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# West moves closer to Syria intervention

## Syria okays UN chemical probe as US says move too late

AGENCIES

David Cameron and Barack Obama moved the west closer to military intervention in Syria as they agreed that last week's alleged chemical weapon attacks by the Assad regime had taken the crisis into a new phase that merited a "serious response".

On Saturday, Obama held a rare meeting with his top aides and discussed Syria by phone with British Prime Minister David Cameron.

Obama had said a year ago that the use of chemical weapons by Assad's forces was a "red line" that could trigger Western intervention.

Meanwhile, UN experts are to start investigating an alleged Syrian chemical weapons site today after receiving the go-ahead from Damascus yesterday, as a sceptical Washington said Syria's acceptance had come too late.

In an escalation of a showdown over an alleged chemical weapons attack near Damascus last week, the United States pointed the finger of blame at President Bashar al-Assad's regime as it weighed military action.

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**Inset, fishermen try to catch hilsa in the Pasur river in Mongla, Khulna. There was a time when they used to catch 40-50 fish at one go but nowadays they catch 4-5 fish despite using the banned current nets. They blame the river losing depth for their poor catch. The photos were taken last week.**

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

# Urea price slashed by Tk 4 a kg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has reduced the price of urea fertiliser by Tk 4 per kg with immediate effect, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury announced yesterday.

The move to slash the urea price will cost the government an additional subsidy burden to the tune of Tk 640 crore a year.

"From today [Sunday], the farmers will get urea fertiliser at Tk 16 instead of Tk 20 per kg," Matia said while addressing a press

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# ACC to sue BTCL MD, 21 others

## Probe finds Tk 610cr corruption

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday gave the go-ahead for four cases to be filed against the incumbent managing director of state-owned BTCL and 21 others in connection with stealing Tk 610 crore by erasing international incoming call records.

ACC Commissioner Mohammad Shahabuddin told The Daily Star yesterday afternoon that the cases could be filed this week.

The would-be accused include Managing Director Mohammad Kalimullah of Bangladesh Telecommunications Company

Ltd, former MDs Mohammad Afsarul Alam, Khabiruzzaman and Abu Sayeed Khan, BTCL general managers Anwar-ul Mamun, Ronel Chakma, Badiul Alam, Habibur Rahman Pramanik and ex-member Mohammad Tawfiq, among other BTCL staff.

Asif Zahid, Country Manager of Ericsson Bangladesh, which provided software to BTCL, its Relations Manager Nazrul Islam and Engineer Mashrurul Hakim are also among the people to be accused, said a high official of the ACC involved in the investigation.

The ACC investigation found that the

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# TESTIMONY OF 17TH WITNESS Ashraf hid in his village home before fleeing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Alleged Al-Badr leader Ashrafuzzaman Khan hid in his village home in Gopalganj after liberation and escaped when the villagers tried to catch him.

Firoz Khan, a freedom fighter and resident of Ashrafuzzaman's neighbouring village, also told International Crimes Tribunal-2 that the accused had fled to the USA though India and Pakistan.

As the 17th prosecution witness in the case against Chowdhury Mueen Uddin and Ashrafuzzaman, Firoz said Ashrafuzzaman was involved with the Islami Chhatra Sangha, the then student wing of the

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# Nizami was involved in Pabna mass killing

