehedi Hasan Prince, Samith Hasan, and his relative MA Salam.  
Former Chhatra League president Liaquat Ali Sikdar.  
Tazin Shahnaz, her sisters Tazin Mahnaz and Tazin Farhanaz, all of whom are daughters of former Public Service Commission member Prof Mahfuzur Rahman.  
Begum Jebunnessa and her son Zakir Hossain who are mother and brother of Dr AZM Zahid Hossain, leader of the BNP-backed Doctors Association of Bangladesh.

## ACC yet to

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extortion case filed against the Awami League chief.  
Replying to a question, Habibur Rahman said the commission in its meeting today will approve the submission of three charge sheets against AL leader and former state minister Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, BNP leader and former state minister Mir Nasir and his son Barrister Helaluddin, and BNP leader and former state minister  
Amanullah Aman and his wife Sabera Aman.  
Earlier on March 6, the ACC filed first information reports (FIRs) against them for concealment of information on their wealth statements sought by the commission.  
About submitting the charge sheets, ACC Chairman LT Gen (ret'd) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury told reporters that the commission is trying to do the job perfectly.

## US for quick

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Khaleda Zia's reported confinement.  
The spokesman said the US is watching Bangladesh situation quite closely.  
He viewed that if the government doesn't take right decisions regarding handling the current situation, there is a real possibility that it can threaten Bangladeshi democracy.  
When asked if the US government is in touch with ex-premier Hasina in London, McCormack said, "I know our embassy has been in close contact with them and Nick Burns talked to them several months ago."

## 17 ex-MPs

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Shaheeda Sarker Reba, Poritosh Chakkraborti, Hafizur Rahman, Amjad Hossain Talukder, Moklechor Rahman, Joyanal Abedin, Shahajahan Sarder, Ahsan Ahmed, NK Alam Choudhury, Bharoti Nandi, Noor Mohammad Mondol and Hafiz Uddin.

Rangpur BTBT accounts officer Nurul Islam filed the cases on behalf of BTBT.

## Wilted boro

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Earlier in 1997, similar problems arose due to high temperature, Bari sources mentioned.  
Abdul Karim, a farmer in Savar area, spoke of sterility problem. When this correspondent, visited his field, he said he had planted Boro seedlings earlier than the normal time. He however could not exactly say when he planted those.  
Asked about the reasons of less rainfall last year, a weather expert said, "Behaviour of weather varies month to month and year to year."  
He went on, "Weather fluctuation is a natural phenomenon. It might be caused by global climate change but that is still to be ascertained."  
According to DAE statistics, sterility has affected Boro production this season in 33,686 hectares out of 7,12,185 hectares in Mymensingh region, 14,805 hectares out of 3,32,782 in Comilla, 2,457 hectares out of 4,33,327 in Dhaka, 1025 hectares out of 33,72,562 in Barisal, 755 hectares out of 2,26,000 in Sylhet, 515 hectares out of 4,86,870 in Jessore and 42 hectares out of 8,22,433 in Rajshahi regions.

## TV channels

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television channel will operate without approval of the government. The permission from the information ministry will be required to operate any new channel in the country, it added.

## Bank clients

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the banks to provide NBR the "secret information" of accounts.  
A six-member delegation of Bangladesh Association of Banks, led by Bank Asia Chairman M Sayeeduzzaman, met Bangladesh Bank Governor Salehuddin Ahmed at his office and informed him of the problem.  
The delegation told the governor that the businessmen are scared of making transactions with the banks and sought his cooperation in this regard, meeting sources said.  
"The governor has assured us of examining the problem and doing the needful where it is possible," Pubali Bank Chairman Hafiz Majumder, a member of the delegation, told reporters after the meeting.  
He said the delegation of the private bank owners also requested the governor to extend the tenure of private bank directors from three years to six years to facilitate efficient management of the banks.  
The delegation urged the governor to use his good office to convey the government the need for adjusting the corporate income tax of the commercial banks and non-bank financial institution, he said.  
It urged the governor to recommend withdrawal of 3 percent tax on transactions through credit cards.

