

## President

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Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) came to an end.

Now, the polls for the bifurcated DCC must be held within 90 days, by the end of February next.

On Tuesday, parliament hurriedly passed the bill on splitting DCC into two zones by bringing changes into the Local Government (City Corporation) Act, 2009, ignoring widespread criticisms and protests.

The changes in the act took effect soon as the president gave his consent to the bill yesterday afternoon, said a senior official of the parliament secretariat, adding that the copy of the law was sent to press in the evening to have it published in the official gazette.

On the day the bill was passed, Local Government Minister Syed Ashraf Islam announced that the government would appoint administrators to the DCC offices.

However, it is still to unravel whether the government will appoint the administrators now or wait till the disposal of a writ petition filed by Khoka. The outgoing mayor on Wednesday filed a writ petition with the High Court (HC) challenging legality of the amendments brought to the city corporation law.

In response, the HC issued a rule upon the government and the Election Commission to explain in four weeks why the bill should not be declared illegal and unconstitutional.

The HC bench of Justice Farid Ahmed and Justice Sheikh Hassan Arif, however, kept from ordering a status quo on holding of the offices by the mayor and councilors.

Although the tenure of the DCC mayor and its councilors expired in 2007, the government could not hold polls for the city corporation. One of the major reasons behind this is the state of emergency in 2007-2008.

Meanwhile, President Zillur Rahman yesterday also signed into laws five more bills, including the one for bringing amendments to the Upazila Parishad Act.

## Climate fund

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some other Latin American countries want an informal session to settle this issue.

"As the situation is now, I feel that everything is very fluid," said Dr QK Ahmed, coordinator of the Bangladesh delegation. "The US has not made it clear what issues need to be reviewed. I don't think anything on the fund would happen in the Durban conference."

But that would mean a major setback for countries like Bangladesh and other climate vulnerable nations.

"Right now, we need a global figure like Bill Clinton who would intervene and get things straightened out," said Dr Asaduzzaman, a negotiator of the Bangladesh team. "Unfortunately, we don't see anyone at this moment."

Against such a backdrop, the EU has made a positive statement that it wants to see the Green Climate Fund board in operation as soon as next year.

"In the context of a satisfactory outcome on the green climate fund as well as the overall package from Durban, we want to see the board start as early as 2012," said the chief climate negotiator for the EU and Poland Tomasz Chruszczow, at a press briefing.

Meantime, Mishba-ul Alam, environment secretary, told the media that Bangladesh has proposed to set aside 50 percent of the GCF for adaptation, a big increase from the original plan of 17 percent.

This proposal has been incorporated in the form of 'balanced distribution' in the transitional committee's report.

Despite such pessimism, some progress is being observed in the areas of other financial mechanism under subsidiary body for implementation (SBI) for the LDCs. It would take a long time for the LDCs to know whether they are getting funds under LDC fund. But now talks are in progress to shorten the time for accessing the funds. A set of criteria is being discussed for easy and smooth fund availability.

## 'Enough is enough'

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spilling even a single drop of any civilian or soldier's blood," The News newspaper yesterday quoted Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar as telling a Senate committee on foreign affairs.

"Pakistan's role in the war on terror must not be overlooked," Khar said, suggesting Pakistan could end its support for the US war on militancy. Despite opposition at home, Islamabad backed Washington after the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States.

The US Embassy released a video statement on YouTube by Ambassador Cameron Munter in which he expressed regret for the attack.

He said the United States took the attack "very seriously" and pledged "a full, in-depth investigation."

"Pakistan and the US have stood together for over 60 years," he said. "We have weathered previous crises together. I'm certain we will weather this one too, and emerge, together, as stronger partners."

But events seemed to be working against lowering tensions. Two Pakistani men were killed in Afghanistan early yesterday and Pakistani border guards said NATO may have been responsible.

The officials said the two men, who were from the town of Chagai in the Pakistani province of Baluchistan, were gathering wood 30 km inside Afghanistan. They said NATO helicopters fired on their vehicle.

NATO helicopters and fighter jets attacked two military border posts in northwest Pakistan on Saturday in the worst incident of its kind since 2001.

The precise sequence of events surrounding the incident remained in dispute. While Islamabad says there was no provocation to justify firing on two Pakistani outposts, Afghan and Western

## 74 people

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said they were accompanying their kids. But we got suspicious of their gestures and movements," the official said, requesting anonymity.