## Witness tells war crimes tribunal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

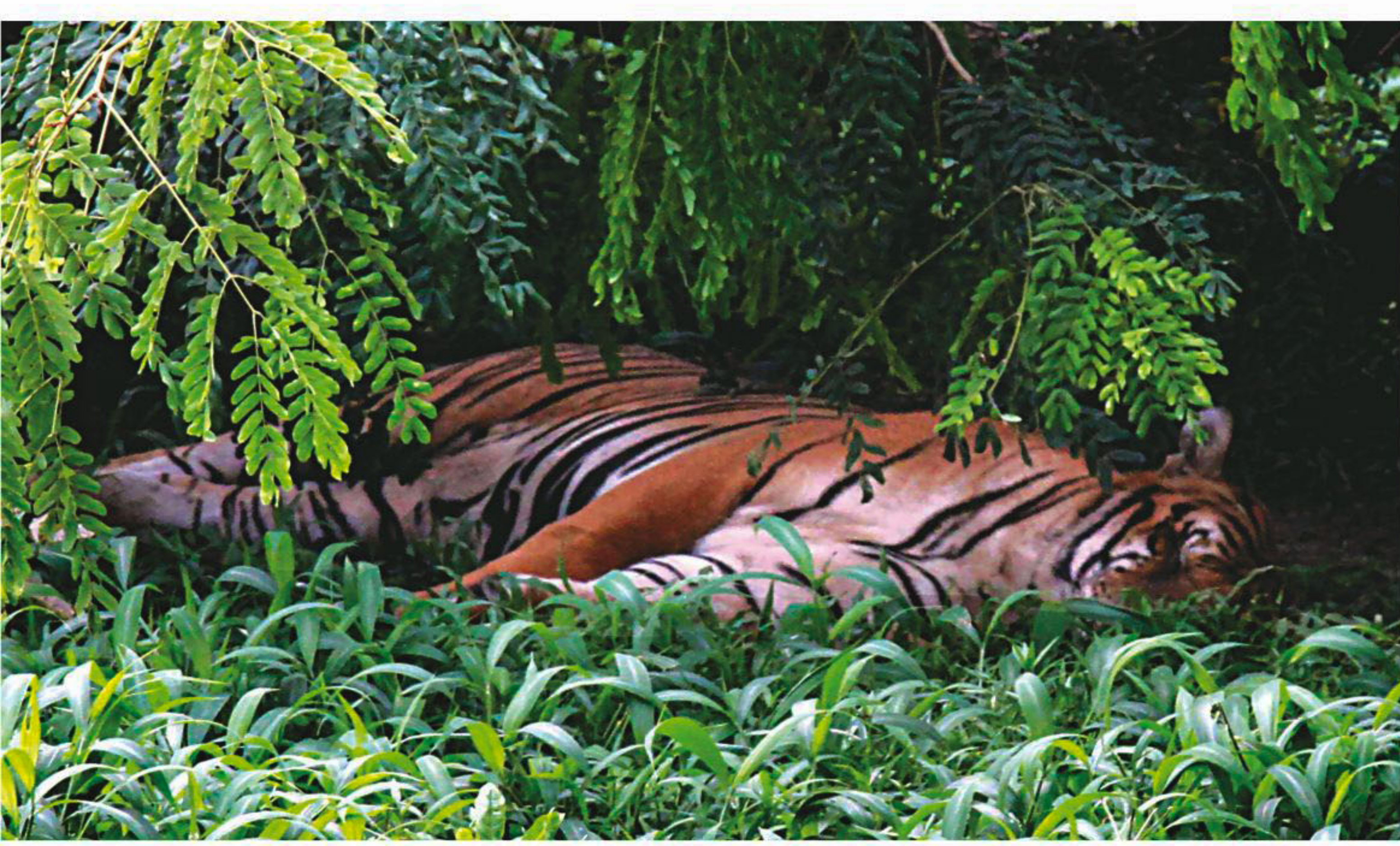
Under Motiur Rahman Nizami's leadership, the Pakistan army and its local collaborators raided three villages in Pabna and killed at least 450 people on May 14, 1971, a prosecution witness said yesterday.

Jamal Uddin, a freedom fighter from Sathia upazila and the 17th prosecution witness in Jamaat Ameer Nizami's case, told the International Crimes Tribunal-1 that the mass killing took place following a meeting in the first part of May 1971, which was attended by Jamaat men and addressed by Nizami.

During his testimony, 60-year-old Jamal, a former deputy commander of Sathia upazila Muktiyoddha Sangsad, said he took part in several operations in Faridpur, Bera, Bhangura, Shahjampur and Sathia during the Liberation War and had apprehended several razakars.

