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## Bhuiyan's salam to Khaleda goes in vain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia did not return the 'salam' of her former secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan during an encounter at the trial court for Gato corruption case yesterday.

Bhuiyan, who had been the longest-serving secretary general of the BNP, fell from Khaleda's grace as he espoused reforms in the party following the imposition of a state of emergency in the country on January 11 last year.

The former prime minister, however, exchanged pleasantries with other co-accused as she entered the courtroom at 11:00am, virtually ignoring Bhuiyan who threw her 'salam' several times.

Failing to draw Khaleda's attention, Bhuiyan grew pale and perturbed, said an eyewitness account.

The BNP split into pro-Khaleda and pro-reform factions after the Bhuiyan-led group floated

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## People will try today's corrupts

Warns Khaleda at hearing of graft case, terms govt dialogue manipulated; hugs ailing son Koko in tears

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained former prime minister and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday said the country's people would try those who are committing corruption at present.

"Those who are committing corruption now must be punished. The people will bring them to trial," Khaleda said during the trial of Gato corruption case against her, her youngest son Arafat Rahman Koko and 22 others at a special court.

Terming the ongoing dialogue "manipulated", she said the government actually does not want the dialogue, otherwise it would not



have conducted the mass arrest of political leaders and activists.

She said despite having good intentions, the major political parties cannot join the dialogue

because of such measures of the government.

Khaleda alleged that the caretaker government wants to implement its "blueprint" to hold an election with their "chosen" candidates excluding popular leaders of the major political parties. "But the people will foil the government's blueprint," she added.

Khaleda, Koko and other accused in the case were produced before Special Court-3 on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises yesterday amid tight security.

Koko was taken to the court by an ambulance from Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University at

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## Addl attorney general Hassan Foiz resigns

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Additional Attorney General (AAG) Hassan Foiz Siddiqui resigned yesterday on personal grounds. Earlier on June 1, Md Anwarul Azim Khair Manna stood down as deputy attorney general on the same ground.

Hassan Foiz sent his resignation letter to the president through the attorney general's office at 11:00am.

"It is no longer possible for me to perform my duties as an additional attorney general due to personal problems," Siddiqui said in his resignation letter.

Attorney General Barrister Fida M Kamal, however, declined to talk to the journalists about Hassan's resignation yesterday, saying he was busy with official works.

Md Abdul Quddus, administrative officer at the attorney general's office, said "After moving a case at the Appellate Division in the morning, Hassan Foiz Siddiqui submitted his resignation. A special

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## 4 new social safety net plans to get Tk 3,000cr

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government will introduce four new social safety-net programmes of Tk 3,000 crore to relieve people of the brunt of high food prices in the next budget to be declared on June 9.

The amount is almost equal to the allocation including microcredit provided by the government for social safety nets in the current fiscal year, finance ministry officials said.

One of the four programmes is a Tk 2,400 crore scheme designed to create employment for 100 days a year for around 20 lakh people below poverty line, especially of the char and Monga-hit areas.

The government has already directed authorities concerned to enlist the people of low-income group for the programme.

This allocation however may be

- Employment for 2 million ultra-poor people
- Tk 300cr fund to face climate change challenges
- Maternity allowances for urban professionals
- Tk 200cr road maintenance, employment fund

brought down to Tk 2,000 crore, as different ministries are demanding allocations for different other schemes, the officials said.

In the draft of the programme, the government has decided that the people will be employed for 50 days during March-April and 50 days during September-October, said the sources.

Each day wage of each employed worker will be Tk 120, while the government will provide

the same amount as allowances to the enlisted workers who cannot be provided employment for the first fifty days.

The allowance amount, however, will reduce gradually.

In the next budget, the government will set aside Tk 300 crore for the fund to face the challenges caused by climate change. To make the fund bigger, the government will add money to the fund every year and also collect funds from the donors.

A committee led by the environment secretary will also be formed to handle the fund to fight upcoming challenges due to climate change.

Officials said the Economic Relations Division (ERD) will be entrusted with special responsibilities to collect money for the fund.

Another Tk 25 crore will be

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## Desa chairman, 13 others asked to appear in court by Jun 10

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday directed the authorities concerned to put an advertisement in two national Bangla dailies asking former Desa chairman Towhidul Islam and 13 others to appear before it by June 10 in the Desco share scam case.

Meantime, the hearing of arguments in an extortion case against detained former communications minister Barrister Nazmul Huda and his wife Advocate Sigma Huda would be held on June 6.

