

## Military rulers

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Ayub hailed them as true representatives of the grass-roots people.

A presidential referendum was held the next month giving the right to franchise only to the councillors. Ayub was the lone candidate, who claimed to have secured 95.6 per cent "yes" votes. He declared himself president after the referendum.

In quest for legitimacy, both Zia and Ershad, who seized the office of president unconstitutionally, organised referendums seeking people's mandate in favour of their regimes.

Before staging the referendums, they too organised election to union parishads across the country and increased allocations for local government bodies to get the support of the grassroots.

In the 1977 referendum, Zia was the only candidate and his regime claimed a voter turnout of 85 per cent. He bagged 99.5 per cent of "yes" votes in favour of his rule as president.

General Ershad was also the lone candidate in the referendum he organised in 1985. Ershad claimed to have obtained 94.14 per cent "yes" votes in his favour as the president.

Both the elections were marked by large-scale vote rigging.

"Some of the councillors in an interview expressed that Zia compelled them to snatch ballot papers and put them into ballot box during the referendum and the presidential election (1978), which is something Ayub never did," said a study conducted by local government expert Prof Tofail Ahmed.

Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD), an autonomous body, published the study "Decentralisation and People's Participation in Bangladesh: A Political Perspective" in 1987.

The study described how the two military regimes manipulated local government bodies to attain political purposes.

Once their purposes were served, they took no time to turn away from local bodies to consolidate power by forming political parties.

The parties extended all-out support to their regimes and resisted anti-government movements through violence, counter-violence, rallies and processions.

**"NEW AYUB FOR LOCAL BODIES"**  
Within a year of capturing power, Zia looked out for ways to legitimise his regime by using a civilian base.

"The task was easier for him because the institutions built by Ayub provided a very solid foundation. Mujib had bypassed those institutions, causing utter frustration among them and they looked for a 'new Ayub,'" said the BARD study.

Zia launched the first public relations campaign with the chairmen and members of union councils within six months of seizing power.

He met and addressed them at four divisional headquarters, and used government officials in districts, thanas and unions to mobilise local body representatives.

He tried to convince the councillors that there would be more development work in rural areas and the local councils would be given the responsibility to implement the development programmes.

Zia, who altered his position from deputy chief martial law administrator to chief martial law administrator in November 1976, declared himself president in April 1977, forcing Justice Sayem to resign on grounds of ill health.

After the 1978 presidential election, Zia shifted his emphasis from local bodies as he had already moved to form a political party for contesting parliamentary election.

He formed BNP that secured a landslide victory in the second parliamentary election in 1979.

By the end of 1980, the Zia regime introduced a broad rural structure -- Swanirvor Gram Sarkar (Self-reliant village government) in 68,000 villages, marginalising union parishads.

In most cases, Gram Sarkar committees were formed with the members of ruling BNP much to the annoyance of union parishad representatives.

"...In the manner it [Gram Sarkar] was operationalised, it laid itself open to criticism that it was being used for extending the influence of the ruling party," said another study "Local Government in Bangladesh" edited by seasoned bureaucrat Kamal Siddiqui.

**ERSHAD CANCELLED** the unpopular Gram Sarkar system after capturing power on March 24, 1982 with the overthrow of

President Abdus Sattar. Union parishad representatives welcomed the announcement of controversial Gram Sarkar system.

The Ershad regime held union parishad elections the next year and pledged to strengthen local government. The regime got large-scale support from union parishad representatives in staging the referendum in 1985.

He looked for a new and effective means to consolidate power at grassroots level. Ershad introduced the upazila parishad system and used it effectively.

The system was introduced in 1982 but polls to upazila parishads were held in May 1985. The candidates of government-backed Janadal, later renamed Jatiya Party, won 45 per cent of the posts of upazila chairman.

In the absence of parliament, upazila chairmen enjoyed the power, prestige and status of lawmakers. They played an active role in resisting movements against the Ershad regime and worked for his political party.

Before announcing the date for third parliamentary election, Ershad met upazila chairmen several times in Dhaka and other divisional headquarters to discuss the national polls and movements by the opposition.

Ershad took a few upazila parishad leaders with him on tours across the country. They were seen beside the president in most of his public appearances.

The UP chairmen extended full support to the government to organise the third parliamentary elections in 1986. Jatiya Party won the polls.

