

## More listed criminals behind bars

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 62 people, including 14 listed criminals, were arrested by the joint forces in the 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday.

The joint forces of the army, the BDR and police recovered two revolvers, two shotguns, one Chinese rifle, one shutter gun and 168 bullets during the period.

The arrests pushed the number of people rounded up since the start of the anti-crime crackdown on October 17 to 10,617, including 2,329 listed criminals. The joint forces have so far seized 1,930 firearms and 29,239 rounds of ammunition.

In Natore, three people were arrested by the joint forces in Shingra upazila Monday night.

Police said Samad, accused in a number of cases, was arrested with a foreign revolver from Toltoipara village.

Acting on his confessional statement, they arrested Ashraf and Emad from Sonaghat village.

Our Madaripur correspondent reports that a team of the joint forces arrested, Liakat Sheikh, a top terror

from East Sharmongal of Rajoir upazila. But his accomplices snatched him away and fled in a speedboat. Later, the joint forces arrested Alim Sheikh, an accomplice of the top terror. He was handed over to Rajoir thana police and sent to the court, shown arrested under section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC).

The police headquarters in a press release yesterday said they (police) have arrested 1,172 people, including seven identified criminals during their countrywide drive in the 24 hours ending at 6:00am yesterday. Police also recovered four firearms during the drive, the press release added.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police in a press release yesterday said they have arrested 316 people from different parts of the city during a special drive in the 24-hours ending yesterday morning.

The DMP also took action against 1200 vehicles for violating traffic laws. They seized 27 cars and arrested 32 people for failing to show driving licences and other relevant documents.

## Mongla Port won't be privatised, says minister

BSS, Bagerhat

Shipping Minister Colonel (ret) Akbar Hossain has rejected outright the speculation of disinvestment of Mongla Port and said the government would not privatise it so long it would make profit with quality service.

Referring to a study of the IIFC, the minister said, "A survey does not essentially reflect the decision of the government."

Akbar said this while exchanging views with the newly elected Mongla Port Dock Sramik Union, Jatiyatadabi Sramik Dal and Employees Union at the port here yesterday.

The minister said the movement of ships depends on importers and exporters and hence the government has nothing to do with it. The government has already decreased the port charges, but unfortunately the berthing of ships did not go up.

He asked the workers and employees of the port to find reasons why ships are not showing interest in using the port.



Prime Minister and BNP Chairperson Khaleida Zia releases a pigeon to inaugurate the 24th founding anniversary of the Jatiyatadabi Chhatra Dal, the student front of the BNP, at the Ramna Park in the city yesterday.

## New Year revellers stay indoors

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army personnel who remained on the city roads throughout the night. Besides army personnel, over 3000 police and BDR men and mounted police, along with dog squads, guarded 84 identified trouble spots to prevent any untoward incident. Special security measures were taken for the diplomatic zone. A police team led by the Deputy Commissioner (Protection) was deployed in the zone.

The city's Gulshan and Banani areas known as 'celebration points' were almost empty in the first hour. Few local people and foreigners were seen on the roads. They exchanged greetings with the law enforcers.

Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chodhury accompanied by the Inspector General of Police, (IGP) and some other high officials, was seen exchanging New Year's greetings with the law enforcers and journalists at the Gulshan-2 crossing at midnight.

Altaf visited different city areas from 11:00pm till small hours of yesterday to

supervise the activities of the law enforcers. He asked the law enforcers to discharge their duties properly.

Students of Dhaka University gathered at the TSC and Shahbagh crossing before zero hour. They danced, sang and exploded a few crackers but the celebrations looked rather insipid. Outsiders could not enter the campus as the law enforcers had sealed off all the entrances at 8:00pm. Only students and teachers were allowed to enter the campus.

Celebrations in other places in the city followed a more or less similar pattern. Police, BDR and army personnel checked the vehicles. They even went for body search.

In many places, there were indoors and locally-based parties where people welcomed the New Year dancing, singing and having feasts.

The hotels, however, did brisk business. A large number of men and women joined the New Year's parties in hotels.

Many city dwellers said there was

no lack of enthusiasm among them but they could not celebrate the New Year according to their plans owing to the tight security measures adopted by the law enforcers. "This time people did not come out fearing harassment or even arrest," said a man at the Gulshan-2 crossing.

