

# Tribunal accepts

**FROM PAGE 20**  
and in two acts of genocide in Faridpur during the war in 1971.

The prosecution said Azad, as a leader of ICS, was a close associate of Jamaat leader Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, another war crimes accused at the tribunal.

Azad played a leading role in the formation of Razakar in Faridpur.

Later the Pakistan army appointed Azad as the chief of the Al-Badr force in the district. In association with the Pakistan army, he had committed numerous crimes in the district during the war, the prosecution added.

On July 26, the investigation agency completed its enquiry and said it had found "strong evidence" against Azad in connection with crimes against humanity.

It handed over the report to the prosecution on July 29.

Azad went into hiding around seven hours before ICT-2 issued an arrest warrant against him on April 3.

The prosecution, however, said in accordance with the law, the war crimes trial against Azad could start in his absence.

**SAYEDEE'S TRIAL PROCEEDINGS**

After the defence counsel's failure to produce witnesses, International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday passed an order saying that from henceforth it would not put off the proceedings on this ground.

The tribunal made the order as the defence counsel failed to produce witnesses for war crimes accused Delwar Hossain Sayedee and prayed for an adjournment.

Accepting the adjourn-

ment prayer, the tribunal Chairman Justice Md Nizamul Huq passed the order.

The order will be applicable to both defence and prosecution.

The tribunal also directed the prosecution and defence to keep several witnesses ready to avoid any further failure.

It rejected another prayer of Sayedee's defence counsel for restarting the trial proceedings of Sayedee as two members of the three-member tribunal had been substituted.

In his plea for an adjournment, Sayedee's counsel Tajul Islam said that defence had failed to produce their witness Nurul Haque Hawladar as he was not physically fit, while another witness Abdul Haque Hawladar could not be reached.

As soon as Tajul made the submission to the tribunal, Nizamul Huq said, "Does that mean we should leave now?"

"From now on, I will not allow an adjournment for either defence or prosecution. If you could not find one witness then keep another one ready," he added.

The tribunal then passed the order.

In his order, the tribunal chairman said, "The case (against Delwar Hossain Sayedee) in this tribunal is going on smoothly and continuing everyday."

He then suggested that both the parties take note of it. "This case will be taken up tomorrow [today]," said Nizamul Huq.

As soon as the tribunal chairman finished his order, Tajul Islam informed the tribunal that Sayedee was feeling physically fit and eager to appear at the tribunal.

Nizamul Huq then asked the prosecutor to collect information about Sayedee's health from the jail authority, and inform the tribunal by today morning.

On Thursday, defence submitted the names of the two defence witnesses who were supposed to give deposition and face cross-examination by prosecution yesterday.

The tribunal yesterday also deferred the proceedings of another war crimes accused, BNP leader Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, to September 12.

It agreed to conduct the next proceedings on September 12 after consulting with the prosecutor and Salahuddin Quader's counsel on Thursday.

The tribunal, however, kept a date for the proceedings yesterday.

Salahuddin Quader's counsel Fakhru Islam, for the second time, yesterday declined to make a submission on a petition in the absence of his client.

Defence made the petition so that Salahuddin Quader, who is also a BNP lawmaker, could join the session of the parliament.

Such a petition was rejected by the tribunal on May 31 and the tribunal drew attention to it.

Fakhru claimed that some new matters had been added to the petition. But he declined to make the submission in the absence of his client, though the tribunal asked him several times to submit the prayer.

Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury is facing 23 specific charges of crimes against humanity committed during the Liberation War in

# KAZI AREF KILLING 2 fugitive convicts arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, KUSHITIA

Police on Saturday arrested two fugitive convicts in Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) leader Kazi Aref Ahmed murder case at Talbaria village at Daulatpur upazila of Kushtia.

The arrestees are Sahir Uddin, 48, and Rafat Sarder, 50, of Talbaria village.

Sahir was awarded the death penalty while Rafat was given life term imprisonment, said Sheikh Lutfar Rahman, officer-in-charge of Daulatpur Police Station.

JSD central leader Kazi Aref and four other leaders of the party's Kushtia unit -- Lokman Hossain, Yakub Ali, Shamsher Ali and Israil Hossain -- were killed in an armed attack on a rally in the upazila on February 16, 1999.

