

## CA seeks WB help

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Patel said the WB would continue its support to Bangladesh, on a larger scale in the days ahead, according to Secretary-in-Charge of Chief Adviser's Office Kazi M Aminul Islam, who was present at the meeting.

Patel appreciated and expressed satisfaction over the caretaker government's performance, outcome and various reforms in a short time, which has been also praised throughout the world.

"The prime objective of the caretaker government is to hold a free, fair and credible election, and the government is carrying out all the activities keeping in mind that the present government is

accountable to the people," Fakhruddin said.

He said, as they want to hold election with a flawless voter list so the Election Commission is working to that end.

Explaining the importance of various sectors for which he sought assistance from the donor agency, Fakhruddin said his government wants to deal with the power sector on a war footing to take it on the fast track as the country's socio-economic development is dependent on electricity.

On Local government, he said strengthening local government was long expectation of all and it needs strengthening administratively and financially to reduce dependence of the local government on the government.

Regarding Padma Bridge, he said it would help in ensuring balanced economic development across the country along with connecting Mongla seaport with many parts of the country.

On agriculture development, the chief adviser said the government is giving much importance to its extension, research, development of technology and developing supply chain to connect growers and consumers. He sought WB's long-term support for this agenda.

The meeting also discussed quick implementation of development projects and disbursement of funds.

The WB will also support capacity building of various ministries for implementing projects, Patel stated.

WB Country Director Xian Zhu, its Operations Adviser Mohammad Althousseyni Toure, ERD Additional Secretary Md Shahidul Huq and Chief Adviser's Deputy Press Secretary Md Sarwar Alam were also present at the meeting.

## CHT land body

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held during the last Awami League government. No meeting of the council were held during the four-party alliance government.

Foreign and CHT Affairs Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury chaired the meeting held at the auditorium of CHT Affairs Ministry. Chairman of CHT Regional Council Jyotindra Bodhipriya Larma, circle chiefs of Chakma, Bomang and Mong, and chairman and members of Khagrachhari, Bandarban and Rangamati district council were present at the meeting.

Meeting sources said the commission would start working in full swing to help develop the region. The meeting also discussed about the problem of land disputes in the region.

It is widely believed that the land dispute problem started when the governments of late 70s and early 80s rehabilitated Bangla speaking people from different parts of country on the lands of indigenous communities in CHT.

The peace accord signed between the government and Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samity (PCJSS) on December 2, 1997, mentions the formation of Chittagong Hill Tracts Land Commission to resolve land related disputes. According to the accord, the commission was formed November 1, 2004 headed by a retired judge.

Yesterday's meeting also decided to appoint some staff to facilitate the works of the commission.

## Huda, Wadud

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"Charge sheets will be submitted against the four corruption suspects either on Monday or Tuesday," a well-placed source at the ACC told the news agency yesterday.

He said the commission has already approved the submission of charge sheets, but those will be submitted on completion of some more formalities.

A charge sheet will be submitted against Huda and his wife Sigma Huda for allegedly taking Tk 2.40 crore in bribe to facilitate to get a tender. The first information report (FIR) in this regard was filed with Dhanmondi Police Station on March 21.

The ACC is preparing to submit charge sheet against former BNP MP Wadud Bhuiyan for concealing information and acquiring wealth worth Tk 6.3 crore without any known source of income. The FIR was filed with Khagrachhari Police Station on March 21.

A charge sheet will be submitted against AL leader Panaj Debnath for concealing information and acquiring wealth worth Tk 65 lakh without any known source of income. The FIR against him was filed with Dhanmondi Police Station on March 22.

The anti-graft watchdog will submit a charge sheet against T&T CBA President Firoz Miah and his wife Roushan Ara for concealing information and acquiring wealth worth Tk 2 crore. An FIR was filed against them with Ramna Police Station on March 22.

## Babar

FROM PAGE 1  
minister also confessed that an official of the Bangladesh High Commission in Singapore used to look after his business there.

Sources said the former state minister gave the investigators information, which they later found to be false. Babar gave the false information to save himself, the sources added.

Babar also confessed to owning a lot of plots and flats in the names of his relatives.

Meanwhile, Tk 20 crore, which Babar took as bribe from Bashundhara Group, was deposited in the central bank's government exchequer on Wednesday in nine cheques and pay orders.

