# NEWS

# Testimony

FROM PAGE 1 beginning of the end of a plot through which the four national

leaders embraced martyrdom in the early hours that day. With November approach-

ing every year since then, the same old story begins with a fresh appeal for justice, but the killers are yet to be tried. This time around 50 people

including LGRD Minister Syed Ashraful Islam, Home Minister Sahara Khatun, state ministers Shamsul Hoque Tuku and Kamrul Islam and lawmakers Tanjim Ahmed Sohel Taj and Mohammad Nasim visited the building where the heinous killings occurred.

Several witnesses recalling from their memories described the heinous killings following a milad mahfil held there. Among the witnesses,

Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya began: "I was at a loss when I woke up with the hoarse whistles. Within moments Bihari [non-Bengali] jail guard Zabbar called out Qamaruzzaman from his room and Mansur Ali from the adjacent room and took them to Sayed Nazrul Islam and Tajuddin Ahmad's room."

The four leaders were then seated on a bench-like-bed. Around 20 army men rushed in the room immediately and brushed fired them and left the scene leaving three of them dead, Maya continued.

A deadly hush fell on the area, he said, adding, a few moments later a groaning sound and appeal for water in a faint voice came out from the "It was Qamaruzzaman," he

said, adding that they could recognise the voice from the next room which was locked from outside.

Later they came to know that Qamaruzzaman fell on his back with the pulling of the triggers and bullets hit him in the legs nstead of his chest.

One of the jail guards informed the killers that one eader survived the attack. Around 15 minutes later they reappeared and brutally charged bayonets on Qamaruzzaman and the three others who were already dead.

The call for morning prayers came from the mosque around 10 minutes after the killers finally left the scene.

The rest two rooms were

### Volcano erupts in Indonesia

AP, Indonesia

A deadly Indonesian volcano spewing lava and smoke for more than a week erupted yesterday with its biggest blast yet, shooting searing ash miles into the air as soldiers hastily evacuated villages and emergency shelters.

One scientist warned the worst may be yet to come.

More than 70,000 villagers have been evacuated from the 9,700-foot (3,000-metre) Mount Merapi's once-fertile slopes since it began erupting just over a week ago, killing 38 people and injuring dozens,

most with severe burns. There have been more than a dozen strong blasts in recent days including a smaller one yesterday morning prompting some scientists earlier to say pressure building up behind a magma dome in the

crater was slowly easing. Djarot Nugroho, the head of Central Java's disaster management agency, said funding for the refugees would run out in five days unless a national disaster was declared.

#### locked from outside. Blood poured through the drain and was left untreated in the sun all day long that brought forth an air of stinky odour.

"Several personnel from different intelligence agencies with torch lights in their hands arrived on the scene around 2:00am. From outside they assured us that they would conduct post-mortem of the bodies," he added.

At around 10:00am the bodies were handed over to the families concerned.

The three rooms, in which the four leaders were imprisoned, have now been made museum to commemorate their sacrifice.

#### MUSEUM RENOVATED During a visit to the museum

inside the jail it was found that the building was renovated. At the entrance four sculptures of the four national leaders were set up on raised pedestals. Portraits of the four leaders

and different photographs of historic importance were also hanging on the inside walls.

The bench-like-beds, chairs and tables for each of the leaders were preserved in glass boxes fixed on the floors of the respective rooms.

But the utensils used by the four leaders were not found in their rooms.

As many as 25 people including the four leaders were arrested on the night of Shab-e-Barat on August 23, 1975 and were taken to the building which was being used as the storehouse of the jail. After their arrests two walls

were constructed immediately inside, dividing the storehouse into three rooms, which were crammed with the arrestees.

Syed Nazrul Islam and Tajuddin Ahmad were imprisoned in the first room, AHM Qamaruzzaman in the middle and M Mansur Ali in the third with other arrestees.

#### PLEDGE REITERATED Home Minister Sahara Khatun

reasserted her government's pledge to revive the trial of the jail killing cases while talking to reporters following the milad. She said they will request the

court through the law ministry for re-trial as the present government is not pleased with the verdict of the case.

### Hashem Clarke

Michigan Senate, has won a congressional seat to the United States House of Representatives.

After winning the congressional seat, held by Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick for more than 20 years, Clarke said he would try to fulfil the dreams of the people of United States. Clarke was born in Detroit,

Michigan to a Bangladeshi American father, Mozaffar Ali Hashem from Sylhet, and an African American mother, Thelma Clarke.

