

## Swine flu

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inbound passengers from only these 19 countries to report to the desk. Countries like Malaysia, Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia are however not on this list," an on-duty health officer explained.

The banner on display inside the airport, however, says that all travellers suffering from fever or with runny noses, sneezes or coughs are to report to the Health Support Desk before immigration.

Experts warn that unless strict vigilance is kept at the entry points of the country, carriers of the virus could easily slip into the country without detection.

Prof Nazrul Islam of the department of virology at BSMMU said, "There is no guarantee that swine flu cases will never be detected in countries which don't have any reported cases today. They might discover a case tomorrow for example. Therefore it is vital that there is strict monitoring of all entering the country, especially those with flu-like symptoms."

On enquiry, the Assistant Airport Health Officer Nasrin Sultana said that the health support desk has been open since April 29 and is providing passengers with necessary information.

Immigration officers on duty at the airport, trained accordingly, are also helping out, she said, so that no passenger can leave the airport with any flu-like symptom without reporting it.

Immigration officers said they have not received any training yet. A special training session, however, has been scheduled for Saturday.

The Director of Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) Prof Mahmudur Rahman told the Daily Star yesterday that a strong role of all on duty at the airport is required to monitor the situation.

He said adequate training of immigration officers, in addition to health officials, is vital for management of the situation and also self-protection.

At a seminar at the Institute

of Public Health (IPH) yesterday morning, Prof Mahmudur said epidemiological trends show that every 10 to 40 years a pandemic takes place.

He too emphasised vigilance at the entry points of the country.

"We need not panic about swine flu but take adequate precautions and preventive measures. Trained teams already keep vigil at airports, land ports and seaports -- at nine different entry points -- of the country to prevent the entry of the virus," he said.

Meanwhile, the government said that it has enough stock of Oseltamivir to treat swine flu patients, if required, and the World Health Organisation (WHO) is going to provide an additional two lakh units of Oseltamivir to tackle emergencies if such a situation arises.

WHO has already provided 5,000 masks for use in airports, land ports and seaports.

## Bangladeshis

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Many companies earlier hired workers from Bangladesh but failed to employ them, creating employment crisis. Besides, as the global recession hit the Malaysian industry, many companies went for layoffs.

At such a time the then labour councillor of Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur Talat Mahmud Khan told Malaysian media that 70,000 Bangladeshi workers would be going to the country.

The councillor's statement sparked protests from the opposition political parties and trade unions. They criticised the government for cancelling 55,000 visas in the first place.

Talat Mahmud was called back to Bangladesh following the incident. Soon Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and Expatriates' Welfare Minister Mosharraf Hossain visited Malaysia and held talks with Malaysian cabinet ministers. They requested the ministers to hire workers from Bangladesh when needed.

## ADB pledges

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A three-member delegation from Bangladesh led by the finance minister participated in the conference and seminar.

Muhtith said the ADB has taken several steps to face the impact of recession. Notable among those is a \$3.4 billion fund.

"We hope to get at least 200 million dollars from the fund in addition to ADB's normal assistance. We will utilise this money for employment generation, expansion of safety net programme, investment on infrastructure and providing support to local industries," the ministers said.

The ADB has two more funds, he said, climate fund and newly formed disaster mitigation fund. "We have expressed our interest in getting assistance from both the funds."

He also said in these two fields, "We can not only take, we can also give."

Muhtith mentioned that in this region Bangladesh is a leading country in disaster mitigation and environment protection. So, it can provide technical assistance to other countries in this regard.

The minister also said, "We should come out of the frustrating comments made by the World Bank and IMF (mainly about GDP growth). We should build up an optimistic tone. My statement got support in the conference and all accepted it."

The ADB conference decided to increase the bank's capital about three times. As a result, it will be able to expand its assistance programme.

Muhtith said he had bilateral discussions with representatives from a number of countries.

"During the discussion with Chinese delegation, we made some allegations. Conditions relating to some Chinese projects in Bangladesh are not good. We have asked the country to ease the conditions," he said.

In bilateral discussions with India, Bangladesh requested it to open new credit lines, the minister said. "Our trade gap with India is huge. We have asked India to increase facilities further."

Mentioning the experience of Indonesia, he said bad assets in both public and private sectors should be sold out. He however added only the cabinet can take such a decision.

ERD Secretary Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan was on the delegation led by the finance minister.

## Talks on change

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"We have just started discussing the bills. We will examine those in detail, and if necessary, ask for opinions from constitutional experts," Abdul Matin Khasru, chief of the committee, told The Daily Star.