A Bashundhara Group director told the joint forces that Babar took the money in exchange for not implicating Bashundhara Group owner Ahmed Akbar Sobhan's son Shafiat Sobhan in the killing of another director of the conglomerate Humayun Kabir Sabir.

The former state minister asked the Bashundhara men to deliver the money to Prime Bank Director Qazi Saleemul Huq who was supposed to return the money to Babar at a later time, sources said.

After receiving the bribe, Babar allegedly instructed the police not to proceed with the case and the Bashundhara director's murder still remains unsolved. He also allegedly let Sobhan's son Shafiat fly out of the country.

Bashundhara Chairman Ahmed Akbar Sobhan is on the Anti-Corruption Commission list of graft suspects. He escaped to London soon after the anti-graft drive began and has been hiding abroad since then.

## Peace status

FROM PAGE 1  
Intelligence Unit, a division of the Economist publication, and funded by Australian businessman Steve Killelea.

The ranking was done by using 24 indicators, including military spending, ease of access to 'weapons of minor destruction' - guns and small explosives - corruption and respect for human rights.

## 3 killed in 'shootouts'

STAR REPORT

Three criminals were killed in "crossfire" during "shootouts" between law enforcers and the criminal's accomplices in Dhaka and Kushtia yesterday.

The dead were identified as Mizanur Rahman, 25, Sahidul Islam alias Picture, 25, and Tofazzol Hossain alias Tota, 30.

Sources said a Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) patrol team challenged a group of five to six youths near Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the capital around 11:15pm. As the gang started shooting at the Rab personnel, Rab retaliated leading to a 10-minute gunfight. When the gang finally retreated they left behind the bullet riddled body of Mizanur Rahman.

Police sources claimed Mizanur has several criminal cases filed against him with Tejgaon Police Station including four murder cases.

KUSHTIA  
Two cadres of the outlawed Gono Mukti Foj (GMF) were killed in "crossfire" during a "shootout" between police and their cohorts at Milpara in Kushtia early yesterday, our Khustia correspondent reports.

Police sources said following secret information that GMF is holding a secret meeting at Milpara, a team of Kushtia police raided the area around 3:30am and managed to close in on them.

They asked them to surrender but the criminals started shooting at the police. Police retaliated that led to a 30-minute gun battle.

Following the shootout the criminals managed to flee but they left behind the bodies of Picture and Tota on the spot. Police also recovered one locally made gun and seven bullets from the spot.

According to police, Picture was accused in eight criminal cases and convicted in a murder case. He was given the death sentence by a special tribunal. Tofa was accused in 10 criminal cases including abduction, rape, robbery and murder.

## Heat wave to turn severe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's average temperature yesterday rose one degree higher than Wednesday's while meteorologists said the mild to moderate heat wave might turn into a severe one in some parts of Dhaka, Rajshahi, Khulna and Barisal divisions in the next couple of days.

Yesterday's temperature was again the record high of the season. It was 41 degrees Celsius in Bogra. The humidity is also very high.

Dhaka met office sources said a moderate heat wave is moving over Dhaka and the south-western region of the country.

Yesterday's temperature in Dhaka city, 36.6 degrees Celsius, was however, a bit less than Wednesday's. Despite a little lessening of temperature, sultry weather accompanied by load shedding and water crisis continued to make the city dwellers suffer terribly.

The monsoon is now at Sandoway point near Myanmar coast and the temperature will fall with the monsoon's crossing the Teknaf border, meteorologist Sadekul Alam said.

Now the temperature is 7 degrees Celsius higher than this period in last year while the rainfall is 24 per cent less.

"The heat seems unbearable in Dhaka city as it has turned into a city of concrete, losing much of its trees and wetlands. Otherwise, the temperature is not that much for this season. The heat is required for ripening of mangoes and jackfruits," said Dr Arun Nishat of the World Conservation Union.

## Foreign adviser

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legal manpower export.

The signing of the MoU would allow Bangladeshi workers to legally gain employment in the prospering far-east Asian country as manpower recruitment from Bangladesh has been banned in Korea for the last five years.

"Workers who have previously worked in (South) Korea and who are currently there will have a greater opportunity to get jobs there after the signing of the MoU," Iftekhar said while talking to the reporters yesterday. The new Employment Permit System (EPS) will allow Bangladeshi workers to utilise their knowledge in English and IT, he added.

