

# Iraq's new parliament convened

REUTERS ONLINE

Iraq's parliament convened yesterday for the first time since a March election, cloaked by heavy security a day after gunmen and suicide bombers raided the central bank in a sign of continued lawlessness and instability.

The new 325-member parliament will be tasked with drafting legislation on a slew of economic issues as the country tries to move beyond the sectarian violence unleashed after the 2003 US-led invasion and set off on a path of economic development.

"On behalf of the Iraqi people we open the first session of parliament," said re-elected Kurdish lawmaker Fouad Masoum, one of the chamber's oldest members and picked to open the session.

The inaugural parliamentary session more than three months after the March 7 vote was a major step toward the establishment of a government but it appeared likely it would still take weeks for political factions to agree on a choice of prime minister.

Sunni Islamist insurgents have sought to exploit the sectarian tensions generated by the extended political vacuum through bombings and assassinations.

Recent weeks have also

seen a spate of raids on banks and gold markets blamed by the authorities on insurgents seeking funds. But Shia militia groups that took up arms after the invasion have also turned to crime as sectarian warfare fades.

The number of civilians killed each month since March has increased slowly but steadily, raising questions about whether the US government can stick to its plan to end combat operations in August ahead of a full withdrawal in 2011.

Suicide bombers and gunmen on Sunday stormed the heavily-guarded central bank in Baghdad, killing 15 people and wounding dozens. They did not gain access to the vaults where piles of Iraqi dinars and US dollars are stored, but fought an hour-and-a-half-long gunbattle with Iraqi security forces.

**SUNNI-BACKED ELECTION WINNER**  
A cross-sectarian alliance led by former Prime Minister Iyad Allawi won the most seats in the March election after gaining strong backing from Iraq's once dominant Sunni minority, but it fell far short of a governing majority.

That has led to weeks of political wrangling as political groups sought to build coalitions that would give them the clout needed to pick the next government.

# China keen

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Jinpeng also mentioned that Bangladesh has a long historic relation with china. "Bangladesh has developed a lot after its independence and the living standard of the people is improving day by day," he said.

He said if this development could continue Bangladesh would be able to attain a big growth in the near future.

The Chinese vice president said that after Sheikh Hasina's recent visit to China the relations between China and Bangladesh witnessed a big boost.

Speaking at the banquet, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said she believes that the visit of the Chinese vice president would add depth and dimension to the existing bilateral relation between the two friendly countries.

She also congratulated Jinpeng for the successful holding of Shanghai World Expo-2010.

The premier appreciated the warm Chinese hospitality that was accorded during her visit to China early this year.

"China and Bangladesh enjoy sound friendship based on equality, mutual respect and trust, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. We are steadfastly committed to 'one China' policy," she said.

Hasina said the diplomatic relation that was established 35 years ago is now enjoying a "close comprehensive partnership of cooperation."

The six China-Bangladesh friendship bridges, the Bangbandhu International Conference Centre and many other projects by China testify to this partnership, she said, adding, "These projects truly contributed to Bangladesh's socio-economic develop-

ment."

Hasina said the cooperation between the two countries encompasses all areas of relations including trade, which has reached \$5 billion.

She said the other major areas include agriculture, education, science and technology, national defense, culture, tourism, and investment.

"I believe, early implementation of the four agreements and Memorandum of Understandings signed during my visit to China and the new areas of cooperation identified at today's meeting would further boost our mutual gains and benefits."

She said to facilitate expeditious realisation of these and other excellent initiatives of her government are bent on eliminating corruption as well as safeguarding peace and stability, and importantly in consolidating the democratic process.

These are necessary for attaining the objectives of Digital Bangladesh--an ICT-based middle-income country with a better standard of living for the people--by 2021, Hasina said.

"As we move towards fulfilment of our vision 2021 and Golden Bangladesh as envisioned by father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, we are confident; we shall find China by our side as our unwavering friend."

The premier underscored the need for continued bilateral visits for mutual interest.

Industries Minister Dilip Barua, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, LGRD Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam and Speaker Abdul Hamid, among others, attended the banquet.

activities; water management, midday meal and reception of the guests, the officials inform.

The council would seek help of the school management committee and local people to implement their decisions, they add.

They say there will be a meeting with the students of the school in every six months where the students would give their opinions about the council's activities.

Through the election of the council under the project will be held on June 15, it will be later held in January every year.