Security was beefed up in the city and across the country on the 31st night because of two past incidents weighing heavily in the law enforcers' calculations. First, the memory of the untoward incident on the Dhaka University campus, where a woman was harassed by revellers in the first hour of the year 2000, is still fresh. Second, the bomb explosions in cinema halls in Mymensingh and Satkhira laid bare some glaring holes in the overall security system.

## Road accidents kill 8 in Natore, Bhola

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least eight people were killed and 25 others injured in separate road accidents in Natore and Bhola districts yesterday and on Tuesday night.

Of them, six were killed in Natore while the rest two in Bhola.

In Natore, six people were killed and 25 others injured in a road accident at Kadamchilian in Lalpur upazila on Natore-Pabna highway yesterday, according to UNB.

Police said the accident took place at about 2:55 pm when a Pabna-bound truck collided head-on with a Rajshahi-bound bus of Jony Paribahan, killing six on the spot and injury 25 others.

The dead identified as Arifur Rahman, 24, of Gabtoli in Bogra, Kochi, 7, of Pangsha in Rajbari, Shahadat, 30, of Kushtia, Afzal Hossain, 46, Zallat, 40, and Lokman, 35, of Rauta village in Boraigram upazila of Natore.

The injured people were admitted to Natore Sadar Hospital, Rajshahi Medical College Hospital and different clinics.

In Bhola, two people were killed in a road accident at Kunjerhat on Bhola-Charfashon road on Tuesday night.

The deceased were identified as Harun-ar-Rashid Helali, 45, Ameer of Lalmojan upazila Jamaat and chairman candidate of Ramaganj union parishad, and Jahangir, 30.

Police said the accident took place when a Charfashon-bound night coach from Bhola hit the motorbike of Helali, killing him along with his co-rider Jahangir on the spot.

The bus driver managed to flee the scene but police seized the vehicle. The bodies were handed over to the relatives of the victims after autopsy. A case was filed.

## Pregnant woman

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her family managed only Tk 2,000. However, the clinic staff yesterday charged Tk 5,000 which Amirun's family could not afford. At this, Dipali and others of the clinic beat up Amirun who fell sick.

She was rushed to the Mitford Hospital where the on-duty doctors declared her dead yesterday morning. The body was sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

Amirun was scheduled to give birth to her fourth child. Our hospital correspondent reports that another woman died due to negligence of treatment at the same clinic last year.

The duty officer of the Kotwali Police Station told The Daily Star that on information they went to the clinic and found the accused already had left the clinic. He also said they came to know that the victim died due to negligence of treatment.

The victim's husband yesterday filed a case.

## 11 bank staff

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department of the bank, who allegedly helped his relatives to withdraw the huge amount of money through cheques against current accounts of zero balance on different occasions during the six-and-a-half-year period.

## UP polls

FROM PAGE 1

promulgated during the eighth parliamentary election in October 2001. Also, the election observers will be under legal cover like in the general election.

So far, Bangladesh Manobadhiker Samannaya Parisad, Bangladesh Manobadhiker Commission, Democracy Watch, Massline Media Center, Nari Progoti Shanga, Broti, ASA, Odhiker, FEMA, Service Civil International, International Society for Fair Election Monitoring, SEAF, Jatiya Nirbachan Parjabeokhok Parisad, Muktiyoddha Kalyan Kendro, Nari Jagoron Sangstha, Action on Disability and Development, Human and Environment Development Association, Banche Shekha, Khan Foundation, Liberty Movement, RDRS, Bangladesh Manobadhiker Bastobayan Sangstha, National Democratic Alliance and Asia Foundation sought accreditation from the EC.

## AL call to stop HR violation

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Hasina apart, outgoing general secretary Zillur Rahman, new General Secretary Abdul Jalil and central leaders Bir Bahadur, Col. (ret) Faruk Khan, Sultan Md Mansur Ahmed, Akhtaruzzaman, Mirza Sultan Raja, Khairuzaman Chowdhury Lita and Fazle Rabbi

took part in the discussion. The meeting in a political resolution said that since launch of the Operation Clean Heart on October 17 last year 'political persecution' has notched up.

The meeting was highly critical of the arrests of party-men and intellectuals and their maltreatment in

prisons. The AL expressed concern at the arrest of opposition leaders and activists in connection with 'false cases' soon after their release on High Court orders.

