

Shahjahan reborn

FROM PAGE 16
 emperor Shah Jahan in honour of his wife Mumtaz in 1631, and is regarded as one of the world's greatest monuments to love and grief.

Kadari might not have had the riches of the old emperor, but the promise made to his dying wife Tajammuli Begum was enough to fuel his ambition and build his own version of the Taj Mahal in Diba of Bulandshahr district.

He took a team of local workers to Agra to see the original masterpiece and asked them to build a smaller replica, without all the intricate carvings and decorations.

To fund his project, Kadari sold his land, his wife's jewels and used up all the savings from his pension.

On her dying bed, Tajammuli Begum told her husband they would be forgotten because they had no children to carry on their

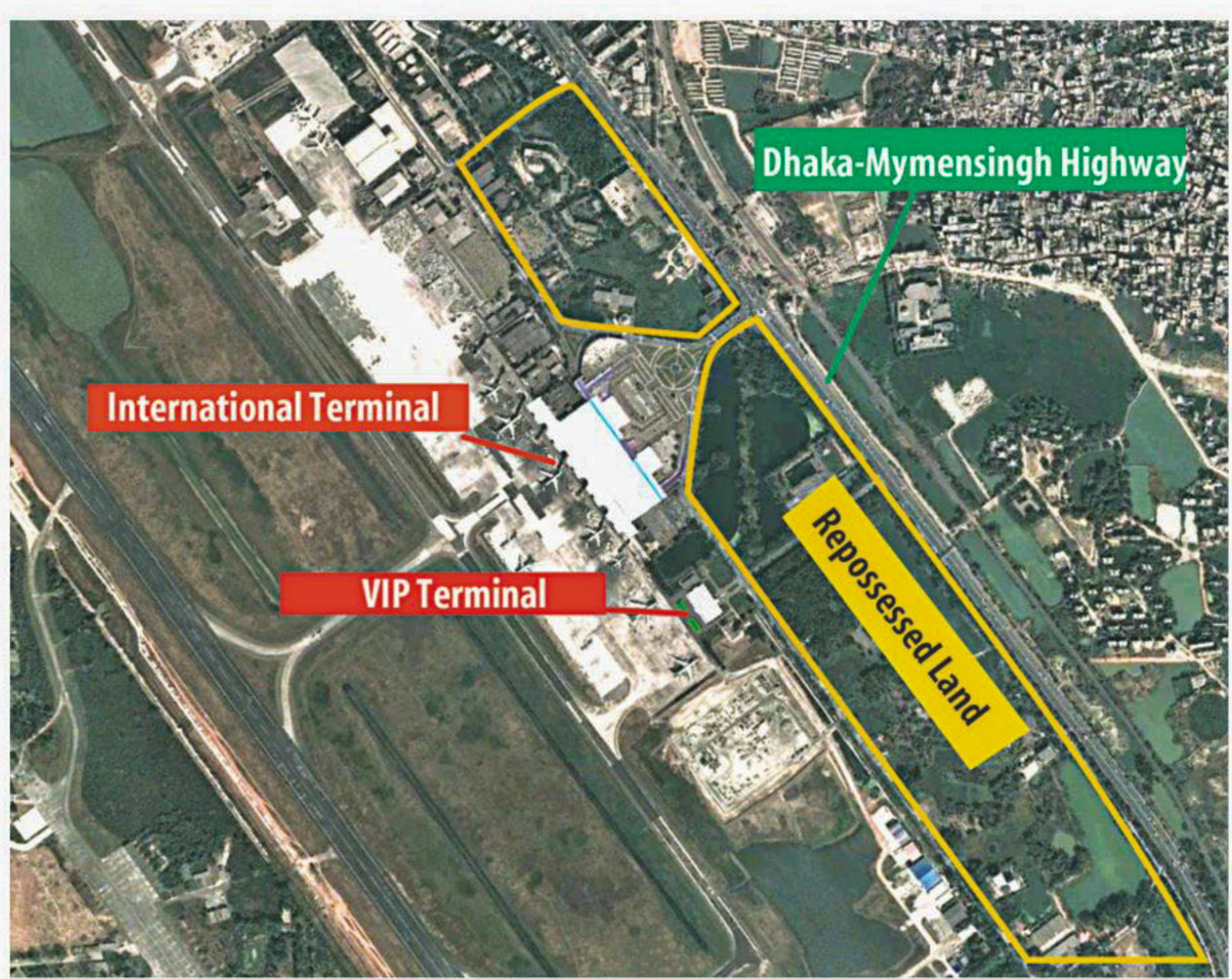
name, but Faizul promised to build a grand mausoleum in her name so that the world would remember them for many years.

