

## Process of war crime trial kicks off Apr 8

UN experts to visit shortly to assist in investigation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The process of trying war criminals is expected to begin on April 8 with the appointment of an investigation officer and a public prosecutor.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh has accepted a UN offer of sending a team of war crime experts to help Bangladesh try those who were involved in various war crimes during the Liberation War of 1971.

Law ministry officials said the group of UN specialists, having experience in dealing with war crimes that had occurred in different nations, might visit Dhaka shortly.

UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh Renata Lok Dessallien put forward the offer at a meeting with Law

Minister Shafique Ahmed at his ministry. Home Minister Sahara Khatun was also present at the meeting.

"We have offered Bangladesh to bring here specialists, who deal with the war crime issues, so that the trial process of 1971 war criminals meets international standards," Renata told reporters after the meeting.

She said mistakes have been made in trials of war crimes earlier in many countries. "The experts will share their experiences here in Bangladesh to avoid the mistakes," she added terming the process very complex and delicate.

Renata reiterated the UN's cooperation in holding the trial but said the trial would be of Bangladesh's own, not the UN's.

State Minister for Law Quamrul Islam said steps have already been taken so that suspects of war crimes cannot flee the country. He would not say who are on the list of suspects.

An inter-ministerial meeting, scheduled for Wednesday at the home ministry, would discuss the probe and trial issues for the second time since March 25. The meeting may also appoint a public prosecutor.

Once an investigation officer is appointed, law ministry officials said a large team would be formed to initiate investigation into the genocide that took place during the Liberation War. The government has also passed a resolution in parliament paving the way for holding the trial.

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## PRESIDENT'S SPEECH Thanks-giving motion to be passed Tuesday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Passage of a resolution to thank former president Iajuddin Ahmed for his inaugural speech in the ninth parliament was deferred till Tuesday as Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia declined to speak on the motion yesterday.

The discussion on the thanks-giving motion on the president's address was scheduled to end yesterday through passage of resolution in the House.

Leader of the House Sheikh Hasina and Opposition Leader Khaleda Zia were supposed to speak on the motion before its passage.

Prime Minister and Leader of the House Sheikh Hasina was present at the beginning

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## Daylight saving time likely from June

Proposal to advance time by an hour as a measure to save electricity

STAR REPORT

The government is likely to forward Bangladesh Standard Time by one hour from June under a proposed Daylight Saving Time (DST) plan to manage the power crisis.

The Power Division of the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources yesterday discussed the issue with other ministries at a meeting. It also asked all ministries to send their views on the proposal by Thursday.

"We have requested all ministries concerned to let us know their views on the matter by Thursday," State Minister for Power Shamsul Haque Tuku told reporters after the meeting at his ministry.

Representatives from 18 ministries were present at the meeting.

Shamsul said if other ministries support the daylight-saving proposal, then it will be placed before the cabinet for the government's final decision.

If the proposal is approved, all will have to forward their clocks by one hour from June because HSC examinations begins on April 16 and runs till May 28, the minister added.

The power ministry went ahead with the proposal to cut down electricity consumption.

What it actually means is that offices and businesses will open and close an hour early, resulting in a change of habit for people. The reason DST works is because it saves energy as less artificial light is needed in the evening.

Many countries including United States, Canada, most European countries, Brazil, and

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## Returnees stage sit-in at ZIA

Demand compensation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirty deported workers from Malaysia yesterday staged a sit-in at the Zia International Airport, demanding compensation from the government for their being cheated and the huge amount of money they spent for preparing legal papers and getting jobs.

"Fifty-three of us went to Malaysia through recruiting agency Tanager Overseas, but it could not give us work permit although it took a lot of money from us," said Rubel, one of the deported workers.

"We will not leave until we get any compensation from the government," he said. "We sold our land properties and other valuables and now we have nothing to spend for living. The recruiting agent in Bangladesh and the Malaysian

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A number of job seekers deported from Kuala Lumpur stage a sit-in at Zia International Airport yesterday, demanding compensation for the loss they incurred being cheated by a recruiting agency.

PHOTO: STAR

## Trapped by nexus of brokers, employers

Workers in Malaysia denied promised salary, food, accommodation

PORIMOL PALMA, back from Malaysia

The employment was supposed to be permanent and the monthly wages were promised to be 600 Ringgits (RM). But they were employed for only 22 days in the first three months and paid just RM 200.

"Sometimes we could manage food with that money, sometimes we starved. When there was no work we were kept in godowns together," Moniruzzaman told The Daily Star sitting at a makeshift restaurant in front of Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur.

