

## Georgia opposition protests enter fifth day

AFP, Tbilisi

Protests aimed at ousting Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili entered a fifth day yesterday although turnout dwindled as several opposition parties stayed away.

Some 200 activists maintained their vigil outside the public television studios in the ex-Soviet state's capital yesterday morning, where they have blocked a main road and set up a makeshift stage.

Accusing Saakashvili of authoritarianism, opposition party leader Nino Burjanadze has promised that yesterday will "determine Georgia's future" and is vowing to occupy another central square in Tbilisi.

But amid bitter divisions within the opposition, a rival party has cancelled plans to boost the demonstrations by holding what it promised would be an Arab-style "Day of Rage".

Looking increasingly dishevelled after round-the-clock protests since Saturday, many of the activists are armed with sticks after brief clashes at the weekend.

They have put up large posters highlighting the alleged injustices and failures of the Saakashvili government, including the country's disastrous defeat in its war with arch-foe Russia in 2008.

## Kamal denies

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[journalists] can," said Kamal, also known as Lotus Kamal, when asked about his connection in the capital market debacle.

"Many accusations were brought against me during the last caretaker government. But I was acquitted of all the cases though I was considered the main suspect. So I don't count any such allegations."

Kamal, an Awami League lawmaker, added that the market index did not fall for his comment or action during the turmoil in the capital market from late last year till early this year.

The probe report on the market debacle mentioned that the share price of CMC Kamal, one of his firms, was revalued in 2009 and 2010. The probe team also identified some reasons behind that.

On this, he said the report said those were all predictions.

The House body will sit in a special meeting after the budget session to discuss the market collapse where he will explain his position on the allegations brought against him.

The meeting will be presided over by Ali Ashraf instead of him.

About yesterday's discussion, Lotus Kamal said the parliamentary body recommended the finance minister not to make tax identification number (TIN) mandatory to maintain BO (beneficiary owner) account or impose fresh tax on the income from stockmarket.

"Tax on dividend income should be reduced to 10 percent from 20 percent at individual and corporate levels, while no tax should be imposed on BO account," he said.

The committee also recommended lowering corporate and individual income tax.

## No new tax

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decided to give more time to the banks that are failing to bring their exposure limit to merchant banks down to the permitted level by June, sources said.

Many banks lent above 15 percent of their total capital to merchant banks, which were invested in the stockmarket, making the parent companies vulnerable to potential shocks in the market.

The meeting asked the central bank to issue an order in this regard.

Earlier, the central bank set June as the deadline for banks to bring down their exposure limit.

The meeting also decided that two more members will be appointed to the SEC after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina returns home from her tour abroad, according to sources.

## Rajuk to clamp

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offenders, who have either deviated from the approved design of proposed buildings or violated the Building Construction Act some other way.

Asked, why the mobile courts do not take action against pending issues of such violation, for instance, BGMEA building, Huda said that it was not possible to take any action against them due to status quo of the Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, Rajuk chairman yesterday visited the city's Nakhhalpara construction site that subsided in the early hours of Saturday.

During his visit, Huda said that vulnerability of the buildings adjoining the site would go away with the completion of earth filling by today.

Islamic Trading Consortium Ltd (ITCL) was doing the groundwork at the site to build a three-layer basement car park for a proposed 14-storey Impulse Medical College and Hospital on a 2.9-acre land.

But the retaining wall of the pit dug for the foundations crumbled resulting in the cave-in and collapse of three corrugated iron sheet houses.

Part of a road subsided and cracks appeared on the adjoining structures including two five-storey residential buildings.

The position of the five-storey building to the north of the site is now stable, said

Huda adding that the other structure to the west will also become safe by today.

This correspondent in a visit to the site yesterday morning found the collapsed part of the road was restored.

Lt Col MA Mohy of the army engineering corps said that the road will become usable for locals by today.

A team of army engineers had been mobilised at the site on that day, and they immediately started filling up the 46-foot deep pit of the shore piling with sand to prevent further collapse of any nearby structure.

The affected residents at a press conference on Tuesday said that authorities of Impulse Hospital went on with faulty foundation work defying locals' safety concerns.

Rajuk and locals filed a total of seven cases against Impulse authorities and engineers with Tejgaon Industrial Area Police Station following the incident.

Meanwhile, Prof Zaheer Al-Amin, managing director of Impulse Medical College and Hospital, at a press conference yesterday said that the hospital authorities were sensitive to concerns expressed by residents around the project.

They had complied with all the rules and awarded the construction work to a first class contractor, He added.

## Plane crash in India kills ten

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Ten people including all seven onboard a small civil chartered aircraft were killed when the medical ambulance flight to Delhi from Patna crashed into a densely-populated residential area near Faridabad, about 30km from here, due to bad weather last night.