Clarke visited his village home a few years ago.

His father died when he was a child. Clarke attended Cass Technical High School, and then got admitted to a prestigious east-coast prep school to complete his high school.

Clarke studied at Cornell University, graduating with a degree in fine arts. While at the university, he became interested in politics.

He was elected to the student seat on the Cornell University Board of Trustees and was a member of the Quill and Dagger society. He then earned a law degree from Georgetown Law School in

Clarke worked as chief of staff to US Representative John Convers, as well as in Wayne County during the administration of Edward H McNamara.

### Criminal killed in

'shootout'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged criminal was killed in a 'shootout' between Rapid Action Battalion members and his cohorts in the city's Mohammadpur area early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Shamsher Mobin alias Shimul, 33, a resident of Kamrangirchar area in the capital.

Police said he was accused in eight cases including one for murder. Police sources said a patrol

team of Rab-2 raided a field at Dhaka Udyan in Mohammadpur around 1:00am where Shimul and his accomplices were holding a meeting. Sensing their presence, the

gang opened fire on the elite force members forcing them to retaliate that triggered the 'gunfight', they claimed. Later, the Rab men found

the bullet-hit body of Shimul on the spot. However, his accomplices

fled, they added. Rab members also recov ered a firearm and some bul-

Monsur Ahmed Sohel brother of the victim, however claimed that his brother ran a small business in Shekhertek of Mohammadpur.

He denied the allegation against his brother saying Shimul was not accused in any

The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

#### Hasina renews FROM PAGE 1

She said the previous AL-led government started the trial proceedings of the jail killing case, but after assuming power in 2001 the BNP-Jamaat coalition government did not allow the trial to take its own course. Pointing at Ziaur Rahman

and BNP, she said they helped killers enter the jail and even rewarded them for the killings by sending them abroad and appointing them to different foreign missions.

She also criticised the main opposition saying it created militancy in the country and laundered hundreds of crore abroad in efforts to remain in power permanently. Her government would establish a system so the country's people will be able to vote for the candidates of their choice in the next election.

The prime minister sought people's help to put an end to the politics of killing, coup and conspiracy and urged people to remain alert about the defeated forces and their collaborators.

People voted us to power with much hope, and we are working hard to fulfil their expectations and the pledges we made to them," she noted.

About Khaleda Zia's canton ment residence, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury alluding to Tarique Rahman and Arafat Rahman Koko said the armed forces would not consider allowing the two drug addicts, arms smugglers and money launderers in the military area.

AL General Secretary Syed Ashraful Islam said, "If we fail to eliminate the evil forces from the country, they might try to eliminate us.

Apart from holding the retrial of the murder case of the four leaders, the government would expedite the trial of war criminals and execute the verdicts within its tenure, he

Earlier in the morning, Syed Ashraf told reporters that BNP founder Ziaur Rahman had involvement in the killing of the four leaders.

'His wife Khaleda Zia tried hard to protect the murderers The killers and those who saved them will be brought to justice,

Meanwhile, the prime minister yesterday morning placed wreaths at the national leaders' graves at the Banani graveyard commemorating the Jail Killing Day. She also offered special prayers seeking divine blessings for the departed souls.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashraful Islam and Brig (retd) Shafayet, sons of Syed Nazrul Islam; Tanjim Ahmad Sohel Taj, son of Tajuddin Ahmad; and Mohammad Nasim, son of Mansur Ali, were present there. She also placed wreaths at

the graves of the martyrs of August 15 at the Banani grave-Earlier, the prime minister

began the day's programme by placing wreaths at the portrait of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the city's Dhanmondi.

The four leaders were assassinated inside the Dhaka Central Jail on November 3, 1975, 79 days after the assassination of Bangabandhu and most of his family members.

## WB expresses

**FROM PAGE 16** 

contracts although it supports setting up costly quick rental plants which the government has allowed to face the persisting power crisis.

The Jatiya Sangsad recently enacted the law -- Power & Energy Fast Supply (Special Provision Act) -- aimed at quick generation of power and extraction of gas. World Bank Country

Director Ellen Goldstein said yesterday they want speedy and quick implementation of power projects but at the same time transparency and accountability in the procurement process has to be ensured.