An official of the directorate said they have already taken preparations for the election. Twenty officers will monitor the election in the schools and the activities afterwards, he added.

Through this practice the students will be aware about their responsibilities and leadership qualities will grow in them, the acting secretary observes.

## Menon

**FROM PAGE 16**  
independent investigation into the allegations of admission trade at the college," Menon told journalists at a press conference at Shaheed Asad auditorium in the city's Paltan area.

The press conference on the recent row over appointing a new principal at the college eventually turned into a press briefing on admission trade there.

About the allegations of admission trade against him, Menon said those were ill-motivated.

He, however, admitted that he had made some recommendations for seats to the then acting principal Rokeya Akter Begum.

"In my long political life I have made many friends like ministers, lawmakers, editors and journalists. As I could not refuse many of those friends I forwarded requests for about 100 to 150 seats to the last acting principal," said Menon, adding that now that a base mark for admission has been set, one who does not meet the criteria does not get admitted.

He alleged that the last acting principal of the college was involved in admission trade in 2009 and 2010.

Contacted over the phone yesterday afternoon, Rokeya Akter said no one got admission on the basis of recommendations in 2009 and she was not involved in any kind of admission trade in 2010.

She, however, said a few cases of enrolment on political and other recommendations did take place this year.

"I could not stay at the college as I was against the illegal trade of admission. I am sure the trade will now continue at the institution," said Rokeya Akter.

## 2 'robbers'

**FROM PAGE 16**  
The couple taking their four-month-old son with them boarded the boat for Swarighat near Sadarghat.

The pirates came by another boat, they said.

They threatened the couple with sharp weapons and tried to rob them of all their valuables, said Officer-in-Charge of Keraniganj Police Station Abul Bashir.

When the couple cried out for help and tried to resist the attack, the robbers threatened to throw the baby into the water, the OC added.

The OC also said when the pirates snatched the baby from its mother's lap, other boatmen of nearby boats came to their rescue. The pirates then returned the baby and jumped into the water to escape.

The boatmen started beating them with oars, and at one point they dragged the three to the riverbank near Zinzira Alam Tower where locals also joined in.

Later, police rescued them and rushed them to the hospital.

The OC said the identities of the couple could not be known as they had left the scene.

In another incident at Paina Nayagaon in South Keraniganj, a mob beat to death a youth in the early hours yesterday for his suspicious movement.

Police said locals suspected that Minu was a mugger, and attacked him.

He succumbed to his injuries at Mitford Hospital.

## Old city

**FROM PAGE 1**  
and also an adviser to the Panchayet of Ali Neki Deuri area.

"Fires might occur anytime, if we do not stop the business of flammable goods," he said.

Architect Iqbal Habib, who also works in urban planning, said some 12 to 15 major fire incidents are reported every year in the old town.

The speakers called upon Old Dhaka residents to make the Panchayet functional and unite against the ongoing business of flammable materials in residential buildings.

"We have to decide whether we will live with the explosives or stop the business," said Mohammad Shahid, a resident.

Wahidul Islam, general secretary of the Ali Neki Deuri Panchayet, said, "Ninety percent factories in the area keep running even after 8:00pm, disrupting sleep of people. If the Panchayet had functioned well, it would not happen."

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolan and Sheikh Borhan Uddin Post Graduate College jointly organised the programme at the college.

The residents urged the government to move the stores of flammable materials and other factories from the area immediately.

Speaking in the session, Bangladesh Paribesh Andolan President Prof Mozaffer Ahmad said nobody has the right to earn money risking the lives of others. He called upon locals to unite and stop the trade of materials that may harm people.

# Supplementary

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Only ten lawmakers including three with ministerial posts were given floor to participate in the discussions on it in the last two days.

The lawmakers made no effort to examine the reasons behind the additional spending. Most of them rather lauded the government's performance in implementing the budget for the outgoing fiscal year.

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury started a discussion on it in the House on Sunday and justified the additional spending.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith wrapped up the discussion yesterday, thanking the participants.

Fifty lawmakers had taken part in the discussion on the supplementary budget for 2008-09 fiscal year for over six hours. But the House this time spent two hours for discussion on the supplementary budget for the outgoing fiscal year and another hour for completion of other procedures.

The public accounts committee did not initiate examining the reasons behind the additional spending in line with the rules of procedure of parliament after the supplementary budget was placed on Thursday.

