

# Party reforms must

**FROM PAGE 16**  
priority," said Suranjit adding, "the protector has become the aggressor in politics".

He said the nation today is gripped by a crisis caused by severe degradation of politics. The nation must be saved from the political degradation and reforms are required in political parties as well as in the government. And for this, "major surgeries, not minor ones", will have to be performed harshly, added the AL leader.

Lt Gen Mahbubur Rahman, a former Army chief, said the country's politics took a nosedive due to severe corruption, criminalisation and influence of black money. To save the parties, politics has to be freed from these drawbacks through reforms, added Rahman.

"If the party chairperson does not believe in reforms and holds on to old conjectures, she will be rejected by the people," said the BNP leader.

# Russia wants freeze on US missile plan

AP, Moscow

Russia's foreign minister urged the United States yesterday to freeze plans for missile defense installations in eastern Europe during negotiations and warned that the proposal intended to serve as a buffer against Iran could backfire.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's comments, reported by Russian news agencies, suggested the Kremlin is unhappy that the United States has continued discussions on its plans to deploy facilities in Poland and the Czech Republic following Russia's counteroffer of joint use of a radar station in Azerbaijan.

"It's necessary for Washington, at a minimum, to freeze the deployment of missile defense elements in Europe for a period of study and negotiations on the Russian proposal," ITAR-Tass quoted Lavrov as saying.

Lavrov also warned that the U.S. missile defense plans could hamper efforts to ease international concerns about Iran's nuclear program, RIA-Novosti reported. The United States has said the missile defense shield is intended to protect against a potential Iranian threat.

Lavrov said there was no proof that Iran was seeking to develop nuclear weapons, but that the missile shield could further provoke the Iranian government, which is already facing international sanctions for its disputed atomic program.

The U.S. system calls for a radar screen in the Czech Republic to watch for missile threats, and 10 interceptor rockets in Poland to shoot down any missiles. Both Bush and Polish President Lech Kaczynski said Friday the system would not threaten Russia. The Kremlin argues that the system would undermine its nuclear deterrent.

President Vladimir Putin, who has led Russia's bitter objection to U.S. plans to deploy a missile-defense radar in the Czech Republic and interceptors in Poland, surprised President Bush with the offer of joint use of the radar station in Azerbaijan, which borders Iran.

Meeting with Putin on Thursday during a Group of Eight summit in Germany, Bush agreed to consider the proposal. But the Bush administration made clear it was not abandoning plans for a program in Poland and the Czech Republic. Cold War-era Soviet satellites that are now in NATO.

Putin added clarity to his offer Friday by suggestion locations for missile interceptors if Azerbaijan were to be used for the radar element, saying they could be placed in Turkey or Iraq, or on sea platforms.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told The Associated Press on Friday that "one does not choose sites for missile defense out of the blue" and that it was not yet clear "whether Azerbaijan makes any sense in the context of missile defense."

# Hasina should quit

**FROM PAGE 1**  
had suddenly announced the Dhaka siege programme urging party activists to march to Dhaka with oars and poles. Party leaders later criticised her decision.

He is now on a three-day remand for further investigation into his alleged anti-state activities. He was taken into custody on March 8, and court had ordered his detention under the Special Powers Act. No case was filed against him till date.

Sources also said that during interrogation, the AL leader also spoke about the recent unrest in garments sector, April 30 (2004) deadline to dislodge the then coalition government, killing of 12 people by setting a bus afire in front of Sheraton Hotel, violent agitation by Jubo Mohila League, donation collection and party nomination in polls for money.

Sonali and Tuhin of Jubo Mohila League had intentionally engaged in conflict and provoked the police to arrest them to have their photographs published in newspapers. The party chief herself had provoked the women activists to do so, Quader is claimed to have told the interrogators.

