

## A perfect platform

**FROM PAGE 16**  
But, most of the new writers have to struggle hard and walk door to door to get the blessing of the publishers.

"It was too difficult for me to persuade a publisher. Some of them even did not bother to show any interest in reading my script", said Mahbubur Rahman, whose first novel titled--'Prem O Anuvab' was published from Bida Prakash Publications this year at the fair.

He thinks those who want to make their appearance as writers like him have very little scope because of the domination of the established and popular writers.

"Popular and reputed writers publish, on an average, eight to ten books at the Ekushey Book Fair each year. Fresh writers like us are always lost in the clamour for books by readers of well-known writers," he said.

However, he thinks only this fair brings rays of some hopes for them to familiarise their works with the readers.

Another new writer Nousher Hira, whose first book on student politics was published from Shikha Prakashana thinks the government should take steps with the help of Bangla Academy to patronise fresh ones.

Hira also said publishers should be more cooperative with new writers and open up windows of opportunity for them so that they can present their works before common people.

Yet new writers are spending their times at the fair everyday with renewed energy and enthusiasm hoping for the fortune to smile upon them.

Meanwhile, a total of 105 new titles arrived at the fair yesterday on its 15th day. The new books include--'Priyo Shakhha Hey Bhandhu Amar' by Kamrun Haque, 'Dangshan' by Hasnat Abdul Hai, 'Jibon Nagar' by Salma Sultana, 'Shavabik Mrittur Guarantee Chai' by Nirmol Sen, 'Chhitro Kala of Bhaskarjio' by Kabir Chowdhury, 'Amar Satar Jibon' by Arun Nandi, 'Misir Ali Apni Kothay' by Humayun Ahmed.

The fair, unlike weekends, was less crowded yesterday but the crowd, much to their irritation, had to make their way through the cloud of dust at the fair premise.

### Killer brother

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Tuhina, 11, and Sharmin, 8, Laily and Selina, two elder sisters of the killed girls, demanded capital punishment to their brother Yunus. They said hanging of their drug addict brother would help in reducing such crimes.

Meanwhile, teachers of the minor girls and students of Surjupur Government Primary School yesterday vowed to say no to drugs, drug addicted persons, downy and child marriage.

The girls were buried at their family graveyard after completion of their autopsy at Comilla Medical College Hospital. Several hundred men, women and children who attended the burial of the girls broke into tears.

Shahena Begum, 42, mother of the victims, earlier took shelter at her father's house at Madhumura village under Debidwar upazila due to a family dispute. She did not come to see the bodies of her girls fearing for her security.

Tuhina's neighbour Amena Begum, 60, who witnessed the killing, and uncle Abu Musa Bhuiyan, who filed a murder case in this connection, were unable to speak following the gruesome incident.

Some classmates of the murdered girls said everybody loved them as the girls lost their father and behaved well.

They said Tuhina and Sharmin came to school on Thursday without eating anything, as there was no food in their house.

At one stage, the teachers of the school could not hold back their tears.

The girls were killed early Friday when they were asleep. After the killing, the killers started shouting uttering 'dacoit'.

Hearing their scream, the locals rushed to the spot and handed over the youths to the police suspecting their involvement with the murder.

Tuhina's two elder sisters Laily and Selina came to their father's house Saturday midnight after getting news of the killing.

Debidwar thana officer-in-charge Zahedul Islam said Yunus and Shafailah confessed to the crime before the magistrate court.

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## JCD men

**FROM PAGE 1**  
General Abdullah Al Noman told reporters that 2009 will be observed as organisational year for BNP. All opinions of grassroots-level leaders will be placed before party high-ups for taking necessary steps to make the party stronger.

About the suggestions that they made about JCD, Noman said the BNP chairperson already asked for reconstituting JCD bodies to keep regular studies in the leadership level.

Many grassroots leaders said BNP should not depend on Jamaat-e-Islami and identified the party's alliance with Jamaat as a major reason for losing votes in December 29 polls.