On August 30, 2004, the then additional district and sessions judge Fazlur Rahman sentenced ten people to death and twelve others to life term imprisonment for the killings.

Among the convicts awarded the death penalty, four have been absconding while one was killed in crossfire with police in 2006. Five others are now languishing in jail.

# Gazipur BNP

**FROM PAGE 20**  
without considering the party interest, they said.

The leaders were exchanging views with the BNP chairperson at her Gulshan office in the city last night.

Khaleda asked all to work together as the party was preparing for an anti-government movement, meeting sources said.

She directed the leaders to reconstitute the expired committees of different units of the district, warning that action would be taken if anyone was found guilty of indiscipline.

BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, among others, was present at the meeting.

# Businessman

**FROM PAGE 1**  
an import export business firm called Sathi Enterprise, police said.

According to witnesses, Baten was crossing the road in front of Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation around 11:30am when a bus of Shatabdi Paribahan struck him down and ran him over, killing him instantly.

Agitating locals vandalised the bus and set fire to it immediately after the accident. They also beat up its conductor, Sohan Sikder, 21, and handed him over to the police. However, the driver managed to flee the scene.

Baten's nephew Abdur Rashid said his uncle left home around 9:30am and headed for a bank in Motijheel.

# Admission

**FROM PAGE 1**  
directives for the government to hold an admission test, rather than enrol students on the basis of SSC and HSC results.

The court will today pass an order after further hearing on the petition, filed by Supreme Court lawyer Eunus Ali Akond.

Aspiring medicals had been agitating for a restoration of the admission test system since the government on August 12 decided to go for enrolment based on GPA scores at SSC and HSC exams.

On September 2, the students called off their agitation upon the health minister's assurance that an admission test would be held this year.

The petition was referred to Justice Sheikh Hassan Arif for disposal after it drew a split order from the bench of Justice Quamrul Islam Siddiqui and Justice Md Ashraf Kamal on August 27.

Justice Quamrul had ordered the government to immediately start the admission process by holding a test, while Justice Ashraf Kamal rejected the petition.

# Gas outlook gloomy

**FROM PAGE 1**  
At a press conference in April last year, Petrobangla Chairman Hussain Monsur said gas supplies will rise by 1,785 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) in June 2013. By December 2015, due to the programmes taken up by Petrobangla and its subsidiaries, another 680 mmcf gas will be added, exceeding the country's demands.

Back then, Petrobangla could supply maximum 2,000 mmcf while there was a shortfall of 500 mmcf, which had been affecting power generation, industrial and commercial activities as well as domestic burners. To tackle this gas crisis, the government was compelled to restrict giving new domestic and industrial gas connections, which remains in effect till today.

But then Petrobangla failed to perform.

Last year's gas growth projection included 500 mmcf gas by importing liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the Middle East by setting up an LNG terminal in Maheshkhali by December 2012. As of today, Petrobangla could not award a contract to a terminal builder because the chairman insisted that the interested bidders must complete the job within the tenure of this government, which the bidders declined. Petrobangla became flexible later but meantime it lost valuable time.

"If it could award such a contract now, it would take no less than two years to build the LNG terminal," said a Petrobangla official.

The 2011 projection also included US oil company Chevron's promised gas supply of 600 mmcf incrementally from this year from its three gas fields in Sylhet region. But it did not happen. Chevron last month announced it would supply 300 mmcf -- instead of 600 -- from 2014, from the Bibyana gas field.

A high official of Petrobangla, however, says that during this period, it may at best be able to add only 400 mmcf and that this forecast uses over-estimated figures.

The chairman's forecast says that in the next 15 months, Bapex will drill eight

Chevron in mid-2010 promised to bring in 940 mmcf gas from the three producing fields of Bibiyana, Moulavibazar and Jalalbad. But as it failed to find new reserves in Moulavibazar, it slashed the forecast to just 600 mmcf last year.

To bring this extra gas, the gas transmission company Ltd under Petrobangla floated a tender for construction of a 190 km 36-inch pipeline. The tender offers opened recently drew prices double the originally estimated prices. This tender may now be cancelled.

"Besides, now that Chevron has slashed its promised supplies to 300 mmcf, we think installing this new pipeline is a waste of money. We can bring this extra gas using the existing North South pipeline and the Murchai gas compressor along with two new compressor stations (being set up now)," said the Petrobangla official.