On the much-talked-about MiG 29 purchase, Quader said businessman Noor Ali, (who was involved in the deal) had paid a huge amount of money to Hasina (then prime minister). Her cousin Sheikh Helal used to take money from all contractors linked to different ministries, and the amount would be hundreds of crores of taka,

# Govt firm

**FROM PAGE 1**  
The CA said besides holding a fair election, which is the main task of the government, its goal is also to fight against corruption and to bring the corrupts to justice, according to his Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim, who was present at the meeting.

He said the Election Commission has given an 18-month timeframe to hold the election and the government is assisting in their tasks.

As the delegation dwelt on Election Commission's consultation with political parties, the CA said the Election Commission would determine it.

Regarding withdrawal of the ban on indoor politics, the CA said the caretaker government is aware of it and the ban will be lifted in due time.

He said the media here are fully free and acting as a link between the government and the people. "People are our main strength. We are being tested everyday," he told the Troika delegation.

The members of the delegation said they are highly impressed with the present caretaker government's policies and reforms, adding that as far as they met and talked with different groups in last four days, they got positive remarks about the government's consistent policies.

Even during the meetings with Awami League and BNP, the two parties did not make criticism about the caretaker government's reforms and policies, the delegation told the CA.

They said they fully support the caretaker government's policies and reform and will prepare a report on the outcome of their mission and send a copy of it to the caretaker government.

# Henin

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Ivanovic's nervous play to win 6-1, 6-2.

Henin closed out the victory with a forehand volley winner, then flipped her racket, buried her head in her hands, leaned on the net and exhaled.

"It's surreal to win for the third time in a row," the Belgian said. "I am struggling to take it in."

She became the first woman since Monica Seles in 1990-92 to win three consecutive Roland Garros titles, and only the second since 1937.

Serb teenager Ivanovic started well before her play deteriorated. Ivanovic committed 26 unforced errors to 13 for Henin and also double-faulted five times.

Henin won the French Open for the first time in 2003 and now has six Grand Slam titles, moving her ahead of Venus Williams and Martina Hingis. She trails only Serena Williams' eight among active women.

Henin won 1.34 million dollars – the same as for the men's champion. Ivanovic, the first player to represent Serbia in a major final, received 670,000 dollars.

# Mufti Hannan

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Three people died and more than 100, including the British envoy, were injured in the grenade attack. The dead were identified as Kamal, college student Zubayer and day labourer Habibur Rahman Hobi.

The three other charge-sheeted accused are Mofizur Rahman Ovi, Sharif Shahedul Alam alias Bipul and Delwar Hossain Ripon. All the four accused are now in custody.

The existence of Mufti Munir named in the ejarah was not found while Ahsanullah Kajol died during the investigation, said the police report.

The Bangladesh-born British high commissioner came under grenade while he was coming out of the shrine's mosque after Juma prayers.

Scotland Yard, the world famous British intelligence agency, visited Sylhet twice to assist the local intelligence agencies in connection with the grenade attack. But it could not make any headway due to complexities of the incident, police said.

Within three months of Sylhet incident, 22 people died in grenade attacks on the Awami League rally in Dhaka on August 22, 2004. Former finance minister of Awami League Shah AMS Kibria was also killed in a grenade attack at Habiganj on January 27, 2005.

# Safeguard tax

**FROM PAGE 1**  
The NBR rule also brought an amendment to the Income Tax Ordinance 1984 to entrust the CIC members with more power.

According to the rule, they will be able to carry out intelligence work to gather information about taxpayers.

The CIC members will also be able to detect tax evasions and concealment of income and offences as described in the Income Tax Ordinance.

They will be able to collect evidence relating to tax offences or tax frauds for recovery of taxes with penalty.

Prices of cars and jeeps between 3550 and 4549 cc will go up as the draft rule proposed 250 percent supplementary duty on import of those vehicles. It also proposed 350 percent duty on vehicles over 4550 cc. Earlier the duty was 100 percent on cars and jeeps over 3000 cc.

However, supplementary duties on cars and jeeps below 3000 cc will decrease by five percent once the rule is issued.

Prices of cellular and fixed phone sets will also climb as the rule proposed to up tariff on each imported set by Tk 300.

