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## National commission to fix prices of farm produce

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will constitute a national price commission to fix prices of agricultural products for protecting interests of the country's farmers, Food Minister Abdur Razzaque said yesterday.

"The marketing system of agricultural products is very weak in our country. This will be reorganised. A national commission comprised of agronomists and others concerned will be formed to ensure farmers' interests," he said while speaking at the chief guest at a seminar at Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council auditorium. Bangladesh Agronomists Association organised the seminar titled "What type of budget we want for food security?"

Referring to the agriculture commission of India, he sought suggestions of the agronomists to improve the existing marketing system of

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## UZ chairman accuses MP of assaulting him

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Golam Faruk, chairman of Banaripara upazila parishad in Barisal, has accused Monirul Islam Moni, an Awami League (AL) lawmaker from Barisal-2 constituency, of assaulting him at Banaripara police station on Friday.

Faruk, an AL-backed chairman and joint convener of the divisional unit of the upazila chairmen association, made the allegation at a press conference yesterday.

Reading out a written statement, Faruk said the incident occurred after he was

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## 2 murdered in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two people were killed and a BNP ward level leader sustained bullet wounds in separate incidents in the capital on Friday.

The deceased were Shafiqur Rahman, 30, of Jatrabari and Abu Bakkar alias Mollah, 70, of Turag, Tongi. The injured is Shamsul Haque Kabir, secretary of ward-8 unit of BNP in Shah Ali.

Police and family sources said Shafiqur Rahman sustained fatal injury when an electrician with his helper stabbed him in the throat with a screwdriver during an argument over payment. The incident took place at the victim's house around 1:00pm, they added.

Shafiqur was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where on duty doctors declared him dead, said police.

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## BSF kills 2

STAR REPORT

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) killed two Bangladeshis on the borders of Satkhira and Lalmonirhat on Friday.

Our Satkhira correspondent reports: The BSF shot dead a Bangladeshi cattle trader early Friday on the Khalishaborder.

The deceased was

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Prayer Timing		
May 3		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-31	6-35
Esha	8-00	8-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		



Authorities have recently installed iron braces around pillars in one portion of the Mohsin Hall at Dhaka University to prevent the roofs from collapsing. They had earlier propped up the ceilings with wooden logs after the roofs developed several cracks. Several thousand students now live in the dormitory risking their lives.

## Govt moves to probe post-polls violence of 2001

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The present government is actively considering formation of an enquiry commission to probe the 2001 post-elections violence and taking actions against the persons responsible for the violent incidents.

The government has informed this to the High Court (HC) through an affidavit in reply to its (HC) rule that came upon a writ petition challenging the inaction of the law enforcement agencies to prevent the criminal activities taking place immediately after the 8th parliamentary polls in 2001.

In the reply submitted to the HC through the attorney general's office on April 15, the government said the perpetrators of the alleged offences had the blessings of the government elected in 2001 polls and thereafter, an interim government ruled for two years.

Though belated, the present government has taken up the matter for necessary action, it said.

According to the affidavit, the formation of a commission for investigation into the post-elections violence, including murder, rape, arson and grievous hurt, is under active consideration of the government.

In response to the writ petition filed by seven lawyers of Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB), the HC bench comprised of ABM Khairul Haque and Justice Md Abdul Hye on February 2 this year issued a rule upon the government to explain why it (government) should not be directed to form a judicial enquiry commission to probe the 2001 post-elections violence.

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## UPAZILA PARISHADS

# Women representatives feel ignored

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Female vice-chairmen of upazila parishads throughout the country could not begin their jobs even after four months of their election as the government is yet to issue any circular regarding the newly created posts.

The elected women representatives yesterday said at a programme in the city that even they have not been given any sitting arrangements at the upazila parishad offices while they are rarely allowed to play their role in development activities in their area.

They pointed out that the recently passed Upazila Parishad Bill also does not mention any guidelines for them.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad organised a view-exchange meeting at the Biam audito-

rium yesterday to accord a reception to the female upazila vice chairpersons of the country. A total of 300 elected women were present on the occasion.

The additional post of vice-chairperson at the upazila parishads of the country has been created this year, exclusively for female candidates. Although the post is reserved for women, candidates are elected by direct voting.

Shamim Ara Dulari, an elected vice chairperson from Cox's Bazar, said, "I have not been able to take part in any of the development work in my area as there is no work plan for my post yet. There is also no sitting arrangement for me at the office."