"World Bank believes all procurements should follow in principle transparency and competitiveness," Goldstein said replying to journalists' queries at her office on the occasion of publication of the quarterly report on Bangladesh State of Economy.

The WB is financing Shiddhirganj power plant, primarily planned to be a 300megawatt plant but later upgraded to a 400-MW one.

Citing the example, Goldstein said the government and the WB are going to cut the time limit of procurement process for it to almost half, and complete the process within 4-5 months. This model can be followed in future to ensure speedy implementation of projects in a transparent manner.

The WB report said additional pressure will fall on the budget due to the government initiative to generate power on fast track basis, and also extra cost will have to be borne on account of fuel import. In the current fiscal year

**FROM PAGE 16** 

(2010-11), additional cos could be between Tk 52.4 billion and Tk 55.8 billion. tative. Additional fuel import bill could be between \$300 million

Sanjay Kathuria, lead country economist of the WB, said "Rental power is appropriate as an emergency measure, but this is a trade off. To make trade off worthwhile, appropriate energy sector actions are needed quickly". He also said it is the best as a short-term solution, but in

the long term, the government

will have to take other mea-

to \$350 million.

sures quickly. These include expediting the bidding process for power plants other than rental ones, taking steps so that existing power plants can run smoothly and formulating a coal policy soon. Kathuria stressed that in

the long term improving financial and operational viability of the energy-related institutions is needed. WB senior economist

Zahid Hussain said production cost and consumer price of power increase when it is generated from quick rental plants. But it will cut load shedding which in turn increases productivity of industries. The issue deserves a holis-

tic approach, he said.

Responding to a question on Bangladesh's position in the Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, Goldstein said when many South Asian countries have slid down Bangladesh retained its position. It was a "cold comfort." The country had tremendous scope to do better in many areas but it could not, she

# Arundhati accuses

FROM PAGE 16 Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) women wing. Roy, an award-winning

author and activist, has accused Indian TV channels of whipping up protests against her. About 100 female protesters

from BJP, a Hindu nationalist party, surrounded her residence on Sunday to demonstrate against a speech last month in which she said Kashmir, the disputed Muslim-majority region, had "never been an integral part of India."

She was not at the house during the attack.

Roy said at least three television broadcasting vans were in place before the crowd arrived. The protesters "broke through the gate and vandalised property" as they chanted slogans against her, she said.

"Some TV channels and newspapers are in the process of brazenly inciting mob anger against me," she said in a statement late Sunday.

The TV channels include NDTV, Times Now and News 24. "Does the media which positions itself at the 'scene' in advance have a guarantee that the attacks and demonstrations will be non-violent? What happens if there is criminal trespass (as there was today) or even something worse? Does the media then become accessory to the crime?" her statement

Sahmat, which has among its members social activists like Romila Thapar, KM Shrimali, DN Jha, KN Panikkar, Amiya Kumar Bagchi, MK Raina, Iqtidar Alam Khan, Shireen Moosvi and Irfan Habib, in an official statement also alleged that some news channels had prior intimation on the inci-

"The attack, by elements of the BJP Mahila Morcha on Oct 31, was reportedly carried out after an advance notice was given to three of India's leading English news channels which had their (broadcast) vans parked outside Roy's home," theatre artist and social activist MK Raina said on behalf of

Sahmat. 'We are shocked that the media engagement with this issue has stopped short of an unequivocal defence of free speech. The failure to defend the right to dissent will inevitably fuel vigilante attacks," Raina

Police in Delhi said they were investigating the attack on Ms Roy's house located in the city's diplomatic quarter. Meanwhile, Shika Roy,

president of the local women's wing of the BJP and who led the protest, told reporters: "The protest was organised against Arundhati Roy's remarks on azadi for Kashmir. We chose to protest on Sunday as it happens

### PM sees FROM PAGE 16

Jail Killing Day.

BNP and Jamaat are hatching different kinds of conspiracies against the government and the people. They always take revenge against people when they fail to assume power, Hasina said.

to be the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhai Patel who united the whole country." Arundhati Roy, winner of the

1997 Booker prize for her novel

"The God of Small Things", is a fierce critic of India's tactics in Kashmir where protests against New Delhi have claimed more than 100 lives since June. Her speech led to demands that she should be arrested for

sedition, but police declined to press charges. Kashmir has been beset by anti-India violence, curfews and strikes since early June, when a 17-year-old student was killed by a police tear-gas shell Since then, a total of 111 pro-

A poll published last month showed that a majority in Indian Kashmir favoured independence for their region.

testers and bystanders have

The once-independent kingdom has been fought over since 1947 when its Hindu ruler decided the Muslim majority state should join independent India, rather than the newlycreated Pakistan. An insurgency that gathered

pace after India rigged elections in 1987, combined with an unrelenting response from the Indian authorities that has transformed Kashmir into one of the most militarised places on the planet, has led to the deaths of more than 70,000 people. Most Hindus were forced out or fled.