When asked about the issue, Noman said they were evaluating the pros and cons of being in alliance with Jamaat.

The field-level leaders also said the dilly dallying attitude towards participating in the elections, delay in announcing candidates and the short time for campaigning contributed to the BNP's debacle in the elections.

BNP Organisational Secretary Amanullah Aman, who was convicted for corruption, told reporters that the common opinion of field-level leaders was that the election was stage-managed and the results were predetermined.

The interview with presidents, general secretaries and organising secretaries or conveners and joint conveners of upazila and municipal units will continue till the end of this month.

## By-polls

**FROM PAGE 1**  
on Thursday. Prime minister Sheikh Hasina, opposition leader Khaleda Zia and Jatiya Party chairman HM Ershad vacated two seats each as per the rules after they won from three constituencies each in the December 29 parliamentary elections.

Hasina vacated Bagerhat-1 and Rangpur-6 seats keeping Gopalganj-3 for herself, Khaleda vacated Bogra-6 and 7 seats keeping Feni-1 for herself and Ershad vacated Rangpur-3 and Kurigram-2 seats retaining Dhaka-17 for himself.

Announcing the election schedule, Election Commissioner Muhammed Sohul Hussain yesterday said members of law enforcement agencies excepting the armed forces will be deployed to maintain law and order situation during the by-elections.

He said adequate number of judicial magistrates will also be deployed to prevent irregularities and corrupt practices in the polls.

Sohul also said the schedule for elections to the seats reserved for women in the parliament will be announced on Monday.

It will be the first ever by-election to be held under the newly formed AL-led government. Questions arose in the past over the credibility of by-elections held under different political governments because of unwanted interference.

## 2 accused

**FROM PAGE 16**  
police remand today for quizzing about 10-truckload of arms haul at Chittagong Urea Fertilizer Ltd jetty on April 02, 2004.

However, out of the 43 accused in the cases filed in connection with the arms haul, only Hafizur Rahman and Din Mohammad are in jail hajat while 33 others got bail and eight remain fugitive.

Md Moniruzzaman was appointed as the fourth investigation officer of the case replacing the previous IO and ASP of CID Ismail Hossain Khan following an appeal made by Public Prosecutor (PP) Ahsanul Hoque Hena on January 18 this year.

Appeal for appointing new IO was made since the previous IO (Ismail Hossain) failed to submit the report by the scheduled date, the PP said.

The two other IOs of the case were Ahadir Rahman, the then Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Karnaphuli police station, and CID ASP AKM Kabir Uddin. Both IOs submitted their investigation reports, headed.

Two cases were filed with the Karnaphuli police station after the country's largest-ever arms haul.

One of the cases was lodged under section-25/B of the Special Power Act for arms smuggling while another under section-19 (ka) of the Arms Act.

## Much ado about

**FROM PAGE 1**  
"But as the offences were committed during the Liberation War and Razakars were involved in the killings of 15 martyrs so we cannot absolutely rule out the possibility of war crime. But there is no such law to investigate the offence as war crime and so we're investigating it as a murder case," he elaborated.

Home Minister Sahara Khatun has earlier expressed satisfaction following the arrests of the two alleged Razakars, members of an auxiliary armed force constituted by civilians under the leadership of Jamaat-e-Islami to help Pakistani occupation forces commit genocide.

The arrest and the home minister's remarks have pinned the people's hopes on the trial of war criminals, which is also an election pledge of the ruling Awami League.

State Minister of Liberation War Affairs ABM Tajul Islam told The Daily Star he thinks the police considered it as war crime just because the offence was committed during the Liberation War.

"It's just the reflection of public perception about the trial of war criminals," Tajul added.

Lt Gen (ret'd) Harun-ur Rashid, chief coordinator of the Sector Commanders Forum, told The Daily Star, "We cannot say right now that the process of trying war criminals has started."

"Police arrested two persons in Rajshahi in a case under the existing penal code for trying criminal offences, but war crime is a special kind of offences which should be tried under a special tribunal," he said.

