

# Bangladesh

**FROM PAGE 1**  
perceived as pervasive.

This year the ranking covered 183 countries measuring 10 components of economic freedom. Score in each category ranged from 0 to 100.

The components were business freedom, trade freedom, fiscal freedom, government spending, monetary freedom, investment freedom, financial freedom, property rights, freedom from corruption and labour freedom.

In the component business freedom Bangladesh scored 59.4 out of 100. The report said in Bangladesh it requires 44 days on average to start a business while the world average is 35 days. However, obtaining a business license requires less than the world average of 18 procedures.

Bangladesh's score was 58 in trade freedom component. Import and export restrictions, numerous border taxes and fees, burdensome import licensing rules, export subsidies, government monopolies, inefficient and corrupt customs administration, among others, add to the cost of trade in the country, said the report.

Twenty points were deducted from Bangladesh's trade freedom score to account for non-tariff barriers.

In the monetary freedom component where the country

scored 66.6, a total of 15 points were deducted from this component to adjust for price-control measures that distort domestic prices for petroleum products, some pharmaceuticals, and goods produced in state-owned enterprises.

About the financial freedom the report said Bangladesh has made modest progress in recent years in its banking sector adding that the sector is underdeveloped and provides a limited range of banking services.

Bangladesh's state-owned commercial banks, which account for more than 30 percent of total banking system assets, undermine the sector's efficiency, it said. Bangladesh scored 20 in the financial freedom component.

In the global context Hong Kong, Singapore, and Australia are the top three scorers in the index while North Korea, Zimbabwe and Cuba were top from the bottom.

In South Asian context Bangladesh's position was only above Maldives whose rank is 148th. Bhutan's position was the 103rd, Pakistan's 117th, Sri Lanka's 120th, India's 124th, and Nepal's 130th.

Though Afghanistan was covered in the index, it was not given any score.

# Two rescued

**FROM PAGE 16**  
flat where the detectives found Hannan and Labu lying on the floor with their hands and legs tied. They arrested the rest three kidnappers there.

Hannan's wife Mohima Akhter Sraboni told The Daily Star that her husband during their last telephone conversation around 7:30pm Sunday told her that he was going to Fakirerpool and that he would come home around 9:30pm.

She said an anonymous caller demanded Tk 50 lakh ransom around 7:30pm the following day and around 11:00pm the caller raised the ransom to Tk 65 lakh and said, "If you don't pay the full amount you'll get your husband back with fewer limbs."

She said, "As I suspected that the caller might be Hakim, I went to Hakim's Gendaria house but he was not there." She said Hakim, a neighbour of her in-laws' in Madaripur, is running from the law in connection with a murder case.

Sanwar said while making calls to Sraboni for ransom, someone at Hakim's end mentioned the name of Shawan. Sraboni reported this to DB Thursday.

Hannan, garment trader of

Mouchak Market, and Labu told DB that Hakim requested him to meet them at the club and when Hannan and Labu went there, Hakim and his men closed the door and beat them unconscious.

Hannan said they found themselves inside a room with their hands and legs tied. He said if they were not rescued they might have been killed since they knew the kidnappers.

Sanwar said the club was used for abusing drugs and doing criminal activities and Hakim ran the club.

He said they are trying to find out who has the allotment of the government flat that was used.

He said the flat's front door was locked and the criminals used the back door.

# Acid attack

**FROM PAGE 16**  
in her face, throat, chest and other parts of her body.

A case was filed accusing three people with Shibchar Police Station in this connection.

# Reckless

**FROM PAGE 1**  
where doctors declared her dead.

Police said they seized the bus but its driver managed to flee the scene.

Our Narayanjanj correspondent reports: A child was run over and killed by a bus at Chandmari of Fatullah in the town yesterday evening.

Shahin, son of day labourer Lal Miah, was hit by a bus of Bandhan Paribahan on Dhaka-Narayanganj link road. The driver fled immediately.

Locals took the seven-year-old child to a hospital at Khanpur where he was declared dead.

Agitated people later damaged more than 10 vehicles on the road. And traffic movement remained suspended for about half an hour.

Police later brought the situation under control.

# Man jumps

**FROM PAGE 16**  
place in the hotel.

According to the staff, on hearing about the police raid, the man panicked and jumped from the rooftop and landed on a three-storey building.

Residents of the building rushed him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Rezaul Karim, officer-in-charge (OC) of Shahabgh Police Station said detailed information about the deceased could not be known immediately.

The OC also said the police arrested four men and six girls from the hotel for unsocial activities.

# Clarification

**FROM PAGE 1**  
forest department and other law enforcement agencies keep their eyes on the routes and apprehend illegally procured logs and timbers.