The remaining gas in the forecast is supposed to be ensured by Bangladeshi exploration company Bapex and other drilling companies from various national gas fields.

But, as both LNG and Chevron hopes have faded away, the Petrobangla chairman on August 30 gave the energy ministry a revised picture of what may be possible to achieve.

This revised forecast entirely talks about new gas supplies from drilling and work-overs of Bapex and Russian company Gazprom in the existing national gas fields. The chairman now says, by December next year, these will be able to add 550 mmcf gas.

A high official of Petrobangla, however, says that during this period, it may at best be able to add only 400 mmcf and that this forecast uses over-estimated figures.

The chairman's forecast says that in the next 15 months, Bapex will drill eight

wells and conduct three work-overs of existing wells. Under an unsolicited and costly deal, Gazprom will drill another eight wells in different fields at the same time. Their efforts combined are expected to add this 550 mmcf gas unless some of the attempt fails to hit gas in the existing fields.

"This is an enormous challenge for Bapex. It is almost unrealistic to expect that Bapex will conduct so many work," said the official.

Since 2009 till August this year, Bapex drilled five wells and conducted eight work-overs helping it to add 125 mmcf gas. Some of its work are set to bring more gas in the next few months. But all of these quantities are small, given the level of energy crisis.

"But, to downplay such a grim situation, Petrobangla in recent months is frequently announcing new discoveries in the existing gas fields," noted the official.

"You don't discover gas in an existing field where gas has already been found. What Bapex is doing in old fields presently is called appraisal of a field. It is a standard practice in the gas industry to drill new wells to get better and clearer ideas about the size of an old field. Once you find a new deposit, you correct your previous reserve figures ... Unfortunately this old process is now being shown as discovery to give the government a false sense of success."

Since the Awami League came to power, different efforts succeeded in increasing gas supplies up to 2,240 mmcf from 1,760 mmcf of early 2009. Despite the increase, the shortfall remains unchanged due to a spiralling demand for gas.

# JP names

**FROM PAGE 20**  
Party chief HM Ershad declared Kazi Zafar Ahmed's name as the candidate from Comilla-11 constituency and gave party tickets to over 100 others.

Although newsmen were not allowed in, the party's media wing issued a press release with the names of over 110 party leaders that the party had categorised as "A" considering their high potential for victory.

"Do or die, I [my party] must take part independently at the next election -- no matter if I am sent to jail again. After the polls, we will consider forming an alliance with other parties," JP lawmaker HM Golam Reza quoted Ershad as saying to the A-rated leaders.

Ershad instructed the selected candidates to work in their respective constituencies intensively and build a rapport with the locals.

The A-rated candidates were selected on the basis of feedback from the party grassroots, the leaders' political acumen and track records, party sources said.

The JP boss will sit with its members of parliament to finalise its prospective B-rated candidates for over 250 seats, added the sources.

# EC for more

**FROM PAGE 20**

The previous EC introduced the provision to prevent "dummy candidates" manipulating the election management system in favour of a contestant.

The incumbent EC says the provision conflicts with voters' right to secrecy about their support. So it was planning to repeal the provision, an election commissioner said yesterday on condition of anonymity.

Introduction of the provision had contributed to reducing the number of independent candidates at the last general election. Only 148 independent candidates contested the polls, held on December 29, 2008. The number was 486 at the 2001 general election.

Talking to reporters at the EC Secretariat yesterday, Election Commissioner Shah Nawaz said the EC was

examining the RPO to determine the necessary changes.

The commission would send proposals to the government to introduce the needed reforms in the RPO, he said.

Meanwhile, the EC Secretariat is inviting civil society dignitaries to a discussion with the commission on September 13, a senior EC official said.

Along with the invitation, it is sending some documents, including those on the progress in updating voter lists across the country and redrawing the boundaries of parliamentary constituencies, he added.

The boundaries of 130 constituencies were redrawn before the 2008 parliamentary polls. "We hope we will be able to complete the task of redrawing the boundaries in time," the election commissioner said.

# Sonali involved in scam

**FROM PAGE 1**  
strength", he told reporters at his secretariat office hours before leaving for China last night on a 10-day tour to join the World Economic Forum meeting.

The minister replied to journalists' queries on a number of issues, including Padma bridge funding, Grameen Bank and Mashur Rahman's and his resignation.

