

## CA appraises president of food situation, poll preparation

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed called on President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday and apprised him of several matters including the country's food situation and preparations for holding the general election.

The president was also informed about the proposed dialogue with the political parties and various aspects of the CA's planned address to the nation, expected to be aired by the end of the second week of this month.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, President's Press Secretary Abdul Awal Howlader said the chief adviser apprised the president of the present food-grain stock and Boro paddy production in the country.

"The chief adviser briefed the president about the progress of the government's preparations for holding the next general election

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## BASHUNDHARA DIRECTOR KILLING, BRIBERY Tarique, Babar 'helped' bid to cover up murder

ACC charge sheet also includes ex-MP Saleemul Huq, Shah Alam, his two sons

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday pressed charges against former prime minister Khaleda Zia's son Tarique Rahman, former state minister for home Lutfuzzaman Babar and six others of Tk 21-crore bribery involving the murder of a Bashundhara Group director.

Former BNP lawmaker Qazi Saleemul Huq Kamal, Bashundhara Group Chairman Ahmed Akbar Sobhan alias Shah Alam and his two sons Shafiat Sobhan Sanvir and Sadaat Sobhan, Director of East West Property Development Pvt Ltd Abu Sufian and Tarique's personal secretary Mia Nur Uddin APU are the other charge-sheeted accused.

The anti-graft body said the eight were involved in receiving and



Lutfuzzaman Babar



Tarique Rahman



Qazi Saleemul Huq

giving the bribe to ensure that Sanvir did not have to face charges of killing Humayun Kabir Sabbir, a director of Bashundhara Group.

Sabbir's body was found outside a building in Bashundhara residential area on July 5, 2006.

ACC Deputy Assistant Director Rupak Kumar Saha, who is also the investigation officer (IO) of the case,

submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court in Dhaka, showing 28 people as prosecution witnesses.

On receipt, Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Golam Rabbani sent the case dossier to the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court for taking the charges into

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## Advisers to talk to professional groups before talks with parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is now looking for ways to hold talks with professional groups and civil society organisations on key national issues in parallel with formal dialogues with political parties.

The quartet of advisers that coordinated the April 7-28 pre-dialogue talks had a meeting yesterday with eminent economist and former adviser Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud at Communications Adviser Ghulam Quader's office to work out ways for such talks.

"Dialogue with different groups of citizens is essential. We are now discussing with experts to find ways for dialogue with the civil society," Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman told reporters after the meeting at Ghulam Quader's office.

During the pre-dialogue talks, political parties reached consensus about engaging the civil society with the dialogue, Zillur said

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## Ctg RMG workers on pay-hike riot

50 vehicles damaged, shops looted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Agitated workers of three garment factories yesterday went on the rampage and vandalised over 50 vehicles in Kalurghat BSCIC Industrial Area demanding an increase in their allowances.

Hundreds of workers of Orchid Sweater Ltd, Global Specialised Garments Ltd (unit-1) and Savar Sweater Ltd, all conglomerates of Azim Group, took to the street for an increase in their share of piece-rate on each garment product and breakfast allowance.

Witnesses said the unruly workers vandalised buses, trucks, private cars, minibuses, CNG-run auto-rickshaws, mugged commuters, looted a sweetmeat and a fruit shops, and damaged windowpanes of the oven division office of Azim Group.

The witnesses said law enforcers refrained from taking action during the rampage that lasted around five hours on the roads stretching from Kalurghat BSCIC Area to Bohadharat intersection.

A tripartite meeting between representatives of Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Azim Group and the workers later took a decision in favour of the demands, bringing the situation under control.

Sources said yesterday's incident was a sequel to a strife and heated altercation between a section of the workers and management of the factories the previous afternoon over the same demands.

The workers alleged the management suddenly cut Tk 10 from Tk 34 of the piece-rate. They met

the management on Monday and placed their demands, but the management refused to accept those, said the sources.

At one stage, the workers became angry and swooped on some officials and staffs of the three factories.

Following the incident, the management of Azim Group shut down the three units for indefinite period. When the workers found the factories closed yesterday morning, they went berserk.

A force from Chandgaon Police Station rushed to the scene but remained "inactive" during the agitation.

