

## Polls to be held within govt timeframe

*President reaffirms UNB, Dhaka*

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday reaffirmed that the next parliamentary elections would be held within the timeframe set by the government.

The president said this when outgoing US Ambassador to Bangladesh Patricia A Butenis made a farewell call on him at the Bangabhaban.

He told the envoy that the Election Commission (EC) has taken various measures, including preparing the voter list with photograph, for holding a free and fair election.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## 16-yr old jailed for 10 yrs in arms case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Jamalpur court sentenced a 16-year-old boy to 10 years' imprisonment and fined Tk 7,000 or one more year in jail in failure to pay it in a case filed June last year for keeping arms illegally.

Another convict in the case, a 17-year-old boy who has been on bail, was also sentenced to seven years' imprisonment and fined Tk 3,000 or six months more in prison in failure to pay.

The 16-year-old boy was sent to Jamalpur District Prison while the court issued an arrest warrant against the other teenager who has been absconding.

Special Tribunal Judge Rukanuzzaman of the First Sub-Judge's Court of the district handed

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## Verdict in Manju's liquor possessing case Tuesday

*Proceedings of Moudud's case adjourned*

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Judgement of a criminal case against former communications minister and Jatiya Party (Manju) leader Anwar Hossain Manju filed for possessing 21 bottles of contraband liquor will be delivered on Tuesday in his absence.

Proceedings of a case against detained former law minister barrister Moudud Ahmed for possession of 32 cans of beer and 16 bottles of other alcoholic beverages were adjourned until Sunday.

Besides, Barisal City Corporation Mayor Mujibor Rahman Sarwar was shown arrested yesterday in a case filed for possessing illegal ammunition.

### MANJU CASE

A Dhaka court yesterday fixed Tuesday for delivery of verdict of the case against Manju for possessing contraband liquor at his Dhanmondi residence.

After hearing arguments from the prosecution, Judge Syed Jahed Mansur of the Metropolitan Special Tribunal-9 set the date.

The court had earlier recorded statements of seven prosecution witnesses including the complain

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

## Ex-BNP MP Shahjahan Miah sent to jail on surrender

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A Chapainawabganj trial court yesterday sent former BNP lawmaker Shahjahan Miah and two others to jail after they surrendered before it in an extortion case.

Shahjahan Miah is widely held responsible for the Kansat tragedy last year.

The others surrendered yesterday are Aynal Haq and Shafikul Islam. The case was filed by one Panaullah on April 23 for extorting Tk 75,000 from him.

The three were sent to jail about an hour after they appeared before the court at around 11:30am.

The district and sessions judge Hrishikesh Saha in a swift move fixed the charge framing date today, as trial of the case was included under the Emergency

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

### THE BANGLA BHAI STORY

# Trading in death under shadow of govt

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Tarique Rahman and several ex-BNP ministers directly patronised the outrageous operations of the JMB (Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh) in Rajshahi with the full knowledge of former prime minister Khaleda Zia, revealed an extensive The Daily Star investigation that was corroborated by top government officials in the region.

Then at the helm of home ministry, Lutfozzaman Babar also joined the bandwagon of JMB leader Bangla Bhai, pouring cold water on feeble attempts by a part of the civil and police administration to resist the terrorist activities.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Nur Mohammad, who had the memories of being a helpless deputy inspector general of Rajshahi then, only could endorse the The Daily Star finds gleaned from strenuous research and interviews with a number of officials, numerous socio-political workers and people, who witnessed the rise of dreadful Bangla bhai under cover of outlaw cleansing campaign that left at least 24 persons killed and 300 others repressed or injured between April 2004-January 2005.

"From whatever I could know, former prime minister Khaleda Zia had the consent to the JMB activities. Her son Tarique Rahman had been supporting the vigilante activities of the militants and state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar never helped me to fight the JMB," said police chief Mohammad flatly. "Some ministers, MPs and ruling party (BNP) leaders were sponsoring the militants."

In May 2004, The Daily Star ran a series of investigative reports on Bangla Bhai's rise that pointed fingers at some ministers and leaders of the BNP-Jamaat ruling

alliance. Three years later, this investigation also found links of the highest level of the BNP-led coalition government with such atrocious crimes.

The BNP's use of government machinery for the JMB also shattered the chain of command in the Rajshahi police forces, creating tension between the local police and administration. Again, many ordinary citizens joined the Bangla bhai's group to save their own lives, sensing the administration inactive and the police supporting the militants.



