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## Latifur Rahman re-elected MCCI chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leading industrialist Latifur Rahman has been re-elected president of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), Dhaka for 2008.

The members of the chamber gave him the mandate at the 103rd

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## Conditions to clip HR commission wings

Rights bodies decry obstacles in proposed ordinance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Human rights organisations yesterday expressed concern saying that the proposed National Human Rights Commission Ordinance 2007 will not ensure transparency and independence of the commission, as it sets many conditions in publishing its reports and its selection committee is too dependent on the executive.

The rights bodies said the definition of human rights in the ordinance is also not comprehensive as it excluded economic, social and cultural rights that are enshrined as key pillars in the constitution of Bangladesh.

Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), Transparency International

Bangladesh (TIB) and Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) made the observations at a joint press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity. ASK Coordinator Sayeed Ahmed read out the joint statement.

"The issue of Human Rights Commission is very crucial. If it is non-functional, it will be dangerous. It is very important to be careful before creating the commission," said ASK Executive Director Advocate Sultana Kamal.

Welcoming the approval of the HR Commission Ordinance 2007 by the Advisory Council of the Caretaker Government, she said the HR bodies had made some recommendations after the draft ordinance was prepared, but those

were not incorporated in the ordinance.

"We strongly propose that this ordinance be consulted with various stakeholders and grassroots level people," Sultana Kamal, also former adviser to a caretaker government said.

TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said there are many examples of establishing institutions with great expectations, but those ultimately became non-functional due to some loopholes in regulations and structures.

Citing the example of the now defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption, he said loopholes in recruitment process and the government's control over it had

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## Lift emergency for fair polls

Expats in US urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshi expatriates living in the United States yesterday said the caretaker government should lift the state of emergency for holding a free, fair and credible election in Bangladesh.

They also demanded banning war criminals and corrupt politicians from taking part in the polls.

The non-resident Bangladeshis (NRBs) raised the demands at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity in the capital.

Besides, they urged the government to enroll them as voters of their motherland.

"We [Bangladeshi expatriates] contribute to our country's economy by sending remittance and therefore as patriotic citizens of Bangladesh, our voting rights need to be ensured," said Nurun Nabi, a renowned scientist and councilman of New Jersey, US.

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## Power adviser forecasts further power shortage

Says 1,000MW more required for irrigation from mid January

UNB, Dhaka

The country will need another 1,000 MW electricity in the upcoming irrigation season that starts from mid-January to operate an increased number of irrigation pumps, mainly for rice fields.

The number of irrigation pumps will increase by 11 percent across the country in order to support massive crop cultivation, especially paddy, as farmers will try to compensate for the colossal loss they suffered in two-time floods and cyclone Sidr in recent times.

Power and Energy Adviser Tapan Chowdhury gave the information at a press briefing at Bidyut Bhaban yesterday, saying there would be 300-650MW of load shedding to ensure adequate

power supply to the irrigation pumps.

The country's power generation will be between 3,600 and 3,800 megawatts in the coming dry season.

Tapan said a total of 2.5 lakh irrigation pumps would be connected to the mains across the country in the irrigation season. "This figure is 11 percent higher on the outgoing year."

Power Secretary Dr M Fouzul Kabir Khan and other senior officials of power and energy ministry were present at the press briefing.

The adviser said Power Division has made all-out efforts to ensure electricity supply to the irrigation pumps, adding that government-run irrigation projects and private

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## Tigers urged to give it all

Final ODI today

CRICINFO, Undated

Captain Mohammad Ashraful demands Bangladesh give it all in the third and final one-day international against New Zealand in Queenstown today after an 'unacceptable' performance in the second match.

Bangladesh have already conceded the best-of-three series 2-0 to the Kiwis, but Ashraful felt his side could come back hard ahead of the two Tests.

"I believe we can recover from the performance in Napier," he told the Sunday Star Times.

"Our effort in that (second) match was not up to our usual standard and we're capable of playing much better than that hopefully we can prove that here in Queenstown."

"We need to lift our game in all the main areas but particularly in terms of producing a better

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PHOTO: STAR

Rapid Action Battalion has the Aminbazar garbage dumping site searched with DCC workers yesterday to find the remaining fragments of the Vishnu idols.

Prayer Timing		
December 31		
Fajr	5:30	6:05
Zohr	12:45	1:15
Asr	4:00	4:15
Maghrib	5:27	5:30
Esha	7:00	7:30

Source: Islamic Foundation

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## Laden warns Iraqi Sunnis not to fight

AP, Cairo

Osama bin Laden warned Iraq's Sunni Arabs against fighting al-Qaeda and vowed to expand the terror group's holy war to Israel in a new audiotape Saturday, threatening "blood for blood, destruction for destruction."

Most of the 56-minute tape dealt with Iraq, apparently al-Qaeda's latest attempt to keep supporters in Iraq unified at a time when the US military claims to have al-Qaeda's Iraq branch on the run.

The tape did not mention Pakistan or the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, though Pakistan's government has blamed al-Qaeda and the Taliban for her death on

Thursday. That suggested the tape was made before the assassination.

Bin Laden's comments offered an unusually direct attack on Israel, stepping up al-Qaeda's attempts to use the Israeli-Arab conflict to rally supporters. Israel has warned of growing al-Qaeda activity in Palestinian territory, though terror network is not believed to have taken a strong role there so far.

"We intend to liberate Palestine, the whole of Palestine from the (Jordan) river to the sea," he said, threatening "blood for blood, destruction for destruction."

"We will not recognise even one inch for Jews in the land of Palestine as other Muslim leaders have," bin Laden said.

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