Faridabad's Sub Divisional Magistrate Pradeep said the incident occurred when the P-12 turboprop aircraft belonging to Delhi-based Air Chartered Services India Pvt Limited crashed in Jawaharnagar locality shortly before landing at Indira Gandhi International airport in Delhi.

Two persons were also injured in the crash.

The persons who lost their lives on the ground are believed to be residents of the houses hit by the plane.

According to Delhi airport sources, the airplane lost control and nosedived from a height of about 8,000 feet 15 minutes before landing. There was strong gusty wind due to a dust-storm at the time of the crash.

The plane caught fire as soon as it crashed on two houses.

The airplane was ferrying a critically ill patient to Apollo Hospital in New Delhi.

Besides the two pilots, two doctors and two medical attendants accompanying the patient were on board.

## Ex-MP Hashem

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Anisul Haq and sought bail in the case.

The six others include Hashem's wife Sultana Hashem, his four sons Aziz-al Kaiser, Aziz-al Mahmud, Aziz-al Masud, Ashfaq Aziz and Joyal Abedin, general manager (finance and accounts) of the company.

The court fixed June 12 for the next hearing.

The court also issued an arrest warrant against Shawkat Aziz, Hashem's son, as he did not appear before the court on health grounds.

On May 10, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) filed the case against them for dodging tax amounting to Tk 13 crore from fiscal years 2005-2006 to 2008-2009.

In the complaint, Deputy Tax Commissioner of the NBR Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman stated Hashem and others concealed information about the income of Tk 53.64 crore in their tax returns and also provided false information about the expenditure of the company.

Two more tax evasion cases were filed against the accused.

## PM pledges

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employment of one member from every poor family, and implementing a "National Services Policy" for two years' service for youths, among others.

"Our success in reducing child mortality by 50 percent was recognised by an MDG Award during the 65th UNGA. We are on track on other MDGs, especially on poverty alleviation, universal primary education and gender equality," she said.

Hasina said Bangladesh is speedily implementing ICT Act and ICT Policy 2009. Internet service is now free for schools, training colleges and local government institutions.

The PM informed the audience that climate change and global warming is the biggest threat for Bangladesh.

She said that to mobilise support against this challenge, she has been meeting Bangladesh's friends all over the world and has also been seeking their support to eliminate poverty and weed out terrorism and extremism from secular Bangladesh.

"The purpose of my life now is to serve my people, my country, and realise my father's dream of 'Sonar Bangla' or golden Bangladesh," Hasina said.

Members of the academia, scholars and students of the university were present at the function.

## Marooned for over a year

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weather at the port where temperature goes as high as over 40 degrees Celsius. Besides, the air coolers of the cabins became dysfunctional due to lack of maintenance.

"We have lost our patience. Some of us are getting sick," the chief officer said from the port, 38 kilometres southwest of Kuala Lumpur.

Capt Shahjahan Siraj, general manager of the ship's owning company HRC Shipping in Chittagong, said the company tried to replace the stranded Bangladeshis in efforts to release them but failed. No seaman from here agreed to go to the ship.

"We hope to release them in a month. The Bangladeshis seamen are passing days in uncertainty while their families at home are anxious too," he said over the phone.

Muslehuddin said following the 2008 incident the port authorities tried to resolve the matter through negotiations

with HRC Shipping but the owning firm did not cooperate. The company's official in the Port Klang even did not attend a meeting convened by the port chairman.

The port authorities then resorted to filing a case. When MV Banga Biraj went to the port last year carrying ceramic materials, port police seized it upon unloading the ship.

Muslehuddin said none of the crew aboard the ship now worked when the accident took place.

He said they are getting only \$3.50 food allowance each day.

"We requested the company many times to increase the food allowance as food price is sky high. But the company did not listen to us."

The crewmen agreed to pay their repatriation cost, but the company did not pay heed to them.

"We feel totally helpless here," the officer said adding salaries of the officers are

pending for eight months while those of the crewmen for five months.

Siraj of HRC Shipping said they have tried to get the ship released against a bank warrant, but to no avail.

Usually under such circumstances, the case continues but the ship is released, he said. The owning firm is counting Tk 1 crore loss a month due to the seizure of the ship.

The company is putting all efforts into bringing the seamen back home, Siraj said. The company has already appointed two Indonesians to take care of the ship, while in the last six months 14 Bangladeshis seamen were released.

Malaysian newspaper The Star reported on Tuesday that the poor living condition on the MV Banga Biraj forced one crewman to attempt suicide while another claimed his wife in Dhaka had threatened to leave him.

