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**Nuclear proliferation cannot be controlled now**  
Former CIA agent says

HAMID MIR, from Islamabad

A former American CIA agent and nuclear expert David Dastych has claimed that main nuclear arsenals of Pakistan, India, Britain, France, the USA, Russia and China are safe but nuclear proliferation could not be controlled now because it has completely slipped out of control.

He said some corrupt officials of the US defence and state departments were involved in the theft of US nuclear secrets which were sold to many countries including Israel and Pakistan.

In an exclusive interview with Hamid Mir, he said questioning Pakistani scientist Dr A Q Khan is not of any high value now. He said Russian-made small neutron bombs are a real threat to world peace. David Dastych (65) was recruited to Polish intelligence in 1961. He joined CIA in 1973 and became a double agent. He served

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## JS, upazila polls might be held on same day

*If not possible, upazila polls to take place first*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The long due polls to the upazila parishads will be held either simultaneously with the ninth parliamentary elections or before it, the election commissioners said yesterday.

Election Commissioners Muhammed Sohul Hussain and Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakhawat Hussain told this to reporters at the Election Commission (EC) Secretariat.

They also responded to queries on electoral law reforms and failure to hold the parliamentary polls within the 90 days timeframe.

The EC will examine the feasibility of upazila polls as the commission now has the power to announce the schedule for it, Election Commissioner Sakhawat said.

"We will examine if it is possible

to hold the upazila elections simultaneously with the parliamentary polls. If not, we will go for holding the polls to the upazila parishads before the parliamentary elections," he added.

Election Commissioner Sohul echoed him.

The caretaker government on Sunday approved a proposal to return the power of announcing the schedule for upazila polls to the EC.

In its electoral roadmap announced on July 15, 2007, the EC announced that the polls to the upazila parishads would be held in between November and December this year while the stalled parliamentary polls to be held before the end of December 2008.

Since its introduction, the first election to the upazila parishads was held in 1985 and the second one in 1990.

After assuming power in 1991,

the then BNP government scrapped the system, but it was re-established in 1998 by the then Awami League government. However, the polls were not held.

About the failure to hold the ninth parliamentary polls within the timeframe since dissolution of the last parliament, the election commissioners claimed that the constitutional provisions for holding polls in 90 days were not violated.

"Question does not arise regarding our failure for not holding the election within 90 days. The prevailing situation in the country must be taken into account. It also needs to be considered why the Election Commission was reconstituted and the current caretaker government assumed office," Election Commissioner Sohul said.

Referring to the High Court

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## Judge feels 'embarrassed' to hold trial of ex-MP Shahidul

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A judge of the Special Court at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar MP Hostel yesterday felt "embarrassed" to hold the trial against detained former Islamist Oikya Jote (IOJ) lawmaker Mufti Shahidul Islam and four others in a case filed for selling a tax-free car obtained under special privileges.

The Metropolitan Judge's Court has asked former chief whip Abul Hasnat Abdullah to surrender before the court by February 3 in a graft case.

Meanwhile the same court fixed the hearing on charge framing against detained former Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) chairman and BNP leader advocate Taimur Alam Khandaker in a Tk 25 lakh bribery case for February 3.

**SHAHIDUL CASE**  
Judge Mohammad Arifur Rahman of the Special Court-10 expressed his embarrassment to conduct the trial against Shahidul and others

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Policemen prevent two pedestrians from jaywalking at the Banani intersection in the capital yesterday as there is a foot-overbridge at the busy junction of the Airport Road.



Bed sheets allegedly of Mitford Hospital are washed at the garbage filled shore of the polluted Buriganga in the capital. The photo was taken yesterday.

## ILL-GOTTEN WEALTH

### Ex-BNP MP Millat jailed for 8 yrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special court yesterday sentenced former BNP lawmaker M Rashiduzzaman Millat to eight years' imprisonment on charges of amassing illegal wealth beyond known sources of his income and accumulating illegal wealth. His wife and son were sentenced for abetting him.

It ordered confiscation of the property Millat accumulated illegally.