Ironically, the 77-year-old retired post-master had always believed emperor Shah Jahan's extravagant monument to love was an insult to the common man, but after losing his wife, he realised the intensity of love and pain made money seem meaningless.

Since they had no children, Kadari had no problem selling everything they had to fulfill the promise he made to his wife.

It cost 9,00,000 rupees (\$15,000) to erect the small Taj Mahal on a 5,000-square-foot piece of land outside of his home, in Bulandshahr, but he requires more money to see it completed.

Funds are drying up, but Kadari refuses to take money from anyone, and plans on using his monthly pension from now on.



This satellite image shows the land of Shahjalal International Airport that has been repossessed.

IMAGE: DIGITALGLOBE

Don't play foul

FROM PAGE 1
 took treatment together at Enam Medical College and Hospital in Savar.

The GOC described the reports as false, motivated and a conspiracy to tarnish the image of the army and the country.

"I don't want to comment on a person [Simon Wright] who was arrested in a criminal case. But I want him and those who were with him to be tried," he told journalists, adding that Wright had come to Bangladesh as a tourist.

Flanked by some senior army officers and officials of the disaster management and information ministries, he said conspiracies were being hatched against the Bangladesh Army when the force was being widely applauded in the country and everywhere in the world for its tradition and professional skills.

"... Many quarters from many places are coming up with statements to make the army controversial. Conspiracy is being hatched not only centring on Reshma. Conspiracies began right after the army got charge of the Rana Plaza rescue operation," said Hasan.

At that time, he said, some write-ups in some blogs urged the government to get rid of the army to avoid trouble.

"Those who are now writing stories about Reshma are the troublemakers."

He added: "The intension is to destroy the chain of command in the army."

He, however, did not say who the conspirators were.

At a separate press conference arranged by the ISPR at the Jatiya Press Club, directors of Enam Medical Zahidur Rahman and Rawshan Akhter Chowdhury dismissed reports that Reshma had been admit-



Enamul Haque

ted to the hospital.

Of the 1,700 persons treated, 700 got admitted and their names are registered. But Reshma's name is not there, said Zahidur.

He, however, said 1,000 people got primary treatment and it was not possible for them to say whether Reshma was among them.

Also present at the press conference were garment workers Enamul and Lipi, who, according to some Bangladesh newspapers, were the sources of the Mirror report.

But the two dismissed the suggestion that they had talked to any foreign journalists.

They also said they neither came out with Reshma from Rana Plaza nor taken treatment together at the hospital.

"Someone called me last Friday saying that a foreign journalist wanted to meet me. He tried to lure me by offering a donation. I was not home at the time and when I came close to my home, my mother asked me not to meet the foreign journalist. So I did not meet him," said Enamul.

Monsur Ahmed and Hazera Begum, whose house Reshma had hired, also dismissed the Mirror report's suggestion that Reshma had stayed in the house after her release from the hospital.

Airport can now expand

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 terminal and improvement in apron and hangar facilities would help the airport double its passenger handling capacity, and there would be no need for a new airport anytime soon, said a Caab engineer wishing anonymity.