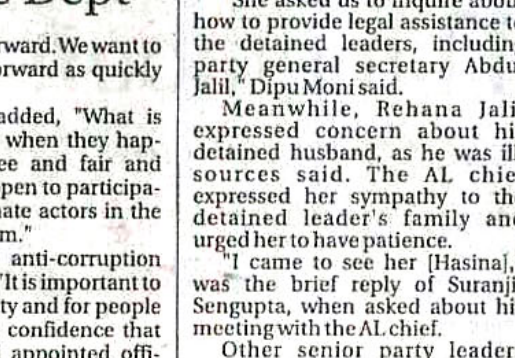
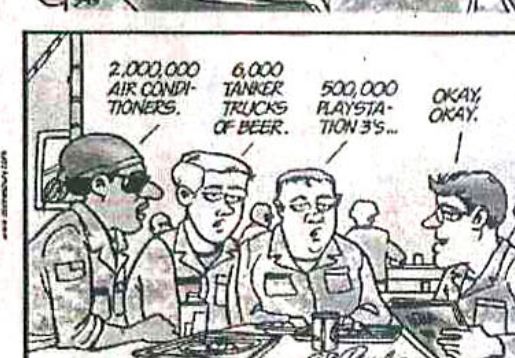
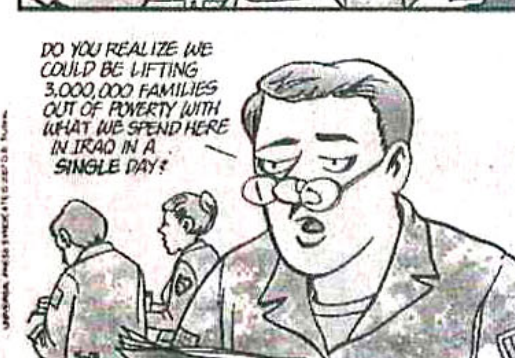
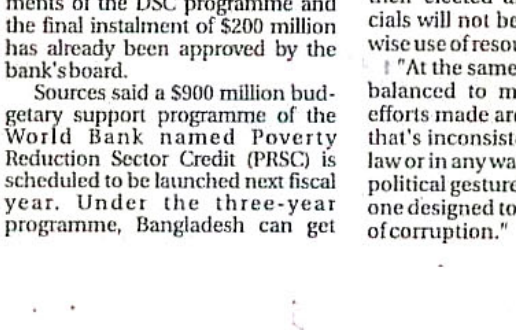
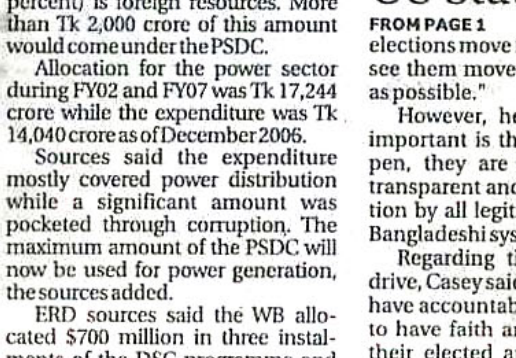
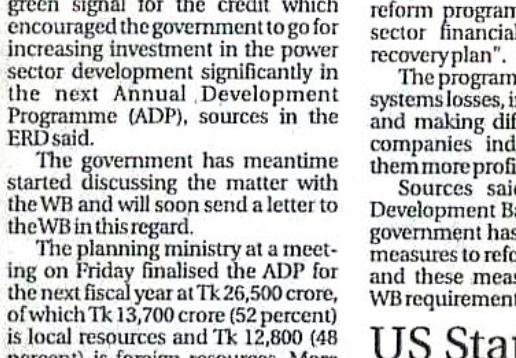
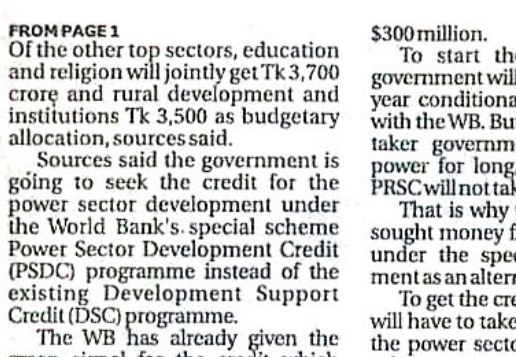
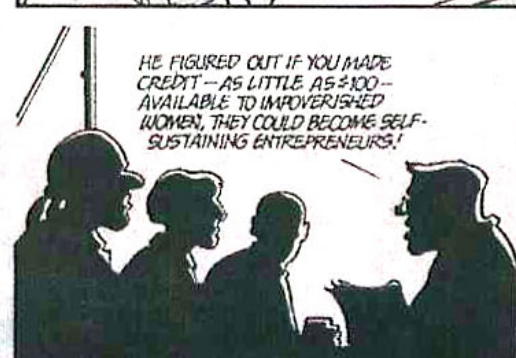
The foreign adviser said that the ACD, attended by foreign ministers, will largely focus on development issues, and he will share Bangladesh's experiences with poverty alleviation, women empowerment, and micro-credit to the other Asian countries.

