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US congressmen
for fair, early
election in
Bangladesh

UNB, Dhaka

US congressmen have expressed their desire to see a free and fair election in Bangladesh at the earliest possible time.

They appreciated the government's measures to fight corruption but stressed the need for observance of due process of law, according to a release received from Bangladesh mission in Washington.

The views were expressed on Thursday by congressmen Charles Rangel, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, James McDermott, co-chair of the House Sub-Committee on Trade, Joseph Crowley, co-chair of Bangladesh Congressional Caucus, Gregory Meeks, Steve Chabot, SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

CARETAKER GOVT STEPS INTO FIFTH MONTH TODAY Demands for allowing indoor politics, specific poll date growing

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed's caretaker government steps into its fifth month today amidst growing demands for lifting ban on indoor politics and a clearer timeframe for general elections.

The state of emergency, declared on January 11 to quell political riot over the abortive January 22 elections, also completed 120 days yesterday.

The anti-corruption campaign,

arrest of alleged corrupt ministers, MPs and businessmen, reforms of the Election Commission (EC) and the Anti-corruption Commission, improving law and order, and establishing stability have earned praise at home and abroad.

However, the government step

decisions regarding the two top leaders and apparently relaxed restrictions on movements of both Hasina and Khaleda and meetings with their party leaders.

In the seemingly changed situation, Awami League and BNP leadership have been pressing for lifting restrictions on indoor politics to allow them to discuss proposed reforms of the Election Commission within their party forums.

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Dismantling of illegal billboards begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has taken an initiative to remove all illegal billboards especially those on top of buildings and the ones that are hazardous to city dwellers.

A mobile team of the DCC removed around 15 billboards from Kakrall on Thursday night, DCC sources said.

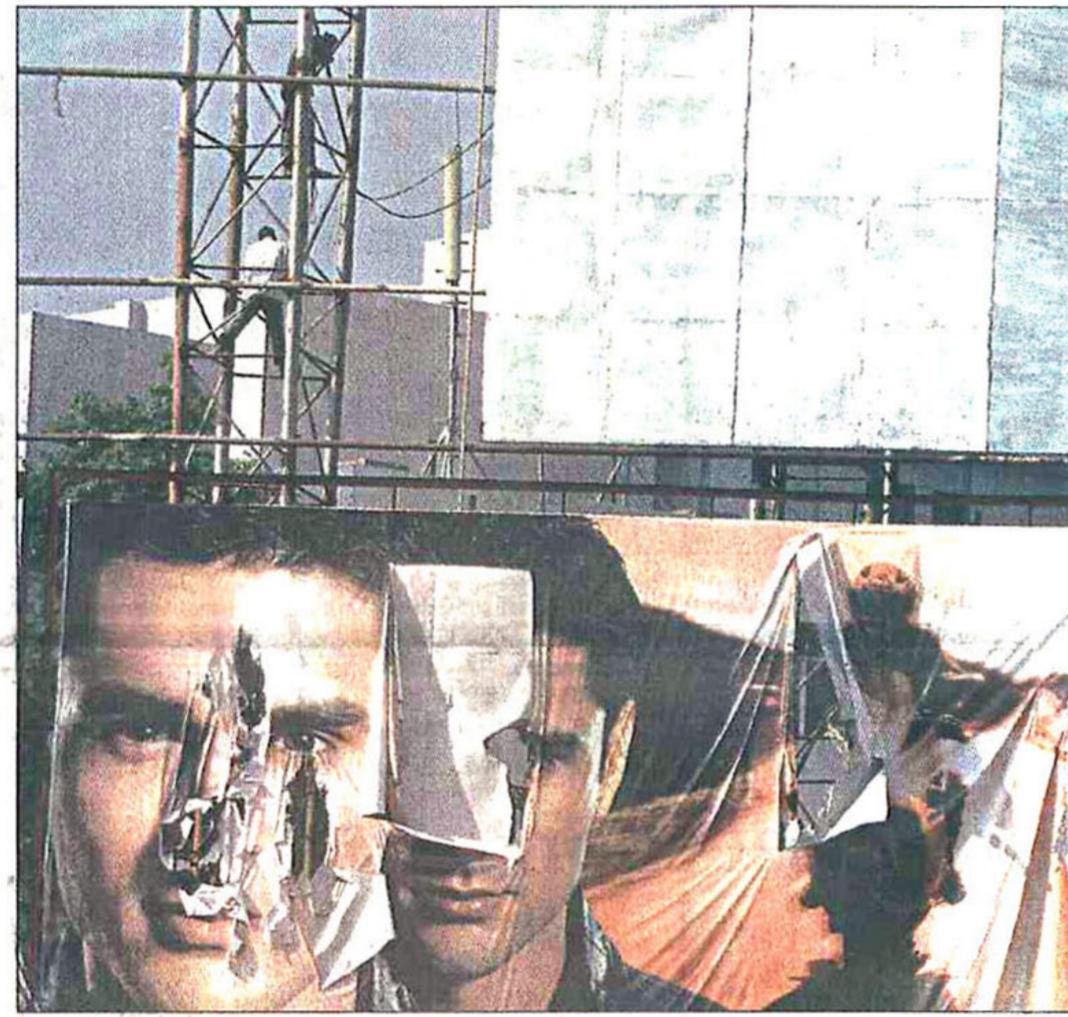
The DCC already formed a committee that would ascertain the number and locations of the risky billboards.

