

## Army chief feels need for constitution review

Says an elected govt, parliament should do so for effective governance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Army chief Gen Moen U Ahmed yesterday said the constitution should be reviewed through a "constitution commission" for preparing new laws and mechanisms to ensure accountability and effective governance.

Moen hinted that an elected government may undertake the constitution review after elections are held by the end of 2008 when a constitution commission might be formed to prepare "relevant new laws" and ensure "horizontal accountability."

He said two years is not enough



Moen U Ahmed

to "heal the rot of the past 35 years" and as such the next elected government must continue the reforms currently being undertaken by the caretaker government.

"Citizens of Bangladesh are seriously thinking that we need to review our constitution as per the requirements of the day," said Moen in answer to a question from the audience at a seminar titled "Democratic accountability and way to curb corruption".

Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS) and the American Centre organised the seminar at Hotel Radisson.

Presenting his keynote speech

to an audience he termed "citizens of hope", the army chief attacked the past political governments saying Bangladesh has never had "real democracy" in the last 35 years.

"Democracy is certainly not having only elected government and depriving its people," he said.

Moen also noted that NGOs need to be more tightly regulated. The NGOs have no accountability, he said adding that he believes they spend 40 percent of their budget on themselves rather than the organisation and its beneficiaries.

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## Sabina now in better condition

CA donates Tk 4 lakh for her treatment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Condition of ailing Sabina Yasmin has improved slightly and she might fly to Singapore today for better treatment.

Physicians of the renowned singer, who is suffering from cancer, yesterday said she was better than on the previous two days. Her liver function improved and body temperature was under control.

Cancer and medicine specialist Lt Col (ret'd) Mofazzel Hossain.

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## Zillur criticises Mainul for his comments on Hasina, Khaleda

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League (AL) presidium member Zillur Rahman yesterday protested Law Adviser Mainul Hossain's remarks terming Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia 'failed leaders' and his call to the people to boycott the two leaders.

"His (Mainul) unguarded remarks proved that he is not a representative of a neutral government," Zillur said in a press statement.

The adviser reportedly made

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## Farmers line up for urea at dealers' shops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Thousands of farmers in 12 upazilas of Bogra have been lining up at fertiliser distribution outlets in their frantic effort to buy urea for their crops.

A number of fertiliser dealers said low stock of fertilisers caused by inadequate supply is the reason behind the ongoing crisis.

Atul Chandra Saha, manager of Parul Enterprise, a fertiliser dealer in Shariakandi upazila, said for the

month of July, only 10 tonnes of urea has been allocated for the store against a requisition of 20 tonnes. Only 13 tonnes of urea was allocated for the dealership last month when the requirement was 20 tonnes.

A frustrated farmer Montu, from Kuptala village in Shariakandi upazila, said that he needed 100 kg of urea for the Aus he had planted on two bighas of land 12 days back. So far he managed to apply only 10 kg urea. His crop will be ruined

unless he applies 90 more kg of urea to the paddy field within the next ten days. He is about to give up hope of getting more fertiliser as the local chairman has refused to request for more fertiliser slip for him.

Another farmer, Nasir Uddin, 70, from Gorher Bari village in Gabtoli upazila described a similar situation while waiting his turn at a fertiliser dealer outlet at Baiguni village. He was able to buy only 15 kg urea.

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## Eminent persons tell court Alamgir honest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

For the first time since the special courts started functioning in May to try high-profile corrupt suspects, two eminent citizens and a foreigner yesterday appeared in one court as defence witnesses.

In their testimonies for former state minister for planning Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir in a graft case, all the three defence witnesses told the court that they know him as an honest person.

Prosecutor of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC)

cross-examined the witnesses for Alamgir, also a presidium member of Awami League.

The three -- Akbar Ali Khan, former adviser to caretaker government, Abul Barakat, secretary of Bangladesh Economic Association, and Forest Cookson, founder president of America-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce, appeared in the Third Special Court of Judge Shahed Nuruddin to give testimonies.

Forest Cookson said he knows Mohiuddin since 1989 when he

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## Khaleda denied permission to visit Sabina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia could not visit ailing iconic singer Sabina Yasmin yesterday as the authorities did not permit her to go to the hospital on grounds of security concerns.

