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People's Right to Know

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## Bangladeshi peacekeepers get UN medal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshi troops serving with the international peacekeeping force in Ivory Coast has been decorated with the United Nations' peacekeeping medal.

At present 2,728 Bangladeshi soldiers are serving in UN peacekeeping mission in Ivory Coast, a country in West Africa. They have been in the current mission for over six months now.

General Marcel Fernand Amoussou, the Force Commander of the United Nations Operation in Ivory Coast (ONUCI) presided over a medal ceremony honouring the Bangladeshi contingent in Daloa, 380km away from capital city of Abidjan, on March 26.

Bangladesh's Brigadier General Mustafa Kamal Khan, the commander of UN operation in Sector West, expressed the contingent's pride in receiving the medal on the Independence Day of the country.

He also said that the contingent

## Jailers 'force' Hasina to appear in court

### The ailing AL chief tells court; sent back to sub-jail from hospital after 20 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday told a special court that the jail authorities are depriving her of fundamental human rights and produced her before the court forcefully although her treatment had not yet completed.

During the hearing of charge framing in the barge-mounted power plant case against her and seven others, Hasina repeatedly complained about the jail authorities' behaviour and the quality of treatment she had received at hospital.

Special Court-1 of Judge Firoz Alam later postponed the hearing until April 3 following Hasina's complaints and on the ground that

her senior counsels were absent as she was not produced before the court on time.

Hasina was taken to the sub-jail on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises after the hearing was adjourned.

The jail authorities had Hasina discharged from hospital yesterday afternoon as the court ordered them on March 23 to produce her before the court yesterday.

At court, Hasina complained about the way she was treated in Square Hospital, saying that the treatment was a "farce".

"My left eye has almost gone blind. It could have been cured had the treatment been started timely. My left ear is also losing its capacity for hearing," Hasina said repeatedly.

"I am being harassed mentally. At this moment, I feel that I cannot stand before the court anymore," Hasina said and sat down on the chair in the dock.

Earlier, she said, "I was kept in the hospital under such a condition that it often felt I was in a sub-jail, not allowed to meet my lawyers, physicians and even relatives. I felt panicked."

She compared her present situation with the one she experienced during the detention by Pakistani occupation forces in 1971. "I was ill and not allowed to meet my parents and relatives at that time and the same is happening now," she said.

Once again yesterday Hasina expressed doubt over getting

## ASHUGANJ POWER PLANT 2 units shut down after explosion 4 get burn injuries

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bhabra

Two units of Ashuganj Power Station were shut down yesterday after a fiery explosion severely burned four people including two engineers of the station.

The two engineers and two electrician of the station were conducting repair work when a breaker of Unit-5 exploded and caught fire at around 11:45am, said sources at the power station.

The injured -- Assistant Engineer Kamruzzaman, Assistant Engineer M Rukan Mia, electricians Brindaban and Mohammad Salam -- have been sent to Dhaka in a critical condition.

Units 4 and 5 have been shut down following the incident and 450 MW of power is currently being generated at the station, said M Ataur Rahman, managing director of the Ashuganj Power Station.

A three-member inquiry



A Bangladesh Rifles' (BDR) fair price shop in Nawabganj in the capital sells rice to people standing in long queues yesterday as more and more people now depend on rice sold in the BDR shops at subsidised price.

## CITY CENTRE CRACKS DCC finds no risk, but prefers to stay alert

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) authorities yesterday said the cracks in the under-construction 37-storey City Centre at Motiheel do not pose any risk, but still they would stay alert.

The same day, they formed a five-member committee to probe what caused the structure to develop cracks, and decided the construction work would remain suspended till the committee comes up with a report.

Speaking at a press conference at Nagar Bhaban in the afternoon Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka said, "In primary observation we found those cracks are not part of the main structure. We will take necessary measures regarding the high-rise on the basis of the inquiry report."

The probe body comprises two teachers from Bangladesh University of Engineering and



Police struggle to control media people at Square Hospital in the capital yesterday when Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina was being taken back to the sub-jail.

## AL demands suspension of Hasina's trial until recovery

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) yesterday reacted sharply over shifting its detained President Sheikh Hasina from hospital to sub-jail and demanded suspension of her trial process until she is completely well.

The AL at an emergency meeting held at Acting AL President Zillur Rahman's residence in the capital said the government is responsible for the former prime minister's multi-faceted ailments.

The speakers at the meeting alleged that the jail authorities forcefully took the AL chief to a special court and later to the special jail on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises without completing her treatment at Square Hospital where she had been undergoing treatment since March 11.

Zillur Rahman told reporters

## INDIA'S DECISION TO RAISE EXPORT PRICE Traders hoard rice, hike prices

### It forces warn retailers of stern action

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

STAR REPORT

In the wake of India's hiking the minimum export price for its rice, traders here have reportedly started hoarding the staple.

Retailers and wholesalers across the country already raised the price of Indian coarse varieties by Tk 70 to Tk 80 and fine rice by Tk 20 to Tk 50 per maund (37.32 kg) yesterday.

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Zillur Rahman told reporters

The joint forces yesterday warned kitchen-market retailers in the city and its outskirts of stern actions for any profiteering.