Advocate Amena Begum from Patuakhali

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## Obama reaches out to Sharif hoping to make Pakistan stable

AFP, Washington

The administration of US President Barack Obama is reaching out to former Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif, the chief rival of President Asif Ali Zardari, in hopes to find a way to strengthen the country's government, The New York Times reported late Friday.

Sharif, who served as Pakistan's prime minister twice during the 1990s, represents the Pakistan Muslim League-N.

Citing unnamed administration officials, the newspaper said on its website that

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## AIRSTRIKES, GROUND OFFENSIVE

# 76 militants, 2 soldiers killed in Pak tribal area

AFP, Peshawar

Pakistani helicopter gunships and ground troops pounded Taliban fighters Saturday and Friday, killing up to 76 militants and destroying a dozen would-be suicide bombers in fierce fighting, the army said.

Troops on Saturday killed 16 militants in heavy fighting after Taliban militants attacked a security post in a tribal area near the Afghan border, killing two paramilitary soldiers, officials said.

The military launched the gruelling assault in the northwest of the nuclear power six days ago under US pressure after the Islamist hardliners advanced to within 100 kilometres of the capital Islamabad.

"During the last 24 hours, 55 to 60 militants have been killed," Major General Athar Abbas told a briefing update on the operation in Buner district on Friday.

Based on combined tolls released by the military, nearly 200 militants have been killed in Operation Black Thunder since tanks, fighter jets and helicopter gunships swung into action in Buner and neighbouring Lower Dir.

Troops retaliated after the militants launched a pre-dawn attack on Spinki Tangi post in the Mohmand tribal region bordering eastern Afghanistan's Kunar province, local military spokesman Major Fazal Khan said.

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Passengers wearing masks arrive at the Hong Kong international airport yesterday. The first confirmed case of swine flu in Asia was recorded in Hong Kong on Friday, after a Mexican man who arrived via Shanghai tested positive.

PHOTO: AFP

## Another BDR jawan dies in Sylhet

# Death toll rises to 19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) jawan died, in Sylhet, yesterday raising the death toll to 19 since March 9.

The deceased, nayek Renu Mian, 43, of 20 rifles battalion in Sylhet felt pain in the chest while taking lunch. He was on special duty at the BDR sector headquarters, says a BDR press release.

After Renu fell sick he was taken to the sector medical officer for treatment at 1pm who sent him to Sylhet Osmani Medical College Hospital at 1:25pm.

He was later admitted to the hospital where he fell unconscious after ECG test and died at 2:15pm.

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## 50 injured as traders clash in Rajshahi

RU CORRESPONDENT

A clash between cloth traders and jewellers at Shaheb Bazar in Rajshahi city yesterday left at least 50 people injured including traders, policemen and journalists.

City cloth traders, in a protest, declared to keep their business shut for an indefinite period if their damage is not compensated.

The injured were identified

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## 64 civilians killed in Lanka hospital attack

AFP, Colombo

At least 64 civilians were killed and another 87 wounded yesterday in an attack on the last remaining medical facility inside rebel-held territory in northeastern Sri Lanka, a pro-rebel website reported.

Tamilnet.com said two shells fired by government forces hit the make-shift hospital at Mullivaikal in the Mullaitivu district three days after its location was given to the military through the International Committee of the Red Cross.

There was no immediate comment from the ICRC, which has limited access to the combat zone, but the military denied targeting the area. "We have not carried out any shelling, but we heard some loud explosions inside the no-

fire zone and it could have been a misfire by the Tigers," military spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara said.

Charges and counter claims by both sides cannot be verified as there are no independent observers in the conflict area and the government has rejected international calls to allow neutral humanitarian access.

The latest reports of civilians casualties came as Japan's special envoy to Sri Lanka Yasushi Akashi held talks with President Mahinda Rajapakse on the humanitarian crisis.

A presidential spokesman said Akashi was told that the government wanted the Tigers to surrender and allow some 20,000 civilians still trapped in a small sliver of beach to leave to safety.

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## Muggers shoot businessman, loot money

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of armed muggers snatched around Tk 10 lakh yesterday at Sutrapur in the capital, leaving a businessman bullet-hit.

The victim was identified as Krishna Saha, 40, owner of Grameen Auto Parts at Azmiri Plaza in Banglabazar.

Babul Saha, brother of Krishna, said a gang of three armed muggers intercepted Krishna's rickshaw at Sutrapur around 10:30am while he was going to the shop from his Baniannagar residence and snatched his bag containing the money after injuring

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