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## Khaleda, Hasina agree to hold dialogue after Eid

### None puts any condition, says Rafiq-ul Huq

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina, the country's two top politicians, 'unconditionally' agreed to sit together for a dialogue some time after Eid-ul-Fitr on Hasina's return from abroad, counsel of the two former premiers Barrister Rafiq-ul Huq said yesterday.

If they sit together and talk, not only their personal differences will be resolved, but the country will also be relieved of the current political crisis, the eminent lawyer believes.

The much anticipated talk between the traditional political archrivals is being considered by many as the most vital step forward now to reestablishing democracy in the country, since the move is expected to usher in qualitative

changes in the body politic.

"Both leaders agreed to sit together for a dialogue. Neither of them put any condition," Barrister Rafiq-ul Huq, who is acting as the liaison between the two former heads of governments, told The Daily Star in his chamber yesterday afternoon.

He said BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia was very positive about the meeting while Awami League President Sheikh Hasina also welcomed the move.

"Hasina said since she is currently outside the country, she will give a final decision after talking to her party colleagues on her return home," he added.

If they do not sit together, the barrister fears, the country might revert to the pre-1/11 situation.

Rafiq-ul Huq said he talked to Khaleda first and then to Hasina over the phone during his overseas trip.

In between his conversations with the two political party chiefs, he also talked to two advisers to the military backed caretaker government who had earlier approached him to be a part of the effort. He returned home yesterday.

Either as prime ministers or as opposition leaders, Hasina and Khaleda have been the two most

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People's Right to Know

Dr Rashida Begum holds Apsora for photographers at Anwar Khan Modern Hospital at Dhanmondi in the capital yesterday. Apsora was born as a result of the first ever successful frozen embryo implant in Bangladesh.



## First frozen embryo baby born in Bangladesh

SHAMIM ASHRAF

The couple were ecstatic yesterday when they heard the cry of their newborn Apsora, the first ever success in frozen embryo implantation in Bangladesh.

"She is doing great, she is in good health, she has no physical defect, nor does she need any special care," Rashida Begum, the doctor behind the groundbreaking success, told The Daily Star.

Now in a ward of Anwar Khan Modern Hospital in Dhanmondi, the baby girl, weighing 3.2kg at birth, will soon go home, doctors expect.

"It can't be described how happy the couple are. They had been waiting for a baby for long five years. It is really thrilling to see such a success," said Rashida, an assistant professor

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COURTESY: INFERTILITY RESEARCH AND CARE CENTRE

Dr Rashida Begum holds Apsora for photographers at Anwar Khan Modern Hospital at Dhanmondi in the capital yesterday. Apsora was born as a result of the first ever successful frozen embryo implant in Bangladesh.

## HASINA-KHALEDA TALKS FBCCI can take move if both parties agree

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) might take an initiative to bring to a table the two former prime ministers and also chiefs of Awami League and BNP- Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia- if the two parties consider it positively.

"If the business community thinks such an initiative should be taken and the parties think our efforts will be valued, then we will move to bring the two leaders (Khaleda and Hasina) to a table for the sake of the country and its economy," said President of the country's apex business body Annisul Huq.

Talking to The Daily Star last

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## Hizb ut-Tahrir gives 48-hr deadline to free its leaders

### BNP, allies hold talks with EC today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hizb ut-Tahrir Bangladesh yesterday threatened to oust the government by launching a movement if its 10 leaders and activists arrested in Rajshahi on Thursday are not released within 48 hours.

The threat issued at a meeting of the organisation in the capital was apparently in violation of the state of emergency but no action was taken in this regard as of filing of this report at 10:00pm yesterday.

Akrumul Hossain, assistant commissioner of Special Branch of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police, said, "We may seek necessary government approval for filing a seditious case against the arrested persons."

Addressing the meeting at the city's Engineers' Institute of Bangladesh, the organisation's Chief Coordinator Mahiuddin Ahmed said, "The Hizb ut-Tahrir will stomp the city streets and no one will be able to live in peace on the soil of Bangladesh if our leaders are not released in 48 hours."

Asked about the open threat against the government amid the

state of emergency, Home Secretary Md Abdul Karim told The Daily Star last night that the law would take its own course.

Our staff correspondent from Rajshahi reported that law enforcement agencies were waiting for the government approval to file a seditious case against the Hizb ut-Tahrir leaders and activists for plotting against the country.

Four teachers including Dr Syed Golum Mowla, a Dhaka University teacher and Hizb ut-Tahrir coordinator, and Ahmed Jamal Iqbal, teacher of electrical engineering at South East University and a senior member of the Islamist group, were arrested along with eight others on Thursday in Rajshahi.

They were arrested prior to holding a press conference at the Rajshahi City Press Club. Later, police produced them before a Rajshahi court under section-54 and the court sent them to jail.