Harun added, "Though the offences of the case in Rajshahi were committed during the Liberation War the case was filed last year as a civil murder case."

"As long as a special tribunal is not formed to try the war criminals where the state

would be complainant, we cannot say the trial process has started," Harun observed.

Trying the war criminals is one of the top five election pledges of the present government. Even after winning the elections and forming the government Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and many of her cabinet colleagues reiterated the government's stance on the issue.

Home Minister Sahara Khatun even said last month the government has taken steps so that the war criminals cannot escape the country.

A resolution has also been passed unanimously in parliament for trying the war criminals following a proposal placed before the House by a ruling party lawmaker.

Despite all these, no major progress has been made to start the process of trial, say sources concerned in the government.

Police sources also say there is no official list of war criminals with which they can stop them from fleeing the country.

Meanwhile, sources say in different cabinet meetings the issue of trying war criminals has been discussed informally without having it on the agenda.

But no formal discussion has been made in the cabinet, the sources say, adding the issue is likely to come up at today's cabinet meeting. But the discussions are mainly limited to the possible options of starting the process.

The ministers concerned and legal experts on different occasions informally discussed whether the trial should be held under the International Crimes Tribunals Act, 1973 or whether the law should be amended or new law should be formulated, sources say.

They also discussed whether an enquiry commission should be set up first and a tribunal constituted on completion of enquiry, the sources add.

## Ordinances chosen

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Ordinance, 2006, The Code of Criminal Procedure (amendment) Ordinance, 2007, The Code of Criminal Procedure (second amendment), 2007, Speedy Trial Act (amendment) Ordinance, 2007, Criminal Law (amendment) Ordinance, 2007, Finance Ordinance, 2007, Consolidated Fund (supplementary) Ordinance, 2007, Consolidated Fund (advanced) Ordinance, 2007, Bangladesh Biman Corporation (amendment) Ordinance, 2007, Public Procurement (amendment) Ordinance, 2007, Padma Multi-purpose Bridge Project (land accusation) Ordinance, 2007, Money Laundering Prevention (amendment) Ordinance, 2007, Electoral Rolls Ordinance, 2007, Bangladesh Flag Vessels Protection (amendment) Ordinance, 2007, The President's (remuneration and privileges) (amendment) Ordinance, 2007, The Pesticides (amendment) Ordinance, 2007, Income Tax (amendment) Ordinance, 2007, Islamic University (amendment) Ordinance, 2007, Islamic University (amendment) Ordinance, 2007, Human Rights Commission Ordinance, 2007, Income Tax (second amendment) Ordinance, 2007, Income Tax (amendment) Ordinance, 2008, Election Commission Secretariat Ordinance, 2008, Bangladesh University of Professionals Ordinance, 2008, Anti-terrorism Ordinance, 2008, Finance Ordinance, 2008, Appropriation Ordinance, 2008, Appropriation (supplementary) Ordinance, 2008, Rangpur University Ordinance, 2008, Representation of the People Order (amendment) Ordinance, 2008, Real Estate Development and Management Ordinance, 2008, Grameen Bank (amendment) Ordinance, 2008, Bangladesh Shilpa Bank (amendment) Ordinance, 2008.

## BNP to skip

**FROM PAGE 1**  
to return to parliament.

"We (two BNP members of the special committee) were not present at today's special committee meeting as they (treasury bench) have turned down our request for including Salauddin Quader Chowdhury in the special committee," opposition Chief Whip Joyanal Abedin Faruq told reporters at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban complex.

The BNP parliamentary party proposed the names of MK Anwar and Salauddin Quader Chowdhury as members of the special committee of parliament. Of the two, MK Anwar was included in the committee.

The treasury bench, however, included him (Faruq) instead of Salauddin without having any discussion with the opposition, said the opposition chief whip.

"We shall wait for the authorities concerned to make the changes to the special committee," Faruq said.

He said the whole nation is worried about the 'non-cooperation' and 'autocratic attitude' of the treasury bench.