After scrutiny, the committee will submit its report to the House, stating if the bills can be taken up for consideration.

"Parliament will then decide whether to pass those or not," added Khasru, also former law minister.

At its inaugural meeting yesterday, the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions decided to invite the two lawmakers to hear from them the rationale behind the bills.

While Imajuddin's bill proposes amending the constitution to ensure display of Bangabandhu's portrait, Aslamul's concerns both the subjects--display of the portrait and the president's assumption of the chief adviser's office.

In his bill, Aslamul also proposes amending the constitution to make provision for holding the parliamentary election strictly within 90 days since dissolution of parliament.

He said the ninth parliamentary election could not be held on time due to the then president Iajuddin Ahmed's taking the helm of the caretaker administration. Iajuddin's action also led to the state of emergency, he added in his statement to the bill.

"So, we'd better put an end to the provision allowing the president to play concurrently the chief adviser's role," observed Aslamul, MP from Dhaka-14.

The ninth parliamentary election was long delayed because the constitution had no time limit stipulated for the interim government to hold the election, he noted.

In 2001, parliament passed a private member's bill making mandatory the display of Bangabandhu's portrait at various offices.

But shortly after coming to power in October that year, the BNP-led four-party alliance government scrapped the Preservation and Display of Father of the Nation's Portrait Act 2001.

At yesterday's meeting, members of the Committee on Private Members' Bills opined that parliament must ensure that no-one in future can overturn the proposed provision for preserving and displaying the portrait, said meeting sources.

## Cabinet to expand

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ministries of labor and employment, housing and public works, power, energy and mineral resources, women and children affairs, and cultural affairs, according to the sources. Some of the new ministers for those ministries might be transferred from other ministries, the sources added.

The sources said changes might also be brought to the ministries of water resources, home affairs, foreign affairs, and industry, which are not performing satisfactorily. Close aides to the prime minister already suggested that she reshuffles those ministries, the sources claimed.

Hasina might also appoint some state or deputy ministers to the ministries of post and telecommunication, industry, and commerce and communications, among a few others.

She already discussed the matter with her close aides in the cabinet and in the party as well, and since then some AL leaders and leaders of its allies, are lobbying seriously to be included in the expanded cabinet.

Talking to The Daily Star on Tuesday one of the close aides to the prime minister said the cabinet expansion might come within two or three days. "If the cabinet is not expanded now, it will take some time, and then the expansion might come ahead of the budget session in June," he however added.

Another source said Hasina might expand the cabinet prior to her planned visit to Canada next week. But she might postpone the visit itself, considering the health condition of her ailing husband Dr Wazed Miah, who is now undergoing treatment in a capital hospital, reportedly in a critical condition.

On January 24 the prime minister expanded her cabinet once, by including six state ministers. There are currently 38 members in the council of ministers with a majority of neophytes.

## Industry-made

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Chairman of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) Md Abdul Mannan Howladar mentioned that his organisation has little power to free the rivers from encroachment. And BIWTA's dredging capability is ruefully inadequate--it only has seven dredgers that were bought about 35 years ago.

He said dredging is a must to augment flow in the rivers around Dhaka but pollution has accumulated so thick in the Buriganga that normal dredgers are ineffective and BIWTA does not have specialised dredgers.

Chief Conservancy Officer of Dhaka City Corporation Mukusdur Rahman Chowdhury said the tanneries must be relocated from the city's Hazaribagh to save the rivers. He said waste collection in the growth centres outside, which fall under union parishads, have to be strengthened to stop pollution of the rivers.

Industries Minister Dilip Barua said industries do not have social responsibility to care for environment and often they do not operate their effluent treatment plants. He affirmed that industrialisation must take care of all environmental concerns.

He said installation of effluent treatment plants will be made compulsory for industries and efforts will be taken to expedite disposal of a case that has stuck relocation of the tanneries from Hazaribagh.

Chief Executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela) Syeda Rizwana Hasan said the usual threat of industries that workers would lose job should not deter the authorities from taking action against polluters.

Professor of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) Dr ABM Badruzzaman said he had found that most industries with effluent treatment plants do not run them. Moreover, Wasa dumps sewage just a little away from its own intake plant. He mentioned that Wasa covers only 30 percent of the city with sewage network and the treatment plant can treat only 20 percent of the sludge.

Buet Professor Mujibur Rahman said the Shitalakhya and Balu rivers must be saved first and for that industries and environment ministries have to take up a five-year plan and start working right away. He said industrialisation at the pollution control zone of Shitalakhya must be stopped.

