



The Daily Star

Plus 8-page Rising Stars



REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XVII NO. 127

DHAKA THURSDAY MAY 24, 2007

People's Right to Know

www.thedailystar.net

JAISTHA 10, 1414 BS

JAMADIUL AWAL 6, 1428 HURI

20 PAGES PLUS RISING STARS PRICE: Tk 10.00

No chance for military involvement in politics

Army subservient to civil authority, Lt Gen Moeen tells editors, asserts press freedom

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Army chief Lt Gen Moeen U Ahmed yesterday said power takeover by the military or their getting involved in politics is out of the question as the army is not the "proper institution" to run the government.

Moeen also reiterated the army's full commitment to press freedom and journalists' right to report freely. "The army respects the free press and takes its suggestions very seriously and often acts on them," he told newspaper editors at a meeting at his office yesterday.

He said he wants elections and restoration of an elected government as early as possible. If the army wanted to take power, they could do it during the chaotic



Lt Gen Moeen U Ahmed

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Govt successes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Army Chief Lt Gen Moeen U Ahmed yesterday highlighted some successes of the caretaker government to the media, elaborating its achievements in recovering outstanding utility bills, money siphoned offshore and lost government lands, and in improving the efficiency of Chittagong Port among other things in the first four months of being in state power.

A document released by the army chief said the caretaker government (CG) recovered Tk 2323

crore of outstanding bills, Tk 320.5 crore of money siphoned abroad, and 14,187 acres of grabbed government land. It also improved the efficiency of Chittagong Port, boosting exports by 20 percent, the document said.

However the document identified the rising prices of essentials, 1454 MW power shortage, and an anachronistic administrative system as the main challenges the country is facing.

It claimed that with the help of the army the CG successfully established

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Kids on their way home from school yesterday walk through sewerage pipes kept on a road in the city's East Basabo area as Dhaka Wasa dug the road for laying the pipes.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

EC's reform move facing problem due to ban on indoor politics

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) is facing problems to discharge its functions, particularly the task for electoral reforms, due to the ongoing embargo on indoor politics.

"We could have discussed draft proposals for electoral reforms with the political parties had the embargo on indoor politics been lifted. We are waiting for holding talks with the political parties," Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hossain told reporters yesterday.

Had the discussions with the political parties been held, many proposals for electoral reforms could be raised," he said.

LGRD and Cooperatives Adviser Anwarul Iqbal yesterday told reporters that the embargo on indoor politics will be lifted when the EC asks for it while Law Adviser Mainul Hossain emphasised creation of the

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EC now mulls door-to-door voter info collection

1-year jail for discouraging voters from being listed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) is now actively considering sending its enumerators to door-to-door visits for collecting the particulars of prospective voters to start preparing simultaneously the voter list with photographs and national identity cards from August.

Citizens eligible for being registered as voters however will have to visit the voter registration centres to have their photographs taken at their conveniences. The enumerators will distribute voter registration forms in advance by going from door to door to expedite the process and to encourage eligible citizens to visit the centres.

Besides, the EC is drafting a proposal for bringing amendments to the existing electoral ordinance and rules, with a stringent provi-

sion against any act discouraging eligible citizens to be registered as voters. Discouraging eligible people to be registered as voters will become a punishable offence with a maximum of one-year imprisonment and fines, if the proposed amendments become part of the law, sources said.

In a bid to get closer to the people, the EC decided to double the number of the voter registration centres across the country. In its original plan, the number of registration centres was about 50,000 but it will be about one lakh now, as the EC specified every voters' area will have a registration centre.

To study the feasibility of the procedure the EC will begin a pilot project on June 10 in Sripur municipality of Gazipur.

Earlier, the EC announced that it would prepare the voter list with

photographs and national identity cards by only setting up voter registration centres instead of going from door to door. Major political parties have been opposing the plan demanding door to door visits.

"Along with setting up the registration centres, we are of course considering sending enumerators to door to door visits to distribute voter registration forms. They will encourage eligible people to come to the voter registration centres after filling up the forms. If anybody cannot fill up the forms, the enumerators will assist them," Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hossain told reporters yesterday.