**THE SPEECH**

In his address, Hizb ut-Tahrir Chief Coordinator Mahiuddin Ahmed vowed to establish Khelafat rule in

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## BNP, allies hold talks with EC today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The much-talked about dialogue between the Election Commission (EC) and BNP takes place today, bringing down the curtain on the electoral talks that began last year.

Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) too will participate in the discussions to be held separately at the EC Secretariat.

Bangladesher Jatiya Party (BJP), another component of the BNP-led four-party alliance, however did not get invitation to the dialogue scheduled to start at 10:30am.

BNP is joining formal talks with the EC for the first time since the caretaker government took over in January last year.

Earlier, the commission had taken a lot of flak for sitting with the party's pro-reform faction while ignoring the ones loyal to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

According to EC invitations, the meeting with Jamaat will get underway at 10:30am, BNP at 11:30am and IOJ at 2:00pm.

Party sources said Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain will lead the BNP

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## 4000 MW POWER SHORTFALL FEARED BY 2012 Gas crisis to put a stop to 3200MW new projects

SHARIER KHAN

The government's failure to overcome persistent gas crisis is now resulting in suspension of 11 large and medium power projects with their production capacity totalling around 3,200 megawatt (MW), pushing the country towards a deeper power crisis in the coming years.

Petrobangla that ensures gas supply to power projects categorically said recently it would not be able to supply gas to these projects in the next three years. Gas may be given to some of these after 2011 on completion of certain other gas related projects.

But till a year back, Petrobangla was ready to provide gas to these projects which include three independent power projects (IPPs) and seven public sector ones. All these are more than a few years old.

According to the power ministry, the country's installed power generation capacity should reach 9,666 MW by 2012 against a peak

demand for 7,887 MW. To achieve this target, the nation must produce around 5,000 MW more within that time. But the present initiatives would ensure only around 1,100 MW additional power in the next few years, leaving a shortfall of around 4,000 MW.

Gas supply shortfall is already preventing generation of another 700 MW power. Power Development Board (PDB) sources said it is currently producing around 4,000 MW power against an officially estimated demand for 4,500 MW (unofficial demand 5,600 MW). "If gas supply was adequate, we could have met the official power demand," said a PDB source.

Petrobangla on the other hand is unable to supply more than 1,800 million cubic feet per day (mmcfd) gas as the previous BNP-led alliance government took almost no initiative for oil and gas exploration.

Gas production could not be increased due to lack of adequate pipeline network. The present caretaker government is also very slow on these matters.

Petrobangla however assured gas supply to some rental power projects with a total production capacity of around 300 MW and 450 MW Bibiyana IPP scheme, Sylhet 150 MW scheme, Siddhirganj 220 MW peaking power (now nearing completion) and Bhola 150 MW projects.

Of these, Bibiyana project is brand new and a result of pressure from Chevron that operates Bibiyana gas field. This power tender drew only one tariff offer from a Korean-Malaysian consortium. The tariff is very high but the power ministry is going ahead with the scheme.

IPPs that do not have assurance of timely gas supply are 450 MW Sirajganj and Meghnaghat 450 MW phase 2 and 3 projects. Of them, Sirajganj and Meghnaghat-2

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Items	Year			
	2004-2005	2005-2007	2008-2012	2013-2020
Installed Capacity, MW	5,025	6,441	9,666	17,765
Peak Demand, MW	3,743	5,368	7,887	14,600
Transmission Line, Km	4,038	4,898	7,180	8,396
Distribution Line, Km	2,42,832	2,86,375	3,45,530	4,77,558
No. of Consumers, million	8.84	9.03	12.75	20.76
Per Capita Generation, kWh	158	190	260	450
Access to Electricity	38%	47%	65%	100%
Investment Requirement, (billion Tk)	0	115	307	575

## 'AL won't join poll unless Hasina freed permanently'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) will not contest in the upcoming parliamentary election unless the release of its President Sheikh Hasina is made permanent, said a senior party leader yesterday.

The AL leader also said the caretaker government is planning an all-party policy summit to aid Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh in carrying on with its politics in the country.

The comment was in response to Commerce and Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman's recent statement that the government will organise a policy summit in November with the country's top political leaders on three key issues -- investment growth, administrative reform, and education.

"Awami League will not participate in any election until the

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PHOTO: STAR

Abdul Matin takes his son Ashiqur with his entire body wrapped in bandages to Acid Survivors Foundation in the capital yesterday. Criminals mistakenly poured acid on Ashiqur, his mother and Matin on Tuesday.

## Acid throwers maim baby missing their target Parents also burnt severely

SHAMIM ASHRAF and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Two-year-old Ashiqur was sleeping carefree next to his parents, all completely unaware of the acid throwers who would turn their world upside down within a moment, burning all three severely.

The attack took place in Utrapur village of Arahazar in Narayanganj early Tuesday, five days after Ashiqur's father had taken his family there to visit his brother-in-law Mozammel

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Haque.

