

## Gen Moeen meets Pranab, discusses ways to boost ties with India

STAR REPORT

Army chief Gen Moeen U Ahmed has met India's top political and military leaders to find specific ways to boost defence, transport and trade ties between the two neighbours.

Gen Moeen has also agreed for Bangladesh to finally honour Indian Army soldiers who died for Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971.

The agreement was made during Moeen's meeting with Indian Chief of Army Staff Gen Deepak Kapoor, according to a report by Indian daily The Hindu yesterday.

He also met Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee on Monday, discussing ways to take bilateral relations forward for mutual benefit.

Gen Moeen is expected to call on President Pratibha Patil, Prime

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## BARAPUKURIA COAL MINE

# Khaleda, 10 of her ministers sued for corruption



FROM LEFT... BNP chief Khaleda Zia, top row, M Saifur Rahman, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, M Shamsul Islam, Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain and MK Anwar. Bottom row, Aminul Haque, AKM Mosharraf Hossain, Altaf Hossain Choudhury, Motiur Rahman Nizami and Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed a case against detained BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and 15 others including 10 former ministers from BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami for graft in awarding Barapukuria coal mine operation contract to a Chinese company.

In the case filed with Shahbagh Police Station, the 16 have been accused of causing a loss of over Tk 158.71 crore to the public exchequer by awarding the production, management and maintenance contract through abuse of power.

The accused former ministers from BNP are M Saifur Rahman, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, M Shamsul

Islam, MK Anwar, barrister Aminul Haque, Altaf Hossain Choudhury, and AKM Mosharraf Hossain.

Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid and Motiur Rahman Nizami are the accused ex-ministers from Jamaat.

The others charged with the offence are former acting secretary to energy and mineral resources Nazrul Islam, former Petrobangla chairman SR Osmani, former Petrobangla director Mainul Ahsan, former managing director of Barapukuria Coal Mining Company Ltd (BCMCL) Sirajul Islam and Hosaf Group Chairman Moazzem Hossain.

Of the former ministers, nine were members of the cabinet purchase committee.

Since the military-backed caretaker government assumed power,

this is the third case against Khaleda, also former prime minister. It is however the first case filed against Nizami and Mojahid by the anti-graft body.

The charges were brought under sections 409/406/109/419/420 of the penal code and 5 (2) of corrup-

tion prevention act of 1947.

ACC Assistant Director Shamsul Alam, the complainant, said the offence took place between June 2, 2003 and June 4, 2005 at the energy and mineral resources department.

In the first information report

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

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SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## SC stays Hasina verdict, case proceedings

Allows govt to appeal against HC judgment in extortion case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday stayed the High Court (HC) verdict that declared inclusion of Emergency Power Rules (EPR) in the Tk 2.99 crore extortion case filed against Sheikh Hasina illegal and quashed it.

The six-member SC bench headed by Chief Justice Mohammad Rubul Amin also stayed all proceedings of the case in the lower court and permitted the government to file a regular appeal against the HC judgment.

The HC verdict had also stayed all proceedings of the case in the lower court.

The SC fixed March 16 for the

hearing of the government appeal.

The trial of the case filed against detained former prime minister Sheikh Hasina by businessman Azam J Chowdhury was being held in a Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court specially set up in Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban Complex.

The HC delivered the landmark judgment on February 6 following Hasina's writ petition challenging the legality of the government approval to bring the extortion case against her under the EPR.

After completion of the hearing of both sides, the Appellate Division of the SC yesterday passed its order, saying the HC judgment and the proceedings of the extortion case will be stayed until dis-

posal of the government appeal. All prosecution and defence lawyers were happy over the SC order.

"Both us and the government side are happy at the order. We are happy as proceedings of the case will not continue in the trial court," Hasina's chief counsel barrister Rafique-Ul-Huq told the press after passing of the SC order.