The authenticity of the information collected from the voter registration forms will be checked at the

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NBR sues Lobi for dodging Tk 17cr tax

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) yesterday filed a case against detained former BNP lawmaker Ali Asgar Lobi for evading Tk 17 crore income tax.

Senior Special Judge Mohammad Azizul Haq of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka issued an arrest warrant against Lobi after Mohammad Nurul Amin, deputy tax commissioner of Taxpayers'

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NON-FARM SECTOR

Male workers' earning goes up, females' down

BBS study shows inflation ate up the gains in Q3 of this fiscal year

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Monthly income of the non-farm sector male workers marked a rise in the third quarter of the current

fiscal year in comparison to the first quarter, but there is a decline in the earnings of their female counterparts, an official survey report says.

The report of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) also draws attention to the rising inflation eating up a significant portion

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Buffalo carts carrying paddy to peasants' houses is a common sight in rural Bangladesh. This picture shows such loaded carts in a water body as buffaloes like to have dips in scorching summer heat.

PHOTO: STAR

Pabna lawyer held for 'patronising' militants

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday arrested Advocate MR Khan, brother-in-law of militant outfit Allahar Dal chief Matin Mehedi, from his house in the district town allegedly for patronising militants who have regrouped recently under the name 'Jadid-ul-Qaeda'.

The elite force personnel raided MR Khan's Gopalpur residence early yesterday following an intelligence report that militants were holding a secret meeting there. But the militants managed to flee before the raid, Rab officials said.

Pabna camp-in-charge of Rab-12 Capt Taifur Mahub said Khan's eldest son Mahmudur Rahman has direct links to Allahar Dal, and Matin Mehedi used visit his (Khan)

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Six engineers of Rajuk, PWD closed

UNB, Dhaka

Six engineers of Rajuk and Public Works Department (PWD) have been closed to the Ministry of Housing and Public Works, said a handout yesterday.

They are chief engineer M Emdadul Islam and superintending engineer Mohammad Ali of Rajuk, superintending engineer of Public Works Department and director of Rajuk Housing Project Abdus Sadek, superintending engineer of Dhaka Public Works Circle-3 Ziauddin Ahmed, executive engineer of PWD and project director of Rajuk Uttara Extension (3rd phase) Kazi Reazul Monir and executive engineer of the Works Bhaban, Dhaka (O&M) Syed Mahfuz Ahmed.

Charges pressed against Dulu for JMJB link

23 others also accused; Nadim Mostafa's name dropped

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police yesterday submitted charge sheet against 24 people including former deputy minister for land Ruhul Kuddus Talukhdar Dulu in a Natore magistrate court for abetting Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) militants.

Arman Hossain, investigation officer (IO) of the case and also officer-in-charge of Naldanga Police Station, dropped former BNP lawmaker Nadim Mostafa from the charge sheet for lack of witnesses and evidences against him.

The other accused are Ratan, Kalu, Kawsar, Amjad, Afzal, Golap, Hafizul, Yunus, Aser, Ataur, Hazrat,

Wahidur, Abdur Razzak, Abdul Kuddus, Hazrat-2, Abdul Khalek, Jalal, Abdul Malek, Sahadat, Biplob, Helal, Belal and Zeher.

JMJB torture victim Muhidul Islam Khan of Nandipara Darbeshpur under Puthia upazila of Rajshahi lodged the case on April 1 accusing 21 persons including Dulu, Nadim Mostafa and JMJB top leader Siddikul Islam Bangla Bhai, executed recently, court and police sources said.

According to the charge sheet, Dulu formed a terrorist group 'Dulu Bahini' to take retaliation of the murders of his nephew Sabir Hossain Gama, cousin Majedur Rahman Maju and chairman Mukul

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14 arms seized from robbers of Sundarbans

