

Children raising their schoolbags wade through knee-deep water to school at Paroirchawk of Dakshin Surma, about 15km from Sylhet city, as heavy rain and rush of water from the hills inundated the area. PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

### Another 23

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8,000 and special quotas in government jobs and benefits for their children and grandchildren. Over 200 applications from the

Biranganas are now under scrutiny at the Jatiya Muktijoddha Council, the central platform of the freedom fighters. The process of recognising the

Biranganas as freedom fighters began following a High Court order on January 27, 2014. On January 29, last year, parliament

unanimously passed a bill to include them in the list of freedom fighters. At least 1.62 lakh women were

raped, and another 1.31 lakh Hindu women went missing during the Liberation War, according to the War Crimes Facts and Findings Committee led by M Hassan.

The 23 war heroines who received freedom fighter status in the third phase are: Hamida Begum of Gaibandha, Rokeya Bewa, Shaleha Bewa, Nazimon, Saloki Bewa, Goljan Begum, Rubia Begum, Shirin Akter, Ayesha Begum of Natore, Shokina Khatun of Jamalpur, Nazma Akter of Barisal, Rezia Bagum of Brahmanbaria, Khodeja Begum and Manu Begum of Sylhet, Tomina Bewa of Thakurgaon, Nurjahan Begum of Comilla, Sokina Begum of Sherpur, Fatema of Gopalganj, Ambia Begum of Faridpur, Momtaj Begum of Gazipur, Ashia Khatun and Joshna Banu of Sirajganj.

#### News on 'Joy-Safadi FROM PAGE 16 protest the BBC Bangla Service's news

in this regard. Speaking at a press conference at AL President Sheikh Hasina's political

office in Dhanmondi, Hanif said, "Staying in London, BNP leaders are making up the story that Joy met Safadi." He alleged the BNP leaders' inten-

tion was to shift people's attention from the "conspiracy to oust the government, which was leaked following the arrest of BNP leader Aslam Chowdhury".

"It's been already proved that the BNP was hatching a deep conspiracy along with Israel.

"I have watched the BBC interview [with Mendi N Safadi], which was done by BNP's London-resident leader Jacob Milton. During the interview, Milton intentionally asked Safadi whether he had talks earlier with anybody of Bangladesh. Safadi replied in the affirmative. It could easily be understood from such a motivated query that it [interview] was all a drama," the AL leader said.

BBC Bangla in a May 27 report cited that in an interview with BBC, Safadi said he had met Joy last year at the latter's office in Washington DC, USA while his meeting with BNP leader Aslam Chowdhury in India was in April this year.

After Aslam's meeting with the Israeli politician became public, police arrested the BNP joint secretary general on May 15 on charges of being involved in the conspiracy to topple the government and on sedition charges.

## 'Aristotle's tomb'

FROM PAGE 16 that his remains had not been

unearthed there.

He said the location of the structure, its view, its positioning at the centre of a square marble floor, and its estimated time of construction all pointed to it having been a shrine to the philosopher.

The archaeologist also quoted medieval references to Aristotle's ashes being interred in his hometown.

Aristotle, who lived from 384 to 322BC, was a pupil of Plato, and is regarded as one of history's most influential thinkers and a pivotal

contributor to Western philosophy. He started his own school in Athens, the Lyceum, and spent his life working as a teacher, researcher and writer.

#### UP Polls

# Irregularities down, violence up: CEC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad yesterday said violence escalated in the fifth phase of Union Parishad polls although there were fewer cases of irregularities this time.

At a post-election press conference at the media centre of the Election Commission Secretariat, the CEC said incidents of ballot box stuffing decreased this time than the previous phases but the number of casualties had increased.

"It is tough to control anyone if he wants to win polls by any means," he said. Meanwhile, the ruling Awami

League termed the polls free and fair, while the BNP said it was worthless to inform the Election Commission about voting irregularities.

Rakibuddin said law enforcement agencies were forced to open fire for the sake of people's lives and properties when opposing candidates and their supporters got locked into clashes during the polls.

Voting in 53 centres out of 6,884 was suspended, the CEC added.

Regarding violence on the voting day, Rakibuddin said a "climate of violence" was prevailing in the country at present. Therefore, polls-related violence has also increased.

"We all, including political parties fair. and candidates, need to change our mindset to stop the polls violence otherwise it would be tough to do

"We are initiating tough actions to Dhanmondi office.

There is no news of the rest five yet.

gone missing from Rangunia of

Chittagong on May 22 and the last three

on April 21 from Hazaribagh and

All the four are activists of the ruling

In a press release yesterday, Rab

Kamrangirchar of Dhaka, families said.