With their vacation turning into a nightmare, the infant boy, his father Abdul Matin of Gabtoli village in Sonargaon, and his mother Razia Sultana have now found shelter in Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF) in the capital.

"My baby is suffering for no fault. We didn't have the slightest idea about the enmity between Mozammel and the attackers," Sultana Razia, six percent of whose body including the face and lower abdomen was burnt with acid, told The Daily Star.

Recalling the incident, the 25-year-old mother said her husband, a furniture shop employee, had taken them to Mozammel's house on Thursday.

The three went to sleep in the same room on Monday night with the door open as the doors and windows of the house were being repaired.

"Suddenly, I felt something fell on me setting me on fire," Sultana said, adding their baby also gave out a heart wrenching scream at the same time.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab-10 raided an area in East

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## Muggers take away Tk 6.2 lakh from two traders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Muggers took away Tk 6.2 lakh from two traders at Sutrapur and Kotwali in the city within a span of eight hours.

Sutrapur police said a gang of three riding two motorbikes intercepted the private car of Murad Hossain, a cement trader, at Gandaria Sadhana lane under Sutrapur Police Station at around 10:00pm on Thursday. Murad was returning home from his shop at Shyampur.

The muggers fired at the car and took away Tk 5.40 lakh from Murad. He sustained injuries as the broken glass of the car pierced his leg.

In another incident, a gang of three blasted bombs and snatched

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## ILLEGAL BRANCHES OF UNIVERSITIES Bid to attract admission seekers despite ban

SURANIITH DEABNATH

Despite being declared illegal by the University Grants Commission (UGC), some branches of foreign and private universities are out to lure HSC passed students into getting enrolled.

They are leafletting different educational institutions and public places and posting advertisements in the media to take advantage of higher pass rate in this year's HSC exams and limited seats in authorised universities.

False offers of credit transfer after a year's study, foreign degrees while staying home and honours degrees in fewer years are cleverly

presented in ads to attract admission seekers and their guardians, said sources at the UGC.

Some 200 educational institutions including 56 branches of foreign universities, 100 other campuses of private universities and 40 private medical colleges were adjudged illegal last year by the UGC, the state body regulating the private and public universities.

The charges against them include selling degrees without imparting quality education.

The institutions do not even have own faculty or course curriculum, said an UGC official speaking on condition of anonymity.

Still, the commission could not

take action against them due to absence of relevant laws.

All it can do now to safeguard the post-HSC students is raising awareness against phoney institutions, added the official.

The commission will soon publish a list of unauthorised universities and colleges and place advertisements in the national dailies.

UGC Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam said, "We know what's going on. But we can't act against the illegal practices as long as there are no specific laws on branches of foreign universities and outer campuses."

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## Khoka meets Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka City Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka had an hour-long meeting with BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her cantonment residence last night.

When Khaleda was in jail, party Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain dissolved the Dhaka city BNP committee of which Khoka was the president. New committee is yet to be formed.

BNP sources said Khoka went to the cantonment resident of the party chief and had a meeting for an hour from 9:00pm.

Khaleda enquired about the city BNP leaders and activists. She also enquired about the organisational status of the unit.

BNP Standing Committee member RA Gani, Office Secretary Rizvi Ahmed, former justice TH Khan and former lawmaker SA Khaleg also met Khaleda yesterday, party sources said.

## 'Criminal' killed in 'shootout' at Shyampur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged criminal was killed during a "shootout" between his accomplices and members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) at Shyampur in the city early yesterday.

He was identified as Sayel, 22, son of Abul Kalam of Palpara, Shyampur.

Rab officials said Sayel, an active member of notorious Shaheen group of Shyampur, was wanted in a number of criminal cases including for murder.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab-10 raided an area in East

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## BANGLADESHI JOB SEEKERS ABROAD Law soon to stop incidents of fleeing workplaces

PORIMOL PALMA

With lucrative job markets opening up in East Europe, the government is framing a law to prevent overseas Bangladeshi workers from fleeing their workplaces, a trend that recently caused problems to the country's labour market abroad.

The initiative has been taken after at least 67 Bangladeshi workers in Romania fled their workplaces.

Romania is employing around 600 Bangladeshi workers all of who

went to that country this year for jobs with monthly salary of \$450 each besides other facilities including free meals, accommodation and healthcare. Highly skilled workers can get up to a salary of \$3,000 a month, according to a recruiting agency.

Employers of Bulgaria and Poland have also sent proposals for recruiting workers from Bangladesh in the construction sector, an official of the expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry told The Daily Star.

Romania, Poland, Bulgaria and Hungary will require around five lakh workers in garment and construction sectors in the next year as their own workers are migrating to West European countries like the UK and France for higher-paying jobs. The migration tendency is the result of these countries' joining the European Union, said a foreign ministry official quoting Bangladesh Embassy in France.

"The European labour market is much more profitable for us than

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