For many years, Pakistan provided weapons and training to many of the Kashmiri mili-

### BNP demands

FROM PAGE 1 Meanwhile, Home Minister

Sahara Khatun said the incident was a play well orchestrated by the BNP.

"The BNP wants to create drama and it was part of that plan," she said while talking to journalists after visiting a jail museum at Dhaka Central Jail.

Several hundred leaders and workers of BNP and its front organisations demonstrated in front of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's Gulshan office in the wee hours yesterday following a rumour about the arrest of party lawmaker Salauddin Quader Chowdhury. To journalists at the human

Arafat Rahman Koko.

there.

chain programme, Nazrul said the government tried to frighten the party leaders and workers by confining the chairperson in her office but they failed due to protest by party workers. Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal organised the programme

protesting against the issuance of arrest warrant against and the students of both the Khaleda Zia's younger son categories will have to get 33 together from the two sections Party's Senior Joint to pass the exams. Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said the

get 15 minutes extra time. JSC incident proved that the govand JDC examinations will end ernment is not democratic at on November 14 and November 15 respectively. Party leaders Zainul Abdin Education Secretary Dr Farroque, Ruhul Kabir Rizvi,

Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury Fazlur Rahman Patal, Aman and other high officials were Ullah Aman were also present present in the briefing.

### MP Aslam

Asked why he led the drive, Aslamul said he just performed his duty as a people's represen-

As for the basis of the drive, he said he was following the demarcation done by the district administration. When asked whether he has the mandate to conduct an

eviction drive, Aslamul said he

inspector and three constables

during the drive, said they were

taskforce on river recovery, said,

made it an election pledge to aging to the prosecution. solve the drainage problem in Standing in the dock on the area. October 20 this year, replying to "Now I'll call upon the a question of defence lawyers, authorities to continue the Dr Abul Khair said he could not drive." remember from where he had Darussalam Police Station collected samples of the officer-in-charge, who was paracetamol syrup back then present along with a sub-

FROM PAGE 1

The order came 19 years after

the deaths, and just 12 days

Abul Khair -- the complainant

in a case filed in 1992 against

Adflame Pharmaceuticals Ltd

for adulteration of the chil-

dren's medicine leading to the

fatalities -- gave a deposition to

a lower court, which was dam-

that had been tested positive

government organisation,

DDA to report back in four

weeks describing the steps the

National Drug Advisory

Council, and Drug Control

Committee -- two bodies

responsible for ensuring drug

form a high-powered commit-

guideline to stop drug adulter-

upon the government as well,

to explain in four weeks why

the latter should not be

directed to take legal actions

against drug adulteration, and

why its inaction regarding

prevention of the crime should

not be declared illegal.

The court issued a ruling

to stop drug adulteration.

for adulteration.

The damaging deposition of just on protocol duty for the MP. the complainant prompted the Asked for comments about public prosecutor to seek an MP leading a drive, AKM immediate adjournment of the Mozammel Haq, chairman of hearing. parliamentary standing com-Human Rights and Peace mittee on land ministry and a for Bangladesh, a nonmember of the national

then filed a public interest "No comments." litigation on Tuesday following The October 31 drive that newspaper reports on the Aslamul obstructed was incident, resulting in yesterintended to free the 2.5 kiloday's set of directives from the metre long Kalyanpur canal from illegal occupancy of vari-The court also directed the ous kinds, said a magistrate health secretary and the DG of concerned.

The canal stretches between Mirpur main road (Gabtoli) and Kalyanpur sluice gate.