Prof Mujibur pointed out that storm sewage lines bring solid waste to the Buriganga and these lines must be diverted to the Pagla sewage treatment plant. He said unless pollution could be stopped, funds for water treatment plants would be unavailable.

Khawaja M Minnatullah, a World Bank environment specialist, said water in the

Sources said some AL leaders and presidents of Workers' Party and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal -- Rashed Khan Menon and Hasanul Haque Inu -- already talked to Hasina's close aides several times expressing their eagerness to become cabinet members.

One AL presidium member and one of its joint general secretaries might be included as ministers, while a few new faces including two or three newly elected women lawmakers from reserved seats might also be made deputy ministers and state ministers, the sources said adding that one of the AL organizing secretaries might also be included on the list of new cabinet inductees.

"She told us that she wants to appoint a few more ministers, and three to four state ministers and deputy ministers to boost up government activities," said a source close to Hasina.

According to the sources Hasina also has a plan to create two more posts of deputy speakers, one for a woman lawmaker from AL, and another for the main opposition BNP.

After expanding the cabinet, Hasina will steer her attention to making her party more active. AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil recently alleged that there has been no party activity across the country since AL took over the reins of the government.

About making the party active, AL Joint General Secretary Obaidul Quader said the matter will be discussed in an appropriate party forum soon. "We will energise party activities, after she returns home from Canada," Quader told The Daily Star.

Asked about the possible expansion of the cabinet, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashraf Islam told The Daily Star that the prime minister may expand or reshuffle the cabinet on her own wish. But no discussion has yet been held regarding the matter either within the government or AL, he however added.

## Tagore's birth

**FROM PAGE 16**  
President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have given special messages highlighting the colourful life of the poet and his contributions to Bengali language and literature.

In his message, the president said the extraordinary literature and all creative works of poet Rabindranath Tagore would inspire the next generation, reports BSS.

As part of the national celebrations, Bangla Academy and Shilpakala Academy will organise programmes based on various creative works of the great poet.

Besides, various programmes have been chalked out to mark the day at Shilaidah in Kushtia, Patisar in Naogaon and South Dighi in Khulna -- the three districts that harbour the memories of Tagore.

Local administrations across the country will arrange programmes marking the day.

Bangladesh missions abroad will also celebrate the day holding various programmes.

Tagore, born in 1861 at Jorasanko mansion in Kolkata, was a poet, visual artist, playwright, novelist, and composer whose works reshaped Bengali literature and music in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

He became Asia's first Nobel laureate after winning the Nobel Prize in literature for his book Gitanjali in 1913.

Two songs from his canon are now the national anthems of Bangladesh and India -- Amar Sonar Bangla and Jana Gana Mana, respectively.

His verse, short stories, and novels, which often exhibited rhythmic lyricism, colloquial language, meditative naturalism, and philosophical contemplation, received global acclaim.

## Akhter Hamid

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Faria Tajin Siddiqui challenging the legality of her father's detention.

Additional Attorney General MK Rahman told The Daily Star that Akhter Hamid Siddiqui would get released if he is not wanted in any other cases, adding, "I do not know whether he (Hamid) is made accused in other cases or not."

But sources said Akhter Hamid cannot get release from jail following the HC order since he is made accused in some other cases, including a sedition case.

OC of Mohadevpur police station Ilias Fakir filed the sedition case against him Wednesday.

On March 21, Hamid was arrested at his house at Mohadevpur and sent to jail with a 30-day detention order on charge of "seditious" talk. Later, the home ministry extended his detention for another 90 days.

Earlier the OC lodged a general diary accusing the ex-deputy speaker of threatening him with 'dire consequences' for arresting BNP men.

Advocate TH Khan appeared for the petitioner.

## Padma Bridge

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Multipurpose Bridge.

Madaripur Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shashi Kumar Sinha received the cheque at a function at Shetu Bhaban. Earlier the minister had handed over Tk 11 crore to the DC in this regard.

Addressing the function the minister said Shariatpur and Munshiganj districts would receive Tk 135 crore and 415 crore between June and July this year for the same purpose.

Syed Abul Hossain also handed over a letter of appreciation to the Madaripur DC for being the first to complete land acquisition process.

A total of 918 hectares of land will be acquired for the bridge construction for which around 4,000 households will be displaced requiring new settlement.

Talking to The Daily Star the DC said within one month the money would be distributed among about 2,000 people whose land had been acquired for the construction in the district.