"If one looks at the political process of Bangladesh from 1982 onwards, the clear political role of the upazila system in consolidating the power base of military regime is not hard to mark. This was the only major programme the military rulers persistently and carefully handled from 1982 to 1985 and finally attained success," the BARD study observed.

However, the local body leaders, especially the UP chairmen, began losing ground after the parliamentary polls as ruling Jatiya Party curtailed their political role.

## Cops fail

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Later, he was taken to National Institute of Cardio Vascular Diseases (NICVD) where he succumbed to his injuries around 8:30pm.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Ramna Police Station Shiblee Noman said police are yet to arrest the accused in the case as they are absconding since the incident.

However, police picked Russel, younger brother of the prime accused Faisal, for interrogation.

The OC said they are waiting for the autopsy report to decide whether the case, filed by Yousuf, will be converted into a murder case or not. Dhaka Medical College Morgue sources told The Daily Star that Syed Yousuf might have died due to beating as severe injury marks were found on his skull.

Meanwhile, blaming the negligence of police, Yousuf's nephew Syed Imran Ali Robin said, "Police could have arrested the accused soon after the case was filed on Thursday noon. Instead, they gave them the opportunity to flee by acting late."

Locals said the accused including Faisal, Badsha, Ripon and Mohammad Ali were involved in extortion and mugging in the area in the name of BCL.

## Hajj flight

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The authority deferred the schedule following a request from Saudi Civil Aviation as it was facing some technical difficulties.

A flight of Boeing-747 will carry the pilgrims to Saudi Arabia.

About 94,000 pilgrims from Bangladesh are likely to perform hajj this year, Biman officials said on Thursday. Around 55,000 Bangladeshis performed hajj last year.

Apart from Biman, 10 other airlines will carry Bangladesh pilgrims to and from Saudi Arabia.

This year 6,565 pilgrims will perform hajj under government management and 87,167 under different hajj agencies.

Biman plans to ferry some 45,000 pilgrims to and from Jeddah by operating 198 flights in two months.

The national flag carrier has leased two Boeing 747-400 aircraft for carrying the hajj pilgrims. It has also engaged a DC-10-30 aircraft for the task.

## Ceaseless rain

**FROM PAGE 1**

All fishing boats and trawlers in the north bay and deep sea have been advised to remain in shelters till further notice.

"New moon and heavy rainfall with gusty wind triggered by the prevailing depression have unleashed the nature's fury on the low-lying coastal areas," said meteorologist SM Mahmudul Haque.

River communication between Dhaka and the coastal districts was partially disrupted as Bangladesh Inland Water Transportation Authority (BIWTA) decided not to allow operation of any launch smaller than 70 feet. Internal launch communication in Patuakhali also remained suspended till last night since Tuesday, due to the same reason.

Ferry communication on Mawa-Kawrakandi and Paturia-Daulatdia routes were temporarily while larger long-term power projects are implemented.

Meanwhile, the government has raised its five-year new power generation target to 11000 MW from its previously planned 9,500 MW to make sure that even if some new projects fail to be launched, load shedding is gone before the next general elections.

Coupled with the lack of new power projects for several years, gas supply crisis has also deeply affected power supply. Power shortage is hovering between 600 MW to 2,000 MW this year, resulting in frequent

outages.

The PDB generated around 4,600 MW of power on some occasions this year, but usually it generates around 4,000 MW. But by the end of this year, it hopes to generate at least 4500 MW on a regular basis.

On the other hand, the country's power demand ranged between 5,200 MW and 6,200 MW this year. Next year, the demand would go up by nearly 10 per cent.

By December next year, the government hopes to add between 1,500 and 2,000 MW of power, which will significantly ease the crisis.

The power secretary said the crisis would be 'reasonably resolved' by 2012 as new power plants would start operation one after another.

"So far we have signed contracts for power projects having 2,500 MW production capacity. By December, we will sign deals for production of another 2,500 MW," the PDB chairman said referring to some larger gas-based and dual-fuel power projects.

In addition to taking up dozens of conventional oil and gas-based power projects, the government is also focusing on large coal-based plants, solar and wind power projects and energy conservation.

## Power crisis

**FROM PAGE 1**  
also because many existing plants have become old and inefficient.

Ninety per cent of the country's power plants operate using natural gas.