On questioning, they admitted that they were flying in the hope of finding jobs in Malaysia.

All of them were released later in the night, immigration police told The Daily Star.

Those children who had their genuine guardians accompany them were allowed to fly.

A company named UCMARF arranged their visas, immigration police said, adding that they were yet to collect further information about the company.

An organised gang took the chance to send them following the Malaysian government's announcement relating to a legalisation of illegal Bangladeshi workers in the country, the official said.

Officials, however, could not immediately identify the "gang".

They said they had alerted the Special Branch of police about the matter and sought its help in ferreting out the culprits.

## India test-fires

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missile powered by solid propellants was test fired from a mobile launcher from a launch pad of the Integrated Test Range, said Indian defence sources.

Describing the trial as successful, a senior official said it met the mission objectives.

The Strategic Force Command of the army, as part of their training exercise, executed the trial with logistic support provided by Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO), said an official of DRDO.

Agni-I missile has a specialised navigation system, which ensures the missile reaches targets with a high degree of accuracy, he said.

The trajectory of the missile, was tracked by sophisticated radars and electro-optic telemetry stations located along the coast and ships positioned near the impact point in the downrange area.

The 15-metre Agni-I, weighing 12 tonnes and carrying payloads up to 1000 kg, has already been inducted into the Indian Army.

officials have reportedly accused Pakistani forces of firing first.

The top US military officer denied allegations by a senior Pakistani army official that the NATO attack was a deliberate act of aggression.

General Martin Dempsey, chairman of the US military's Joint Chiefs of Staff, told Reuters in an interview: "The one thing I will say publicly and categorically is that this was not a deliberate attack."

Protests have taken place in several cities every day since the NATO strike along the poorly-defined border, where militants often plan and stage attacks.

Pakistan military sources said Islamabad had cancelled a visit by a 15-member delegation, led by the Director General of the Joint Staff, Lieutenant-General Mohammad Asif, to the United States that was to have taken place this week.

## Delhi reassures

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project as two advisers to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday met the Indian ministers for water resources and power, and the National Security Adviser in New Delhi.

Hasina's advisers Gowher Rizvi and Mashiur Rahman are in the Indian capital as part of regular consultations to review the status of bilateral relations.

They had discussions with Indian Water Resources Minister Pawan Kumar Bansal and Power Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde about ways to implement the decisions the two countries had taken on water sharing of common rivers and the power sector.

Tipaimukh figured prominently during the advisers' meeting with Bansal, Shinde and National Security Adviser Shivshankar Menon, said sources.

The Indian ministers and Menon told the advisers that the Tipaimukh project on the Barak river would in no way harm Bangladesh's interests, as it is only a power plant and does not entail diversion of river water, added the sources.

The two advisers declined to give details of the meeting, and described it as a "mere courtesy call".

India had expressed readiness to discuss the issues involving the project after Bangladesh wrote to India last week for holding talks on the Tipaimukh issue.

## HIV cases

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infected with HIV and AIDS this year, the minister added.

The minister urged religious leaders, teachers, students and the youth force to come forward and create awareness about HIV/AIDS in the society and reduce the number of people infected with the virus to zero.

Dr Abdul Waheed, line director of National AIDS/STD Programme, presented the keynote paper, which showed the rise of HIV/AIDS infected patients is highest in Dhaka and Chittagong.

Based on occupation, migrant workers (31 percent) are mostly infected, he said.

In the presentation Waheed said, 24,00,000 in India, 7,40,000 in China, 98,000 in Pakistan, 64,000 in Nepal, 1,000 in Bhutan and 5,30,000 people in Myanmar are infected with HIV/AIDS.

He focused on some risk factors for HIV/AIDS in Bangladesh including not using sterilised injections, unprotected sexual contact, blood transfusion, injection of drugs, external and internal migration and high HIV prevalence in neighbouring countries with porous borders.

Humayun Kabir, secretary to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Prof Dr Khandaker Md Sefyettullah, director general of DGHS, Arthur Erken, UNFPA representative, Abu Yusuf Choudhury, chairperson of STD/AIDS Network also spoke at the seminar.

Meanwhile, different organisations including Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha, Sushasoner Jonno Procharavijan and Nari Unnayan Shakti organised programmes to observe the day.