The ALCWC urged the government to end human-rights violation and political persecution, release political detainees, stop patronising local criminals and international terrorists, permit rallies and demonstrations, execute the verdict of Bangabandhu Murder Case, expedite the trial of Jail Killing Case, stop distorting history, end crimes on campuses, uphold freedom of press, lower prices of essentials, stop politicising the administration, state of economic stagnancy, create congenial environment for investment and form an independent anti-corruption commission.

In another resolution, the meeting alleged that the government went for direct recruitment for public jobs bypassing the Public Service Commission and was politicising the administration.

With two-stroke auto-rickshaws withdrawn from the city streets and many thoroughfares off-limits to rickshaws, the AL demanded alternative arrangements for commuters and job opportunities for unemployed rickshaw-pullers and auto-rickshaw drivers.

It criticised the recent vandalism of the Jatiyatadabi Chhatra Dal, the student chapter of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, at the Dhaka Medical College.

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## Engur Shafiq murder

FROM PAGE 12

his phone call, only saying that he had bought the mobile phone Sunday morning from Sadarghat. He could not be contacted further.

Earlier, family members had filed a general diary (GD) with Ramna police Sunday noon. They came to know about recovery of Shafiq's body and identified it at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue in the afternoon. Then a murder case was filed.

Shafiq's body was handed over to his family following autopsy and he was buried at Jurain Graveyard on Monday.

A former official of the Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority (DESA), Shafiq was running a private business firm - Multimode Exploration Limited-- for the last several months. He left behind two sons aged 8 and 2, and his wife.

When contacted last night, the second officer at the Ramna Police Station said they are waiting for the autopsy report to begin an investigation. He, however, said they are trying to trace the person with Shafiq's mobile phone.

Meanwhile, Shafiq was the top bidder for the shore-based facilities project of the Global Maritime Distress Safety System (GMDSS) under Spain-Bangladesh Financial Cooperation Programme. Spain is providing a grant of US\$ 9.5 million for the project.

Dr Abdullah Bari of Ananda Group, when contacted last night, said Shafiq had come to his his office at the Maghreb prayer time on Saturday and left at around 7:00 pm.

"Shafiq pressed my office staff to allow him to meet me. But they told him I was busy," Bari said.

Shafiq's friend Goutam Mitra told

this correspondent yesterday he had repeatedly tried to contact Shafiq on his mobile phone on Saturday but failed. "When I contacted his office at 9:30 am on Sunday, an office attendant said he had gone to his village home in Chandpur. But his wife told me he was at his brother's residence at Jurain," Goutam said. But Shafiq's brother said he had not come to his residence.

## Book fair

FROM PAGE 12

Dhaka Book Fair at Sher-e-Bangla National Parade Square yesterday afternoon.

"Books for prosperity" is the theme of this year's book fair, which has attracted 151 publishers and organisations from home and abroad, including Japan Foundation, Islamic Republic of Iran, Indian Guild, World Book Centre and Midas.

This year's book fair also marked the birth centenary of celebrated poet Jasimuddin.

The prime minister urged writers, litterateurs, academics and scholars to contribute towards building a treasure of scientific and technological books in Bangla, the dearth of which is currently hindering dissemination of knowledge including modern technical know-how.

At yesterday's function, she presented a crest and books to two eminent personalities - SMA Faiz, Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University, and Prof. Zinnatunnesa Tahmidia, Chairman of the Public Service Commission.

She unveiled the plaque inscribed "Present Books to Your near and dear ones" at the entrance of the book fair. She went round a number of stalls and observed some of the publications.

## PDB clarifies

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for the Ghorashal Power Plant from the Chittagong and Mongla ports.

It says the PDB sought an allocation of Tk 37 crore to pay CD/AVAT to release the materials and bring them to the project site for inspection. It has paid about Tk 6 crore to Mongla customs authorities.

"At this point, PDB neither accepted the materials nor rejected those". The materials could be accepted only after inspection by a committee.

The PDB says the present five-member inspection committee has two mechanical engineers. The PDB requested inclusion of two more mechanical engineers in it to make their work easier.

And local traders fear that prices might go up a little more because of 'poor supply' and because of the off season between January and mid-March.

"Growers' presence in the markets is much lower this year and the foggy weather has also slowed down the rice drying process," Abdur Rashid, a rice trader in Rajshahi's Shaheb Bazar area, said. "We could not supply sufficient rice to our clients from different parts of the country

including Dhaka, Chittagong, Comilla, Barisal and Jessore."