## Babar, 13 others

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Indian national Abdul Aziz Batt alias Abdul Majed are going to be included in the charge sheet of Kibria murder case, said Rafiqul, also ASP of the Criminal Investigation Department.

The others are Mufti Mainuddin Sheikh alias Abu Zandal; Harkat-ul Jihad (Huji) kingpin Mufti Abdul Hannan; his brother Muhibullah alias Ovi; Huji operatives Sharif Shahedul Alam Bipul; Hafez Syed Nayeem Ahmed Arif; Badrul Alam Mizan; Mizanur Rahman; Moulana Taj Uddin, brother of ex-BNP deputy minister Abdus Salam Pintu; Mufti Shafiqur Rahman; Mufti Abdul Hai; Mohammad Ali and Badrul Alam Badrul.

In an instant reaction, Asma Kibria, wife of the slain former finance minister, said she would not accept the charge sheet, as it does not contain the name of the mastermind behind the killing.

The CID remanded Babar and interrogated him in February last year with links to Kibria murder. The former state minister was shown arrested in the case.

Rafiqul told The Daily Star that he did not find evidence against 10 people, who were accused in the first charge sheet submitted by previous IO Atiqur Rahman.

However, their names are on the supplementary charge sheet, as it is up to the court to decide on their exclusion from the list, he said.

Shah AMS Kibria, also former Awami League lawmaker from Habiganj, was

killed in a grenade attack on a rally in Baidyer Bazar in Habiganj on January 27, 2005. His nephew Shah Manzur Huda, local AL leader Abdur Rahim, Abul Hossain and Siddique Ali were also killed in the attack.

District AL Organising Secretary Abdul Mazid Khan filed two cases -- one for murder and the other under Explosives Substances Act -- with the Habiganj Police Station the next day.

Sylhet Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal Judge Biplob Goswami started the trial and framed charges against ten people. But the High Court stayed the trial following an appeal from the complainant.

The then BNP-led government formed a probe committee to investigate the attack and the home ministry made Atiqur Rahman the IO of the two cases.

The probe body submitted its report in April 2005 accusing ten people including some local BNP leaders and grassroots activists.

They are district BNP vice president Abdul Quayyum, Juba Dal leader Zainal Abedin Jalal, Zamir Ali, Tajul Islam, Zainal Abedin Mumin, Shahed Ali, Selim Ahmed, Ayat Ali, Muhibur Rahman and Kajol Mia.

The charge-sheeted accused were released on bail during the tenure of the last caretaker government. One of them died later.

The IO submitted a charge sheet on March 10, 2005 against the same ten people and the two probe reports were identical.

The plaintiff of the two

cases and Kibria's family repeatedly expressed "no confidence" in the probe and called for further investigation.

Following an appeal from the complainant, the High Court gave an order to probe the case further. The new IO found banned militant outfit Huji's link with the attack.

The IO said the perpetrators were determined to kill Kibria. They held several secret meetings in the capital and Habiganj before carrying out the attack.

Rafiqul said Babar made arrangements for Moulana Taj Uddin to sneak out of Bangladesh using a fake name days after law enforcers arrested Mufti Hannan.

Badrul Alam Mizan was arrested from Habiganj on October 1, 2006 following Mufti Hannan's statement. Mizan admitted that he had joined the operation on Mufti Hannan's instructions, the IO said.

## 2 cops

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On March 20 this year, the two policemen asked Shafiqul Islam Ranju to come out of his Senpara residence and hauled him off to Mirpur Police Station, Ranju alleged in the complaint.

There they released him after extorting Tk 10,000 and threatening him not to disclose the matter, he said.

On March 27, Ranju filed a case against the accused with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka.

The court then ordered a judicial inquiry into the matter.

## EC for state funding for parties

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defence forces engaged in election duties with the authority to arrest anybody without warrant within the radius of 400 yards of the polling stations on election day.

Authorising the EC to annul polls result if a candidate is found guilty of suppressing or giving false information in the affidavit, introduction of electronic voting machines, reducing the punishment for electoral offences so that executive magistrate can try offenders, cancellation of political parties' registration for violation of laws are also in the proposal.

The EC also prepared two other drafts, a new law on redrawing the boundaries of parliamentary constituencies and another act detailing the procedure for the appointment of its chief election commissioner and election commissioners in a transparent way and beyond controversy.

If the draft on state funding is translated into law keeping the condition unchanged, the ruling Awami League will get the highest amount of money from the state coffers for its massive victory in the December 29, 2008, elections.

The Awami League won 230 seats alone obtaining over 49 percent of the popular vote, BNP got 30 with over 33 percent popular vote,

Jatiya Party 27 with seven percent vote, Jamaat-e-Islami two seats with around five percent votes cast across the country.