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

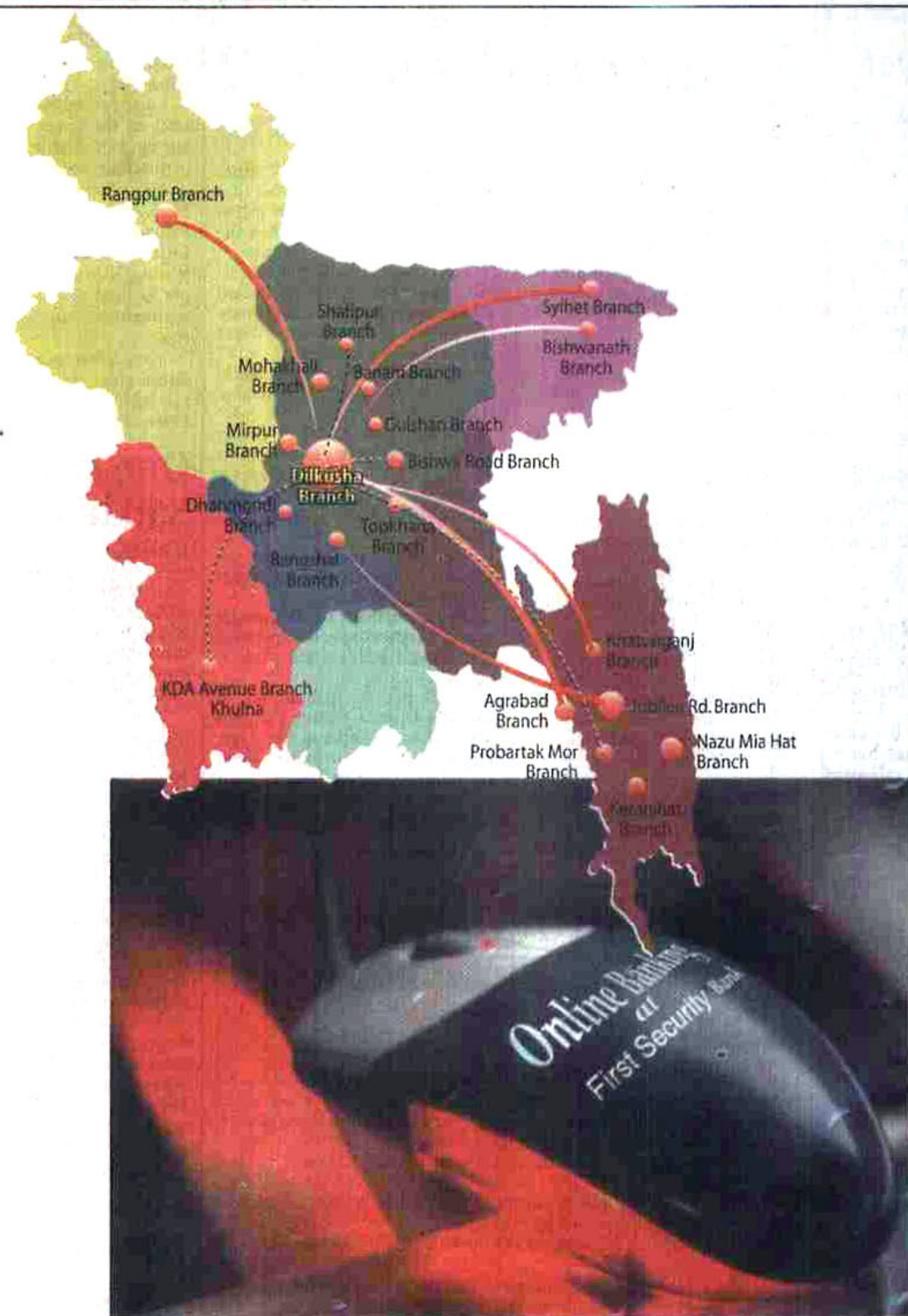
The law enforcers in separate raids recovered 14 firearms and 180 bullets from the hideouts of two gangs of robbers in Bagherhat district yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, a joint team of Rab and coastguards raided the hideout of Kalam Bahini of the Sundarbans in Panirghat area under Swarankhola upazila at around 2:30pm and recovered six SBL guns, one 303 rifle, two DBL guns and 150 bullets from there.

They could not arrest any of the gang members as they fled the hideout sensing the presence of the law enforcers.

In another operation, police recovered one SLR, two 303 rifles, two home-made guns and 30 bullets from the hideout of Badal Bahini in Dhanshidhar Char area

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