Judge Mohammad Azizul Haque of the Senior Special Judge's Court ordered the publication of the advertisement after receiving

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RMG UNREST

## 3,000 sued for vandalism

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday filed a case against over 3,000 people, including a journalist of a private TV channel, on charges of vandalising vehicles and private properties at Ashulia on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the authorities of seven garment factories filed seven general diaries in connection with the violent incidents.

Sub-inspector Obaidul Huq of Ashulia Police Station filed the case yesterday afternoon mentioning that soon after two garment workers were injured in a road mishap in

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## TARIQUE'S GRAFT CASE SC hearing adjourned for a month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday adjourned for one month hearing of the Anti-Corruption Commission's (ACC) appeal against the High Court (HC) order that stayed proceedings of a graft case against detained BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman.

The six-member full bench of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice MM Ruhul Amin, also asked both the defence and prosecution counsels to take steps for disposing of the rule earlier issued by the HC within the period.

Following a writ petition filed by Tarique, the High Court on October 1 last year stayed proceedings of the case and issued a rule upon the ACC to show cause why the case proceedings should not be quashed. The ACC recently filed an appeal with the SC to vacate the stay order.

Earlier on May 28 last, the SC dismissed a similar appeal filed by the ACC and upheld the HC order staying proceedings against Tarique's wife Dr Zubaida Rahman in the same case.

Zahirul Huda, a deputy director at the ACC, filed the case with Kafil Police Station on September 26 last year against Tarique, his wife Zubaida and her mother Iqbal Mand Banu for amassing wealth through illegal means and for concealing information in their wealth statements submitted to

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PHOTO: ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

RISKY RIDE... A man puts a child on the carrier of his bike tying the vehicle's chain lock around the child's neck. The photo was taken at Bahaddar Hat in Chittagong yesterday.

## Obama wins historic nomination

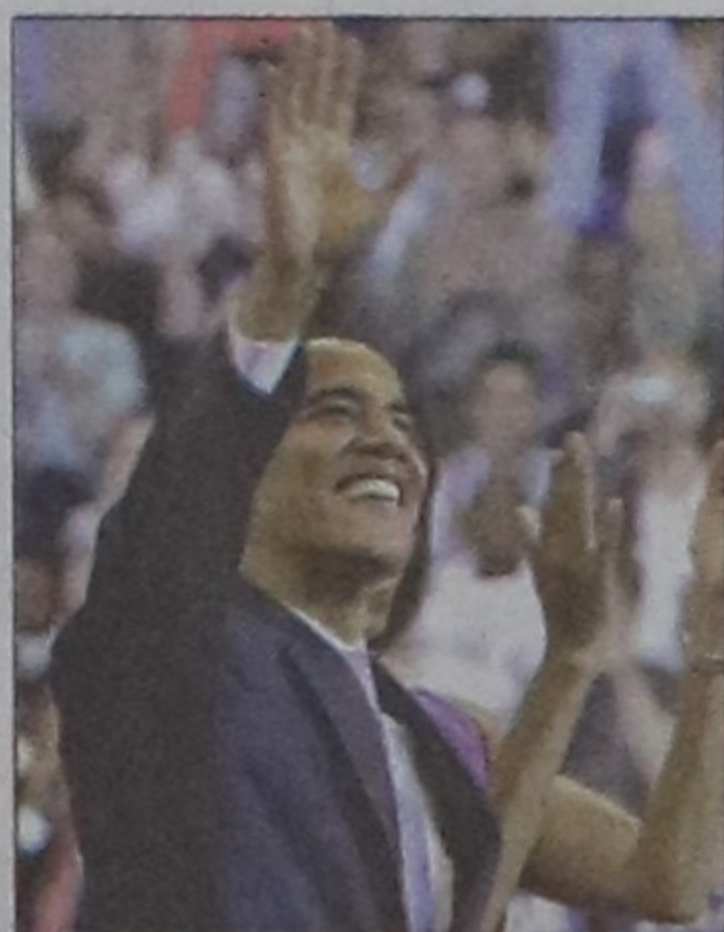
AFP, St Paul, Minnesota

Barack Obama made history Tuesday, capturing the Democratic White House nomination as the first black candidate atop a major-party ticket, after a giant-slaying win over Hillary Clinton.

"America, this is our moment. This is our time. Our time to turn the page on the policies of the past," Obama said even as Clinton, on her own quest to be the first female president, refused to formally concede defeat.

"Tonight, I can stand before you and say that I will be the Democratic nominee for president of the United States," Obama said, in one of the final acts of the longest, most expensive and spell-binding nominating epic ever.