The parties figures will increase if the fact that they did not have candidates in all 300 constituencies in the last polls is added to the equation. They shared seats with their alliance partners.

Workers Party of Bangladesh won two seats, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) won three but their candidates used electoral symbols of the Awami League. Similarly, Jatiya Party of Bangladesh won one seat using the electoral symbol of BNP.

The poll performance of other parties was very poor. Twenty-five small political parties that fielded 716 candidates in the last polls bagged only 2.38 percent of the total votes.

No candidate of 25 parties won any seat. Moreover, most of the candidates of the parties lost their security deposits due to poor results.

The draft law imposed some conditions for getting and using the fund. The political parties will send lists to the EC of their candidates who would take state funding in the polls. No political party can use the fund for other purposes.

On completion of the polls, the parties and candidates will have to submit statements to the EC on the expenditures. The office of

the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) will audit the accounts of the political parties and the statements submitted to the EC after the polls, says the draft law.

The proposed legislation also empowers people and organisations to file complaints with the EC if any political party or candidate misuses the state fund.

It also empowers the EC to organise meetings where all contesting candidates gather on one stage and talk to the voters. This is intended to encourage electoral debates.

If any candidate or party taking the state fund refuses to attend such programmes, they will be considered ineligible to get the state fund and will have to refund, says the draft law.

If any party or candidate boycotts the elections, they will have to refund, it says. The Daily Star obtained copies of the draft laws and proposals for electoral reforms.

Talking to reporters yesterday at his office, Election Commissioner Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakhawat Hossein said the EC hoped all parties will join the talks to bring necessary changes to the electoral laws.

He said the EC would finalise the proposals for electoral reforms in consultation with the political parties and then will send the proposals to the government for making it a law.

## Asma Kibria

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chargesheet.

With tears in her eyes she said she told the home minister and the attorney general that she will have to resort to protest demonstrations if the charge sheet is not revised.

Meanwhile, confusion was created yesterday over submission of the charge sheet to Habiganj Judicial Magistrate's Court.

The police authorities at first said the IO submitted the charge sheet yesterday afternoon.

But within an hour police retracted their earlier statement and said the charge sheet could not be submitted as the judicial magistrate was not available at the court yesterday.

The Criminal Investigation Department, and Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder also said the charge sheet was scheduled to be submitted yesterday but due to a necessity for its further scrutiny, it finally could not be submitted.

CID Chief Mokhlesur Rahman told BBC last night, "The charge sheet could not be submitted today, although all preparations were almost over."

The police authorities' return from their earlier claim came soon after Asma Kibria talked to Home Minister Sahara Khatun and Attorney General Mahubey Alam over the phone.

"I will have no other option but to stage a demonstration if the charge sheet is not revised. I know it will be embarrassing for me as well as for the government, but I don't care, I will do anything to bring out the names of the big fishes who were behind the killing of my husband," Asma Kibria told The Daily Star with tears rolling down her cheeks.

"In the charge sheet, they identified some hired killers, but we want to know the names of the masterminds who ordered the killing," she added.

"I even requested the government, if they are not able to identify the masterminds, they should seek assistance from foreign experts," she said.

Shah AMS Kibria was also a leader of ruling Awami League.

## Govt acts

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association yesterday.

"We will increase BRTC bus services in different city routes to improve mass transport system," he said, adding the number of bus stoppages will also be increased simultaneously.

Meanwhile, Dhaka Sarak Paribahan Samity yesterday urged all bus operators to implement the government-fixed fares.

In a press statement, General Secretary of the organisation K Enayet Ullah said that out of around 150 bus companies, 12 to 14 who are not members of the samity, have been overcharging passengers.

He urged the government to take stern action against those bus companies immediately.

As on other days, most of the bus operators were overcharging passengers yesterday, ignoring the government-fixed fare rates. And CNG-run three-wheeler operators were charging fares at will taking advantage of the government focus on checking extra bus fares.

Earlier on Monday, the HC asked the authorities concerned to prevent transport operators from collecting extra fares, and directed the communications secretary to set up several mobile courts in the capital to stop the malpractice.

Of the seven mobile courts deployed yesterday, Dhaka district administration provided five to the BRTA to strengthen vigilance. Two mobile courts of the BRTA were operating since May 17, a day after the government fixed bus fare rates, which came into effect on May 19.

The BRTA deputy director said all the mobile courts have been asked to check overcharging of passengers both by the operators of buses and CNG-run three-wheelers. The main focus of yesterday's drive was on bus services.

"As we have remained busy with checking overcharging of passengers by bus services, CNG-run three-wheeler operators have gone crazy paying no heed to the government decision on transport fares..."

We will also focus on the three-wheelers from tomorrow [today]," BRTA Magistrate SM Rezaul Karim told The Daily Star.