The court also handed down three years' jail term each to Millat's wife Sabera Suraiya and their son Sayed Bin Jaman Sourav in the case.

Millat was also fined Tk 10 lakh, in default of which he would have to remain behind the bars for one year more. Besides, his wife and son were fined Tk 1 lakh each, in

default they would have to serve jail term for another month.

Judge Firoz Alam of Special Court-1 at MP Hostel of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises awarded one year's imprisonment to Millat for giving false wealth statement and seven years' for accumulating illegal wealth. His wife and son were sentenced for abetting him.

All the three are absconding.

Earlier on November 28, another special court sentenced Millat to six years' imprisonment for evading taxes.

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Deputy Director Mobara Khanom filed the case concerning illegal wealth on June 3 last year accusing that in the wealth

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## 12 killed as missile destroys Pak militant hideout

### Pak militant hideout Benazir killing suspect identifies bomber

AP, Xinhua, Peshawar/ Islamabad

A missile destroyed a suspected militant hideout in volatile north-western Pakistan yesterday, killing 12 people, officials said.

In other clashes in the area, militants killed a soldier and injured four more.

The fighting came a day after gunmen held dozens of students and teachers hostage for about five hours at a school in a nearby district.

The air attack occurred after midnight in Khushali Torikhel, a village in North Waziristan, a tribal region bordering Afghanistan, an intelligence and a government official in the region said. The two officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not

authorised to speak to media.

The intelligence official described the victims as "local Taliban."

Neither the government nor the Pakistani military had any immediate comment.

Islamic insurgents have stepped up attacks against government troops and officials in the rugged tribal regions, where scores of militants and troops have died in clashes in recent weeks.

The government frequently employs air strikes to attack militants in areas, which its ground forces and artillery can't reach.

In other fighting Tuesday, one soldier was killed in South Waziristan, a neighbouring region along the border, the army said in a

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## 5-yr-old boy accused of issuing death threats

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

A five-year-old boy has been accused of issuing death threats and destroying properties in the charge sheet of a general diary (GD) filed with the Naikhangchhari Police Station in Bandarban.

The child, Shahidul, appeared in the Bandarban District Judicial Magistrate's Court yesterday for the hearing of the case, which drew huge attention in the court area.

The boy came to the court on the shoulder of his father Hadi Bari (50), who along with his wife Peyara Begum (40) and two others is also accused in the charge sheet.

Sub-Inspector Salahuddin of Naikhangchhari PS, investigation officer of the case, submitted the charge sheet showing Shahidul aged 23 years. He said in the charge sheet that the

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## Bush seeks to reassure US on Iraq, economy

*Bangladeshi hero invited in his State of the Union address*

AGENCIES, Washington

President George W Bush on Monday warned against pulling the plug on his Iraq strategy and assured the US public -- now more worried about the US economy than the war -- that help was on the way.

With barely 12 months before his term ends, and less before the race to the November elections all but sidelines him, Bush also vowed to "confront" Iran where necessary and do "everything we can" to reach a Middle East peace deal.

In a rare gesture, the most famous Bangladeshi-American, Hassan Askari -- a Bangladeshi born student at Berkeley College in Manhattan, New York City was honoured during President Bush's State of the Union address to Congress on Monday.

Taking personal risks, Hassan came forward to save Walter Adler and his Jewish friends from extremist Christian attackers. The incident took place on the Q train in New York City on the night of December 7, 2007.

Hassan has received numerous honours from officials in New York and US Congress earlier. The State of the Union feature is the first time for any Bangladeshi-American.

The president used his final

annual State of the Union address to defend his deeply unpopular handling of what US voters say are their top two concerns: the nearly five-year-old Iraq war and economic turmoil.

"In the long run, Americans can be confident about our economic growth, but in the short run, we can all see that that growth is slowing," he said, urging lawmakers to speed approval of a 150-billion-dollar (102-billion-euro) stimulus package he agreed last week with Congressional leaders.

With the lower House of Representatives due to vote on Bush's economic package Tuesday, the Senate meanwhile unveiled a rival plan to include billions of dollars for seniors and the unemployed, and extra tax breaks for businesses.