Faruq said they wrote to the chief whip for including

Ordinance, 2008, Representation of the People Order (second amendment) Ordinance, 2008, Representation of the People Order (third amendment) Ordinance, 2008, Right to Information Ordinance, 2008, Bangladesh Laws (revision and declaration) (amendment) Ordinance, 2008, the Citizenship (amendment) Ordinance, 2008, Public Money and Budget Management Ordinance, 2008, Supreme Court Judges (remuneration and privileges) (amendment) Ordinance, 2008, Fertiliser Management (amendment) Ordinance, 2008, Members of the Bangladesh Public Service Commission (terms and condition of service) (amendment) Ordinance, 2008, Speedy Trial Act (amendment) Ordinance, 2008, Local Government (city corporation) Ordinance, 2008, Local Government (municipality) Ordinance, 2008, Gram Sarkar (repeal) Ordinance, 2008, National Board of Revenue (amendment) Ordinance, 2008, Public Servants (Marriage with foreign nationals) (amendment) Ordinance, 2008, Public Servant (dismissal on conviction) (amendment) Ordinance, 2008, Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (amendment) Ordinance, 2008, Consumers' Right Protection Ordinance, 2008, Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority (Desa) (amendment) Ordinance, 2008, Real Estate Development and Management Ordinance, 2008, Grameen Bank (amendment) Ordinance, 2008, Bangladesh Shilpa Bank (amendment) Ordinance, 2008.

## Foreign aid

**FROM PAGE 16**  
\$2.08 billion, which is 25 per cent higher than the previous year.

The country received the highest amount of foreign aid in the last fiscal year after 1971-72, ERD sources said.

It was a staggering figure that Bangladesh has received in foreign aid so far compared to that of the last fiscal year given the absence of any kind of natural calamity like Sidr and flood.

The period of political transition is also to be taken into consideration as donors at this stage are in the dark about the new regime to come and they have to look into the policy taken by the new government before any aid disbursement, sources added.

The Asian Development Bank will provide \$453 million, the World Bank \$280 million, Department of International Development \$49 million, Germany \$25 million, Japan \$20 million, EU \$10 million and Canada \$12 million.

The donors in the 2008-09 fiscal year pledged to disburse \$3.21 billion for 62 projects under the lending programme. In the last six months projects involving \$1.76 billion have already been signed which is 55 per cent of the total aid.

In the last fiscal year during the same period projects involving \$1.31 billion were signed.

This time Tk 5245 crore was earmarked for payment of foreign loan but as the value of taka went up against US dollar the amount was increased in the revised budget to Tk 5550 crore, said sources.

## Rally at JS

**FROM PAGE 1**  
The last Awami League (AL) government through the 1998 act empowered lawmakers with the authority to oversee development work in upazilas, by making them advisers to upazila parishads in respective constituencies.

According to the act, it was mandatory for upazila parishads to discuss development activities with respective lawmakers and to get their recommendations for those.

During the question answer session of the day, AL lawmaker Shahiduzzaman Sarkar asked the LGRD minister whether the government will make block allocation of development fund to lawmakers for carrying out development activities in their constituencies, prompting treasury bench lawmakers to welcome the question with desk thumping.

In reply, the LGRD minister said Bangladesh does not have the system of making block allocation of funds to lawmakers.

He said block allocations to lawmakers exist in India to ensure their involvement in localised development.

Replying to the AL lawmaker's query, the LGRD minister also disclosed that the government plans to ensure lawmakers' participation in upazila level development activities.

The lawmakers demanded infrastructure development including building of roads and culverts in their constituencies.

## SSC exams

**FROM PAGE 1**  
The expelled teachers include two from Jessore Board and one each from Dhaka, Dinajpur and Madrasa Board, a statistics of the combined education board control room said.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid visited some SSC and Dakhil examination centres in the capital.