# Water bodies

**FROM PAGE 1**  
they behaved at a meeting with the state minister on Sunday, ruling Awami League lawmaker Enamul Haque told The Daily Star.

"We will implement the detailed area plan (DAP) to save Dhaka city. We will not care if it inconveniences anyone," Enamul quoted Hasina as saying.

She asked the state minister not to be dissuaded by anyone's "browbeating", he added.

Wishing not to be named, another lawmaker said he had heard her telling Mannan: "Keep working. Don't pay heed to anybody. We cannot cater to a few greedy persons."

Hasina observed land grabbers have made thousands of crores of taka thanks to "backing of past governments". They gave plots to politicians to have them on their side, she alleged.

Earlier, participating in the budget discussion, Mannan Khan said land grabbers are threatening the government in broad daylight, as it is trying

## BSF kills 1

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Shafiqul died on the spot, he said.

Soon after the incident the Indian border guards took the body to their territory. Bangladesh Rifles strongly protested the killing and urged BSF to return the body immediately.

## China to help

**FROM PAGE 1**  
the 35th anniversary of the diplomatic ties between Bangladesh and China this year.

Chinese Vice Minister for Commerce Chen Jiang and Economic Relations Division (ERD) Secretary Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan signed the deal on behalf of their respective government.

## Top floor

**FROM PAGE 1**  
number of tin-shed and bamboo-made structures to recover a Rajuk plot at Gulshan in the morning. Executive Magistrate Rokon-Ud-Dowla led the team.

The Rajuk authorities, however, spared a number of residential buildings that were being used for commercial purposes like hotel, buying house and school in violation of the approved plan 3 in the immediate vicinity of Gulshan road no-4.

Rajuk Chairman Md Nurul Huda told The Daily Star, "We will undertake an eviction drive for these buildings later."

The team also knocked down around ten fruit shops set up illegally on the Banani playground at Kemal Ataturk Avenue.

Regarding shops in the playground, Executive Engineer Nurul Islam said they (Rajuk) entrusted Banani Society with maintenance of the playground but the Society allowed the setting up of shops in the area.

Following the discussion, the finance minister moved the appropriation bill seeking Tk 11,987 crore against 34 demands to meet additional spending during the fiscal year ending on June 30.

Of the ministries, food and disaster management ministry incurred an additional spending of Tk 4,894 crore, education ministry Tk 1,555 crore, defence ministry Tk 800 crore and agriculture ministry Tk 731 crore.

The finance minister outlined the performance of ministries and divisions spending additional money. He also gave a few reasons behind the additional spending and justified it.

Muhith said the budget implementation system is poor and needs to be improved.

He however hoped the implementation of the annual development programme (ADP) in the next fiscal year would be close to the target.

"There is no denying the fact that we have limited capacity to implement the annual development programmes. Up to March we could implement only 47.6 percent of the Tk 28,500 crore ADP in this year's revised budget."

to save rivers, canals and other water bodies.

He said some land developers first buy a half-katha land at one end and another half-katha at the other, and later grab the entire land in between.

They place eye-catching ads hiding the real condition of their housing projects to con people who entrust them with their hard-earned money.

Soon after the sitting was adjourned, Mannan briefed the premier about Sunday's meeting where he had a heated argument with land developer leaders.

At Sunday's meeting, the realtors bashed him and Rajuk officials over the draft DAP, which reserves 21 percent of the capital's area as water bodies that cannot be filled in.

Contacted by The Daily Star over the phone, the state minister declined to elaborate on his conversation with the prime minister. He said she knows everything about his encounter with the developers.

## Walking

**FROM PAGE 16**  
road, however, the length of footpath is only 388 km. The hawkers have taken over around 155 km of it.

"Almost everywhere in the city, walking on footpath feels like walking through a bustling bazaar", Majibar said.

Reflecting on the role played by Dhaka law enforcers he said, "Law enforcers turn a blind eye to these vendors and everyone knows why. Extortion on a daily basis by the police gives them the licence to occupy the footpath."

Most vendors also dispose waste directly on the footpath adding to the ordeal, mention some pedestrians. "Two days ago a fruit seller threw a bunch of rotten fruits on the footpath and missed me by an inch," said Arifur Rahman, a college student from Uttar Badda.

Some women complained of being honked by motorcycle riders on the footpath.