Awami League, said upazila AL presi-

claimed that the four were picked up

from the capital's Paltan area on Friday

of Faridpur Police Station, said

Ramjan, Suruj and Dulal were named

in the case over the murder of Saiful

Islam, general secretary of the upazila

unit of Jubo Dal, a pro-BNP youth

organisation. Liton is a suspect in the

unknown assailants in the upazila's

Savar village on February 3. A murder

case was filed with local police station

the following day, accusing 14 people.

Later, the case was shifted to the

Criminal Investigation Department,

arrested Ramjan, said his brother went

into hiding following the incident.

"We came to know that he [Ramjan]

was picked up from Rangunia of

others, including three brothers, were

picked up from Khagarbaria and Savar

Chittagong on May 22."

Ashraful Islam, younger brother of

Saiful was hacked to death by

Habibur Rahman, officer-in-charge

Of the four arrested, Ramjan had

Rab says

FROM PAGE 1

Liton Islam, 20.

dent Khalilur Rahman.

night.

said the OC.

prevent polls violence and we will never tolerate any irregularities at the polling centres," the CEC said.

"At every meeting with law enforcement agency members, we emphasise on recovering illegal arms and arresting criminals ... The situation would have improved had the two steps were implemented," he

Rakibuddin thanked all concerned for their involvement in yesterday's "peaceful" voting.

About the allegation of the BNP, he said the party's allegations were of "general types". Whenever the commission received any specific allegation, it gave directives to respective officials to look into that. BNP'S REACTION

The BNP yesterday alleged that the EC

was aware of the irregularities during the UP polls, but had not been taking any measures to prevent those. "The EC is sleeping despite being

aware of the irregularities which are taking place during the polls," BNP Standing Committee member Nazrul Islam Khan told reporters after meeting with the CEC.

"It is useless to bring all these issues to the EC. They [the EC officials] have done nothing to stop election-related violence or took any action," he said. AL'S REACTION

The Awami League yesterday said that apart from a few isolated incidents, the fifth phase of the UP polls was free and

AL Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif made the remarks at a press conference at AL President Sheikh Hasina's

villages in the upazila on May 11, their Suruj Ali, 22, Dulal Hossain, 24, and families claimed. They are: siblings Tikkah Sardar, 35,

> Ershad Miah, 30, and Saddam Hossain, 25, and Rony Pramanik of Khagarbaria village and Dulal Pramanik of Savar village. Rony and Dulal are aged between 25 and 35.

Family members of the missing held a press conference at Pabna Press Club on May 25. They claimed that law enforcers picked up their loved ones. The families also demanded their safe return home.

Talking to this correspondent yesterday, Abdul Karim, the father of the three siblings, claimed that a group of armed people, introducing as Rab men, picked up his sons from his house. Some 10 to 12 men also accompanied the armed people, he added.

Karim said that when they went to Pabna Rab camp the following day, Rab officials denied picking up his sons. RAB'S CLAIM

Rab in the press release claimed that the four went into hiding after the murder. On information that the four of the

accused were staying in Paltan area, a team of CPC-1 [Crime Prevention

Company] of Rab-3 detained them, says the press note issued from the elite The statement further says the

force's Legal and Media wing. accused planned to kill Saiful as his family had disputes with Delwar Apart from the four arrestees, five Hossain, another accused in the case,

and his cohorts over taking control of a

local mosque and its property.

## Rail minister blessed with baby girl

UNB, Dhaka

Railways Minister M Mazibul Hoque was blessed with a baby girl yesterday.

His wife Hanufa Akter Rikta gave birth to the girl at the city's Square Hospital around 3:00pm, minister's private secretary AKMG Kibria Majumder told UNB.

Both the mother and the newborn are fine and the minister is staying beside them at the hospital, said Kibria. This is the much-talked-about

couple's first child. The minister hit

headlines two years back for getting married at the age of 67. Mazibul Hoque's personal staff Mosheraf Hossain posted some photographs of the newborn in her father's lap on his Facebook

page. On October 31, 2014, the minister tied the knot with 29-year-old Rikta, putting an end to his bachelor

Amid huge festivities, the wedding ceremony was held at the house of bride Rikta at Mirakhal village of Chandina upazila in Comilla.

# Tokyo renews

FROM PAGE 1 such projects.

"A dedicated railway bridge alongside the existing Bangabandhu Bridge, development of cross-border connectivity and a number of some other proposed projects would be included under the quality infrastructure development initiative," said the Japanese leader. He highly appreciated Hasina's

contribution to G7 Summit that concluded in Nagoya on Friday. "Your intervention and contribution helped the G7 leaders lead the discussion which ultimately helped us in our key components of the outcome elements," Abe told Hasina.