Chaired by Abdul Karim, secretary (bridge division) of the Ministry of Communications (MoC), the function was also addressed by ASM Ali Kabir, secretary, roads and railway of the MoC, Delwar Hossain, secretary, ministry of land, and the Madaripur DC.

Representatives from different donor agencies including Asian Development Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency and Islamic Development Bank were present at the programme. A panel of experts, consultant team and senior government officials also attended the function.

## Pakistan pounds

**FROM PAGE 1**  
insurgency in Afghanistan fed from militant havens in Pakistan's lawless border area.

Officials are bracing for a mass exodus from the Swat Valley, a former tourist destination where fighting has resumed after the breakdown of a controversial peace deal earlier this week. The military claimed to have killed more than 80 militants in the region on Wednesday. There has been no official word on civilian casualties.

More than 500,000 Pakistanis driven out by fighting in other regions of the northwest are already living in makeshift camps or with relatives, adding a growing humanitarian crisis to the country's daunting security, economic and political problems.

With Taliban militants roaming the streets of Mingora, Swat's main town, on Thursday and troops launching artillery and airstrikes on militant targets from helicopter, many residents hunkered down in their homes.

The army announced it was relaxing its blanket curfew in the area, but some of those who tried to make a swift exit said militants blocked their way.

The agreement between the government and the Taliban to allow Sharia law in Swat was supposed to end the bloodshed after a nearly two-year violent Taliban uprising.

"If there is no peace, there is no deal as it is directly linked to the restoration of peace," foreign ministry spokesman Abdul Basit told reporters.

A military official in the northwest said troops were ordered to target militant hideouts and establish the writ of the government "at any cost" as the peace deal unravelled.

Pakistan is under US pressure to crush militants, who Washington has called the biggest terror threat to the West and US President Barack Obama has put the nuclear-armed Muslim country at the heart of the fight against al-Qaeda.

Obama hosted a summit with Pakistani President Asif Ali

## Fresh notice

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Sources said the staff signed "the receipt for the notice around 2:30pm."

Khaleda, also former prime minister, was inside the house then.

The notice reads, "If the notice is not answered within 15 days, it would be considered that you have nothing to say and then steps would be taken according to the law."

Sources said after the notice was received, Khaleda Zia held a meeting with senior BNP leaders at her Gulshan office around 7:30pm.

The notice also mentioned that the notice was supplementary to the earlier notice issued upon her, sources said.

On April 8, the cabinet decided to cancel the lease of the house. According to the cabinet decision, the military lands administrator's office started the process to take back the estate cancelling the lease.

## Madhav

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Unified CPN (Maoist), is showing undemocratic behaviour by obstructing the parliament.

Earlier Maoist secretariat member Barshaman Pun said his party would not allow parliamentary proceedings if President Ram Baran Yadav does not rectify his "unconstitutional move".

Nepali Congress leader Ram Saran Mahat said the President's move averted a dangerous situation as the Maoists were preparing to capture power by taking Nepal Army under political control.

"The Maoists are still possessing arms, which is a problem. They should be disarmed completely," Nepal news quoted him as saying.

Meanwhile, riot police beat back hundreds of women from Nepal's communist party who protested Thursday in front of the president's house in the capital to demand that he fire the country's army chief.

Nepal's communist Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal sparked a national crisis Monday when he resigned and pulled his party from the ruling coalition in protest over the army chief's failure to integrate former communist rebels into the military.

Some 500 protesters from the women's wing of Dahal party marched on President Ram Baran Yadav's residence Thursday, chanting slogans while police used bamboo batons to beat back activists who tried to break through a cordon. Some of the women were lightly injured.

Dahal's supporters are angry that Yadav overruled Dahal on Sunday when the former prime minister tried to fire army chief Rookmangud Katakaw.

Zardari and Afghan counterpart Hamid Karzai in Washington on Wednesday to cement a sweeping new US strategy to crush Taliban, al-Qaeda and other Islamist militants in the region.

"Thousands of people are emptying the area," a senior administration official told AFP from Swat in reference to residents leaving Mingora, the main town, and the old Swat capital, Saidu Sharif.

Residents said they were suffering from both the military bombardment by government forces and the guerrilla tactics of the Taliban, who have terrorised the population in Swat by kidnapping and killing those who oppose them.

"Civilians are suffering at the hands of both the army and the Taliban. The Taliban are killing residents who don't side with them," said the shop owner Jamal.

Meanwhile, a son of the pro-Taliban cleric who signed the February agreement was killed when fighter jets bombed an area in Lower Dir, a district adjacent to Swat, a spokesman for the cleric said.