Alamgir said the PDB expected that at least five petroleum-run rental power plants would add 450 MW by December.

And the figure could be higher if two more rental power projects, which missed deadlines several times, could come into operation within this period.

The rental plants will have contract terms of three to five years. These stopgap measures have been taken to address the power crisis temporarily while larger long-term power projects are implemented.

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## Jailed Chinese

**FROM PAGE 1**  
president Thorbjørn Jagland said Mr Liu was "the foremost symbol of the wide-ranging struggle for human rights in China".

Local residents said Sapin was washed away by a tidal surge around 9:00am as their house was being inundated. Later, family members recovered his body from nearby Khakdon canal.

Minara and Noren died in a separate incident when their mud house collapsed on them. Road communication between Kuakata, a tourist spot in Patuakhali, and others parts of the country remained snapped till last night as gangways of four ferry terminals on Patuakhali-Barisal highway went underwater.

Golam Mostafa Chowdhury, president of Barguna District Fishing Trawler Owners Association, said at least 50 fishermen of the area were missing since Wednesday with five trawlers. An unusual tidal surge occurred at the coast of the district yesterday.

Since Wednesday night 9,047 hectares of crop lands went under water in Patuakhali, 8,831 hectares of those had been newly planted with aman paddies, 150 hectares had been planted with vegetables, while 66 hectares had been betel leaf fields, according to the district's Relief and Rehabilitation Office.

Lowlands and more than 100 shoals in the 7 upazilas of the district were flooded in the last three days, inundating more than 100 villages as flood control dams were breached at 50 points.

Around 14,000 houses of 142 villages were inundated as 40 kilometres of embankment of different upazilas collapsed in Cox's Bazaar. Around two hundred shrimp enclosures was also washed away, reports a correspondent from Cox's Bazaar.

At least 15 villages in Padmapukur, an Aila affected union under Shyamnagar upazila of Satkhira district, were inundated as water entered into the areas collapsing embankment at two points on the river Kabodak due to violent tide on Thursday night, our Satkhira correspondent adds.

The embankment covering 120 yards at two points--Khutikata and the house of Daud Moral-- at village Padmapukur was devoured into the river caused by heavy pressure of water from the river due to high tide inundation.

Over 12,000 people of all most all the villages in Padmapukur union were marooned and again compelled to take shelter on high lands in the areas.

Due to heavy downpour and collapse of embankments at Aila affected Dakop and Koira upazilas of Khulna district, Sharankhola, Morrelganj and Mongla upazilas of Bagerhat district, over three lakh people were rendered homeless again, reports our correspondent from Khulna.

According to UNOs of Koira and Dakop upazilas, 74 villages have been submerged under five to six feet water after the embankments were washed away. All UNOs of Khulna and Bagerhat districts have been asked to remain standby to render their services to the marooned people.

Cargo handling at Mongla port remained suspended since Thursday due to hostile weather.

Six ships laden with imported food grains, fertiliser, clinker and exportable jute goods have been moved to safer place at Mongla port, said Harbour Master Inamul Huq.

Several lakhs of people in the low-lying areas in all the upazilas under Chandpur district, chars of Matlab and Haimchar were marooned due to the downpour.

Similar reports were received from Noakhali, Barisal, Chittagong, Feni, Bhola and other coastal areas.

German government spokesman Steffen Seibert said China should free Mr Liu so he could attend the ceremony.

France's Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner also welcomed the award and called on China to release Mr Liu.

Rights group Amnesty International said Mr Liu was a "worthy winner".

But Catherine Biber, deputy Asia-Pacific director, said: "This award can only make a real difference if it prompts more international pressure on China to release Liu, along with the numerous other prisoners of conscience languishing in Chinese jails."

No candidates are announced ahead of the Peace Prize but others mentioned in the media included Afghan women's rights activist Sima Samar, Russian human rights activist Svetlana Gannushkina, former German chancellor Helmut Kohl and Zimbabwean Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai.

The Nobel committee had to defend last year's controversial Peace Prize choice of US President Barack Obama.

## Speed

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formed to scrutinise the proposals and recommendations to introduce an effective system with a combination of a central monitoring cell, speed guns, speed sensors, data networking and CCTVs, said Saiful Haque, director (engineering) of BRTA.