FILE PHOTO

FROM LEFT... Executed JMB kingpin Bangla Bhai and JMB chief Abdul Rahman, and now-detained JMB leader Salahuddin being interviewed by The Daily Star in May, 2004 at a UP office in Bagmara where the portrait of Khaleda Zia hangs on the wall.

The then Rajshahi police superintendent Masud Miah took up the unofficial JMB assignment gallantly, playing a pivotal role in the terror of the radical Islamist group. The SP thrived on his Hawa Bhaban clouts so much so that many other police members found it safe to become friendly with the JMB militants despite the fact the DIG was not liking the happenings.

"Despite a lot of efforts, I could not resist the militant activities," he told The Daily Star remorsefully.

**OUTLAW CLEANSING WAS A COVER**

### THE PATRONISERS



Tarique Rahman



From where militants start in 2004



Babar



Aminul



Dulu



Minu



Nadim



Alamgir



Masud Mia

STAR GRAPHICS

### SHE WHO KNEW ALL



### PRICE CONTROL

## Law enforcers to intervene in market if govt efforts fail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will seek intervention from the law-enforcement agencies if the government's ongoing efforts to keep the market under control failed, Food Adviser Tapan Chowdhury said yesterday.

"The government has been trying its best to keep the prices of commodities stable and if the efforts fail, the law-enforcement agencies will interfere," he told the reporters during a visit to the Central Storage Depot (CSD) at Teigaon in the capital.

The adviser, however, said that the government is not going for the move right now.

"Though the supply of the commodities in the market is adequate, there is still a tendency to hike the prices of essentials, which is unfortunate," Tapan said adding that the main goal of the government efforts is to keep the market under control and to make the commodities available to the people.

Tapan also said that the government has all kinds of preparations, including adequate collection of food, to face any kind of natural disaster.

"Over 3 lakh metric tons of rice

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

# Khaleda cooking her own reform proposal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday said she is preparing a reform proposal for her party, which will be finalised through consultation with grassroots level leaders and activists as soon as the ban on indoor politics is lifted.

She also said her party should be reformed with the participation of leaders and activists of all levels.

"The party cannot be reformed with only a few people," she firmly told reporters at Birdem Hospital in the capital yesterday.

The former prime minister went to the hospital to see ailing Nazrul Islam Khan, joint secretary general of the party, who had been hospitalised on Saturday with diabetes, a heart condition, and back pain.

Meanwhile, party Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan continued his views exchange meetings with senior leaders to finalise another reform proposal. He yesterday met Dr RA Goni, one of the most senior leaders of the party, to discuss the much talked about issue of reforming BNP.

The BNP chief stayed at the hospital for about 40 minutes and inquired about Khan's health condition and the treatment he is getting. Mannan Bhuiyan was not present there at the time but Selima

Rahman, another joint secretary general of the party, accompanied the party chairperson.

As she was leaving the hospital, Khaleda told the reporters, "I am always in favour of reforms and you saw that we brought major changes to our party policies. We shifted from a presidential system to a parliamentary system, and we also endorsed the policy of free market economy."

"I took many reform oriented steps when we were in the government," she said adding that she will bring in reforms after discussing with all levels of the party in line with the expectations of everyone.

"I am preparing a reform proposal which will be finalised through consultation with all after the ban on indoor politics is lifted," she said.

When asked about some BNP leaders' move to bring reforms excluding her, she said, "I am in favour of reforms but it should happen with the participation of everyone."

"Reforms will be implemented as the party leaders and activists are expecting it," Khaleda said adding that reforming a party is an ongoing process and for that the ban on politics needs to be lifted.

"We have to discuss with all and you know that BNP is the largest

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

# Top reformists in AL to hand over 25-pt proposal to Hasina

## They will oppose party chief's proposal to shun all 60-plus leaders

HASAN JAHIID TUSHER

Top pro-reform leaders of the Awami League (AL) are likely to meet party President Sheikh Hasina in the next four days and hand over a 25-point proposal for intra-party reforms, opposing Hasina's contention that no one above 60 will be allowed to remain in the party central committee.

The AL chief on Tuesday proposed that central leaders above 60 will be accommodated in the advisory council of the party. Many of the pro-reform leaders opposed this saying there is no such precedent in politics of any country in the world.

"It might be a new tactic of Sheikh Hasina," a senior reformist leader told this correspondent.

Influential AL Presidium Member Amir Hossain Amu, who returned from Singapore on Tuesday night after about two months, yesterday opposed Hasina's views and said there should be no age limit in politics.