Recently, a Bangladesh Bank probe found serious anomalies in the lending of Tk 3,606 crore to the Hall-Mark Group and five other companies.

Half of the loans, granted by the Sonali Bank's Ruposhi Bangla Hotel branch, were based on forged documents.

Muhith yesterday said it was quite impossible that such a grave offence was being committed and yet nobody in Sonali Bank had noticed it.

Replying to a query about extending the tenure of the Sonali Bank chairman and directors for another two years, the finance minister said a three-member board led by the chairman would remain in office.

Muhith said a government official and a chartered accountant had been kept as board members and the

tenure of no other director had been extended.

A board is necessary for taking decisions on a number of matters, including cases regarding the scam, he added.

The minister said the Sonali Bank board would be reconstituted and a decision in this regard taken on his return from China.

About the demand for his resignation, he said, "There are many demands like this ... But I have not taken any decision."

The minister also spoke on the bridge project. "We have been in talks with the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) in this regard. I will speak about this after the talks conclude."

Muhith declined to comment on the WB condition relating to the removal of the Prime Minister's Economic Affairs Adviser Mashur Rahman for the funding of the project.

"Talks are also going on with the World Bank about this matter. I cannot say anything about this at this point."  
**GRAMEEN BANK**  
Also yesterday, Muhith defended a recent change in

the Grameen Bank Ordinance, saying the government had brought in the amendment to appoint a full-time managing director.

The appointment "must be done"; it had long been pending owing to objections apparently from directors, he said.

The world-renowned microcredit organisation has been run by an acting chief executive since its founder, Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus, stepped down in May last year.

Grameen Bank supporters both at home and abroad and also the nine elected women borrower-directors say the change has been introduced to curb the authority of the majority of the board in choosing the managing director and give more powers to the government-picked chairman.

The minister also said the law did not permit the powers exercised over the last 27 years in appointing the managing director.

"The government allowed this to let a good thing continue. But there are two sides of the coin -- one is flexibility and the other is unaccountability," he added.

# US mission on Myanmar due tomorrow

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A US mission currently visiting the Rakhine state of Myanmar to see conditions of the Rohingyas in the post sectarian violence will arrive in Dhaka tomorrow to discuss the US role in assisting the refugees.

Diplomatic sources said a fact-finding mission comprising four senior officials of the US Department of State went to Myanmar on September 8 and are expected to pay a three-day visit to Dhaka and Cox's Bazar.

They are: Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Joseph Y Yun, Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs Ms Alyssa Ayres, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration Kelly Clements, and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour Daniel Baer.

The team will hold talks with government officials and representatives of international organisations regarding the role of the US in helping improve the living conditions of the Rohingya refugees.

According to the programme schedule, US Ambassador in Dhaka Dan W Mozena will also accompany the visiting team during their inspection at the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar.

Sources said the US team has discussed with Burmese government officials how to ensure long-term peace, security and humanitarian aid for the Rohingya population.

Besides, the mission intends to discuss the issue with diplomats of various countries to seek their suggestions for an effective solution to the Rohingya problems, foreign ministry sources said.

In June, Rohingya Muslims were attacked by the Arakanese and Burmese Buddhists in the Rakhine state on the western Myanmar frontier. Officially, 80 people were killed, mostly Rohingyas, while 70,000 people were left homeless.

Countless Rohingya Muslims attempted to enter Bangladesh to escape persecution but most of them were pushed back by the Border Guards Bangladesh.

# Bangladesh

**FROM PAGE 1**  
the Asia Pacific region, according to the Swiss-based foundation that released the first such index with promise to repeat the exercise once in every year.

Sir Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of World Wide Web, established the foundation in 2009. He invented World Wide Web in 1989 while working as a software engineer at CERN, the large particle physics laboratory near Geneva, Switzerland.

Sweden topped the chart, followed by the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Finland, Switzerland and New Zealand while Yemen is on the bottom, preceded by Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso, Benin, Ethiopia, Namibia and Bangladesh.

Of other Asian countries, Singapore ranked 11, China, 29, India, 33, Indonesia, 34, Thailand, 37, Pakistan, 44, and Nepal, 52.

Among the seven components used to weigh internet's impact, communications and institutional infrastructure indicate web connectivity and the laws, regulation and censorship indicate web access.

Low-ranking countries like Bangladesh suffer a vicious cycle of poor infrastructure and high costs for access to internet, the index suggests.

