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**DCC elections in May, says CEC**

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur**

The long overdue election to the Dhaka City Corporation will be held in the last week of May, Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda said yesterday.

The union parishad and municipality elections will also be held gradually, the CEC made the announcement while talking to reporters at Chandpur Circuit House.

Later, he attended a programme organised by Angkur Kochi Kachar Mela here.

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**Longing for lasting peace**

*CHT violence leaves around 2,000 still hiding in Baghaichhari forests*

**EMRAN HOSSAIN, back from Baghaichhari**

Over two thousand adivasis were still hiding in deep forests in Baghaichhari yesterday, although a peace process had begun in the ethnic violence torn hill districts of Khagrachhari and Rangamati through formation of peace committees, and bringing out of peace marches.

"Let peace return, we will return home. I haven't heard yet that normalcy has returned, and we all are staying in the jungle. We don't feel that peace has returned," Kishore Chakma told The Daily Star over the phone last evening, whose house was set on fire by Bangalee settlers.

In Baghaichhari of Rangamati around 1,500

adivasis became homeless as their 357 houses situated in Rethkaba, Surunala, Jarulchhara, Hazachhara, Deepu Para, Dane Bhaibachhara, Bame Bhaibachhara, Gangaram Mukh, Naya Para, and Panbari villages were set on fire by Bangalee settlers. All of them fled to the forests in search of safety.

Many other adivasis fled as well, fearing similar attacks.

Around 100 houses of the settlers were also set on fire by adivasis in retaliation, in the same villages, making around 400 Bangalees homeless.

"We want to return home, but we are afraid. If the government ensures our safety we will return home right at this moment," said Bhanga Chakma on Wednesday, coming out of hiding to get govern-

ment relief distributed by Rangamati district administration at Gangaram Mukh.

"We are living under trees in forests where we think it is safer. We don't have a single penny in our pockets, as we left our houses only with the clothes we were wearing. I had only 600 taka as my savings inside the house, but that was burnt in the fire," said Sujan Chakma of Gangaram Mukh over the phone yesterday.

Many adivasi families got separated as they fled to the forests. Many survivors do not know where their family members are. Some do not even know where their injured relatives had been admitted for treatment, whether they are still alive or not.

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**Launch of MRP scheme to delay by 3-4 months**

**BSS, Dhaka**

The introduction of machine-readable passport (MRP) project will take three to four months more because of the procedural delay, say sources at the home ministry and the Directorate of Immigration and Passport yesterday.

According to a senior official of the home ministry, the MRP project, scheduled to be launched on April 1, would be delayed as the authorities are yet to issue the work order to the company who is the lowest bidder in the tender finalisation process.

As per the schedule, after receiving the work order, the Passport and Immigration Directorate will open the Letter of

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**Tigers take on England tomorrow**

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Bangladesh will take on visiting England in the first one-day at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium tomorrow.

The first of the three-match series will be a day-nighter as will be the second match at the same venue. The third game will be a day match in Chittagong.

This is the second home series for Bangladesh against England. The last time the Englishmen toured was back in 2003 where they won both the Tests and one-dayers. There is only one survivor in the English side from that tour in Paul Collingwood while Bangladesh too have one survivor in fast bowler Mashrafe Bin Mortaza who

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**An indigenous woman gathers burnt rice from the ground where her house used to be before Bangalee settlers set it on fire Tuesday last. The photo was taken yesterday at Satbaiyapara in Khagrachhari.**

PHOTO: STAR

**Thai court seizes Thaksin's fortune**

*Charged with concealing assets, abusing power for personal gain*

**AFP, AP, Bangkok**

Thailand's top court said yesterday it would confiscate frozen assets worth 46 billion baht (1.4 billion dollars) from deposed premier Thaksin Shinawatra, more than half his fortune.

"The majority of the judges rule that the wealth of Thaksin to be confiscated, from share dividends and part of the share sales... is altogether 46.73 billion baht," judges said in a ruling read out on national television and radio.

The government applied for the seizure of the proceeds from the sale of shares owned by Thaksin and his family to Singapore-based Temasek holdings, which have been frozen since the coup that toppled him four years ago.

Thailand's Supreme Court ruled Friday that ousted prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra unlawfully concealed his assets while in office and abused his power for personal gain, as it prepared to issue a decision on whether his \$2.29 billion fortune should be seized.