After visiting Mohammadpur Govt High School, Mohammadpur Kaderia Taiyabiya Kamil Madrasa, Mirpur Bangladesh-German Technical Training Centre, Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Girls' Technical Training Centre and Dhanmondi Government Boys High School, the minister said they are committed to improving the quality of education in the country.

He urged teachers, employees and law enforcement agencies to perform their duties with honesty and dignity.

The month-long SSC, Dakhil and SSC vocational examinations for 2009 began yesterday under eight education boards, one madrasa board and one technical education board. Some 10.63 lakh students -- 5.58 lakh boys and 5.05 lakh girls -- from 26,239 schools are taking part in the SSC and equivalent examinations.

Around 50,000 more candidates are taking part in this year's SSC and equivalent exams though the dropout rate remains high, 42 per cent.

## 54 ordinances

**FROM PAGE 1**  
In defence, the law secretary said the process for promulgation of these ordinances was at the final stages and he just published the gazette notification, meeting sources said.

The final list of ordinances to be ratified includes three which transformed Biman Bangladesh, Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board, and Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority into public limited companies from their previous status of government agencies.

Earlier, the three ordinances had been dropped from the possible list of ordinances for ratification.

Committee Chairman Rahmat Ali said the committee's report on scrutinising the ordinances will be placed before the House tomorrow.

The committee will meet again tomorrow to discuss whether a legal cover is required for the immediate past caretaker government's regime of two years, as the constitution allowed it to stay in power only 90 days.

If a legal cover is required, the constitution will be amended to give the regime the required coverage.

After yesterday's meeting, Rahmat Ali told reporters that the committee recommended the ordinances for ratification considering public interest, although those had been promulgated by the caretaker government by stepping out of its constitutional jurisdiction.

Defending the recommendations, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed echoed Rahmat Ali.

The law minister said the ordinances for ratification will be placed in parliament as bills soon.

The committee chairman

## Witnesses

**FROM PAGE 16**  
daughter Shoma Biswas, AL-backed chairman candidate at Belkuchi upazila Fazlul Haque, vice-chairman candidate Abdul Hamid Akand, Bhangabari union parishad Chairman Abdul Matin Pramanik and the minister's personal secretary Hilton.

In the complaint, Nitish mentioned the names of eight peoples witnesses.

They are Deputy Commissioner Humayun Kabir, Police Super Alamgir Rahman, District Returning Officer and Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Abdul Kayum, Assistant Returning Officer and Belkuchi Upazila Nirbahi Officer Nasir Uddin, Belkuchi Upazila Election Officer Mohammad Mosharraf Hossain, Presiding Officer Abul Hossain, Belkuchi Police Station Officer-in-charge Arman Hossain and Presiding Officer Masud Karim.

Of the witnesses, Nasir Uddin was transferred to Ghalanda in Rajbari and Mosharraf Hossain to Tazumuddin in Bholia.

## Suhrawardi Hospital

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Suhrawardi Hospital in the city which they tried to take over on Thursday.

Director of the hospital Dr Yakub UI Azad said that the group led by Tanik Hasan Kajal -- president of AL's Ganabhaban unit and assistant public secretary of Tejgaon Thana AL unit -- returned the key at around 11.30 in the morning.

Earlier on Thursday, Kajal led a group about 15-20 miscreants onto the hospital premises at around 3:30 pm and forcefully took over control of the doctor's canteen from Khokon who was running it.

Hospital staff quoted Kajal as saying that he was 'taking up control of the canteen with the approval of local MPs'.

The doctors' canteen has been running at the hospital for seven years now. The current contractor, Khokon, has been running it under the supervision of Ward Master Zakir Hossain Ukil after he won the tender for the job two years ago.

The hospital authorities informed the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) and Tejgaon Police Station about the incident on the same day. Kajal and his associates fled the scene when police arrived later in the day.

The OC of Tejgaon Police Station Lutfur Rahman told The Daily Star that they could not make any arrests, as the hospital authorities had not filed a case against anyone.

The return of the canteen key follows reports published in different newspapers over the weekend about the incident.