Maulana Kifayatullah, 50, the eldest of Sufi Mohammad's 12 sons, was killed and his brother-in-law suffered leg wounds, Ameer Izzat Khan told AFP.

A military official confirmed that jets raided suspected hideouts in Lower Dir, where the military announced last month that an offensive against advancing armed Taliban had begun.

In the same district overnight, fighters attacked a paramilitary checkpoint and kidnapped 10 soldiers after heavy gunbattles, said local police official Falak Naz.

Analysts said Pakistan might stand by its February decision to grant three million people in the northwest Sharia law, but a short-lived ceasefire was over.

"The militants are occupying government buildings and security forces are taking action against them, so where is the peace deal?" political analyst Shafqat Mahmood told AFP.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) warned Thursday that a humanitarian crisis was escalating in the northwest, where the government has said up to half a million people could flee Swat.

(AFP, AP)

## Bismillah

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Shafique alleged that some former ministers of four-party alliance government were trying to mislead people by saying that the constitution would not contain Bismillah any more after the cancellation of the fifth amendment.

"Only those who opposed the Liberation War of the country and the 1972 constitution are raising the question of anarchy," he said it at a briefing at the conference room of the law ministry yesterday afternoon.

State Minister for Law Qamrul Islam was present at the briefing.

The law minister said the HC in its verdict had not interfered with Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim or resting trust on the Almighty Allah in the preamble to the constitution.

He said, "If the HC verdict is upheld following the government's withdrawal prayers, secularism--one of the four principles of the state--will automatically be restored in the constitution."

"Scrapping of the fifth amendment will revive the four basic principles on which the war of independence was waged against Pakistani colonial rule in 1971," he said.

Shafique said the present government decided not to proceed with the leave-to-appeal petitions against the HC verdict as it believed that the HC judgment delivered on the basis of facts, documents and correct information, was legal and justified.

The government on May 3 prayed to the Supreme Court for withdrawal of pending leave-to-appeal petitions against the HC judgment that had declared the fifth amendment to the constitution illegal which endorsed late president Ziaur Rahman's takeover and all acts since August 15, 1975.

The BNP-Jamaat coalition government and Bangladesh Mukti Joddha Kalyan Trust filed two separate leave-to-appeal petitions with the SC against the HC verdict on August 29, 2005 following a writ petition filed by Bangladesh Italian Marble Works Company (BIMWC).

On May 4 last the SC permitted BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain and three lawyers to file separate leave-to-appeal petitions with the SC in four weeks against the HC judgment that had declared the fifth amendment to the constitution illegal.

RATZ/OTCH

## Indian polls

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Another person was killed when paramilitary personnel opened fire to prevent a mob from capturing a polling booth at Olwara in Rajasthan's Sawaimadhopur.

Despite violence, West Bengal, where 17 constituencies went to the fourth phase polls, drew the highest voter turnout of 75 percent followed by Punjab (65 percent), Haryana (63 percent), Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh (50 percent each).

Yesterday's polls decided the electoral fate of 1,315 candidates including political heavyweights External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee, BJP President Rajnath Singh, Samajwadi Party chief Mulayam Singh Yadav, Rashtriya Janata Dal President Lalu Prasad, Jammu and Kashmir's ruling National Conference Party head Farooq Abdullah and Rashtriya Lok Dal chief Ajit Singh, an ally of BJP.

Mukherjee is contesting from Jangipur constituency in Murshidabad district of West Bengal while Rajnath Singh is making electoral debut from Ghaziabad constituency close to Delhi. Lalu is in fray in Bihar but is also hedging his seat by contesting from another constituency Pataliputra in Bihar. Yadav is fighting in Mainpuri in Uttar Pradesh and Abdullah is pitted against his sister Begum Khalida in Srinagar.

Among other key candidates in the fourth phase are young Congress leader Sachin Pilot, actor-cum-politician Sharughan Sinha of BJP who takes on Congress candidate-cum-television actor Shekhar Suman in Patna, former BJP leader Kalyan Singh in Etah in Uttar Pradesh where he is being backed by Samajwadi Party, senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal fighting in Chandni Chowk constituency in Delhi.

The polling in 17 of the 42 seats in West Bengal include Nandigram and Singur, the epicentre of a long-drawn agitation led by Trinamool Congress against the Left Front government's bid to acquire farmland for setting up industries.

The agitation, often marred by violence between rival groups, had made national and international headlines in 2007 and 2008. Nandigram and Singur are in two separate constituencies held by CPI(M).

Nandigram is in Tamluk