# Lift politics ban

**FROM PAGE 1**  
they said, adding that they were assured in their meeting with Army Chief Moeen U Ahmed that the Army will not 'play a role in politics in the future'.

"We have been told it is 'unrealistic' to expect the completion of the voter list before 2008. If the whole process is completed by mid-2008 or September 2008, you should not wait further to hold elections. That is what we mean by holding elections at the earliest," Michaelis said.

It is important to build 'sound foundations' before holding elections, he said.

The delegation said they were satisfied with the Election Commission's plan to announce an 'election roadmap' by July 15, and they will determine their financial support for creating a new voter roll after a United Nations consultants' team finish preliminary assessments.

Michaelis, however, said they suggested that the government should look at an early lifting of the ban on indoor politics in the country and take specific measures to allow political parties to engage in all aspects of electoral reform.

He said holding elections is not only a governance and a technical matter, but also a political matter, and as such, "Political parties have to play a role."

The European Union recognises the indispensable role of the political parties in the democratic process and feel their perspective needs to be taken into account in due time," said Michaelis, adding, we have asked the government to facilitate their early participation.

The EU team also urged the political parties to act as the 'avant-garde' of political reform to regain 'credibility' and support of the people, and also to receive EU backing.

Regarding human rights, the EU expressed its 'deep concern at reports of torture and inhuman treatment of detainees, continuing incidents of extra-judicial execution and intimidation of journalists'.

They said they have raised these points of concern with the government and urged them to quickly establish a National Human Rights Commission.

"The application of due process and prompt adjudication will be a key indicator of the fight against corruption and help ensure the confidence of the people in the process," the EU team said.

They underlined the need for "clear explanations, as to the reasons for the

arrest, the possibility for bail, access to lawyers and family when in detention and swift disposal of cases by the courts."

The team also encouraged the government to improve conditions of Rohingya refugees and work towards full implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord in consultations with indigenous representatives.

During their four-day visit, the team met Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, Law Adviser Mainul Hossain, Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, Army chief General Moeen U Ahmed, Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda, an Anti-Corruption Commission commissioner, and leaders of the BNP and Awami League.

**MEETSAL**  
The European Union (EU) Troika delegation yesterday stressed the need for lifting the ban on indoor politics soon so that the political parties can sit with the Election Commission (EC) and the caretaker government over reforms.

The delegation was quoted as saying when some Awami League (AL) leaders called on them at the Gulshan residence of the German ambassador and discussed the prevailing situation in the country.

"It was a fruitful discussion," AL Presidium Member Abdur Razzak told the reporters emerging from the meeting with Troika delegation. "We informed them about the need for removal of the ban on indoor politics," he added.

Observing that his party is for the reform always, Razzak said that the AL had brought reforms within their party in the past. He, however, noted that more reforms are needed.

"It is the politicians who will practise politics," the AL leader said adding, "For that we need proper environment."

Meanwhile, AL Presidium Member Tofail Ahmed said that their party believes in reform but at present the party does not have the opportunity of exercising political rights.

None of the EU Troika delegation agreed to talk with the reporters.

The five-member delegation arrived Dhaka on June 6 on a four-day visit to get a firsthand view of the country's pre-election political situation.

# EC tests voter listing

**FROM PAGE 1**  
The Daily Star yesterday.

He said all preparations have been completed. "We have been informed that a festive mood is prevailing in the area," he said.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda, Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed and two election commissioners Sahul Hossain and Brig Gen (retd) M Sakawat Hossain are scheduled to attend the inaugural ceremony of the pilot project this morning.

Bangladesh Army is assisting the EC in carrying out the pilot project by providing manpower and logistic support.

Local administration and election office have completed all preparatory tasks and enumerators have already started distributing the voter registration forms among the eligible people. People have been asked to visit the registration centres to have their photographs and fingerprints taken so that it could be incorporated into the voter list and national ID cards.