In a similar incident, the authorities on October 18 had to suspend a drive to evict encroachers from Ramchandrapur canal in Mohammadpur in the face of opposition by some freedom fighters. Two days later, the drive along the Kantashur canal was also abandoned for a reason unspecified. PLIGHT OF THE LAND

### OCCUPANTS

Manika Sarkar purchased 3 kathas of land at the canal site for Tk 7.5 lakh in 1998 from PC Culture Housing. She had no idea that there was a canal there, as the housing authorities did not disclose it. "I've received two and a

had to sacrifice the rest for the construction of a road." She said she lost one more katha following the drive.

quarter kathas out of 3 kathas

from the housing company. I

Joseph Modhu, another land claimant, said he purchased land at Tk 1.1 lakh per katha from Turag Housing eight years ago. "They didn't tell us that there was a canal here," he said.

James Samor Chowdhury,

general secretary of a commit-

tee of the plot owners in the

area, said they are helpless now, as the PC Culture Housing seems to be closed down. He said a total of 144 people purchased plots from different housing companies there, 20 of them have been affected in the

The owner of PC Culture Housing died in 2003. Hashem, who took over him, also died nearly four months ago, said Samor.

### **Junior school**

**FROM PAGE 1** 

the education system, he said adding now scholarships would be given on the basis of JSC and IDC results. "Like the SSC examinations,

JSC and JDC exams will be held in uniform question paper with uniform evaluation system so that standardisation can be ensured in the quality of education," Nahid said. Earlier, a small percent of

class VIII students used to sit for the scholarship exam. Teachers had to remain busy with them without giving attention to the other students, he explained. "Now the new examination

system gives an opportunity to all students to attain scholarships," he said.

The number of girls' participation is higher than boys in the first exams. A total of 7,05,272 boys and 8,00,119 girls are taking the exams at 1,804 centres across the country under eight general education boards and one madrasa education

under the eight boards and 2,72,000 students from madrasa board will do the exams, according to the official statistics. All the subjects except Bangla second paper, English

Some 12,33,391 students

first and second papers, and mathematics of general school categories will be held in creative question methods. There will be two sections -objective and written -- in question paper of every subject

and promise of change. The disabled students will

> country backward. But the election results

## **HC** orders

chairman of BCSIR, and the district and sessions judge of after DDA Assistant Director Dr

Dhaka were made respondents to the ruling. "The issue is dangerously hazardous to public health,

and depriving people of their right to survival," said Advocate Manzill Murshid who filed the public interest petition on behalf of the NGO. BACKGROUND The case against Adflame Pharmaceuticals was filed

the same charge against three other drug manufacturing companies at the same time, after government tests had confirmed use of diethylene glycol, a poisonous chemical, in paracetamol syrup produced by them. Proceedings of all four cases, however, were stayed by

HC in 1994. Two of the cases are still stayed in absence of efforts from DDA to vacate the stays, while another case was scrapped by a lower court in 2003 because the allegations could not be proven. When the HC's stay on the

Adflame Pharmaceutical was vacated in 2007, the Dhaka Drug Court, in seeming convenience, lost all relevant papers. An investigation by The Daily Star in 2009 revealed the facts, finally paving the way for

resumption of the trial on

standards in the country --November 11 the same year. have taken in the last two years The health secretary and DDA were also given 15 days to tee comprising representatives of the petitioners and experts on the matter, to formulate a

> The other companies charged with adulteration of the children's drug were Polychem Laboratories Ltd. BCI (Bangladesh) Ltd, and Rex Pharmaceutical

2,700 children died of kidney failures between 1980 and 1992 after intake of allegedly adul-

# A sour warning

ation.

Republicans for months, with voters anxious about a 9.6 unemployment rate, and less than appreciative of policy achievements including healthcare reform and financial services reform.

Obama and the Democrats sought to convince Americans that without measures such as last year's \$814 billion stimulus package the recession would have been even longer and deeper. But Republicans got the upper hand in message delivery

Obama now faces two big challenges -- to get newly empowered Republicans to work with him on measures to revive economic growth, and to find ways to connect with middle-class Americans, many of whom view him as aloof and cerebral.

Fred Greenstein, a presidential historian and professor emeritus at Princeton University, said Obama's "default setting is solving policy problems.

"I think that weakens his political skills," Greenstein said, adding that Obama will need to "invest more time in explaining himself" and his policies to the

### 'BACKAGAINSTTHEWALL'

Obama's first post-election effort at that will come on Wednesday when he holds a news conference at 1 pm EDT (1700 GMT). He is likely to put a focus on jobs and the economy but will also offer a glimpse of how he is digesting his biggest political setback since taking

office in January 2009. If Obama feels the pain of defeat, he is unlikely to show it.