Globally, positive findings include the spread of e-governance; government data and services made available to citizens online, as well as initiatives to encourage online participation in decision-making, notes the index.

# Economy on the line

**FROM PAGE 1**  
and promoting people.

In 2007, the then caretaker government turned Sonali, Janata and Agrani into companies so that the banks could function better. But the current government in 2009 re-established the banking division under the finance ministry, which was in conflict with the company model, Ibrahim Khaled said.

"The time has come to abolish the banking division; otherwise these banks will never run smoothly," said Khaled.

Former caretaker government adviser Akbar Ali Khan said successive governments had failed to run the state-owned banks.

"No political government has been able to run these banks properly in the last 40 years. We've tried, but we could not stop mismanagement and corruption.... These banks should be privatised for better management," he said.

The government had appointed directors who had no banking experience, added Akbar, who is also a former finance and cabinet secretary.

He also came down heavily on the banking division.

"Officers in the division don't understand the banking business. The control of the state-owned banks should immediately be handed over to the central bank, or else these banks will be in a deeper crisis."

He demanded that the government take stern action against those involved in the Sonali Bank loan scam to restore the faith of the foreign banks engaged in business with Bangladeshi banks.

According to another former caretaker government adviser, AB Mirza Azizul Islam, "Economic governance

has broken down."

"The central bank should have full control over the state-owned banks," he said and demanded punishment of the "culprits" behind the loan scam in the Sonali Bank.

"The government can give a signal to the people by not reappointing any director of the present board," said Mirza Azizul, who is a former chairman of the Sonali Bank's board.

Prof MA Taslim, chairman of the economics department of Dhaka University, termed the Sonali bank scam a "system failure".

"Azizur Rahman [deputy general manager Sonali Bank] was serving a different master and he knew that his bosses could not do anything to him," said Taslim.

He said a sense of impunity seemed to be present everywhere, and if a criminal sensed that he would not face punishment, he would go for bigger crimes.

"First, there was a share market scam, then Destiny irregularities, then the World Bank's corruption charge and now Hall-Mark," he pointed out.

Raihana Anisa Yusuf Ali, former deputy managing director of Sonali Bank, was shocked to hear that the top management of Sonali Bank could not understand anything about the fraud in its Ruposhi Bangla branch though the branch was supposed to send statements on daily, weekly and monthly basis.

The public banking sector made headlines after a Bangladesh Bank investigation found that Sonali Bank's Ruposhi Bangla Hotel branch had helped Hall-Mark Group and five other companies swindle Tk 3,547 crore out of it.

Like its scam-hit Ruposhi Bangla branch, the Sonali

Bank's Gulshan branch has also helped a number of companies to embezzle Tk 159 crore.

In both cases, loans were approved and disbursed against fake documents without due diligence, according to an audit report and Bangladesh Bank findings.

# CLASH WITH COPS 50 Jubo Dal, JCD men hurt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

At least 50 people were injured in a clash between law enforcers and pro-BNP Jubo Dal and Chhatra Dal activists in Rupganj of Narayanganj yesterday afternoon as police barred their joint procession.

Of them, nine activists -- five of Jubo Dal, youth front of the BNP, and four of Chhatra Dal, the pro-BNP students' organisation -- were hit by rubber bullets while 15 policemen were injured in brickbats.

The procession was organised to congratulate the newly-formed central committee of Chhatra Dal and celebrating the jail release day of BNP's Senior Vice-Chairman Tarique Rahman.

During yesterday's clash, vehicular movement on Dhaka-Sylhet highway remained suspended for around an hour.

Police arrested eight people from the spot for their alleged involvement in the clash.

The injured were admitted to Arahazar Upazila Health Complex and different local clinics.

Sheikh Nazmul Alam, district superintendent of police, said 15 policemen were also injured during the clash. Police fired around 200 rounds of rubber bullets and 50 tear gas shells to control the situation.

other blasts. A car bomb and a bomb packed into a motorcycle detonated outside a crime investigation office, killing seven and wounding 40.

More people were killed in several other blasts across the country, including in the towns of Baquba, Samarra, Basra and Tuz Khurmato.

The car bomb that exploded outside the French consular building in the usually stable city of Nassiriya, 300 km south of Baghdad, killed a police guard and wounded four other guards.