He will also have meetings with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Japanese Foreign Minister Tarō Aso on the sidelines of the dialogue, the foreign adviser added.

Iftekhar will then separately meet South Korean Foreign Minister Song Min-Soon and Labour Minister Sang-Soo Lee, with whom he will sign the MoU on manpower export. He will also sit with South Korean entrepreneurs and investors to explore investment opportunities in Bangladesh.

The adviser will also meet Bangladeshi workers in Korea to discuss their problems and look at ways to overcome those through greater cooperation between Seoul and Dhaka.

Iftekhar explained that the MoU would aim to bring all Bangladeshi workers in South Korea under documentation, as there are over 12,000 undocumented workers currently working there.



## Gani's shenanigans

FROM PAGE 1  
posting in the Sundarbans or Chittagong Hill Tracts is sold for Tk 10-20 lakh, said high officials in the Forest Department.

Gani's wife recently collected more than Tk 1 crore from different forest divisions, said an official. Gani, however, did not deposit the sum with any bank for fear of the ongoing anti-corruption drive.

In 2006, the forest ministry warned him for abnormal transfer activities in the department.

Earlier, a departmental case was filed against Gani in 2002 when he was the conservator of forests in Khulna Circle for selling out 368 lots of forest wood without any auction showing only Tk 33 lakh as the price.

Sources said Gani gulped not less than Tk 3 crore 51 lakh which an open tender would have yielded.

Gani was found guilty in the departmental investigation and the erstwhile Bureau of Anti-Corruption filed a case against him in January 2003. But no action was taken against him; he was rather promoted as the deputy chief conservator of forests in 2004.

Gani allegedly had the blessings of three forest ministers of both the Awami League and the BNP-Jamaat alliance governments—Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Shahjahan Siraj and Tariqul Islam.

Sources said before becoming the chief conservator Gani also made a good link with the Hawa Bhawan through former prime minister Khaleda Zia's APS-2 Abdul Matin. Both Matin and Gani hail from Comilla.

Gani allegedly made around Tk 2 crore by appointing 83 forest guards in four forest divisions.

Several sources said Gani embezzled money from three forest development projects—the Sundarbans biodiversity project, the Noakhali coastal afforestation project, and the Nisharghar project.

He allegedly did not return a pricey Canon EOS-100 camera of the Forest Department when he was in charge of the Sundarbans division.

Gani's wife Mohsena Ara used to visit the range offices of both the East and West divisions of the Sundarbans once a month to collect money from the forest officials.

"Osman Gani bought houses in Dhaka with the money he made during a decade's stint in the Sundarbans," sources said.

It is alleged that Gani maintained his money spinning chain through six officers of deputy ranger and ranger ranks in the Rangamati, Chittagong, Dhaka, Sundarbans, Bogra and the Coastal zones.

Sources said the department used to centrally collect more than Tk 2 crore every month from Cox's Bazar, Sundarbans, Chittagong North and South, and Rangamati forest divisions.

"The chief conservator would send shares of the bribes to his higher authorities and close aides working in important posts in the department," said a source.

Gani also made huge money by allowing land grabbers to build structures on forestland at the Bhawal National Park.

A few forest officials recently informed the Ministry of Environment and Forest anonymously of Gani's corruption.

Sources in the forest department said a system has been established in the department through which the chief conservator automatically gets money even without any coercion.

"The British had introduced the

system to earn revenue from the forests instead of conserving them. The forest officials' approach towards the forests still remains the same—they only know how to make money out of the forests," a young forest official told The Daily Star, requesting anonymity.