Another Presidium Member, Motia Chowdhury, told reporters yesterday

that she supports Hasina's proposal. If it is implemented, age gap between senior and junior leaders will reduce and the party will run more smoothly, she added.

But Amu, who is considered a top reformist leader, said, "Sheikh Hasina can give such a proposal (age limit) if she does not want to remain in politics. As per her proposal, she cannot lead the party because she is already 60. However, the matter could be discussed at party forum."

Sources said Amu is back home only to lead the party team that will meet Hasina and hand over the 25-point proposal (formerly 21-point) now being finalised beyond Hasina's involvement.

Well placed sources in the AL said Amu is now examining the 25-point proposal prepared by his colleagues Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed and Suranjit Sengupta, who have virtually kept themselves away from Hasina for the last several weeks.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## Army assisting government in various stages

Says Gen Moeen UNB, Ctg

Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed yesterday appreciated the role of army in the present crucial time of the nation and urged them to stay ready even for the supreme sacrifice to safeguard the country's independence and sovereignty.

"Bangladesh Army is now extending its cooperation to the government and different national organisations in curbing corruption, establishing democracy and holding a free, fair and meaningful national election," he said.

The army chief made the remarks while attending the

SEE PAGE 5 COL 3

## Govt waiting to hear from Rupali buyer

Says finance adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance and Planning Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam yesterday said the government is still waiting to hear from the prospective buyer of the state-owned Rupali Bank about the handover of the bank.

"The ball is not in our court," he said about handing over the bank to Saudi Prince Bandar Bin Mohammad Bin Abdul Rahman Al-Saud.

He was talking to reporters following a meeting with a delegation of Bangladesh Textiles Mills Association (BTMA) at the planning ministry yesterday.

Sources say during the rule of the immediate past BNP-Jamaat

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8



PHOTO: STAR

Schoolgirls hitch a ride on the back of a rickshaw at Madhya Paikpara in Mirpur in the capital yesterday as the street gets waterlogged even after a light shower due to poor drainage system.

## Special court to deliver verdict in Aman's graft case today

UNB, Dhaka

The Special Judge's Court will deliver judgment in the corruption case against former state minister Amanullah Aman along with his wife today.

According to the case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), Aman, by abusing power, amassed wealth worth over Tk 10 crore.

Aman's wife, Sabera Aman, was accused of aiding and abetting her husband in protecting their property acquired "by illegal means".

Meanwhile, two other anti-graft courts trying former state minister for civil aviation and tourism Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin along with his son, and ex-BNP lawmaker Ali Asgar Lobi, fixed June 25 for arguments.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

# Over 2,100 Biman staff want to quit voluntarily

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of retirement seeking Bangladesh Biman officials and employees far exceeded the airline's target as 2,140 persons responded to the Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) as of yesterday, the last day of applications for the programme.

Authorities were still receiving applications from respondents working at the Biman stations outside Dhaka when this report was being filed at 9:30pm, Biman sources said.

On June 5, the Biman offered the VRS in order to trim its staff to 3,400 from existing 4,800.

The scheme is part of the government's plan to turn the national flag carrier into a public limited company (PLC) and make it a healthy and profitable commercial

venture.

A committee will start scrutinising the respondents' applications from today to decide which applications will be accepted.

Seven out of 13 aircraft of Biman Bangladesh Airlines are now in operation, sources said.

"We are trying to bring Man-Equipment Ratio (MER) [ratio of aircraft to manpower] of Biman to a reasonable level to reduce its expenses by 40 to 45 per cent," Biman Managing Director Dr MA Momen earlier told The Daily Star.

Against the 'acceptable' ratio of 1:200, Biman's MER at present is 1:367 while Singapore Airlines' MER is 1:152, Malaysian Airlines' MER is 1:146 and Emirates' MER is 1: 294.

"Biman will try to ensure that its skilled officials and employees do not go into retirement under this

scheme. We will not let anyone leave the job if it is considered necessary for Biman," said Biman Managing Director Dr MA Momen.

Of the eight directorates of Biman, staffs and officials of engineering directorate responded largely to VRS.

While 170 staffs out of 192 from Biman Flight Catering Centre responded to VRS, Biman sources said.

Details of the respondents, however, could not be received as of filing this report.

"The steps that the Biman has taken are positive, and if those are implemented, Biman will regain its past image," said Abdul Hamid, a respondent to the VRS.

Many Biman staffs said they had accepted the VRS as they got benefit under the programme.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1