Shamsul Haque, director of Accident Research Institute (ARI), said two kinds of mechanism should be introduced to make the system a success.

First, speed gun meters should be distributed among highway police and then there should be a central monitoring system to watch and penalise the vehicles that cross the speed limit, he observed.

According to an ARI study, about 26,000 vehicles of different kinds ply Dhaka-Chittagong highway every day.

Referring to a police report, an ARI official said over 200 people die every year in road accidents on Dhaka-Chittagong highway while over a thousand sustain injuries.

Communication Secretary Mozammel Haque Khan told The Daily Star that the aim of introducing the system is to ensure road safety.

On the budget for the project he said it depends on the mechanism the government would opt for.

Sohrab Hossain, deputy inspector general (DIG) of highway police, said they have some speed detectors but they are not sufficient compared to the need.

He said, "Manpower shortage makes checking of all the vehicles on highways impossible. However, a few are checked when the highway police are on duty."

## Boraigram

**FROM PAGE 1**

When one of the AL attackers shot a bullet in the air, all BNP activists except Babu left the spot. The attackers then caught Babu and beat him indiscriminately.

Babu received severe head injuries and there were cuts on the hands and legs and beating marks all over the body, said doctors who performed the autopsy.

BNP activists led by Babu brought out a procession from the upazila parishad premises as part of the opposition's month-long demonstrations across the country. Babu was supposed to address a public gathering after the procession.

Mohammad Nasim, injured reporter of the Bangladesh Protidin, told The Daily Star that Babu was profusely bleeding and lying unconscious on the road for nearly an hour while police watched the situation from a distance. Later, Babu's wife and BNP activists rescued him and whisked him to a hospital, added Nasim.

Anwar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Boraigram Police Station, said Babu was killed as Awami League and BNP activists were locked in a clash at Bonpara Bazar. He said the clash started when BNP activists were holding a procession and AL men intercepted.

Ruhul Kuddus Talukder Dulu, president of BNP Natore district unit, termed the incident a pre-planned murder.

"The killers cut the tendons of Babu's hands and legs to make sure he died. The murder took place, as the government is encouraging killers by freeing them from death row," he alleged.

Mizanur Rahman, general secretary of AL Boraigram upazila unit, said the incident is not political as BNP is propagating. No AL leaders were present on the spot during the incident.

He said local businessmen belonging to AL requested BNP leaders not to hold the rally on Friday, the Jumma day.

"The incident took place when the BNP activists disobeying the businessmen brought out the procession and confronted with Chhatra League activists," said Mizanur Rahman.

The injured include Rafiqul Islam, upazila Jubo Dal president, Jamal Uddin, Mozammel, Nazim, Jamal and Rafiq. The two other injured journalists are ATN Bangla's cameraman Masud Rana and Tofazzal Hossain of the Dainik Destiny.

The attackers snatched two cameras from the journalists when they were taking shots of the assault on Babu, the only son of Boraigram civil surgeon Saber Hossain.

Around 7:00pm, agitated BNP activists staged a demonstration and blocked Bonpara Bazar road for half an hour. They also attacked and vandalised business centre of including that of AL-backed vice-chairman of the upazila Ataur Rahman and the house of local AL leader Zakir Hossain. The activists also vandalised Patwari Clinic, where Babu was rushed to after the incident.

In a statement, BNP Chairperson and the Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia condemned the killing of Babu by the ruling party men.

Demanding arrests of the killers and punitive action against them, she said, "It seems that the government has taken a project to eliminate the opposition. The Boraigram upazila chairman has just fallen a victim to that plan."

## AL, BNP

**FROM PAGE 16**

Mirza Fakhruul Islam Alamgir, BNP's senior joint secretary general.

Alongside party leaders, some popular individuals, not belonging to BNP directly, may also get party support in some areas, but party's local committee will take the final decision, he added.

Earlier, BNP refrained from participating in four city corporation elections during the military-backed caretaker government in 2008.

Central BNP leaders are scheduled to visit upazilas across the country to resolve internal conflict and reenergise party activities as part of their preparation for the election.

Party leaders hope that the central leaders' visit and chairperson's countrywide rallies will strengthen the party.