"As a group commander of freedom fighters, I learnt from detained razakar and Al-Badr men that the crimes committed in Sathia and other

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Unable to bear the heat of summer, a tiger at Dhaka Zoo takes a nap in the shade of a tree on Saturday. The high mercury and humidity over the last few days have been inflicting considerable discomfort on city dwellers as well.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

# Mamata rejects land deal in present form

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has rejected the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) with Bangladesh in its present form and asked the Indian government to take the consent of state government and people residing in enclaves that are to be exchanged between the two countries under the deal.

Mamata's statement came Saturday night, hours after Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and India's leader of the opposition Sushma Swaraj conveyed

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# Shibir's key man behind attacks in Rajshahi held

## Claims some BCL men also involved in attack on Tuhin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Detectives have arrested a long-hunted leader of Islami Chhatra Shibir who allegedly planned almost all Shibir-sponsored criminal activities in Rajshahi over the last one year.

The arrestee, Abdullah Al Masum, is assistant general secretary of Shibir's Rajshahi city unit and operations commander in the city, said SM Moniruzzaman, commissioner of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police.

Masum, 22, is addicted to Phensidyl and Yaba and was caught while taking drugs at a drug den in the city on Saturday evening, Moniruzzaman told a press conference yesterday.

The arrestee is a nephew of Rajshahi Jamaat Ameer Ataur Rahman.

In the press conference, he admitted his involvement in the August 22 attack on RU BCL leader Tawhid Al Hossain Tuhin and also in last year's attack on Akheruzzaman Takim, former vice-president of RU BCL.

But he claimed some BCL men were involved in both the attacks. "Some Chhatra League men who failed to get party posts during its council in July contacted us for attacking