"There is very little walking space as it is. But what annoys me most is when bikers get on the footpath to avoid traffic jam and honk from behind", said Dilara Begum a homemaker from Shaheenbag.

Meanwhile, Dhaka City Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka admits that Dhaka dwellers are gradually forgetting what it feels like to walk on the footpath.

He said, "Eviction of hawkers from the footpath goes on regularly but they come back even before the police force return to their barracks after an eviction drive."

DCC needs to have its own force or a designated contingent of police under its magistrates for regular monitoring, he stressed.

Pointing at a bigger picture he said, "Most of the hawkers are internal refugees. They try to survive with whatever means available and the city is the best place for them. They need to be rehabilitated through a long term programme at state level."

He also claimed that DCC is conducting routine repair works of footpaths. However, continuous digging by utility services for various development projects keeps the city corporation under pressure.

## Onus on govt

**FROM PAGE 1**  
bodies where no development will be permitted. Noted urban and environment experts Prof Nazrul Islam, Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Iqbal Habib and some newsmen were present there in that meeting.

In his reaction, Jamilur Reza said land developers have taken control over a good portion of land in flood-flow zones and put signboards there and have been selling plots for years.

"And, now they are showing the audacity at the Secretariat, mobilising support from a state minister," he said, adding that it was very surprising that another MP was so critical of the government.

Ruling Awami League lawmaker Nasrul Hamid Bipu, president of Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB) and also chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on the housing ministry joined land developers bashing Rajuk on Sunday.

"It is an absurd and unfortunate incident. No work in the country can be done if things like this continue," Prof Nazrul Islam told The Daily Star.

Terming land developers' attitude unacceptable Syeda Rizwana Hasan, executive director of Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association, said, "Their attitude shows how blindly the businessmen have been getting support and shelter from the government. Now they don't care anything, even a minister."

Architect Iqbal Habib said the developers with audacious behaviour not only disgraced the people but also the government. It is expected that the government implements the DAP immediately, he added.

Prof Jamilur Reza said the DAP Review Committee report is a continuation work of a gazette notification published in 1997 but the land developers went ahead developing land on flood-flow zones.

The committee in the report concluded that no unapproved project on flood flow zones would be allowed. The Purbachal and Jhilmil Phase-1 projects were approved, he said.

The committee even viewed that some government projects also had non-conformity with DAP, he said.

Prof Nazrul Islam told The Daily Star the state minister for housing has been quite sincere about DAP and the decision was not made by him alone. He said it was done after discussing with all stakeholders and adequate scrutiny.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, a member of the review committee, said now it is time for the government to prove that it really wants qualitative change in the country.

"If the government is not scared of the developers, they would not change the DAP as per their wish. But for that the government has to take real bold steps," Rizwana said.

## Clash over

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Akhter Hossain and accountant Mohammad Habib. They were treated at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The other two were treated in the locality.

Kafrul police arrested four persons including former headmaster of the school Tofazzal Hossain on charge of involvement in the clash. All of them are said to be supporters of Abdul Kader.

The injured headmaster, Faruk Khan, told journalists at the DMCH that about 15 to 20 people entered the school and attacked his office room and teachers' rooms, causing injuries to at least five including him.

Contacted, Abdul Kader said he established the school in 1997 on his land, at his own expense and named it after his father. And he was running the school as per rules from the beginning.

He alleged that in January this year, the ruling party lawmaker from the area ousted the then headmaster of the school, appointed another headmaster and took over control of the school.

Kader also said he along with some others went to the school yesterday to take charge of the school through amicable discussions. But they were attacked by Kamal Majumder's men.

Asked about this, the lawmaker denied the allegations made against him. He said Kader was a founder-member of the school committee, and he had no objection to his remaining so.

Kamal Majumder alleged that supporters of the ward councillor attacked his men.

He also alleged that the councillor misappropriated huge amounts of money from the school fund.

About ouster of the headmaster in January, the lawmaker said he was removed for inefficiency.

# Govt to recover

**FROM PAGE 16**  
"I want to assure the honourable lawmaker of taking legal measures to recover the money, which was spent illegally for the benefits of the killers and to deposit the money to the public exchequer," Dipu Moni said.

The Daily Star obtained a copy of the report containing responses from the ministers to the lawmakers' call attention notices.