## Govt issues press notes

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is not pressuring Khaleda Zia regarding overseas trips or for leaving the country," the press note stated.  
"The government also did not impose any restriction on her movement," read the press note.  
This was the first public statement by the government on Khaleda's future after advisers had kept mum over the past week on whether the former prime minister would remain or leave the country.  
Law Adviser Mainul Hosen told reporters last night, "It does not really matter to this government whether they [Khaleda and Hasina] are in the country or not."  
"If there are allegations of corruption against them, they will be prosecuted," he added.  
Yesterday, the Bangladesh Bank asked all commercial banks to provide all banking information of Khaleda and Hasina.  
On April 22, British Airways refused to allow Hasina board a flight to Dhaka from London citing the April 13 government press note directing the immigration and aviation authorities, and airlines not to allow Hasina to return home.  
The press note stated that the government feared Hasina could threaten the country's economy, security and public order as, in its own words, reflected by her recent comments.  
On Tuesday, Hasina's lawyers moved to file a writ petition with the High Court to challenge the legality of the government press note imposing restrictions on her return home.  
Hasina was scheduled to return to the country on April 23, but in a dramatic few days starting from April 10 she at first brought her return forward to April 14 and later pushed it back again to April 23 under government requests.  
While, Saudi Arabia reportedly refused to give Khaleda Zia a visa unless she appeared in person and expressed her voluntary desire to go to the kingdom, after days of speculation in the media that she would leave the country with her younger son Arafat and his family, and the wife, daughter and mother-in-law of her elder son Tarique Rahman.  
On April 19 a BNP leader filed a writ petition with the High Court

## Iraqi govt held

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release them, omitting what many had viewed as a rare, reliable indicator of suffering in Iraq.  
The Iraqi government announced in a statement its deep reservations about the report that is "inaccurate in presenting information" and that "lacks credibility in many of its points. Also, it lacks balance in presenting the situation of the human rights situation in Iraq."  
"The publication of this unbalanced report ... puts the credibility of the UN office in Iraq on stake and it aggravates the humanitarian crisis in Iraq instead of solving it," the statement said.  
UN human rights officer Ivana Vuco said the government did not officially given a reason for refusing to release the numbers but it apparently "was becoming increasingly concerned about the figures being used to portray the situation as very grim."  
"Unofficially, however, in a number of follow up meetings to their decision we were told that there were concerns that the people would construe the figures to portray the situation negatively and that would further undermine their efforts to establish some kind of security and stability in the country," she said at a news conference at the mission's heavily fortified compound in Baghdad.  
"We found the decision to be rather unfortunate because the figures were helping us ... to understand the scope of the problem," she said. "In our view it is the government's responsibility and they are probably the only one with the real capacity to gather the figures in a systematic manner."  
Mission spokesman Said Arikat said the reason appeared to be that after the publication of its last human rights report on Jan. 16, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's office told UNAMI its mortality figures were exaggerated, "but our figures were taken credibly they are probably among the most carefully screened figures."  
He urged the government to reconsider its decision, saying the figures it could provide could "actually show what is going on in Iraq. Otherwise there will be a great deal of speculation."  
Numbers for Iraqi civilians killed since the U.S.-led invasion began in March 2003 vary widely and are believed to be vastly underreported, in part because of political pressure.  
The last UN report was issued in January found that 34,452 civilians were killed last year, including 6,376 in November and December, based on information from the Iraqi Health Ministry, hospitals across the country and the Medico-Legal Institute in Baghdad. Iraqi officials have complained that the numbers were too high.  
The current report cited many examples of deadly attacks by insurgents and militias across Iraq during Jan. 1-March 31, but it often relied on media accounts of such killings and does not provide overall numbers for the period.  
On February 14, U.S. troops began stepping up their presence in

## Aussie pace

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Hall who became the seventh man out for three to make the score 93-7 in the 27th over.  
Shaun Pollock then softly gave a return catch to chinaman Brad Hogg for five in the 30th over to take the total to 103-8.  
It is the second meeting between the two teams in the ongoing tournament, with Australia beating South Africa in a group match at St Kitts last month.  
Defending champions Australia are aiming for a World Cup hat-trick, having won the title in 1999 in England and 2003 in South Africa.  
It is South Africa's third appearance in the Cup semifinal since their debut in 1992 while it was Australia's fourth semifinal in a row in the tournament.  
The winner of this second semifinal will face Sri Lanka in the final in Bridgetown on April 28.