The EC is currently considering sending enumerators to make door-to-door visits to collect particulars of prospective voters and asking the voters to visit the registration centres to have their photographs taken when the nationwide voter enrolment starts. However, the EC will finalise the methodology of prepar-

ing the voter list after this pilot project.

The EC has already announced that the field-level task of preparing the voter list will begin from August. A total of 12,000 teams will do the massive voter enrolment task across the country in phases. The EC announced an 18-month timeframe for the task, beginning from May.

Apart from holding the stalled ninth parliamentary elections, no elections of local government bodies would be held until the voter list is prepared.

The Siprur upazila administration already held a number of views-exchange meetings and sensitising meetings with the locals at schools, colleges and madrasas. Voter registrations will be carried out at 30 centres, where people will come to have their photographs and fingerprints taken. The municipality has over 44,000 voters.

The EC Secretariat has sent 60,000 voter registration forms to the local election office for the pilot project.

Besides, the EC formed separate committees comprising local government officials and public representatives to oversee the task and encourage people to register themselves in the voter list by visiting the registration centres.

# Koko owns Dubai house

**FROM PAGE 1**  
who is now in jail, has said he has only \$1 million with him.

Warid owned by Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan of the UAE obtained its operating licence in 2005 and the deal was since then seen with suspicion as the group paid a small amount – only \$50 million – to the government for the deal.

Throughout the BNP-led four-party rule, Koko remained a low-key figure in the Khaleda family and let his elder brother Tarique take a leading role in politics and corrupt private deals. But staying out of public scrutiny, Koko made his fortunes from various shady and illegal businesses. His only publicly known business was of billboard advertisement, which also smacks of allegations of monopolising.

Meantime, the government exchequer has received Tk 435.45 crore until June 6 that the joint forces recovered from different corrupt suspects and business groups involved in shady deals.

Sources said another Tk 100 crore is expected to be deposited by end of this week.

James Finlay, a British tea company, deposited Tk 237.65 crore to the Bangladesh Bank on April 19 as part of the money taken out against sell of its tea estates in Sylhet. MGH Group owned by Anis Ahmed Gorky deposited Tk 23.80 crore on April 23 as part of a deal to return the money he kept from Khaleda's son Tarique Rahman.

Bashundhara Group returned Tk 77 crore on May 28. Kazi Saleemul Haque, a director of Prime Bank, returned Tk 20 crore on May 30 on behalf of Babar, who received the money from Bashundhara Group

# Hasina

**FROM PAGE 1**  
aunt Achiha Khatun, sister of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

"If the budget is not aimed at mitigating people's sufferings, what can be expected of it? No step has been taken to check price hike and reduce inflation. There is no plan for employment too," the AL chief said.

"The actual inflation rate is much higher than has been shown. The inflation in food prices is near 25 per cent."

"According to our constitution, the budget should be placed before an elected parliament. Elected people's representatives [lawmakers] will pass the budget, otherwise there remains the question of legality," she added.

"Constitutionally, no tax can be imposed without people's representation. How will they [caretaker government] explain and justify it?"

"Under article 93 of the constitution, the president can issue an ordinance... but it is for a short time and that too is to be passed in parliament."

"Growth rate was above six per cent during the end of our tenure while inflation rate was 1.95 per cent," the former prime minister said, adding, "During the five years of our government, prices of essentials were stable. Now the situation has changed. People can hardly live with what they earn."

Meanwhile, the AL chief yesterday expressed her utter dissatisfaction to see excessive restrictions imposed by security personnel on the visitors to her Sudha Sadan residence.

While coming out of the residence for Shikhar hospital at about 11:20am, the AL chief noticed a local AL leader of Dhamondi waiting in a wheel chair at the entrance as the on-duty policemen did not allow him to enter the house.

When an irked Hasina asked the on-duty Patrol Inspector Rajib to explain why they were not allowing visitors to meet her, he said it was due to orders from the government high-ups.

They were asked not to allow more than two persons at a time to enter the Sudha Sadan, Rajib added.