"He's got a reputation of being at his best when his back is against the wall," said Bruce Buchanan, a political scientist at the University of Texas. "Staying relatively unflappable in tough times is a leadership resource although it's not always crowd pleasing." "He's not emotive or

exaggeratedly contrite the way some of his critics might want him to be. But he does he seem to be entirely ready to deal with the reality of the situation but also to assess his own political prospects," Buchanan added. Ahead of Tuesday's vote,

Obama immersed himself in campaigning, trying to rekindle the enthusiasm of his 2008 run for office, when he electrified crowds with his rhetorical ease His task this year was more

prosaic -- to make the case for staying the course. He told voters that his policies to date had represented change for the better and warned that Republicans would move the

implicating six persons. Three other cases were also filed on

proceedings of the case against

DDA is so reluctant and negligent in its duties that it did not take the matter into cognisance even after that. Almost 11 months after the publication of The Daily Star report, the DDA complainant in the case gave the deposition damaging to what was supposed be his own

It is estimated that a total of

The health secretary, DG of DDA, IGP, DG of Rapid Action terated paracetamol syrup Battalion (Rab), MD of BSTI DDA started looking into the and its Testing Unit's director, matter in 1991.

> suggested many were unpersuaded. 'ROLL UPTHEIR SLEEVES' Obama and his aides have been careful over the last few weeks to

say little about the post-election But in interviews, the president has suggested that he will try put Republicans on the spot and challenge them to work with him, rather than to focus

solely on obstruction of his If Republicans decline to work with him, the White House is betting that they will pay the

price in 2012. "I think it's going to be important for Republicans to recognize that the American people aren't simply looking for them to stand on the sidelines; they're going to have to roll up their sleeves and get to work,

Obama said in an interview with the National Journal last month. In a phone call after the results, Obama told John Boehner, the likely next Speaker of the House of Representatives that he looked forward to finding common ground with Republicans to "move the country forward and get things done for the American people.' He conveyed the same message

in a call to Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell. CLINTON, REAGAN ... OBAMA? During the 2008 campaign Obama promised -- as many

before him -- a new era of 'postpartisan' politics. But Republicans complain they have been shut out over the last two years as Obama shielded himself behind his big Democratic majorities in

presidential hopefuls have

Congress to push his agenda through. Now he doesn't have a choice as he gets to work on what will likely be far less ambi-

His predicament is difficult but not impossible. Presidents Bill Clinton and

tious legislative goals.

Ronald Reagan both had approval ratings close to -- and even lower than -- the 45 per cent level where Obama's popularity now stands and both suffered big midterm setbacks in congressional elections. But both presidents went on

to win re-election. "Obama has his haters but his job approval and

favourability are higher than Reagan and Clinton at a comparable point in their presidency,' said Thomas Mann, a scholar at the Brookings Institution think tank. "Obama will bounce back if and when the economy picks up some steam and he successfully manages an end to the increasingly unpopular war in Afghanistan."

### Pilots' strike Biman had to spend Tk 17.77

lakh and Tk 33 lakh for accommodation of 891 stranded passengers at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport and 320 more at the Dubai International Airport in the UAE, said the Biman board chairman.

Moreover, a number of Dhaka-bound passengers remained stranded in Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Singapore, Muscat, Riyadh, Kuwait, London, Chittagong and several other airports, said a Biman official at the accounts section. "We will be able to overcome the losses in terms of

money. But the national car-

rier's reputation tarnished

due to the cancellation of

flights will be hard to regain,"

said a Biman high-up preferring anonymity. The Biman authority and the pilots came on a collision course after the airline on September 9 decided to increase the retirement age of pilots from 57 to 62 years but left them out of rehabilitation and insurance benefits in case of loss of licence for medical

In early October, some pilots challenged the Biman

decision at the High Court.

On October 21, most pilots threatened to stop flying extra hours if the airline did not withdraw the order. They launched a protest programme the next day. The pilots said they would not give any concession on working

hours and other services laid

down in the agreement

between Biman and

Bangladesh Airline Pilots' Association. The situation worsened on October 26 after the Biman authority withdrew four pilots from flight duty on the grounds of passengers' safety saying the pilots were not "physically and mentally fit"

day decided not to fly any aircraft unless Biman withdrew the suspension against the four pilots and the decision on pilots' retirement age. They called off the strike on

Bapa members the same

to fly aircraft.

October 29 after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina assured them of looking into their demands.