It is alleged that the station officers at the forest check posts never give clearance to a truckload of wood without money.

"A huge amount of money is collected at the forest check posts and the chief conservator and other high officials get the share of the money on monthly basis," said the officer.

"As an officer has to spend huge money to get a posting, he sells trees to recover that amount," he said, adding that in this way all big and old trees have disappeared from all the forests in the country.

Due to such unbridled corruption of all forest officials, all old trees of the forests of the country have almost vanished except a few in the Sundarbans.

Meanwhile, the joint forces yesterday conducted massive searches to round up Gani's two brothers-in-law Khair and Mintu. Khair is also a forest department employee.

Sources said Gani used to smuggle timber from different forests to different sawmills in the city including the two on Maneswar Road in Dhanmondi where the joint forces recovered huge quantity of timber early yesterday. Khair and Mintu used to coordinate the smuggling.

The joint forces could not arrest anyone.

A joint forces team was measuring the quantity of the timber at the time of filing this report at 8:00pm.

The forces yesterday also raided the six-storey Maneswar Road house of Gani's wife Mohsena Ara but could not find any documents.

Khair, Mintu and Gani's expatriate father-in-law used to live in the building.

Relatives of Gani have removed documents and movable properties from the Maneswar Road house when we were raiding Gani's Uttara residence and his locker in a bank in Dhanmondi, a joint forces official told The Daily Star seeking anonymity.

## Peacekeepers

FROM PAGE 1

Guehenno expressed his profound gratitude to 107 deceased peacekeepers from 46 countries for their courage and selflessness, according to a message received in Dhaka yesterday.

Acclaiming the UN peacekeeping as a powerful expression of the extraordinary vision of international solidarity for peace, Guehenno extended his gratitude to the troop contributing member states for their unique and vital endeavour.

Earlier, on Tuesday, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon paid tribute to the memory of 107 peacekeepers who lost their lives in 2006 and pledged to safeguard the security of those now in operations across the world.

At present, more than 9,600 Bangladeshi soldiers and police officers are serving in the UN peacekeeping missions in Afghanistan, Cote D'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Georgia-Kosovo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, East Timor and the Western Sahara.

## 16 Afghan cops killed

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was on its way from the south to the capital, Kabul, when it was ambushed along the main highway -- one of the busiest in the country, the interior ministry said.

"Sixteen police were martyred and another six police were wounded today at 8:30 am in an ambush by the enemies of peace in Afghanistan," spokesman Zemarai Bashary told AFP.

There were also casualties on the Taliban side, Bashary said, without giving a number.

Nato's International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) said in Kabul meanwhile that a Chinook that came down in Helmand late Wednesday may have been hit by hostile fire. The Taliban movement said its men shot down the chopper.

"We are able to say now that there may have been enemy fire in bringing down the helicopter," the Isaf media office in Kabul said. "It could be anything from small arms fire upwards."

The 37-nation force does not release the nationalities of its casualties, but the Ministry of Defence announced in London that one of the seven dead was a British soldier.

The casualties.org website, which charts casualties in the operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, said five of the dead were US nationals, one Canadian and a Briton.

Taliban spokesman Yousuf Ahmadi said late Wednesday that "our brothers in Helmand" had brought down the heavy transport helicopter.

"The helicopter burst into flames in the sky and then crashed," he said, citing the local rebel cell that claimed to have to

carried out the attack.

The insurgents have made similar claims in the past but are only confirmed to have brought down one military aircraft in Afghanistan -- in June 2005 when a rocket-propelled grenade shot down a Chinook in Kunar province.

## Ex-MP Gias

FROM PAGE 1  
the afternoon for concealing information of wealth worth over Tk 2.23 crore in the statement submitted to the ACC earlier.

Akhter was arrested in February on the ACC premises when he went there to submit his wealth statement. His name was on the first government list of 50 corruption suspects.

RHD Executive Engineer Sanaul Haq filed the cases against Giasuddin with the Siddhirganj Police Station in Narayanganj.

In one case, it was alleged that Giasuddin took possession of a 4 katha land of RHD worth Tk 35 lakh by force at Shimarail and set up 13 shops there.

In the other case, the RHD accused Giasuddin of awarding contractual work worth Tk 6.12 crore to his favoured contractors by using influence and force.