All successive governments after August 15, 1975 continued misusing state money for giving salaries and allowances to the killers, the statement said.

A few crore were spent for their salaries, house rent, transport of goods, educational expenses of their children, medical treatment of their family members, and daily and travel allowances.

It would take time to calculate the actual expenditure. However, the state had to spend at least Tk 1.5 crore for each of them for giving them salaries, allowances and airfares, the statement said.

The money spent for each of the killers might be around Tk 3 crore if all other expenditures including house rent are calculated, the foreign ministers said.

The statement said the military regime in 1976 gave the killers jobs in foreign missions of Bangladesh.

Of them, Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan and Bazlul Huda were appointed second secretaries to Bangladesh missions in Jakarta and Islamabad.

Shariful Haq Dalim was made first secretary to Bangladesh mission in Beijing, AM Rashed Chowdhury consulate general to the mission in Jeddah, AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed second secretary to the mission in Algiers, SHMB Noor Chowdhury second secretary to the mission in Tehran and Abdul Aziz Pasha first secretary to the mission in Buenos Aires.

The appointments were made ignoring all rules and regulations while they were hiding in different countries

## 'Outsiders'

**FROM PAGE 1**  
city after Sunday until the June 17 elections are held.

However, the central leaders said the decision was not well circulated.

"It was not known to me as Election Commission did not circulate this decision. I heard about the decision from journalists. I am leaving the area right now as I am a law abiding person," said Asaduzzaman Noor MP while talking to The Daily Star.

Former lawmaker and Jatiyatabadi Juba Dal president Moazzem Hossain Alal said the Election Commission created the confusion by not publicising the decision.

Awami League presidium member Obaidul Quader MP and BNP's joint secretary general Amanullah Aman, too, conducted electoral campaign in different areas of the city.

However, Jasmine Tuli, a returning officer, said it was a misunderstanding and yesterday she had talked to the agents of the candidates in this regard.

"We would not tolerate any violation of rules or decisions made for the sake of free and fair polls," she told The Daily Star around 2:30pm.

Assistant returning officer Farhad Hossain said every outsider was supposed to leave the city by yesterday.

Meanwhile, representatives of different civil society organisations said direct backing of two major parties to the mayoral candidates made the election a 'battle of two parties'. The CCC polls have lost the characteristic of a non-partisan election.

Ruling Awami League backs Mohiuddin Chowdhury while BNP supports Manjur Alam.

**THREE FINED**  
Mobile courts yesterday fined three persons, including a woman, for violating electoral code of conduct in Chittagong.

Hosne Ara Hasu, 40, wife of Manu Mian of Lake View Residential area, was fined Tk 50,000 for selling a bulletin containing news items against Mohiuddin Chowdhury in the city's Khulshi area.

Two other mobile courts in separate drives fined Jilur Rahman of Bandartila Tk 5,000 for distributing leaflets against Mohiuddin Chowdhury and councillor candidate Abul Mansur Ahmad of No 18 East Bakolia ward Tk 10,000 for using three microbuses in electioneering.

including Libya. They had held the posts until 1996, said the minister.

On assumption of office on June 23, 1996, the Awami League government ordered them to return to Bangladesh. But they ignored it and stayed away from work without permission, she said.

The government then sacked them from jobs in line with the law, Dipu Moni said.

The BNP-Jamaat government in 2001 cancelled the previous order and sent Aziz Pasha on retirement ignoring the law, said the statement.

## Indian Khasias

**FROM PAGE 16**  
rushed to the spot and asked them to leave the Bangladesh territory. The Indians denied leaving the place in between border pillar no 1279 and 1280.

Despite protests and the raising of red flags by BDR jawans, the intruders did not pay heed rather continued ploughing the land with their tractor till 5:00pm.

Major Abdullah Al Mamun, deputy commanding officer of 21 Battalion of BDR, confirmed the incident and said a protest letter in this regard would be sent immediately.

The BDR official said disturbance on the border people by the Khasias with the support of BSF men has become almost a regular affair on Jaintapur, Tamabil, Sripur and Padua borders for months.

Both the border guards were on alert, said local sources.

## ACC asked

**FROM PAGE 16**  
of Board of Investment Mahmudur Rahman with Gulshan Police Station for not submitting his wealth statement to the commission.

The commission served a notice to Mahmudur Rahman on April 19 asking him to submit his wealth statement in seven days. But he did