The Bangladesh PM sought Japan's support to develop a knowledgebased economy, nano technology and blue economy. Japan agreed to extend support to this end. Hasina thanked the Japanese pre-

mier for relaxing some rules of origin with regards to knit garment export, which led to increase of export to Japan from Bangladesh. The foreign secretary said the

meeting between the two leaders was

held in a very warm and cordial environment. The two premiers also discussed the progress of the Big-B project in Chittagong and the prospective

Japanese support to implement the mega project, added Shahidul. Abe asked the officials of Japan International Cooperation Agency

(JICA) to explore Hasina's proposal for Japanese investment in Bangladesh with a buy-back arrangement. Hasina proposed some new areas,

including energy efficiency, nano technology and skill development, before Abe for his country's largescale support. According to a decision taken

in the meeting, holders of diplomatic passports would get onarrival visa for travelling to Japan from July 1. The two premiers agreed to work

together on various international issues and in the discourse for reformation of the United Nations.

### 146 tonnes

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commander of army, said they would carry the food to remote Tindu and Remakri unions of Thanchi. Though 16 tonnes of food were

already distributed among the crisishit people by the upazila administration, it was difficult for it to carry more to the remote areas. Remakri Union Chairman U Chaw

Prue said, "I received some food from the district relief and rehabilitation department." Mong Pru Aung, newly-elected

chairman of Tindu union, said they were yet to receive any relief. Earlier, Amir Hossain, district relief

and rehabilitation officer, said, "We have already allotted 146 tonnes of food to the affected people in Thanchi. We will allot more if needed.' Bandarban Deputy

Commissioner Dilip Kumar Banik said another 200 tonnes of food were kept in reserve to tackle the food crisis. He hoped that the situation would improve soon. Local sources said the most

affected areas are remote Jinna Para, Dolian Para, Yon Nong Karbari Para, Boro Madok Vitor Para, Japa Rong Tripura Para, and Basi Aung Karbari Para, among other areas, of Tindu and Remakri unions.

The people in the areas are facing a severe crisis of food as they could not cultivate enough crops last year due to excessive rain. Their crops were also destroyed by rats and everything will be as before."

insects.

# Argentina court jails

FROM PAGE 16

Paraguayan national Lidia Cabrera de Franco, who was abducted with her husband and two young daughters in Argentina in 1977 and handed over to her home country -- which detained her in secret for 11 months -- said she felt she owed a debt to those killed under the plan.

Cabrera, 67, testified at the trial about three Argentines and two Uruguayans who were detained with her and never seen again.

She said she overheard a policeman say they were to be thrown from an airplane.

"Giving testimony is important for the victims," she told AFP. "It is a debt owed to them." Prosecutors based their case partly

on declassified US intelligence docu-

ments showing how the South

American regimes worked together to track down political exiles in neighboring countries and kill them or have them sent back to their home countries. The various regimes communicated with each other using a telex system

dubbed "Condortel." Officers were trained to use it at the infamous School of the Americas in Panama, a US training center that drilled repressive Latin American regimes in counterinsurgency tactics. STOLEN BABY SEES JUSTICE

The cases included harrowing stories such as that of Maria Garcia and Marcelo Gelman. The militant antiregime couple were arrested in Argentina on August 24, 1976 and taken to an auto workshop that had been transformed into a torture cham-Gelman was killed. Garcia, who was

seven months pregnant at the time, was transferred to her native Uruguay. Her family still does not know exactly what happened to her. Garcia's daughter, Macarena, was

born in captivity and given to a family

of regime sympathizers to raise. She learned her real identity only through blood testing in 2000, when she was

23 years old. Macarena Gelman was present in court yesterday and welcomed the

verdict. "It's a satisfactory sentence," she said. "(Cordero) is the first Uruguayan

to be convicted in my mother's case." "It makes me wonder, when will this happen in Uruguay?"

Uruguay has a controversial amnesty for crimes committed under the dictatorship (1973-1985), although some key regime figures have been prosecuted via loopholes.

Cordero was extradited from Brazil,

which also has an amnesty for its own 1964-1985 military regime. Prosecutors in the case sought numerous other suspects outside

Argentina, but their extradition requests were refused. 'COORDINATED STRUCTURE FOR REPRESSION'

Hundreds of army officers and police have been tried in Argentina for atrocities carried out under the country's

1976 to 1983 dictatorship.