# Sedition case

**FROM PAGE 16**  
The complaint has many components for it to be recorded as a sedition case and filing of such case needs the home ministry's nod, Chowdhury explained.

Moreover, a senior government official (then Rajshahi DC Aziz Hasan, now divisional commissioner of Sylhet) was accused in the complaint and the ministry's permission is also required for suing a government official, he added.

The sedition complaint is the first and lone case against mayor Minu implicating him with JMB. Recently hanged militants of JMB – its chief Shayekh Abdur Rahman and commander Siddikul Islam Bangla Bhai – also named Minu as one of their patrons.

In his complaint, advocate Moazzem said, assisted by mayor Minu, barrister Aminul, DC Hasan and SP Masud, JMB leaders including Prof Lutfar Rahman, Mahtab Khamaru, Abdus Sattar, Jilil Amin and Natib Lutfar gathered around 2,000 militants from Rajshahi and its adjacent areas and marched toward Rajshahi city on May 23, 2004.

The militants marched through different city streets. Chanting slogans against the state from the procession, they declared war against Bangladesh and vowed to establish an Islamic state in the country through forming an Islamic jihad group. The JMB militants also submitted memorandums to the then DC and SP.

The JMB militants later held a rally in front of Rajshahi Court where many militant leaders boasted that mayor Minu, barrister Aminul, DC Hasan and SP Masud had assured them (JMB) of full cooperation and support in JMB's bid to establishing an Islamic state.

The militant leaders also declared that they were pledged to "change the map of the country" and Minu, Aminul and other government officials would help strengthen JMB by providing necessary financial and administrative support. The militants delivered similar speeches from another rally organised later at Zero Point of Saheb Bazar, the complainant added.

The operation of the decree had already been suspended by prime Minister Shaikat Aziz after a pandemic in parliament on Wednesday with scuffles between slogan-chanting journalists and government officials. There were also several protests around the country earlier in the week.

The regulator was empowered to seal the premises or confiscate broadcasters' equipment and suspend their licences. The government earlier blocked transmissions of three private television stations.

Musharraf is facing the biggest crisis of his eight years in power since suspending Chief Justice Iftekhar Muhammad Chaudhry on March 9.

Political violence in Karachi on May 12 left more than 40 people dead.

# Lanka kills 30 Tigers

**FROM PAGE 16**  
north and east of the island that left scores of combatants dead.

"The atmosphere was rather heavy, depressed, with a serious crisis and tension in the country," he told reporters here.

"I am going back with a certain amount of hope and optimism for the future of this country."

Japan had no immediate plans to slash aid to Sri Lanka or freeze assets of Tamil Tiger rebels although international human rights groups have been lobbying Tokyo to exert pressure to stem spiralling violence, he said.

"Some donors have decided to suspend or discontinue assistance to Sri Lanka," he said referring to moves by Sri Lanka's former colonial ruler Britain and Germany, who have frozen debt relief due to rights concerns.

"We are not comfortable about conditions of aid... Our help is for victims of the conflict. People should not be punished for actions or policies of their leaders," Akashi said.

Japan accounts for about two thirds of bilateral aid to the island.

During his visit, the government on Thursday evicted hundreds of ethnic Tamils staying in low-budget hostels in Colombo at gun point and bussed them to a detention centre in Vavuniya, 260km north of here.

The early morning raids were condemned around the world and Sri Lanka's president Friday invited Tamils back to the city, and ordered a disciplinary probe against the police chief responsible.

Akashi was concerned at the

manner in which the raids were carried out and said he was glad the president overturned the decision.

Though Akashi has been trying to help bring the warring parties back to the negotiating table, he did not meet with representatives from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) during the visit.

"The intense fighting and the need to promote a political solution through all party talks prevented me from visiting LTTE areas this time," he said, adding that he was also "disheartened" by the slowness of the peace process.

"The principal actors are the Sri Lankan people. They have to make up their minds. Outsiders, however powerful they are, have to be patient. We are all well aware of our limited and but useful role."

