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**NIKO GRAFT CASE**  
**Hearing on**  
**Hasina's bail**  
**appeal June 5**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT  
 A special court yesterday set June 5 for a hearing on the bail petition filed by detained former premier Sheikh Hasina in the Niko graft case. Judge Amar Kumar Roy of the Special Court-2, set up on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises, fixed the date following extensive arguments by both the defence and prosecution counsels. The court also fixed June 5 for the next date of hearing on charge framing against the Awami League president and eight others in the Niko graft case, following prayer by the defence.  
**SEE PAGE 15 COL 2**

**CONSTITUENCY DEMARICATION**  
**3,000 appeals filed with**  
**Election Commission**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT  
 Near about 3,000 appeals have been filed with the Election Commission (EC) till yesterday -- the last day for the filing of appeals against re-demarcation of 51 parliamentary constituencies. This is by far the largest number of such appeals filed by leaders of various political parties following the EC's move to re-demarcate 133 constituencies before the next parliamentary elections. Earlier in 1984, when the EC took steps to redraw parliamentary constituencies, only 307 appeals were received by the EC. The latest re-demarcation plan of the EC was unveiled on April 29 this year amid growing opposition from major political parties that maintain that the move will create obstacles to holding the upcoming ninth parliamentary polls by the year-end, as announced in the electoral roadmap. "We've received around 3,000 appeals, many of which do not even have merit. We will start hearing the appeals from June 8," Election Commissioner Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakhawat Hussain told reporters yesterday at EC Secretariat. The EC has plans to complete the hearings by June 25 and by the end of June, it would publish a final list of parliamentary constituencies that are to be redrawn, said the election commissioner. The EC yesterday held a meeting and discussed issues pertaining to the commencement of the appeal hearings. The commission will meet again today to finalise the procedure and schedule for the hearings.  
**SEE PAGE 15 COL 2**

**New CJ**  
**takes oath**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT  
 Justice MM Ruhul Amin yesterday took oath as the 16th chief justice of Bangladesh. President Iajuddin Ahmed administered the oath at Darbar Hall of Bangabhaban at around 10:30am yesterday. The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) members did not accord felicitation to him, protesting some recent judgments by the apex court. Earlier, the SCBA did not give farewell to his predecessor justice Md Ruhul Amin on his last day in office on May 29 for the same reason. SCBA president barrister Shafique Ahmed yesterday expressed hope that the new chief justice would perform his duties in  
**SEE PAGE 15 COL 6**

**BEGUNBARI CANAL**  
**Rajuk demolishes 75**  
**illegal structures**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT  
 The Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) yesterday demolished about 75 illegal structures including site offices of the yet-to-be-constructed Hilton Hotel in Begunbari canal on Tongi Diversion Road. A Rajuk team led by Magistrate Emdadul Dastagir started tearing down the structures around 11:30am to implement the Hatirjheel-Begunbari Integrated Development Project. A least 50 workers and a bulldozer took part in the drive that continued till 5:00pm. About 10 structures at the construction site of Hilton Hotel, which lost its land allotment recently, were torn down, an official of Rajuk said. "We have pulled down illegal structures constructed on Bangladesh Railway land in Begunbari canal as the Railway handed over today about 9.8 acres of land to Rajuk out of its 20 acres of land in Begunbari-Hatirjheel area," Dastagir said yesterday. The Rajuk team bulldozed about 65 other concrete and  
**SEE PAGE 15 COL 8**

**Civil society**  
**suggests govt**  
**to adopt**  
**interim PRSP**

STAR REPORT  
 Civil society representatives during a consultation meeting yesterday, on finalising the second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), suggested the caretaker government to adopt an interim PRSP due to the absence of an elected government in the country. "A political vacuum is now prevailing in the country. If it [PRSP] is to be finalised, it should be done for an interim period," said former adviser to a caretaker government Prof Wahid Uddin Mahmud about the draft of the second PRSP. General Economic Division of  
**SEE PAGE 15 COL 6**

**20 hurt as Ctg**  
**RMG workers**  
**clash with cops**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg  
 At least 20 garment workers were injured when several thousand workers of three factories clashed with police in Kalurghat BSCIC industrial area in the port city yesterday demanding a raise in the wages. The authorities declared the factories of Orchid Sweater Ltd, Global Specialised Ltd (Unit-2) and Savar Sweater Ltd of the Azim Group closed in the afternoon after a meeting with BGMEA leaders. During the clash, operations at some 100 other industrial units at the Kalurghat BSCIC (Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation) and adjoining areas were suspended to avert further labour unrest.  
**SEE PAGE 5 COL 5**



Police chase demonstrating garment workers of Azim Group at BISCIC Industrial Area in Chittagong yesterday. The workers were demanding for a pay increase.  
 PHOTO STAR

**AUG 21 ATTACK**  
**Rab captures**  
**two 'grenade**  
**throwers'**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT  
 Rapid Action Battalion has arrested two men who were part of the team that threw grenades on an Awami League (AL) rally in the capital on August 21, 2004. The two detained men later in a news briefing admitted to journalists that they took part in the grenade attack which was aimed at assassinating AL chief Sheikh Hasina. Rab arrested Rafiqul Islam alias Sabuj, 28, from Baliakandi of Rajbari, and Uzzal Hossain alias Ratan, 26, from Noahata under Stripur in Magura in the 24 hours preceding 3:30pm yesterday. Rab Additional Director General (ADG) Col Gulzar Uddin Ahmed told a news briefing yesterday.  
**SEE PAGE 15 COL 1**

**Pak reforms package**  
**gives more powers**  
**to prime minister**

PTI, AFP, Islamabad  
 A package of proposed constitutional reforms drafted by Pakistan's ruling PPP aims to give only prime minister the powers to authorise the use of nuclear weapons or to declare war, apparently in a bid to prevent situations like the Kargil conflict of 1999. The reforms package, approved with certain modifications by PPP Chairman Asif Ali Zardari Saturday, has been provided to the party's allies in the ruling coalition to get their views. Law Minister Farooq Naek met PML-N chief Nawaz Sharif in Lahore yesterday morning to discuss the proposed constitutional amendments. Under the changes outlined in the package, which is expected to be introduced in parliament soon, only the prime minister will have the power to declare war or authorise the use of nuclear weapons, official sources told Dawn News channel. The move to give only the prime minister the powers to declare war is aimed at preventing the Pakistan army from repeating Kargil-like operations, the sources said. Some analysts believe the move will also help in preventing religious leaders from issuing 'fatwas' or decrees for waging 'jihad'.  
**SEE PAGE 15 COL 5**

**Ex-Jamaat MP**  
**Shahjahan, 22**  
**others charged**  
**with extortion**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg  
 Police yesterday submitted charge sheet against detained former Jamaat-e-Islami lawmaker Shahjahan Chowdhury and 21 others in an extortion case. Shahjahan Pasha, the investigation officer of the case and a  
**SEE PAGE 15 COL 7**

**Prayer Timing**

June 2		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-45	6-50
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation



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