The picture carried along with the news item is undated and unspecified, his statement reads, adding that the correspondent should have informed the forest authorities and law enforcement agencies concerned instead of reporting on it.

**OUR REPLY.** We did not state in our caption that all forest goods carried through the Sangu are illegal. It was also specified in the caption that the photo had been taken recently at Ruma, Bandarban.

Throughout the rule of the BNP-led four-party alliance, the Supreme Court Bar Association protested at the appointment of additional judges in the SC on the basis of political affiliation instead of merit.

The recent appointment of 17 additional judges again triggered controversy over track records of at least two of them.

Addressing a function in 2007, the then chief justice Mohammad Ruhul Amin said it would take at least 20 years to rid the judiciary of the effects of irregularities in appointing judges in the past.

# MRPs from 3 dists this week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three more regional passport offices have been set up to start producing machine-readable passport (MRP) this week.

The Comilla office opens today while Jessore office opens tomorrow and Sylhet office Tuesday. Meanwhile, the government decided to deploy the army at regional passport offices to provide technical support in issuance of MRP.

Earlier the machine-readable passport and visa project was launched only at the Department of Immigration and Passport office in Dhaka to meet the deadline set by the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

The regional passport offices in Mymensingh, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Barisal, Rangpur and Gopalganj will also be made ready to produce MRP by the end of this month.

"We are preparing all 34 passport offices across the country for MRP production and they will be opened gradually," Project Director Brig Gen Reyaet Ullah told The Daily Star yesterday.

An Inter Services Public Relations press release said required number of army personnel would be deployed at the nine regional passport offices opening this month following request of the home ministry and government orders.

"The army personnel would give technical support like filing of application forms, preservation of records and computer data entry," says the release.

# Bhola result

**FROM PAGE 1**  
boycotted parliament after that election and later resigned from parliament.

The BNP secretary general has already said it may not be impossible to repeat the things they (Awami League) had done after the Magura by-election.

Insiders say the BNP high-ups are now conducting a massive campaign to create anti-government opinion and as per the initiative the chairperson is addressing public meetings at the divisional headquarters.

Besides these, pro-BNP professional bodies are regularly holding programmes and BNP leaders are frequently attending programmes outside the workers' enthusiasm.

Party leaders believe BNP has restored its political strength and now they are planning to go for a movement step by step, which will get a strong shape through Bholta-3 by-election.

Khaleda Zia has already threatened to forge a movement if the Election Commission does not deploy army and the by-poll is turned into a one-sided election.

However, Election Commissioner Sohul Hossain on Thursday categorically said they will not deploy army for the by-election.

Asked about the EC's stance, Mirza Alamgir said people will not accept any stage-managed election.

Asked about the performance of Awami League government Renata said the Bangladeshi people have to evaluate it. She said energy is a big challenge while population is increasing. Each year there is bigger crisis in energy sector,

# War heroes

**FROM PAGE 1**  
He said over four thousand doctors will be appointed in the country within next three weeks and the hospitals will get doctors as per requirement.

Ruhul visited Mujibnagar upazila health complex and directed the authority to run the hospital in a full swing.

The Health Minister also visited Meherpur General hospital.

Chairman of parliamentary standing committee on ministry of communication Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and local lawmaker Jainal Abedin were present.

# 3 carjackers

**FROM PAGE 1**  
high prices to the owners and some to shops in city's Dholaikhal, Major Hayet said.

Gulzar told Rab they usually stored parts of new cars at his house.

Major Hayet said the gang dismantled parts from businessman CRM Mahub's car parked at his Uttara residence on August 14, 2009. Since then the gang had been offering Mahub over the phone to return the stolen parts in exchange for Tk 10 lakh.

After months of negotiation, the amount was fixed at Tk 3 lakh in December 2009. Meanwhile, Mahub informed the Rab about the matter.

The Rab personnel then contacted the gang and arrested the trio.

# No UN letter

**FROM PAGE 16**  
army had played any role in the general election originally slated for January 22, 2007.

"This was never discussed," Renata added.

The former army chief in his book "Shantir Swapne" (Dream for Peace) said he received a phone call on January 11, 2007 from UN Under Secretary General for Peacekeeping Guehenno who told him that the elections without participation of all political parties would not be acceptable.

"If the army plays any role in such elections, the UN will consider with due importance the withdrawal of Bangladeshi armies from the UN peacekeeping missions," Moeen quoted Guehenno as saying over the phone.

Renata said the UN secretary general expressed his concern over street violence on several occasions including those in October 2006 and early 2007.

She said several missions of the UN electoral specialists visited Bangladesh while the secretary general appointed a personal envoy who visited Dhaka in December 2006.

The envoy had meetings with major political parties and urged them repeatedly to hold dialogues, to be accommodative and to find a solution that both political alliances could accept.