According to article 111 of the constitution, courts subordinate to the SC and the HC are bound to abide by the decision of the Appellate Division and the High Court Division of the Supreme Court, he said.

The article says, "The law

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

## Jamaat fires broadside against EC for 'steps beyond jurisdiction'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At the second sitting for an electoral reform dialogue with the Election Commission (EC) yesterday, Jamaat-e-Islami embarked on a tirade against the commission accusing it of virtually stepping beyond its jurisdiction, which the EC rebutted categorically.

But the Islamist party did not specify which action of the EC constitutes stepping beyond its jurisdiction.

"The Election Commission's

recommendation to amend the laws on different issues is unwanted and tantamount to stepping beyond its jurisdiction," said Jamaat's written electoral reform proposals submitted to the commission yesterday.

In the face of a rising demand of most of the traditional parliamentary political parties taking part in the dialogues, for trying war criminals in an effort to disqualify them from contesting in any poll, the commission on the first day of the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

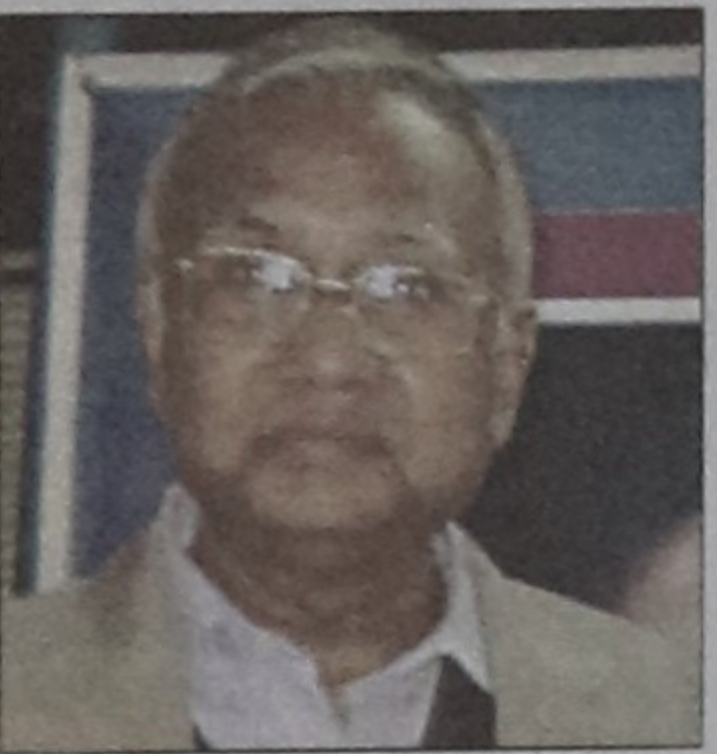
## EC starts talks with Canada on transparent ballot boxes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) has opened talks with the Canadian government for procuring transparent ballot boxes from them free of cost for the next parliamentary elections.

"We are communicating with the Canadian government to have transparent ballot boxes as a grant from them," Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda said yesterday at the electoral reform talks with Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



## Bazlur Rahman passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bazlur Rahman, a legendary editor of the daily Sangbad and a freedom fighter, died last night from a massive heart attack.

He was rushed to Ibrahim Memorial Hospital and Cardiac Research Institute after a cardiac

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## Yunus trashes reports of crimes by Bangladeshis in Saudi Arabia

STAR REPORT

Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus, now on a visit to Saudi Arabia, has brushed aside allegations in Saudi media that a large number of Bangladeshis are breaking the law in the kingdom.

Any people can turn to crimes anywhere and so it is not fair to single out a certain nationality, he said during a reception hosted by Consulate General of Bangladesh at Al-Salam Holiday Inn in Jeddah Sunday evening, daily Saudi Gazette reported yesterday.

Dr Yunus' comments came following Saudi media reports that Bangladeshi workers are engaged in various criminal activities in the country for which Riyadh is reducing the quota for Bangladeshi workers there.

The Nobel laureate, who is

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6