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Abdullah Al Masum

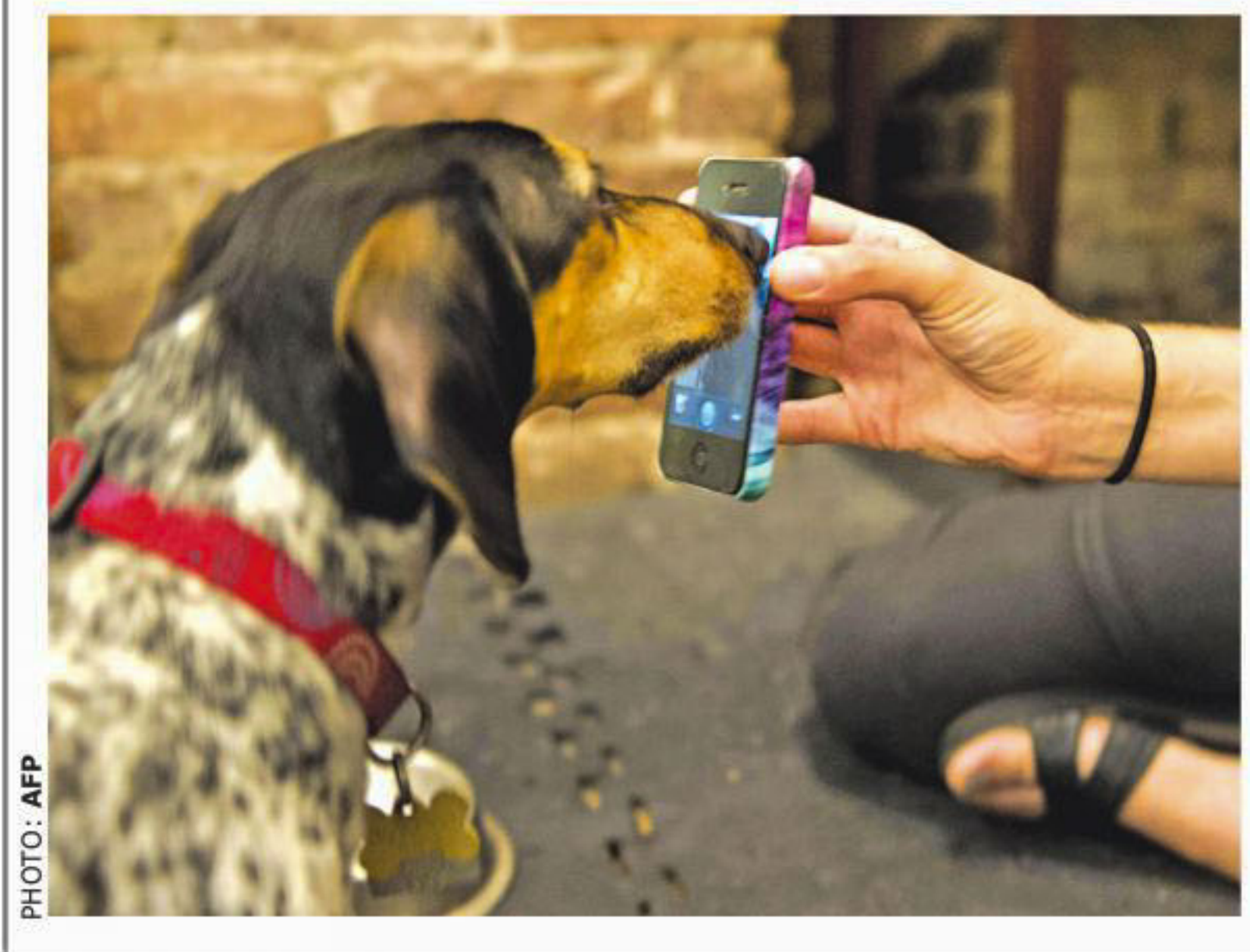


PHOTO: AFP

A dog named Bandit is trained to do a self portrait on an iPhone by Anna Grossman at her studio in New York on Aug 19. Since starting schoolforthedogs.com Anna has taught dozens of dogs how to use touch screen Apple devices. "It's a novelty. It's just sort of a fun thing to do," Grossman told AFP at the classroom she runs with partner Kate Senisi near Manhattan's Union Square.

# Jamaat cannot contest by-polls

## CEC says citing HC verdict on party registration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat will not be able to contest the by-polls to Barguna-2 constituency on October 3, as the High Court verdict declaring its registration illegal remains in force, said Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad yesterday.

No candidate of Jamaat-e-Islami can run in the polls by using the party symbol, but can stand as an independent candidate. This will continue to hold until the Supreme Court stays the verdict, he added.

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**The Daily Star**

**Integral Energy Limited**

**ONLINE POLL**

Do you agree with BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia that she and her party are ready for dialogue with the ruling party to resolve the ongoing political crisis?

Yes (65%)

No (35%)

TOTAL VOTES: 280

**TODAY'S POLL**

Do you think the main opposition BNP will join the next general election if the poll-time government is not headed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT [www.thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net)

**PRAYER TIMING August 26**

Azhan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-30 5-05
Zohr	12-45 1-15
Asr	4-45 5-00
Maghrib	6-33 6-36
Esha	8-00 8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

**দোয়া মাহফিল**

মহান আল্লাহ তায়ালার পবিত্র আমানত যা তিনি আমাদের দান করেছিলেন, আমাদের একমাত্র পুত্র মারফুর শারার আযম (২০) কে তিনি আবার আমাদের কাছ থেকে ফিরিয়ে নিয়ে গেছেন (ইলা লিল্লাহে...রাজিউন)। এই গভীর শোকের মধ্যেও আমরা আল্লাহ তায়ালার এই বিধানকে মেনে নিয়ে সবর করেছি। শারারের রুহের মাগফিরাতের জন্য আজ সোমবার বাদ আসর নিউ ডিওএইচএস মহাখালী জামে মসজিদে এক দোয়া মাহফিল অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। আমাদের সকল আত্মীয়, বন্ধু ও শুভাকাঙ্ক্ষীকে এই দোয়া মাহফিলে শরিক হওয়ার জন্য অনুরোধ জানাচ্ছি।

বিনীত-নাশীদ আযম এবং মসিউল আযম