"I was astonished to see that the workers continued attacks on our factories in presence of a large number of cops," said Anup Kumar Das, general manager of Azim Group.

## Hasina blames govt's inability to control price situation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the present government's lack of skill and experience, and inability to foresee potential slump in global economy account for the unabated hike in prices of essentials.

She urged her party leaders and workers to keep pressing the military-backed caretaker administration to hold the general election immediately.

Also a former prime minister, Hasina was talking to her lawyers and relatives after the Special Court-1 adjourned till May 12 the hearing on charge framing in the barge-mounted power plant graft case.

The counsel for former energy secretary Tawfik-e-Elahi Chowdhury, another accused in

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PHOTO: STAR

Workers of three garment factories of Azim Group take to the street in Kalurghat BSCIC Industrial Area of Chittagong yesterday demanding an increase in their wages and allowances.

## Revised budget bloats for subsidies

REJAUAR KARIM BYRON

The revised budget of the current fiscal is likely to be increased to Tk 93,610 crore from Tk 87,137 crore due mainly to additional expenditure in relief work, interest payments and subsidies in fertiliser and petroleum products.

Sources say the Finance Division has already sent accounts of revised allocation of non-development budget to different ministries. With the revised allocation, the gross expenditure of non-development budget will be increased by Tk 16,906 crore.

On the other hand, the government has already reduced the development budget to Tk 22,500 crore from Tk 26,000 crore. Slow pace of development projects under the Annual Development Programme (ADP) has forced the government to decrease development spending.

Finance ministry sources say

non-development expenditure in the original budget was Tk 60,637 crore, which may be revised to Tk 71,110 crore with an increase by Tk 10,473 crore.

According to the revised allocation of non-development budget, out of 47 ministries and departments, allocations for 37 are going to be increased.

The preliminary estimate shows that non-development allocation for the agriculture ministry is going to be increased by Tk 1,939 crore, the food and disaster management by Tk 837 crore, defence ministry by Tk 398 crore, home ministry by Tk 355 crore, and women and children affairs ministry by Tk 313 crore.

Besides, gross expenditure of the Finance Division may be increased by Tk 12,434 crore. Such a huge increase is mainly for capital investment, the sources add.

They say allocation for the

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## AL ex-MP Mockbul gets 13 years for illegal wealth

Wife gets 3 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special court dealing with graft cases yesterday sentenced former AL lawmaker Mockbul Hossain to 13 years' imprisonment for concealing wealth information from Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and amassing wealth beyond known sources of income.

The court also sentenced Mockbul's wife Fatema Tahera Khanam to three years in jail for abetting her husband in the corruption.

The Special Court-9 of Judge Khandaker Kamaluzzaman at the MP Hostel in the Jatitya Sangsad Bhaban complex also fined the AL leader Tk 10 lakh, in default of which, he will have to spend another year in prison.

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## Programmes soon for release of Khaleda

Says Delwar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Khandaker Delwar Hossain, BNP chairperson-appointed party secretary general, yesterday said that they would announce programmes soon demanding release of the party chief immediately.

Condemning the charge sheets against Khaleda Zia in Niko case and Tarique Rahman in a bribery case, he blamed the government for conspiring with the help of foreign forces to hold the election keeping out the top two leaders of the country.

"Along with the people, we will do everything so that the government can't hold a stage-managed election without the top two leaders," he said at a press briefing at his

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## EC skips specific date for polls

Informs HC through affidavit elections by Dec

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday informed the High Court (HC) through an affidavit that the much-awaited parliamentary election will be held by December this year, but it did not specify any date for the poll.

"In accordance with the roadmap, and in order to hold a free, fair and acceptable election within December 2008, the Election Commission will announce the date for the election in due course," the EC told the HC through an affidavit replying to a

query of the court.

The HC on April 30 asked the commission to inform the court through an affidavit when it will have the voter list ready and when will it hold the next parliamentary election.

The directive came during a hearing on a writ petition filed by Barrister Masood R Sobhan on January 27 saying the commission had no authority to delay the general election past the stipulated 90 days of dissolution of the last parliament.

Giving the directive to the EC,

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## Army HQ says it has no desire to take part in dialogue

UNB, Dhaka

The army headquarters yesterday announced that it has no intention or desire to participate in the planned dialogue between the caretaker government and political parties.