Nearly 60 aircraft can usually take off and land an hour in a busy international airport. But the number is only 10 in case of the Shahjalal airport that can utilise only 40 percent of its runway capacity, he said.

Caab's annual earnings of Tk 800 crore would double once the new facilities are in place, said the engineer.

In 2000, the then Awami League government had controversially awarded Singapore-based IPCO a 60-year lease of 144.73 acres of prime land adjacent to the airport to construct hotels and resorts. But the company failed to comply with the conditions of the agreement.

IPCO returned 105.13 acres of land to Caab on June 2, following a lengthy negotiation and signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in April.

Of the remaining 39.6 acres of land, 14 acres will be

in possession of IPCO that will build a five-star and a three-star hotel with a shopping arcade on that land in the next three years.

The Caab chairman said the rest 25.6 acres would remain under Caab's ownership. But if it wishes to lease out the land, IPCO would be its first choice.

IPCO will also pay Caab outstanding lease money of Tk 42 crore.

"We expect to sign soon the final ownership deals on the land in line with the MoU," said Mahmud.

CANCELLATION AND REVIVAL

In 2000, IPCO set up three companies -- IPCO Hotels Ltd, IPCO Development Ltd, and IPCO Resorts Ltd -- and signed three Land Lease Agreement and three Build Operate Transfer deals with Caab to implement the projects.

Four Bangladeshi businessmen, including Bengal Group owner Abul Khair Litu, bought 15 percent share of IPCO's local units.

The companies were supposed to build a five-star hotel with 500 rooms, a three-star hotel with a shopping arcade, a golf course (on 105.13 acres of land

repossessed by Caab) and a country club in three phases.

In the first phase, the company was supposed to construct half of the five-star hotel by October 31, 2001. The government justified its decision to lease out the land for the hotel, saying it would facilitate the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Bangladesh in 2002, which never took place.

In the next two phases, the company was supposed to complete all other projects by 2007.

IPCO was supposed to pay Caab an annual rent of \$175,000 for the first phase, \$50,000 for the second and \$100,000 for the third phase.

The government on August 23, 2001 cancelled the agreement as the company failed to meet the deadline for finishing the construction of the hotels and other projects, and did not pay lease rent.

But the cancellation order was withdrawn in December the same year following a change of government.

In 2003, Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) cancelled the designs for the proposed hotels, as those didn't have environ-

mental clearance. But Rajuk withdrew its order in September 2006.

Talks between IPCO and the authorities resumed during the tenure of the last caretaker government. In April 2009, the parliamentary standing committee on civil aviation and tourism ministry recommended scrapping the agreement.

As the government cancelled the agreement, IPCO filed a case with the High Court that directed Caab not to start any work on the land without consulting IPCO.

Meanwhile in 2010, Summit Group, a company owned by Civil Aviation Minister Faruk Khan, and United Group purchased the 15 percent share of IPCO's local units from the four businessmen, and things started to change quickly.

United Group Chairman Hasan Mahmood Raja said the decision on the remaining 25.6 acres of land would be taken jointly by IPCO, the civil aviation ministry and Caab.

United Group holds 8 percent share of IPCO's local units while Summit Group owns 7 percent, he said.

Concern over waterlogging

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 rainfall over the last couple of days, leading to concerns among election officials.

Matiar Rahman, returning officer of Gazipur, has sent a letter to the administrator of GCC seeking necessary initiatives to free the centres of the waterlogging ahead of the election scheduled for July 6.

"Waterlogging has really become a matter of concern for us as there is no effective

and efficient drainage system in the city," Matiar said.

"I have already asked the authorities concerned to take necessary steps in this regard. But if the rainfall continues heavily over the next few days, it may increase the problem," he added.

The polling centres where waterlogging is a problem include Vogra Maddyapara Government Primary School, Dakkhin Vogra Government Primary School, Madinatul

Ullum Senior Madrasa, Saheed Smriti High School in Joydevpur, and West Joydevpur Government Primary School.