The Illinois senator's momen-



tous victory set up an intriguing general election clash with the 71-year-old Republican senator, John McCain.

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## Poor people's income dips 36pc in 15 months

CPD study identifies food price hike, inflation as main reasons

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Between January 2007 and March 2008, the gross income of poor people decreased by 36.7 percent, mainly due to price hike of food and inflationary pressure, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) observed yesterday.

Due to income erosion, an additional 8.5 percent people have fallen below the poverty line during this 15-month period, putting 25 lakh households below the poverty line, according to a CPD estimate.

"We took gross national income (GNI) into the calculation so that

the remittance incomes are included and we found that the price hike and the weighted inflationary impact on prices of rice have brought additional 8.5 percent people below the poverty level," said CPD Executive Director Mustafizur Rahman at a press conference organised for the release of a paper on "State of the Bangladesh Economy in Fiscal Year 2008 and Outlook for Fiscal Year 2009".

Mustafizur said the people below the poverty line spend 45.6 percent of their incomes on rice. The 66.9 percent hike in rice prices in the 15 months alone contributes to 30.5 percent income erosion of the segment below the poverty line.

Another 6.2 percent income erosion happened due to inflation, the paper added.

Due to this income erosion, the real income of a garment worker for example is Tk 1,295, even though his or her monthly income is fixed at Tk 2,046, the paper said.

Considering the situation, the think tank suggested that the government distribute rice and wheat to the tune of 30 lakh tonnes through the social sector and social

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## Govt eyes consensus on constitution review

BSD asks govt to withdraw emergency now

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is trying to build a political consensus to form a "constitutional review commission" but will leave its recommendations to be implemented by the elected government, said Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman yesterday.

The government resumed the ongoing dialogue with political parties and held talks with the leftist Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD). Both the sides agreed that the constitution has not been properly practised.

The party also demanded immediate withdrawal of the state of

emergency and establishing the right to seek bail for all.

The dialogue resumed at a time when detained ex-premier and BNP chief Khaleda Zia termed it a "staged drama" as the government itself is working against through "mass arrests".

The government also left open the options of holding the dialogues through to July to wait for the Awami League and BNP to take part. It also plans to hold talks with women's groups, farmers, people from media, ethnic and religious minorities, and upazila and union level representatives.

Khalequzzaman, convener of

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## Gas-fed generators operate illegally amid Titas inaction

Chinese generators flood market to meet high domestic, commercial demand

ERSHAD KAMOL

A large number of domestic and commercial users of gas operated alternative power generators are using the equipment with illegal gas connections without any permission from Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd (Titas Gas).

Because of the rampant illegal use of natural gas (NG) to run alternate power generators in different areas of the country, the government is being deprived of a large sum of tariff on the use of the scarce natural resource.

Thousands of illegal users are

purchasing China made gas operated power generators marketed under local labels such as Green Generator, Anik Power, Power Plus, Intraco Generator, Europa Generator, SS Generator, and Arora Generator from different markets like Nawabpur Machinery Market and Dhaka Stadium Market in the capital and in other places.

The generator distributors are also helping the illegal users to hook up the equipment with illegal natural gas supply lines.

The distributors do not even ask their clients to show or get permissions from Titas Gas. "As gas generators are in much demand, and

getting permission from Titas Gas is time consuming as well as difficult, many domestic users install the generators without any permission. But, to be on the safe side one can apply", said an official of Intraco Energy Ltd.

"Technicians sent by the distributors don't refuse to connect the generators with the gas line set up by Titas Gas for kitchen stoves," said a domestic user of such a generator in Dhanmondi area of the capital.

The distributors launched advertisement campaigns with catchy lines like "no need to think

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PHOTO: STAR

Power generators capable of using liquid petroleum gas and natural gas are being sold at a store in Nawabpur in the capital yesterday. The government loses revenue when these are plugged into the Titas' gas supply system.

## Rajuk knocks down illegal structures

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) yesterday demolished illegal sections of four under construction buildings at Banani, including one belonging to the wife of a former BNP lawmaker.

The sections of the buildings were constructed violating approved plans.

A team led by Rajuk Magistrate Emdadul Dastogir began the drive around 11:00am and continued till 5:30pm. A total of 30 workers and a bulldozer took part in the drive with assistance from police.

"We have demolished parts of the under construction Rupsha Towar on Road-11 in Banani owned by Khashnud Asghar, wife of Ali Asghar Lobi, former BNP lawmaker," said Dastogir adding that

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