The former premier was scheduled to visit Sabina in Labaid Specialised Hospital in the capital at 4:00pm but law enforcers informed her just before she was to leave her house that she would not be able to go to the hospital for security reasons.

Meanwhile, Ashraf Hossain,

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## 3 killed as bus rams rickshaw

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three people were killed when a speeding passenger bus rams a rickshaw on English Road in Old Dhaka yesterday.

The dead are Abul Kashem, 65, of Aganagar in Keraniganj, his daughter Sheuly Begum, 22, and the rickshawpuller whose name and address could not be known.

Sheuly appeared in the recently held HSC examinations from BM Pilot High School and College in Keraniganj.

Police and locals said the bus named "Park Link" rams the rickshaw by which Kalam and his daughter Sheuly were returning home from Ray Shaheb Bazar around 12:30pm.

Sheuly and the rickshawpuller died on the spot while Kalam succumbed to his injuries at Pongu (orthopaedic) Hospital at 4:00pm.

Local caught the bus driver and later handed him over to Kotwali Police Station.

## TECHNICAL GLITCHES Another Biman flight delayed for 22hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In around three days, another Biman flight, this time to London, was delayed for about a day at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) due to technical glitches in the aircraft.

Earlier on Saturday, a flight bound for Abu Dhabi was delayed for 39 hours for similar reasons.

Airport sources said the Biman flight that was originally scheduled to leave for the UK capital at 1:00am was rearranged to depart at 11:00pm yesterday in a delay of 22 hours.

The national flag carrier has delayed 220 stranded passengers at a hotel in the capital, said sources in the airline.

"The Airbus 310 that was to fly for London delayed coming from Bangkok as it was having hydraulic problems," Mamdud Khan,

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## 50 militants, 8 soldiers dead as troops seize Red Mosque

AP, AFP, Islamabad

Pakistani troops seized Islamabad's Red Mosque yesterday and attempted to flush out the remaining militants entrenched inside a women's religious school in fierce fighting that left at least 50 militants and eight soldiers dead, the army said.

The troops stormed the mosque compound before dawn. Eight hours later, they were still trying to root out the well-armed defenders said to be holding about 150 hostages. Officials said at least 50 women were allowed to go free from the complex. Some 26 children had earlier escaped.

Rebel cleric Abdul Rashid Ghazi was killed in crossfire between militants and Pakistani forces who stormed an Islamabad mosque, an interior ministry spokesman told

AFP

"He was spotted in the basement and asked to come out. He came out with four or five militants who kept on firing at security forces," spokesman Brigadier Javed Cheema said, updating his earlier account of the incident.

"The troops responded and in the crossfire he was killed."

Clashes this month between security forces and supporters of the mosque's hardline cleric prompted the siege. The religious extremists had been trying to impose Taliban-style morality in the capital through a six-month campaign of kidnappings and threats. At least 67 people have been killed since July 3.

Amid the sounds of rolling explosions, commandos attacked from three directions about 4 am and quickly cleared the ground

floor of the mosque, army spokesman Gen Waheed Arshad said. Some 20 children who rushed toward the advancing troops were brought to safety, he said.

Two dozen others fleeing were captured by security forces. Arshad said, without giving further details about those trapped inside. Another military official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to talk to the press, later said that 51 militants had surrendered or been captured.

The government, eager to avoid a bloodbath that would damage President Gen. Pervez Musharraf's embattled administration, had earlier said it would not storm the mosque so long as women and children remained inside.

The mosque itself has been

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An aerial view of Red Mosque complex in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad during Operation Silence by Pakistani special forces yesterday. Pakistan's Inter Services Public Relations released the photo.

## Kandy Test from today

BISHWAJIT ROY from Kandy

With Sri Lanka taking a 2-0 unsalable lead, the three-match Test series against Bangladesh is all but over but the third and final Test starting here today is as important as any other game for the visitors to prove their improvement in longer version.

Captain Mohammad Ashraful slammed an unbeaten hundred

and young Mushfiqur Rahim his maiden half century in the second game but in the end it proved just individual successes. To avoid further embarrassment, the top order has to put on more effort.

The Bangladesh think-tank made two changes from the last game as left-hander Mehrab Hossain was dropped after playing only his maiden Test to make way

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