## 2 trampled to death by elephant

A CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A woman and her grandchild were trampled to death by an elephant in Chokoria upazila of Cox's Bazar early yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Alkum Ara Begum, 45, wife of Rahamat Ulla of Chemchhari village, and her granddaughter Zamira Begum, 12.

An elephant attacked the house of Alkum Ara around 12:30am, leaving the victims dead on the spot, said witnesses.

Police recovered the bodies around 9:00am.

## Two killed

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when the microbus rammed their rickshaw from behind and flung them on Mirpur embankment, Shah Ali police said.

In a flash, the microbus ran over and killed the child, as the mother watched helplessly. Angry locals seized the microbus, caught its driver and handed him over to the police.

In a separate accident, Ramzan Ali, 60, was killed and Abdul Khaleque, 58, injured when a speeding minibus hit them in front of the capital's Jagannath University around 5:00am.

The two men had been waiting for a bus to go to Tongi, said officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station.

They were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared Ramzan dead.

Police have seized the minibus while the driver and his assistant fled.

## PM to visit

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During her three-day visit to Myanmar, the prime minister is scheduled to lay foundation stone of the Bangladesh Chancery Building in Nay Pyi Taw, foreign ministry sources said.

She will visit Gems Museum, Pyithu Hluttaw (parliament house) and the historic Uppatahandi Pagoda and White Elephant.

Hasina will leave Myanmar for Indonesia on December 7 to reach Bali in the evening.

She will attend the two-day international democracy conference styled "Bali Democracy Forum (BDF) IV" on December 8-9 at Westin Resort Nusa Dua.

Fifteen heads of state are set to attend the event, with 54 participating countries from the Asia Pacific region including Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, Brunei Darussalam, Qatar and Sri Lanka.

Hasina is expected to return home in the afternoon on December 9.

## Ex-adviser's

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Second Joint District Judge's Court passed the order as the two defendants did not follow the rules and provisions of the Civil Procedure Code (CPC) while filing the petition.

The petition seeking cancellation of the judgment was submitted by the defendants' counsel Anwar Zahid Bhuiyan on November 14.

On November 3 this year, the judge delivered the verdict following a lawsuit filed by Everest Enterprise in 2009 demanding Tk 25 crore in compensation.

Earlier on September 1, 2009, Mohammad Shahadat Hossain, proprietor of Everest Enterprise filed the lawsuit against the two after the Tender Evaluation Committee dropped Everest as the lowest bidder, from the bidding process on November 20, 2008.

Shahadat alleged his company was dropped by the committee without showing any convincing reason which caused his firm to incur a loss of Tk 25 crore.

The petition mentioned that the lawsuit was dismissed on March 21 this year, as the plaintiff did not turn up at the court on several consecutive dates.

However, the judge revived the suit on May 5 upon an appeal submitted by the plaintiff without notifying the defendants.

## 25 ministers, MPs complicit

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following October 2001.

Sahara said of the 5,571 complaints lodged with the commission, 3,625 complaints of major offences had been probed.

Sources in the commission said of those, 355 incidents involved political murders while 3,270 involved rape, arson, looting and other crimes.

The alleged perpetrators of the crimes include former ministers Ruhul Quddus Talukder Dulu, Abdus Salam Pintu, Matiur Rahman Nizami, Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, Tariqul Islam and Maj (retd) Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, and former lawmakers of the BNP and Jamaat.

Sahara said the government would help victims file lawsuits against people alleged to have been involved in the crimes, but if the victims were afraid to file the cases, the government would on its own do the job.

Since the commission in its report mentioned that many victims had sought financial help from it, the government would help them financially according to its capacity, she said.

The commission members visited the spots where the atrocities allegedly occurred, took photographs and collected evidence, along with details of the alleged perpetrators and their victims.

State Minister for Home Shamsul Haque Tuku told the press briefing that none but the rapists of Purnima Rani Shil, a schoolgirl in Sirajganj, had been put behind bars this year. They all had links to the post-polls violence.

According to the prosecution, the 11 convicts forcibly took Purnima Rani Shil to a lonely place and gang-raped her on October 8, 2001.

The criminals also beat up Purnima's family members for protesting the incident.