The warning came at a meeting between the joint forces and traders at BDR headquarters at Pithkhan.

The joint forces said they would continue monitoring the prices of vegetables in the capital's wholesale and retail markets and take "exemplary" actions against the individuals found guilty of irregularities.

Presidents and general secretaries of kitchen market associations attended the meeting chaired by Col Abdul Halim, chief coordinator of Trade and Commerce Monitoring Cell, BDR.

The Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), who are now carrying out Operation Daal Bhat at subsidised prices, has been assigned by the

## Nam flats property of parliament; allotment can't be cancelled now Says Speaker in a letter to CA

SHAMIM ASHRAF

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar in a letter to the chief adviser yesterday said the 324 Nam flats are parliament's property and it is not possible now to cancel allotments to former lawmakers of the eighth parliament as asked by the housing and public works ministry.

The House Committee, responsible for accommodating parliamentarians, allotted the flats to MPs for staying until the results of the ninth parliamentary elections. Since the committee is not in place, it is not possible to cancel the allotment now, the Speaker said.

He made two suggestions to the

chief adviser in case it becomes necessary to settle the issue.

The first is to arrange an "arbitration" involving Parliament Secretariat, housing ministry and eight ex-MPs of BNP, Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami with the law adviser as the arbitrator.

The second suggestion is seeking opinion of the judges of the Supreme Court Appellate Division through the president in line with article 106 of the constitution, Sircar told The Daily Star last night.

The Speaker sent the letter after receiving a letter from the housing ministry on March 19. The letter

## TRUTH COMMISSION No mercy scope if jailed for 2 years or more for graft

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK and SHAMIM ASHRAF

People sentenced to two years or more for corruption or corrupt practices won't be allowed to make voluntary disclosure before the Truth and Accountability Commission within five years of their release.

The three-member Truth Commission would be a combination of former officials from the judiciary, military and civil administration.

An eminent citizen can also be appointed to the commission, according to the draft of the "Vol-

untary Disclosure Ordinance, 2008".

The commission may have up to six sub-commissions with its headquarters in Dhaka to cover the whole country.

In addition to having no provision to challenge the commission's orders, its members will also enjoy indemnity for any of their official activities, says the draft.

Besides, the commission will be independent, free from any political or other bias or interference, adds the draft expert committee of Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud,

## Some people might exploit Commission Fears Prof Muzaffer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) Chairman Prof Muzaffer Ahmad yesterday said that some people may take advantage of the proposed Truth Commission and get themselves acquitted of corruption charges by dint of it.

Prof Muzaffer said that a corruption free society cannot be established without reforms in the administration.

He was talking on occasion of the launching of a new book titled *Andhakare Kalo Biral* (Black Cat in Dark). The book, written by Anis Rahman, was released at the National Press Club in the city.

Prof Muzaffer said that corruption is so deep rooted in our society

## Restructure agri system for food security CA urges agriculturists

UNB, Gazipur

Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday called for restructuring the country's agricultural system to increase the production of food grains for ensuring food security.

Referring to the recent trend in the world food production, he said it is clearly understood in the changed situation that the strategy to replenish food shortages through import is risky.

Inaugurating a three-day 'Bari Technology Transfer Workshop 2008' organised by the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute

(Bari), Fakhruddin said the government has taken the initiative to formulate a new national agricultural policy considering the changed perspective at national and international levels.

He called for adopting effective and sustainable short, medium and long-term planning and programmes to boost the agricultural production.

The objective of the agricultural technology transfer workshop is to make the recently developed sustainable and useful technologies to the farmers through agricultural extension and development

## Purchase body okays import of Indian rice at \$430 a tonne

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The advisory committee on purchase yesterday approved import of four lakh tonnes of non-basmati rice from India at Tk 29.67 per kilogram (kg) through government channel.

"We have approved import of rice at \$430 per tonne. The import price of each kg rice will be 43 cents," Finance Adviser AB Mirza Azizul Islam told journalists after the purchase committee meeting at the cabinet division.

Food ministry Secretary Mollah Waheeduzzaman yesterday told The Daily Star that the rice will be imported by ships in 60 days after opening the letter of credits (LCs), adding that the contract in this



Employees of offices located in 37-storey City Centre in Motiheel remove documents yesterday after the building developed large cracks Saturday.

## German parliamentary team stresses party reforms Asks govt to lift or relax emergency

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A visiting German parliamentary delegation yesterday said Berlin would not show any understanding and would exert political influence if the caretaker government in Bangladesh shows "unwillingness" to pass on power to an elected government.

Expressing its optimism that the general elections are going to be held by the end of this year, the six-member delegation stressed the need for internal democratic reforms of the political parties and asked the government to either relax or lift the state of emergency to pave the way for it.

"If we see it is simply the government that does not want to pass on power, then we would certainly not show any understanding for this and exert our political influence and insist that the election be held soon," said Thilo Hoppe, head of the German delegation.

If the state of emergency continues for a long period, Germany will think that the caretaker government "is not playing by the rules", he said, adding that Germany will then enter in a critical dialogue with the Bangladesh government.

Hoppe was talking to reporters at a press conference at Zia International Airport after

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