The hospital director said the incident was a result of conflict among different contractors who ran the canteen at different times.

During a visit to the hospital at 1:00 pm yesterday, this correspondent found the canteen still shut. Dr Azad said that a committee has been formed with the vice principal of the medical college Abdur Rashid as chairperson to formulate a policy for running of the canteen.

"A fresh tender will be called on the basis of the policy formulated to avoid any further unwanted incidents," he said.

Sources said that Kajal and his associates had won all the canteen tenders of the seven hospi-

said once the bills are placed in the parliament, it will not be mandatory to pass them within 30 days of their initial introduction to the House on January 25.

Eminent jurists also attended the special committee's meeting and gave their expert opinions about the ordinances.

Emerging from the committee meeting, jurists Mahmudul Islam and M Zahir said they suggested 31 ordinances for ratification, which were promulgated by the immediate past caretaker government staying within the bounds of its jurisdiction provided by the article 58 (D) of the constitution.

They, however, added that they also told the committee that it might consider some other ordinances for ratification as well.

The jurists earlier had recommended 50 ordinances for ratification. Later in a meeting, the special committee picked some more of the ordinances for ratification, increasing the number to 54.

"We did not pick for ratification any ordinance that contradicts the constitution," Rahmat Ali said.

## Eden College

**FROM PAGE 16**  
recovered from the kitchen of her maternal uncle Shoendra Mitra's home, on the second floor of a seven-storey building, around 10:30pm.

Lalbagh police said they detained Shoendra, an accountant of a Bangla daily, and his son Swaswata, 22, a cultural activist, for interrogation.

Local sources said Poly had been staying at her uncle's for several years. They said her throat was slit with a kitchen knife and her body had other stab wounds too.

Sub-inspector Emran Hossain of Lalbagh Police Station said they could not ascertain the motive behind the killing.

Soiendra said he, his wife and son were out. "I had to enter the house unlocking the door as it was locked from the inside... I found her lying on the floor," he said, adding, "I then called my son over telephone and informed the neighbours of the matter."

Law enforcers from Criminal Investigation Department, Detective Branch of Police and Rapid Action Battalion rushed to the spot.

In another incident, a garment employee last night succumbed to his injuries sustained Saturday night after criminals beat him up at Tongi.

The victim Helal Uddin Meer, 23, was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital Saturday night.

Tongi police said criminals also took Tk 5,000 from him.

## US newspapers

**FROM PAGE 16**  
investigative journalism, must be preserved," pointed to "hyperlocal" news websites and "philanthropic" ventures like ProPublica.org as possible future models.

**Micro payments.** hyperlocal and philanthropic schemes are a few of the ideas being banded about in the pages of dying US newspapers -- which cut more than 20,000 jobs last year -- and in scores of blogs on the Web.

In a recent opinion piece in the Times, David Swensen, the chief investment officer at Yale University, and Michael Schmidt, a financial analyst, argued that US newspapers should be turned into "non-profit, endowed institutions -- like colleges and universities."

Most industry observers tend to agree on what is killing US newspapers.

Print advertising revenue is steadily declining and circulation is falling as readers go online to get news for free. Online advertising revenue has been rising but is not keeping pace with the drop in print advertising revenue.

What they do not agree on is the solution.

Much of the debate has focused on whether readers, accustomed to getting news for free online, will be ready to pay for quality journalism.

The Wall Street Journal is currently the only major US publication which has successfully managed to make readers pay to gain access to all of the content on its website.

In a recent online question and answer session with readers, New York Times executive editor Bill Keller said his paper may also put some of its content behind a pay barrier, less than two years after a failed experiment with just such a system known as TimesSelect.

"Really good information, often extracted from reluctant sources, truth-tested, organized and explained -- that stuff wants to be paid for," he said.

"So far, it gets paid for mainly by advertisers, but a lively, deadly serious discussion continues within The Times about ways to get consumers to pay for what we make."

In his Time cover story, Isaacson said "the key to attracting online revenue, I think, is to come up with an

Observed.