The nine-judge panel, reading a lengthy verdict, said it had

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**Jamaat's rejoinder, our reply**

In a statement against our report headlined "Shibir embroiled itself in conflicts" published on February 25, Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami has said the report was false and confusing.

Signed by Tasnim Alam, secretary, central publicity wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, the statement says there could be no question of interfering in the internal matters of Islami Chhatra Shibir by Jamaat leaders as Shibir is run by its own constitution and heritage.

The statement also says the reported difference of opinion between the top local Jamaat

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**India hikes defence budget, oil prices**

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi**

The Indian budget 2010-11, presented in parliament yesterday, hiked defence expenditure by four percent, raised taxable income limit but pushed up prices of petrol and diesel by increasing excise duty.

Presenting the budget, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee allocated Rs 1,47,344 crore towards defence in the budget, a paltry 4 percent increase, which in real terms would amount to Rs 5,641 crore, from last year's Rs 1,41,703 crore.

Of the allocation provided, Rs 60,000 crore would go for capital expenditure, Mukherjee said.

Last year, the government had provided a steep hike of about 34 percent for the defence working out to an increase of Rs 36,103 crore.

Mukherjee, however, said considering the importance of defence of the country, more funds would be provided on the basis of requirements in the future.

The defence allocation continues to hover over 2.5 percent of

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**BSF kills 1**

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah**

A Bangladeshi cattle trader was shot dead by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) on Baghadanga frontier in Moheshpur upazila of Jhenidah early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Shafiqul Islam, 30, son of Abdus Sattar of Baghadanga village.

The commanding officer of Chuadanga 35 Rifle Battalion said the BSF troops of Ramnagar camp shot Shafiqul when he was returning from India in the early hours, leaving him dead on the spot. BSF later dragged the body into their territory.

Bangladesh Rifles has protested the killing and urged their Indian counterpart to return the body.

**17 killed in Kabul suicide bombing**

*Dead include 10 Indians*

**AP, ANI, Kabul**

Insurgents struck in the heart of the Afghan capital yesterday with suicide attackers and a car bomb, targeting hotels used by foreigners and killing at least 17 people and wounding dozens, police said.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attacks, which Afghan President Hamid Karzai said were aimed at Indians working in Kabul.

India's foreign minister said up to 10 Indians were killed, including government officials. An Italian diplomat and a French national were also among the dead.

The four-hour assault began about 6:30 a.m. with a car bombing that levelled a residential

hotel used by Indian doctors. A series of explosions and gunbattles left blood and debris in the rain-slackened streets and underscored the militants' ability to strike in the heavily defended capital even as Nato marshals its forces against them in the volatile south.

Dr Subodh Sanjivpaul of India said he was holed up in his bathroom for three hours inside one of the small hotels where he lived with other Indians.

"Today's suicide attack took place in our residential complex," Sanjivpaul said at a military hospital where his wounded foot was bandaged. "When I was coming out, I found two or three dead bodies. When firing was going

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**Fish trader killed in bomb attack**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna**

Unidentified criminals killed a fish trader by hurling bombs on him at Alka village under Fultola upazila in the district last night.

Identified as Amzad Ali Gazi, 36, son of Sohrab Gazi,

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**Prayer Timing**

**February 27**

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-20	5-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-03	6-07
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

**Myanmar rejects Suu Kyi's appeal for release**

**AP, Yangon**

The highest court in military-ruled Myanmar dismissed opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's latest bid for freedom yesterday, turning down an appeal to end 14 years of house arrest, her lawyer said.

The Supreme Court's decision had been expected since legal rulings in Myanmar rarely favour opposition activists, and the junta appears determined to keep Suu Kyi, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, detained through elections planned later this year.

Defence lawyer Nyan Win told reporters he would launch one final "special appeal" before the court after determining why the recent appeal had been rejected. "The court order did not mention any reasons," he said.

"Although the decision comes as no surprise, it is deeply disappointing," said British Ambassador Andrew Heyn, who attended the court session along with diplomats from Australia, France and the United States. "We continue to believe that (Suu Kyi) should be released immediately along with the other 2,000 and more other prisoners of conscience."

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**OnlinePoll**

Do you think the law and order situation in the capital declined since the AL led government came to power?

Yes (36.2%) No (62.2%) No Comments (1.6%)

**Total votes: 1128**

**TODAY'S POLL**

Do you support Sajeeb Wazed Joy's joining politics?

Please cast your vote at [www.thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net)