Also, the army headquarters requested the mass media to refrain from making any imaginary and negative opinion out of their personal notion that might create confusion in the people's mind about the army.

An ISPR press release said the army has been discharging its responsibility on instructions of the government and extending cooperation towards holding fair elections under the incumbent

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## Export of rice, except for aromatic varieties, banned till Nov 7

Shoot on sight order to check rice smuggling

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday banned export of all but aromatic varieties of rice for six months, till November 7.

Commerce ministry in an SRO (statutory regulatory order) signed by Abu Sayeed Chowdhury, a deputy secretary, yesterday said the ban will be effective from today (Wednesday).

This decision puts Bangladesh in the group countries that enforced a ban on rice export to restrain the price of the grain at home. Thailand, the largest rice exporter, Vietnam, India and Brazil

already preceded Bangladesh in banning the export.

"The move will help ensure food security and serve the country's interest," a senior commerce ministry official said asking not to be named.

He said the government has decided to impose the ban as it noticed that a group of exporters are cashing in on the government's lenient rice export policy. The country has exported a record quantity of rice, including non-aromatic category, in the first eight months of the current fiscal year despite serious rice shortages at home.

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## Relief starts arriving in cyclone-hit Myanmar

Death toll soars past 22,000

AP, AFP, Yangon

The death toll from the cyclone that battered Myanmar last weekend has risen above 22,000 as the first plane-load of aid arrived from Thailand, state radio has reported.

A news broadcast on government-run radio said Tuesday that 22,464 people have now been confirmed dead from Cyclone Nargis, which tore through the country's heartland and biggest city of Yangon early Saturday.

The broadcast added that thousands more are missing.

Relief efforts for the stricken area, mostly in the low-lying Irrawaddy River delta, have been difficult, in large part because of

the destruction of roads and communications outlets by the storm. The first assistance from overseas arrived Tuesday from neighbouring Thailand.

Officials had said today that the toll could continue to climb higher than the 14,000 already feared dead from the Southeast Asian nation's devastating cyclone as the international community prepared to rush in aid.

Meanwhile, UN aid agencies waited Tuesday for visas for disaster response teams to travel to cyclone-hit Myanmar Tuesday amid rebukes that an early warning system could have saved lives in the reclusive country.

A UN spokeswoman said

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একটি প্রেমের জবাব দিয়ে চলে আসুন  
মেরিল-প্রথম আলো তারকা জরিপ পুরস্কার বিতরণী অনুষ্ঠান ২০০৭-এ

নতুন মেরিল স্প্যাশ বিউটি সোপে এমন কি আছে - যা সব ঋতুতেই আপনাকে রাখে ফ্রেশ!

এ প্রেমের উত্তর জানতে নতুন মেরিল স্প্যাশ বিউটি সোপ-এর মোড়ক সেবে দিন এবং মোবাইলের মেসেজ অপশনে গিয়ে Splash লিখে একটি Space দিয়ে উত্তরটি টাইপ করে ১৫ মে, ২০০৮-এর মধ্যে পাঠিয়ে দিন। ৬৯৬৯ নম্বরে।

সঠিক উত্তরদাতাদের সেরা ৫০ জন পাবেন সর্দীসহ মেরিল-প্রথম আলো তারকা জরিপ পুরস্কার বিতরণী অনুষ্ঠান ২০০৭ সরাসরি উপভোগ করার সুবর্ণ সুযোগ।

আর, সেরা বিজয়ীর জন্যে থাকছে সর্দীসহ মরিশাসের এক চমৎকার ট্রিপ!

• সেরা উত্তরদাতা বাছাইয়ের জন্যে কর্তৃপক্ষের নিয়মকানুন খুঁটিয়ে নিন।  
• একজন অংশগ্রহণকারী কে সেরা মোবাইল ফোন থেকে একদোহা-এর মাধ্যমে একটিমাত্র উত্তর পাঠাতে পারবেন।  
• শর্ত মতো।

যে তথ্যসমূহ পাঠিয়ে দিন সঠিক উত্তর আর সেরা উত্তরদাতা হয়ে নিজের দিনে আপনার ট্রিপ।

১১ কলার টোল ফ্রীঃ

Meril  
Splash  
Beauty Soap