Moniruzzaman, 25, of Jhenidah, is one of 21 workers who went to Malaysia in September last year through recruiting agencies.

"Malaysian and Bangladeshi agents take away large portions of our wages and then sell us to another agent," he was describing how Bangladeshi workers fell into a vicious trap of modern day slavery as outsourcing companies,

brokers and errant employers have used labour supply for a money-making scheme. The outsourcing companies even keep the passports of the workers and demand money in return for those.

These fortune seekers followed all procedures required to go to their "dreamland" and spent huge amounts of money but now they can neither earn enough to support their families back home nor can they survive in Malaysia themselves.

These workers remained stranded in Kuala Lumpur airport for four days before their agent Joya Bala took them to Johor Baru to sell them to at least three other agents.

Another worker named Zahirul Islam said, "With expired work permits or without any job, we are living haphazardly—under a bridge maybe, but then, police raid the place."

As per rules, workers have to go through

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## 6 BCL men expelled from JU

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Jahangirnagar University (JU) authorities yesterday expelled six students for six months for their involvement in Friday's violent incident in its Mir Mosharraf Hossain Hall.

The students are Shafiqul Mahmud of Statistics dept, Arif Iqbal Hossain and Sajidur Rahman of History dept, Khan Mohammad Abu Sayeed Al Arabi and Zihan Hossain of Government and Politics dept and KM Taifur Siddique of Geography and Environment department, says a JU press release.

Under section 8 of disciplinary ordinance,

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## Plan to extend primary education up to class-8

Education policy being formulated in light of Khuda Commission

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government plans to modernise the primary education system by extending it up to class VIII and introducing a final examination at the end of this level.

The process of the modernisation of primary education will start after formulation of National Education Policy in line with the recommendations of the Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission-1974, education ministry officials said.

The policy formulation will be completed within a couple of months.

Besides, a 15-member national textbook expert committee led by Dhaka University Teachers' Association former general secretary Prof Akhtaruzzaman has already been formed

to update syllabus, curriculum and contents of textbooks of primary level.

The committee will consult with teachers and experts and prepare recommendations within next one month, primary and mass education ministry sources said.

The primary and mass education ministry is now very much concerned about the quality of education at the primary level and also planning to update the system.

A recently published survey report of directorate of primary education (DPE) revealed that around 70 per cent of students who completed five-year primary education are unable to read, write or calculate properly.

"We are thinking about improving the quality of education in primary schools. Primary

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## Re-election in 5 upazilas today

UNB, Dhaka

Re-election in five upazilas among six where polls were postponed due to various reasons will be held today.

The five upazilas are Belkuchi (Sirajganj), Ramganj (Laxmipur), Barura (Comilla), Brahmanbaria Sadar and Dighinala (Khagrachhari).

The election to Ukha upazila would be held later as the law and order situation is not conducive for holding the

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## BCL men threaten to quit, want Hasina back

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Most central leaders of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) yesterday threatened to resign from their posts if Awami League President Sheikh Hasina does not reconsider her decision of withdrawing herself as the organisational chief.

The BCL central leaders last night sat at a crucial meeting with their President Mahmud Hasan Ripon and General Secretary Mahfuzul Haider Chowdhury Roton to discuss the existing unorganised situation of the student body that led Hasina to quit as its guardian on Saturday.

Meeting sources said 110 of the 201 members of the BCL central committee signed a paper, which they said they would

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## BCL bodies inactive, fail to meet regularly

RAKIB AHAMMED and NAJMUL ALAM NOBIN

The central executive committee of Bangladesh Chhatra League failed to hold a single general meeting in its three years' existence.

It even failed to form a single fresh committee of its district units and units at educational institutions. The one-year tenure of a key unit committee—Dhaka University

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## CONGRATULATIONS



Heartiest congratulations to Alhaj Md. Saiful Alam Masud, Chairman and Managing Director of S. Alam Group for being unanimously elected as Chairman of the Board of Directors of Oman Bangladesh Leasing and Finance Ltd.

All Executives, Officers and Employees of  
**Oman Bangladesh Leasing and Finance Ltd.**

## Heated debate in JS over rice price

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury and her predecessor BNP lawmaker MK Anwar yesterday locked horns in parliament over prices of rice and production of food grains during the regimes of past Awami League (AL) and BNP governments.

The debate kept the House quite heated for sometime defying the air conditioning.

MK Anwar referred to information published by the agriculture ministry while Matia Chowdhury said the BNP government manipulated the data by turning the Bureau of Statistics, and Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation

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