Later, Nirmul Committee, a rights body, took her to Dhaka and held a press conference on October 20, 2001 seeking exemplary punishment for the rapists.

Purnima's mother Basona Rani Shil told the press that the crime was committed by local gangsters of the BNP on October 8, 2001.

Purnima is one of nearly 200 women from the minority Hindu community who were allegedly gang-raped by the cadres of the then ruling BNP-Jamaat alliance over a period of 15 months.

The Daily Star, it may be noted, had run a series of reports on the post-polls violence.

Tuku said the culprits subjected these people to torture, considering them to be loyal to the Awami League.

Citing a few incidents, Tuku said Rojua, a minor girl in Bagmara, Rajshahi, was kidnapped and raped because her brother was an Awami League activist.

He also mentioned the gang-rape of Jyotsna, a minor girl in Gaffargaon, whose family members were AL activists.

Talking about several incidents of post-polls violence in Bhola, commission sources in April told The Daily Star that former water resources minister Maj (retd) Hafiz Uddin Ahmed and his men had picked up one of their rivals and shot him dead after the 2001 polls.

In another incident, Hafiz and his men forced another of his rivals to strip naked and walk through a local market.

Hafiz, however, refuted the allegations and challenged the commission's

findings.

Former home minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, one of the alleged perpetrators of the violence which occurred after the October 2001 elections, told The Daily Star last night, "The so-called probe report is nothing but an attempt to malign my character."

"The report is politically motivated and concocted."

"What they have mentioned about me in the report is a blatant lie. The Awami League had appointed a partisan judge and persons loyal to the party to prepare a fictitious report against me and other BNP leaders in the name of investigation."

Maj (retd) Hafiz Uddin echoed Altaf's views on the findings.

He, however, acknowledged that some incidents of torture on members of the Hindu community had happened in his constituency after the 2001 polls.

"I had helped the authorities concerned arrest the persecutors, and they are now in jail," he said.

The High Court had directed the government to form a judicial probe commission following a writ petition filed on behalf of Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh on May 6, 2009.

The three-member commission, headed by retired district judge Mohammad Sahabuddin, was formed on December 27, 2009 to probe the atrocities against members of minority communities and opposition parties after the 2001 election, which returned the BNP to power.

The victims of the crimes, their family members and witnesses gave depositions to the commission.

Sahara said the government had already taken an initiative to file cases against the alleged persecutors.

## Animals predict

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investigate these chemical effects after seeing a colony of toads abandon its pond in L'Aquila, Italy, in 2009--days before a quake.

They suggest that animal behaviour could be incorporated into earthquake forecasting.

The team's findings are published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health.

Animals that live in or near groundwater are highly sensitive to any changes in its chemistry, so they might sense this days before the rocks finally "slip" and cause a quake.

The team, led by Friedemann Freund from Nasa and Rachel Grant from the UK's Open University hope their hypothesis will inspire biologists and geologists to work together, to find out exactly how animals might help us recognise some of the elusive signs of an imminent earthquake.

There have been reports throughout history of reptiles, amphibians and fish behaving in unusual ways just

before an earthquake struck.

Grant, a biologist from the Open University, was monitoring the toad colony at L'Aquila as part of her PhD project.

"It was very dramatic," she recalled. "It went from 96 toads to almost zero over three days." Grant published her observations in the Journal of Zoology.

Scientists at the US space agency had been studying the chemical changes that occur when rocks are under extreme stress.

Nasa geophysicist Friedemann Freund showed that, when rocks were under very high levels of stress--for example by the "gargantuan tectonic forces" just before an earthquake, they release charged particles.

These charged particles can flow out into the surrounding rocks, explained Dr Freund. And when they arrive at the Earth's surface they react with the air--converting air molecules into charged particles known as ions.

"Positive airborne ions

react with water, turning it into hydrogen peroxide," said Dr Freund.

This chemical chain of events could affect the organic material dissolved in the pond water--turning harmless organic material into substances that are toxic to aquatic animals.

Dr Freund said that the behaviour of animals could be one of a number of connected events that might forecast an earthquake.

## Call off hartal

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when some high-powered business delegations of different countries are visiting the country to explore investment potentials, it said.

It is possible to resolve the crisis of DCC split through discussion among the stakeholders, political parties and other related organisations, the statement added.