"Telephone calls from high level UN officials to Dhaka were made to try to defuse the rising tensions so as to allow more space and time for the parties to negotiate an acceptable solution," Renata said.

The UN official said when the UN secretary general and any UN staff makes any statement, the copy is sent to the respective governments ahead of the issuance of such statements to the press according to international practice.

Asked about separate meetings of western diplomats with senior Awami League and BNP leaders at the residence of the Canadian high commissioner on January 11, 2007, Renata said the meeting with the BNP leaders was dispersed in the afternoon as the news of declaring the state of emergency had been circulated by that time.

She said the main message of all these statements and meetings were to resolve the issue through dialogue and in non-violent fashion.

When asked about the performance of the Fakhruddin Ahmed's caretaker government, Renata said, "we focused on elections but general criticisms were that the government was doing too much and it had broad agenda."

Renata recalled a number of impediments like two floods, cyclone, food crisis in the wake of price hike of food and oil in the international market and spread of avian flu. It is difficult for a caretaker government with 10 advisers to deal with all these problems, she continued.

Termining Bangladesh a complex country, she said, "Managing a complex country like Bangladesh, I think, is even more difficult. Each government faces challenges to implement its policies."

Asked about the performance of Awami League government Renata said the Bangladeshi people have to evaluate it. She said energy is a big challenge while population is increasing. Each year there is bigger crisis in energy sector,

she said, adding that it will take time to resolve the problem.

Explaining UN's position on the trial of war criminals, she said the UN has received a request from Bangladesh government for information about how war crime tribunal operates in the context of other countries.

The UN has responded positively as we consider it important to share lessons of international experience with Bangladesh authorities in order to help them meet international standard, she said.

Renata, however, said the UN has not been asked for any other form of assistance in connection with Bangladesh's war crime trials, nor has it offered any additional assistance.

Asked about her farewell meetings with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia, Renata said the energy and water shortages as well as other challenges like food security and disaster preparedness were discussed.

Renata stressed the need for strengthening democratic institutions to deepen democracy in Bangladesh and said since parliament is one of the most important institutions in any democracy all parties should sit in parliament and put their different agenda on the table for constructive debates.

She highly appreciated the formation of the parliamentary standing committees during the first session where chairs of the seven committees were given to other political parties. She also welcomed BNP's return to Jatiya Sangsad ending their long boycott.

Expressing her firm conviction that Bangladesh has a bright prospect, the UN official said the country has demonstrated its remarkable capacity to overcome crises -- from the War of Independence to repeated floods and cyclones, to food security and many more areas.

"I do not minimise the very real and pressing problems that currently face the country... all that's required is the strengthening of good governance. The key is already in the hands of decision makers. If their time and energy is spent in patronage pursuits serving special interest groups or individual interests, overall social progress will be sub-optimal and beset with setbacks," she added.

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ship-breaking yard owners, the government is violating all national and international laws, conventions and the HC directives. The government also has moved from its ethical position, he added.

ASM Shajahan, the former adviser to the caretaker government, said no one wants the policy which goes against human health and environment. He urged the prime minister to look into the matter and investigate who will derive benefits out of the entire process.

He also demanded that the culprits behind the scenes are found out and proper rules and regulations followed in the ship breaking industry.

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# Toxic ship

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# Khaleda

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country and assumption of power by the AL-led grand alliance government.

Begum Zia is going to Khulna today to address the second divisional level rally after Chittagong as part of her programme for anti-government campaign.

The grand rally will begin at 3:00pm at the Babri square under Sonadanga police station of Khulna city.

Meanwhile, all preparations have been completed to hold the grand rally peacefully and successfully where leaders and activists of BNP and all its front organisations of ten districts of Khulna division will join to express solidarity with the programme for movement against the government's misrule, said ex-minister Tariqul Islam at a press conference.

Tariqul is a member of the party's standing committee and also chief coordinator of the Khulna divisional rally implementation committee.

Over two hundred ceremonial arches have been erected at different points of Khulna city to welcome BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia and other central leaders.

Security measures have been stepped up in the entire city in view of today's grand rally of BNP.

Apart from police, Rapid Action Battalion and intelligence agencies, over 300 volunteers of the party will remain vigilant and on high alert to maintain law and order.

A three-tier security blanket would be thrown from tonight to check any untoward incident in the rally, said KMP Commissioner Helaluddin Badri.

UNB adds: After Khulna, Khaleda will move on to another grand rally in Rajshahi on May 5, before the finale in Dhaka on May 19. Earlier, Khaleda's public meeting in Barisal scheduled for April 29 was postponed due to the by-election for the Bholta-3 parliamentary constituency, to be held on April 24.

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