Most of the centres are located in Tongi sub-divisional area of Gazipur city, said the election officer.

Ashrafuzzaman Selim, an inhabitant of Kaniya of Ghasa area in Tongi, yesterday came to the returning officer to complain of the waterlogging at his polling centre at Aret Ali

Udayan Academy.

"We are really so worried over the waterlogging. If it goes on, nobody will be able to enter the centre," said Selim, while talking to the returning officer.

Akbar Hossain, executive engineer of the GCC, said, "We will start working from today to do away with the waterlogging so that the voters can go to the centres [without facing any problem]."

Army chopper crash landed

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 College Hospital.

However, sources in the army said an Air Force helicopter flew Major Nazrul, who suffered relatively minor injuries to his leg, to the

CMH, adding, both the pilots were undergoing treatment at the CMH.

The officers, belonging to the Army Aviation Group, boarded the US made Bel 206 helicopter at 9:46am but lost

contact with the control tower at 9:57am, a high-ranking army official said on condition of anonymity.

The helicopter broke into three pieces as it came down to the ground fast, said Brigadier

General Ali Ahmed Khan, director general of Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Fire fighters rushed to the spot, he said, but the landing did not trigger any fire incident.

Cars entering

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 The city corporation has a target to earn Tk 388 crore from holding tax. It realised Tk 228 crore in 2012-2013 fiscal year, though the target was set at Tk 288 crore.

The DNCC aims to earn Tk 746.55 crore in revenue in the current fiscal year. It earned Tk 443.35 crore in the last fiscal year against a target of Tk 482.75 crore.

For maintenance and development of roads and traffic infrastructure, the budget has Tk 236 crore, up from Tk 203.27 crore in the previous fiscal.

It has kept Tk 41.76 crore for construction work of Mirpur-Cantonment by-pass road, development of Ceramic road at Mirpur-12 and drains and roads at South Pallabi, and Tk 50 crore for expanding roads and constructing drain and footpath in Uttara.

The administrator also announced an allocation of Tk 50 crore to construct a road from Mirpur

Darussalam (Ansar Camp) to Kachukhet and Tk 26 crore for a road from Beribandh to Mohammadpur Bus Stoppage.

The budget also kept Tk 50 crore to construct grade separator on roads to underpass or overpass to reduce traffic congestion in Gulshan-1 and 2 areas.

For setting up two graveyards at Mirpur and Aftabnagar, the DNCC has allocated Tk 30 crore, and for mosquito control, it has Tk 9 crore, up from Tk 8.55 crore in the previous year.

It has allocated Tk 17.80 crore for waste management, which is Tk 2.20 crore less than the previous fiscal.

For development of park and playground, the budget has Tk 4 crore, which is Tk 1.30 crore more than the previous year.

The DNCC expects to receive an amount of Tk 1132.49 crore from the government, foreign finance and private sector investment, said the administrator.

New constituencies

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 Gazipur-2,3; Narsingdi-1,2,3,5; Narayanganj-3,4; Sunamganj-4,5; Brahmanbaria-1,2,3; Comilla-6,7,8,10; Chandpur-1,2; Chittagong-5,6,8,13,14 and 15.

Earlier in February, the EC had proposed changes to boundaries of 87 parliamentary constituencies in 28 districts.

The ruling Awami League had opposed changes to any constituencies. But the main opposition BNP had alleged that the government was exerting pressure on the EC in redrawing the boundaries.

In the proposals, 13 out of the 20 parliamentary seats of Dhaka district were to have major changes in their boundaries. But finally changes have been made in the boundaries of only two seats -- Dhaka 14 and 19.

The number of parliamen-

tary constituencies in the capital was eight before the last delimitation of boundaries. But it increased to 15 in 2008 and the EC had to reduce the number of seats in rural areas to meet the capital's demand.

Against this backdrop, the previous EC led by ATM Shamsul Huda had proposed to reduce the number of constituencies in the capital from 15 to 10 to protect the interests of the rural people.