The move was taken when a number of billboards collapsed following storms. Last year, a security guard of a CNG filling station at the Pragati Sarani was killed when a billboard collapsed on the station during a storm. It also damaged a number of cars parked at the station.

The DCC held meetings with advertisement firms and directed them to remove their unapproved billboards and hoardings.

"We approved a few billboards on top of buildings but now many ad firms have installed them without permission. The government is

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Dhaka City Corporation dismantled this billboard near Dhaka Sheraton Hotel on Thursday night.

4,500 domestic fowls culled in Jaldhaka

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

More than 4,500 four thousand five hundred domestic fowls were killed and buried from all of the 454 households of West Gulmonda Master Para village in Jaldhaka upazila on Thursday night and yesterday.

The culled fowls include 3,297 chickens, 829 ducks and 398 pigeons, upazila livestock office sources said.

This is the first incidence of massive bird flu disease among the poultry birds of local species in the area.

An NGO field worker recently brought samples of some dead chicken from Master Para village to Jaldhaka Upazila Livestock Office that sent the samples on May 8 to Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute (BLRI) at Savar in Dhaka for testing, District Livestock Office

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With cracks and plasters fallen off, the stairs of a Motijheel AGB Colony building in the capital remain horribly risky while about a hundred families dwell in two dilapidated buildings, turning a deaf ear to the authorities' warning (inset).

PHOTO: STAR

Another extortion case against Ilyas Ali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Another extortion case was filed against former lawmaker and Sylhet district BNP chief M Ilyas Ali and five others with Sylhet Kotwali Police Station yesterday.

Angura Begum, a member of Khajanchiagona union parishad of Biswanath upazila, alleged that Union Parishad Chairman Rajab Ali along with others misappropriated Tk 10 lakh by preparing fake deeds of a land they occupied to construct the union parishad building on June 16, 2003. She said

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Crucial second ODI today

SPORTS REPORTER

Tigers' pace spearhead Mashrafe Bin Mortaza is expected to play in the all-important second one-day international against visiting India at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium today.

Bangladesh Television and NEO Sports will telecast the match live from 9.30am BST.

The lanky fast bowler took part in a late-afternoon training session

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Khaleda asks leaders not to create confusion

Hannan Shah says quoting BNP chief while Khoka refutes charges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Brig Gen (retd) Hannan Shah, an adviser to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, yesterday said the party chief had asked party leaders not to give any speech which might give rise to confusions in the party.

The ostensible message from

Khaleda came to Hannan, according to his own claim, after Dhaka City Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka in an interview on Thursday had said now is the time to curb the absolute power of the party chairperson to make the party pro-people as part of bringing reforms to the organisation.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Shibir's secret training of DU students

MAMUN AL MOSTOFA with KAMRUL HASAN KHAN

Islami Chhatra Shibir We will wage an armed struggle to establish Islamic law in Bangladesh."

They were sworn in as members of the student front of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh after nearly three weeks of indoctrination, during which they had been forced to study Islamic literature on jihad and shariah, they had also been instructed in how to run a clandestine organisation.

In the second week of April, they were picked from different residential halls of DU by some leaders of Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) partly with promises of accommodations in university dorms and partly with dreams of better careers.

Md Abrar Ahmed, a first year student of the history department at DU, is one of those thirteen students who were allured by the assurance of getting an

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