The LTTE has been fighting for a separate homeland for minority Tamils in a 35-year old ethnic conflict that has claimed over 60,000 lives.

# Derailment

**FROM PAGE 1**  
"We are continuing the work by unloading the goods," Akhtaruzzaman said.

Azimuddin, the locomotive master and his assistant Rafiqul Islam were suspended and departmental actions are underway against them.

Stranded passengers of trains on both sides of Ahsanganj were taken to destinations after changing trains in the afternoon.

Senior railway officials from Rajshahi and Dhaka visited the spot.

# Bush urges senators

**FROM PAGE 16**  
world leaders.

The White House and a bipartisan group of senators drafted the wide-ranging bill, but they could not overcome steady attacks from the left and right during weeks of Senate wrangling. When the Senate failed Thursday to end debate and schedule a vote, Democratic leaders set the bill aside with no promise of reviving it.

Bush plans to lunch with Republican senators in the Capitol on Tuesday, part of a more hands-on approach to persuading party conservatives that the compromise bill is much better than the status quo.

In his radio address, Bush acknowledged mistakes in handling immigration and pledged to improve the bill as it moves through Congress.

"Today, illegal immigration is supported by criminal enterprises dedicated to document forgery, human trafficking, and labour exploitation," he said. "This is unacceptable, and we need to fix it in a way that honours our finest traditions."

He said the bill "puts border security first, establishes a temporary worker programme to meet the legitimate needs of our growing economy, sets up a mandatory system for verifying employment eligibility, and resolves the status of the estimated 12 million people who are here illegally."

Conceding that a 1986 immigration overhaul largely failed, the president said his administration "is determined to learn from the mistakes of the past decades." The bill would double the number of Border Patrol agents, he said, build more border fences and employ infrared sensors and unmanned aircraft to detect illegal border-crossers.

"Unlike the 1986 law, this bill gives honest employers the tools they need to ensure that they are hiring legal workers," Bush said, including "a tamper-resistant identity card." Businesses that "knowingly hire illegal aliens will be

# Three killed

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Sheraz Ali said.

No one immediately took responsibility for the explosion but authorities have blamed previous attacks on ethnic Baluch rebels fighting for more autonomy and a greater share in profits from the region's vast mineral resources.

# 6 inmates killed

**FROM PAGE 16**  
his troops killed six militants in a series of raids across the country.

A car bomb detonated next to a National Police patrol killing a policeman and a bystander and wounding 12 others in Baghdad's northeast Shia neighbourhood of al-Shaab, a defence official said.

A medic at Imam Ali hospital in nearby Sadr City confirmed the attack and said the bodies of the two victims were received by the facility. Eight of the wounded were also admitted to the hospital, including six policemen, he added.

Another policeman was killed in a separate clash with armed men in the same neighbourhood.

In Zafaraniyah in southern Baghdad, three people were wounded by a roadside bomb aimed at a police patrol, a medic at Ibn Nafis hospital said.

Late Friday, gunmen ambushed a car and killed five members of a family on the main road near Kanan, located in the restive Diyala province, northeast of Baghdad, police Lieutenant Ahmed Ali said.

The dead included a woman. Diyala is the second most dangerous province in Iraq after

Baghdad and insurgents have stepped up attacks there after a massive security crackdown in the capital since February.

The US military, meanwhile, said its forces had carried out a series of raids on Saturday in which five militants were killed.

In a raid southeast of Fallujah, the former rebel town in the western province of Anbar, US troops targeted a weapons distributor for the al-Qaeda in Iraq network.

"As they approached the area, five men in the front yard reached for weapons. Responding appropriately to the hostile threat, coalition forces engaged the armed men, including the suspected distributor killing them," a military statement said.

An Iraqi boy was wounded in the firefight, the military said.

The military announced the death of one more militant in a similar raid but did not specify when the raid was conducted.

More than a dozen suspected militants were also arrested during the raids, the military added.