The EC then had argued that if the boundaries were redrawn on the basis of population, the capital would get two or three more seats as its population has been growing fast.

But the present EC did not accept the previous EC's proposal. After publishing the proposals, the EC disposed of complaints filed against its proposals. And now it has come up with the final list.

Leave it alone

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 Jackson told The Daily Star and other Bangladeshi media that his paper did carry an article by Khaleda Zia on January 30.

But talking to reporters, BNP Joint Secretary General Rizvi Ahmed yesterday said: "Our party has been protesting ever since the newspaper published the article under BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's byline."

But media reports suggest just the opposite. Top BNP leaders, including Moudud Ahmed and Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, hailed Khaleda Zia for the write-up and slammed those who condemned the piece titled "Zia: The thankless role in saving democracy in Bangladesh."

The issue surfaced again after Khaleda in parliament on June 29 denied sending any article to the US newspaper. Her denial came just two days after the US suspended the GSP facility for Bangladesh.

It may be mentioned that one part of the article talked about cancelling the GSP facility for Bangladesh.

In this part, Khaleda

wrote: "They [the US] also must explain to Ms. Hasina that general preferences for trade will be withdrawn if those who support workers' rights and have political views opposed to those of the prime minister are not now allowed to express their beliefs."

Yesterday, when reporters reminded Rizvi about BNP leader Moudud Ahmed's comment supporting Khaleda's article, Rizvi said: "You should ask the leader who made the comment at that time."

"And we ask you not to make things complicated over the issue any further."

He, however, had no answers when reporters asked him whether the BNP sent any written rejoinder to The Washington Times.

The byline write-up, which appeared in the opinion section of the paper, drew huge public attention. At the bottom of the article, Khaleda was identified as former prime minister of Bangladesh and current leader of the opposition.

But Khaleda told the House on June 29: "I did not write it."

\$890,000 Chinese stamp

AFP, Hong Kong
 One of China's rarest stamps sold for HK\$6.9 million (\$890,000) at auction in Hong Kong, the auctioneers said yesterday.

With just 32 recorded copies, the Qing Dynasty "1897 Red Revenue Small One Dollar" stamp is "China's rarest regularly-issued stamp", Interasia Auctions said in a press release.

The bright red stamp, symbolising luck and good fortune in Chinese culture, is rare because the characters "Qing Dynasty postal service, one dollar" were considered too small, prompting the printing of a second version.

JP 'neutral'

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 importance ahead of the next parliamentary polls," Major (ret'd) Khaled Akhter, personal secretary to Ershad, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Moreover, such announcement might also annoy the AL, resulting in an unwanted situation for him like the one he had to face in 2000 when the AL was in power, said sources in JP.

Considering all the aspects, Ershad has adopted the strategy of not backing any of the two mayoral contenders, an adviser to Ershad told this newspaper.

Yesterday, a statement issued by the office of JP chairman announced that the party did not extend its support to any mayoral

aspirants in Gazipur.

AL favourite Ajmat met the JP chief on Monday and sought his support for the July 6 polls. But Ershad only blessed him.

After meeting Ershad on Tuesday night, Mannan had claimed that the JP chief has blessed and supported him in the mayoral race.

But without naming Mannan, the statement signed by Ershad's press and political secretary Sunil Suvo Roy said it was absolutely false that a mayoral candidate got support of JP.

Party's local leaders and supporters will cast their votes in the polls on their choices as the party has not backed any mayoral candidate, it stated.

As there are no instructions from the JP high command, its district unit leaders and activists were still divided over extending their support to a mayoral candidate.

JP's Gazipur district unit president Kazi Mahmud Hasan and general secretary Nurul Islam were campaigning for BNP-backed candidate MA Mannan, while its Gazipur city unit president Monwar Hossain and some party men were working for Ajmat Ullah Khan.

Party sources said the chairman has remained silent about the division in local JP as he thought that it would not be possible to control the local leaders now.

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