Talking to The Daily Star, BNP standing committee member Mahubur Rahman said central leaders will work with the grassroots during their visit to select popular candidates.

There are 4,488 union parishads and 309 municipalities across the country. The last municipal elections were held in 2005 while the last union parishad elections in 2003.

## Deals on border haat, trade this month

**Farak to lead business delegation to India Oct 20**

**UNB, Dhaka**

A business delegation led by Commerce Minister Faruk Khan will leave for New Delhi on October 20 aiming to ink a number of deals related to investment, border haat (market) and removal of trade barriers.

During the four-day visit, a number of issues including duty-free access to Indian market, further reduction of the number of items from India's negative list, Free Trade Agreement and investment are likely to dominate the discussions, officials said.

Talking to UNB over phone, Faruk Khan said the agenda of the discussion is yet to be finalised.

"There are four to five major agenda...Right now I can't tell you specifically, but a final agreement regarding border haat will be signed during the visit," he said.

Leaders of the FBCCI, BGMEA, DCCI, IBCCI and other business bodies are included in the 22-member delegation.

Farak Khan said he would return home by road via Guwahati to see the exact condition of the road communication.

Replying to a question, the minister said he will brief the media with the entire delegation before leaving for New Delhi, most likely between October 10 and 12.

India Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IBCCI) president Abdul Matlub Ahmed said Bangladesh would emphasise on further reducing the negative list for access to Indian market, existing problems relating to sale of jute bag with "Made in Bangladesh" seal and how the Indian investment in Bangladesh can be

boosted. He also hinted that the final agreement on border haat, which will be a common marketplace for both Bangladeshis and Indians to boost local business and trade between the two close neighbours, would be signed on October 21.

The two countries had agreed to set up border haat along their international border in the northeast when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited India in January this year.

Border haat was earlier scheduled to be launched on April 14 or Pabla Baishakh, the first day of the Bangla Year.

Dhaka finally agreed to sign the proposed agreement on border haat after New Delhi had assured of non-imposition of any local tax on Bangladeshi products.

According to the final draft of the agreement, an individual will not be able to trade above \$50 at the border haat and the trading should be conducted in the currencies of both Bangladesh and India.

The draft agreement said a committee comprising government officials and officers of border security forces of the two nations will manage the markets and will sit periodically to review its operations.

Two border haats will be opened in the first phase-- one in Sunamganj and another in Kurigram district--along the international border.

The commodities to be traded in these haats will include locally produced agriculture and horticulture products, spices, minor forest products excluding timber, fresh and dry fish, dairy and poultry products, wooden furniture and cane products, handloom and handicraft items.

## Teenage suicide

**FROM PAGE 16**  
for DNA tests in Islamabad," said Parhiz.

The bombs exploded at the entrance of the shrine to Abdullah Shah Ghazi, a saint in the Sufi mystical strain of Islam, as devotees packed it for a weekly gathering in the city's seaside Clifton district.

Witness Gul Mohammad said he was outside the shrine when two huge blasts were heard in quick succession. "I rushed inside and saw blood and human flesh," he said.

"Some bodies were lying on the ground and several people wounded in the blasts were crying in pain. Then ambulances started arriving and moving the injured to hospitals."

"It was a terrorist attack," said Sindh provincial home minister Zulfikar Mirza, who said the government had decided to seal all shrines in the city immediately over security fears.

A bomb attack in July at a popular Sufi site in the eastern city of Lahore killed more than 40 people. Militant Islamists see visits to Sufi shrines and some of the rituals practised by the sect as un-Islamic.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility but the Pakistani Taliban has been blamed for similar bombings in the past.

Karachi shut down yesterday after religious and political parties called on people to protest the attacks in the city.

Shopping centres, gas stations, schools and shops were

closed, and the usually jam-packed roads were deserted.

More than 3,700 people have been killed in a series of suicide attacks and bombings, many of them carried out by the Taliban and other Al-Qaeda-linked extremists, in Pakistan during the past three years.

The United States, whose intensifying campaign of drone strikes against Islamist militants in northwest Pakistan has raised tensions with Islamabad, condemned the attack.

State Department spokesman Mark Toner said Washington stood "shoulder-to-shoulder with Pakistan in its struggle against terrorism".

The United States has dramatically increased drone strikes against militants in the law