BNP has called the dawn-to-dusk hartal in the capital in protest against splitting the Dhaka City Corporation into two.

## Khokon's arrest

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lawmaker, said, "I told the state minister for home that it was the parliamentary standing committee's responsibility to oversee the functioning of the ministries."

"How will the accountability of a ministry be ensured if you [state minister] discourage us from speaking?"

Maj Gen (retd) MA Salam, chief of the House body, at this stage intervened and asked top police officials to arrest the real culprits involved in the killing of Narsingdi mayor Lokman Hossain upon a proper investigation of the case.

Following Lokman's murder on November 1 at the Narsingdi district AL office, infuriated citizens torched a train and vandalised the DC's bungalow the next day.

Hours after Lokman's murder, Narsingdi police arrested Khokon at his Rampura residence in the capital on suspicion of his involvement in the crime, according to a report submitted by the police to a court.

As the court on November 9 cleared Khokon of the murder allegation, he was shown arrested in the two cases filed against him on November 2.

Home Minister Sahara Khatun on November 9 told reporters that the government had not influenced the law enforcers into arresting Khokon and that he had not been politically harassed.

The court later granted him bail.

## The accused

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Chowdhury of Chittagong  
4. Abu Taher of Comilla  
5. Abdus Sobhan of Pabna  
6. Joyal Abedin alias VP Joyal of Feni  
7. HM Selim of Bagerhat  
8. Shahidul Islam of Jhenidah  
9. Abdus Salam Pintu of Dhaka  
10. Ilias Ali of Sylhet  
11. Delwar Hossain Sayedee of Pirojpur  
12. Elen Bhutto of Jhalakathi  
13. Hafiz Ibrahim of Bhola  
14. Salauddin Ahmed of Demra in Dhaka  
15. Alamgir Haider of Chandpur  
16. Salek Chowdhury of Naogaon  
17. Zahir Uddin Swapan of Barisal  
18. Shakhawat Hossain of Jessore and  
19. Ekramul Kabir of Natore

## HSBC-Star

**FROM PAGE 1**  
giving ceremony styled "HSBC-The Daily Star Climate Awards 2011" at Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel Dhaka in the evening.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid is expected to hand over the awards.

Five awards will be given out in four categories -- green business, green operations (a local and a foreign or joint venture firm), knowledge management and community engagement. Foreign companies have been added to the list this year.

HSBC, a leading international bank, and The Daily Star, Bangladesh's largest English daily, introduced the awards in 2010 to recognise individuals and institutions actively working to improve the country's environment.

Waste Concern is the knowledge partner for the awards, which is now in its second year.

Last year, Satkhira district administration won the award in the Climate Change Adaptation category for excavating the Morrichap River, which had been dead for the last 15 years and responsible for massive water logging in three upazilas of the district.

Industrial and Infrastructure Development Finance Company won the award last year in the Climate Change Mitigation category for financing the country's first green brick project.

Anaire Ehmar Khan, a researcher from Imperial College, UK, was awarded the Climate Change Research and Knowledge Management award for her research on links between salinity in coastal areas and health, especially for women.

Viyellatex Group, a leading apparel company, won the Green Business Entrepreneurship award for adopting green and energy-saving technologies in manufacturing garments.

## Economy in critical

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crises to free the country of those who were bleeding the national economy white.

She, however, did not answer questions from reporters. Senior BNP leaders, including its acting Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, were present.

Khaleda said the government was maintaining a 'scorched-earth policy' regarding the economy to make its foreign masters happy.

"The government has borrowed about Tk 19,000 crore from banks till November this year while foreign currencies are being siphoned off through over-voicing. On the whole, the government is pushing the country towards bankruptcy."

The BNP chief said the inflation rate reached 11.97 percent in September because of the government's utter mismanagement and inefficiency.

Khaleda slammed the government for giving priority to mega projects and the "surprising absence" of its activities in the development of the rural economy.

"Concern over the economy is spreading... It has severely been damaged owing to giving away huge subsidies

to the power and energy sector to overcome the crises."

Khaleda reiterated her claim that the government had failed to tackle the sliding share market, adding, "before forcing banks and financial institutions to invest in the stock market, the present unstable situation has to be taken into consideration."

All sorts of investment have come to a standstill. Employment opportunities and people's income are not increasing as private investment has received a huge