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus in a statement reacting to the address said he hoped Bush would take on board these extra proposals -- but reports predicted a clash, since they include plans already rejected by the president.

US President warned Iran Monday that the United States will "confront those who threaten our troops" and defend its allies and interests in the Gulf.

Bush, in excerpts of his State of

the Union speech provided by the White House, also urged Tehran to suspend its uranium enrichment programme, embrace political reforms, and "cease your support for terrorism abroad."

"But above all, know this: America will confront those who threaten our troops, we will stand by our allies, and we will defend our vital interests in the Persian Gulf," he said.

On Iraq, Bush defended his decision one year ago to "surge" 30,000 more troops into the war-torn country and warned that a hasty troop withdrawal would ruin the fragile political and security progress there.

"Having come so far and achieved so much, we must not allow this to happen," he declared, adding that US forces were starting to come home and more would do so in 2008 as their role there changes.

"Our objective in the coming year is to sustain and build on the gains we made in 2007, while transitioning to the next phase of our strategy. American troops are shifting from leading operations, to partnering with Iraqi forces, and, eventually, to a protective overwatch mission," he said.

Bush cautioned that "we can

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## Stranded at Ctg airport for 24hrs for Biman's fault

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Around 250 Abu Dhabi-bound passengers were stranded for nearly 24 hours at Chittagong Shah Amanat International Airport since Monday evening.

The passengers were stuck at the airport since 6:45pm Monday till filing of this report at 6:00pm yesterday as the Bangladesh Biman authorities failed to confirm their flight schedule.

Flight BG 027 of Biman was first scheduled to take off at 6:45pm on Monday with the 250 passengers, but the authorities cancelled the flight due to flight shortage, said sources.

The Biman authorities rescheduled a flight to take off at 6:45pm

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## BNP rebels talk unification today

### Pro-Khaleda group decides to dissolve city unit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The pro-Saifur faction of BNP will hold a meeting today to discuss party affairs and unification process while the pro-Khaleda faction decided to strengthen the party in the capital by dissolving the Dhaka city unit committee led by Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka.

Party leaders said the Saifur-Hafiz-led faction is also planning to build their strength in the changed situation and focus on the implementation of reforms in the constitution of the party to make it demo-

cratic.

Senior leaders of the party and its front organisations have been invited by Maj (ret'd) Hafiz, the standing committee-appointed acting secretary general of the Saifur faction, to attend the meeting at his Banani residence.

The much talked unification process of the party and ways to strengthen its efforts to reform the party would be discussed in the meeting, said leaders of the faction.

Lt Gen (ret'd) Mahbubur Rahman, a member BNP standing

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## BIRD FLU PATIENTS Civil surgeons asked to ensure isolated units

STAR REPORT

Apprehending that bird flu might transmit into human beings also, the government yesterday directed civil surgeons of all the districts to create isolated units for treating any such patient urgently.

The directive, which was circulated over telephone on an emergency basis, says, "The isolated units or rooms should be four-to-five-bedded accommodations and would have to be one metre apart from each other."

Health Secretary AKM Zafrullah at a meeting at the ministry also issued a directive to the Construction, Management and Maintenance Unit (CMMU) of the

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The photo taken yesterday shows a bamboo put by locals in the gaping hole on Road-140 at Gulshan in the capital. The bamboo is the only sign warning vehicles of the danger.

## 69 killed in Lankan fighting

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's government said yesterday its soldiers had advanced into territory held by the Tamil Tigers in the north of the island, with the death toll from two days of fighting at 69.

Troops smashed 16 guerrilla bunkers in the district of Mannar on Tuesday after killing at least 22 rebels, the defence ministry said.

Security forces also killed 45 rebels along the northern frontlines on Monday, the ministry said, putting its own losses at two soldiers dead and 10 wounded.

There was no immediate comment from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), but the pro-rebel Tamilnet.com website said the guerrillas were using booby-trapped devices and snipers against attacking troops.

Since the beginning of January, the Sri Lankan defence ministry has claimed its forces have killed

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