WARRANTS AGAINST YUSUF  
A Faridpur court yesterday issued arrest warrants against former food, disaster management and relief minister Chowdhury Kamal ibne Yusuf and four RHD officials in a case of misuse of power, reports our correspondent.

Ahsanul Haque Alam, a businessman of the town, filed the case with the judge's court yesterday alleging that the RHD officials at the instruction of Kamal ibne Yusuf demolished eight shops in Goolchamat area of Faridpur town on February 16, 2002.

After hearing Judge Md Abdul Moiz issued arrest warrants against the former minister and the four RHD officials.

## Comic strip

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newspapers worldwide via Universal Press Syndicate including all major newspapers such as International Herald Tribune, The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Guardian (UK) and the LA Times.

A satirical comic strip, Doonesbury is widely read because of its liberal political content.

## Correction

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May 4, which erroneously stated that Abdul Wadud Khanadkar was sacked but the fact is he resigned from the post of additional attorney general.

## Taskforce seizes

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worth over Tk 1 crore. ACC Deputy Director Golam Shahriar Chowdhury filed a case with Kotwali Police Station against Multi Shahidul and five others for evading tax amounting to Tk 80,91,720.

The Lexus car was imported under the duty-free car-import privilege for the members of parliament. The privilege has now been abolished.

## Hasina asks

FROM PAGE 1  
She also urged them to stand beside the party activists, so that the activists do not get panicked in the prevailing political situation.

Hasina said this when a group of leaders of the AL and its front organisations met the party chief at her Sudha Sadan residence in Dhanmondi in the capital.

AL presidium member and former lawmaker Suranjit Sengupta, central committee member AHM Khairuzaman Liton, former lawmaker Sahiduzzaman Sarker, Mohila League President Ashrafunnessa Mosharrar, Jubo Mohila League President Nazma Akhter, Women Affairs Secretary Dipu Moni, Environment Affairs Secretary Hasan Mahmud, Jubo League General Secretary Abu Ukil and Rehana Jalil, wife of detained AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil, were present among others at the meeting.

Talking to the reporters after the meeting, Sahiduzzaman Sarker said, "She [Hasina] asked us to stand beside the party workers as they might be scared and disappointed due to the recent arrest of some senior party leaders."

"She asked us to inquire about how to provide legal assistance to the detained leaders, including party general secretary Abdul Jalil," Dipu Moni said.

Meanwhile, Rehana Jalil expressed concern about her detained husband, as he was ill, sources said. The AL chief expressed her sympathy to the detained leader's family and urged her to have patience.

"I came to see her [Hasina]," was the brief reply of Suranjit Sengupta, when asked about his meeting with the AL chief.

Other senior party leaders including presidium members Tofiq Ahmed and Abdul Razzaq were not present at the meeting.

In the evening, Sheikh Hasina attended a milad mahfil at Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in Dhanmondi to mark the 33rd death anniversary of Sheikh Sayera Khatun, mother of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

## US State Dept

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elections move forward. We want to see them move forward as quickly as possible."

However, he added, "What is important is that when they happen, they are free and fair and transparent and open to participation by all legitimate actors in the Bangladeshi system."

Regarding the anti-corruption drive, Casey said, "It is important to have accountability and for people to have faith and confidence that their elected and appointed officials will not be corrupt and make wise use of resources."

"At the same time that has to be balanced to make sure that any efforts made are not done in a way that is inconsistent with the rule of law or in any way, shape or form is a political gesture rather than simply one designed to tackle the problem of corruption."

## Export policy

FROM PAGE 1  
electronics and herbal medicine and plants.

Items excluded from the special development sector are cosmetics and toiletries, luggage and fashion products, CR coil, cards and calendar, stationery items and rayon.

Mirza Aziz hoped that the new policy would be effective immediately after a gazette notification. Commerce Secretary Firoz Ahmed and senior officials were present at the press conference.

The new policy exempted pre-shipment inspection requirements to ease the export procedure and excluded bamboo, child shrimp and sweet-water shrimp from the negative list.

Outbound passengers used to be able to carry \$100 worth of product along with them abroad but with the new export policy implemented, they would be able to carry \$200 worth of product.

Mirza Aziz said the new policy did not make any projection of export growth and the government assumed that the private sector would make efforts to increase exports taking advantage of the measures taken by the government.

## Power sector

FROM PAGE 1  
Of the other top sectors, education and religion will jointly get Tk 3,700 crore and rural development and institutions Tk