However, Operation Condor itself had never been the subject of a trial until the current case opened in February 2013. "It's the first verdict on Operation

Condor as a coordinated structure for repression," said Gaston Chillier, head of Argentine rights group CELS. Bignone, who ruled Argentina from 1982 to 1983, is now 88 years old and

already serving a 15-year sentence for the theft of babies born to political prisoners during the seven-year dictatorship. Jorge Videla, who ruled Argentina

from 1976 to 1981, also faced charges, but died in prison in 2013 at age 87. He was serving sentences for the

abduction of babies and killing of

#### Mro life turned FROM PAGE 2 He did not pay any heed to our suffer-

ruling party men," said Mangol Kumar Chakma, information and publicity secretary of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) that signed the CHT Peace Accord with the government in 1997. Chong Pung Murong, headman of

Lonkhyong mouza, said AL leaders had forced him to give the headman reports declaring grabber's ownership over the jhum land in Choto Kolajiri area. Saching Prue, organising secretary

of AL Lama upazila unit and chairman of Ruposhipara union, however, denied the allegations. "Local Awami League leaders are

behind everything. They helped Shahidul grab jhum land first and they would hand over the land to a rubber plantation company for a big amount," said Md Mantu, a friend of Shahidul. Indigenous people mostly depend

on ihum cultivation and forest resources for their livelihood in hills.

Goons destroyed cropland and then forced them to leave their farm houses, the victims said. "We are helpless. When we protest,

we face death threats," Kumrao Mro, 60, of Kompong Mro para, said. Asked why they did not seek help from police, villagers said they had

been implicated in false cases several times for protesting land grabbing. "We met our social leader, Chung Pung Mro [headman of Lonkhyong

mouza] several times but to no avail.

Mro para. A few villagers said the headman

had links with land grabbers and that he had allowed many influentials to occupy hilly land by issuing reports in exchange for money. State Minister for Chittagong Hill

Tracts Bir Bahadur U Shew Sing rejected the issue of land grabbing altogether. Companies are making investments

for rubber plantation that will ultimately benefit hilly people, he said. Bir Bahadur, lawmaker from Bandarban, had committed himself to saving land of indigenous people in

the hills, said KS Mong Marma, central member of PCJSS. But he did not take any action against the land grabbing in the district. Rather, he maintains good relations with influ-

ential grabbers, he added. Since the signing of the peace accord, 156 indigenous families of twelve villages in Bandarban have been dislodged from their ancestral land by Bangali settlers, influential rubber plantation owners and horticulturists, said Jumlian Amlai, Bandarban chapter unit president of Parbatya Chattagram Forest and Land

Rights Protection Movement. People's representatives have been patronising the illegal act and that is why the local administration finds its hands tied, said Khaled Mahmud, Lama Upazila Nirbahi [executive] Officer.

# JP is just unable

entered politics after the death of his brother and JP lawmaker Nasim Osman in 2014. He got the party nomination to contest the by-election in

Sadar) constituency.

A local JP leader said the party will remain unchallenged in the area as long as Salim is with it. "We cannot afford to lose the seat in the next general elections by expelling him."

Nasim's Narayanganj-5 (Bandar and

According to local leaders, it is Salim Osman who virtually controls Narayanganj JP. "The party will think twice before doing anything about him," said one of them. A senior leader close to Ershad said,

"Though embarrassed by Salim's activities, the party will not take action against him as it needs Osman family to maintain strong presence in Narayanganj."

murder in 2014, a local politician said the ruling Awami League at that time didn't say anything against Shamim Osman, an AL lawmaker and brother of Salim, despite much criticism for his relations with the main accused, Nur Hossain.

Likewise, the JP won't do anything against Salim Osman. The party has to depend on the Osman family to have a base in Narayanganj, he added. A leader, who had a position in

now-defunct JP central committee, said that people would forget the Narayanganj school incident after

Contacted, JP Secretary General ABM Ruhul Amin Hawlader on Thursday night said they were waiting for the police report on the public humiliation of headmaster Shyamal Kanti Bhakta. The High Court on May 18 had asked the Naryanganj SP to

submit it in three days.

Asked whether JP will ask Salim to refrain from joining the budget session of parliament as suggested by Health Minister Mohammad Nasim, Hawlader replied in the negative.

Nasim on Sunday said, "If the lawmaker has a bit of shame left in him, he will not join the next parliament ses-

Hawlader added the allegation against Salim Osman has not been proven yet. "We cannot bar him from attending parliament session."

JP co-chair GM Quader said Salim Pointing to the Narayanganj seven- recently met Ershad and submitted a written statement explaining his position regarding the Narayanganj inci-Quader added he doesn't know the

> chief will soon form the JP presidium committee, now defunct following the party's council in May 14, and will hold a meeting to discuss issue. Asked about Ershad's stance,

> content of Salim's statement. The party

Quader said he has no idea. The JP chairman could not be

reached over the phone for his comments. According to some of his close aides, he is very much in favour of the lawmaker. "Salim Osman has Ershad's

blessings," said one of them.

another issue comes up. "And then,

# ings," said Ching Moy Mro, of Aomboy