The situation is the same throughout Natore, Bogra, Dinajpur and Rangpur.

Daud Ali, a 65-year-old farmer of Paramandapur, cultivated aman (BR-11 variety) on 10 bighas and returned eight maunds per bigha this year against a standard of 10 maunds.

Joynal, Faruk, Abdul Awal, Muntaj and Abdur Rahim Mandal of Paramandapur and Amnura villages witnessed similar shortfall.

Aman Ali, a marginal farmer of Paramandapur who cultivated aman paddy on 10 bighas, said scarcity of water and untimely rainfall hindered output.

In Berabari of Mohonpur, aman rice grower Abdur Rashid got an average production of six maunds from seven bighas.

Rezaul Karim, deputy director of the Agriculture Extension Department (AED) in Rajshahi, hinted at a production shortfall of about ten per cent in the district.

"I will not claim this year's production as a good one but it will be satisfactory as it was last year despite the fact that there was no reasonable causes for the poor production and there was no remarkable incidents of natural calamities and attack of

insects", Karim said.

He, however, blamed some of the areas in Rajshahi where there is the irrigation facilities are poor and the growers who planted seedlings in late.

The high paddy and rice prices, he said, would encourage Boro cultivation on more areas in the upcoming season.

And so, the AED has marked out 57,100 hectares for Boro cultivation villages in the upcoming season.

Rezaul expects the targeted area to cross the 60,000-hectare mark eventually.

In the immediate-past Boro season, 2.09 lakh metric tonnes of rice was produced from 55,265 hectares in Rajshahi.

Poor aman harvest in certain areas will not affect the gross production figures of the district, Rezaul said. "Rajshahi has fared better in aman production than other districts in the northern region."

Earlier, in January 2002, the cabinet committee decided not to absorb any manpower working in any development project once the project is complete.

A working paper, which was prepared by the finance ministry and placed at the meeting, observed that many institutions like hospitals, educational and training

## Looking to the East

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country at any cost," she said. Turning to student politics, she said there is a common public perception that student politics mean crime, toll extortion, capture of halls etc. But students must put an end to this and restore their past glory by ousting all undesirable elements from the student bodies.

## Hundi charge

FROM PAGE 1

chairman, five directors, two officials of the bank and two other persons, according to banking sources.

The BB team found that they used to buy dollars from the market and send those to different accounts at a bank abroad through TTs (telephonic transfers).

"This is a clear case of money laundering and we will take action as per law," said a source at the central bank.

The BB will serve show cause notices under Section 46 of the Bank Companies Act on the bank chairman, Naism Sikder, and five directors - ZH Sikder, Shahidul Huq, Zahidul Huq, Mahbubul Huq Sikder and Salahuddin Ahmed. And they will have to send their reply in 15 days, sources said.

The two other persons found involved in the dubious transactions are Zainul Huq Sikder and Momtazul Huq Sikder. Two officials of the bank - Khandaker Mohiuddin and Qazi Mashur Rahman - are also learnt to have been involved in it.

The BB will deal with the case under Money Laundering Act and take actions against officials of the bank branch involved in the transactions. Also the Anti-corruption Bureau will be asked to investigate the case.

The central bank investigation found that these people had filed up 15 forged forex declaration forms (FMJ) on different dates and showed they had brought in \$8.9 lakh through Zia International Airport. They used to deposit the dollars at foreign currency (FC) accounts.

And within a short span of time, they used to send those foreign currencies to the joint account of Zainul Huq and Shahidul Huq and an account of Nasim Sikder at the Bank of America through TTs.

The BB team also found they had sent about four lakh dollars through four more TTs.

Security was beefed up in the city and across the country on the 31st night because of two past incidents weighing heavily in the law enforcers' calculations. First, the memory of the untoward incident on the Dhaka University campus, where a woman was harassed by revellers in the first hour of the year 2000, is still fresh. Second, the bomb explosions in cinema halls in Mymensingh and Satkhira laid bare some glaring holes in the overall security system.

The Met office yesterday recorded the lowest temperature at 8.5 degrees in Srimangal.

In the city, the temperature rose yesterday due to a cloudy sky, with the maximum at 23 and the minimum at 12.1. The maximum temperature on Tuesday was at 21.5 and the minimum at 11.9.

The sky will be clear from today and the temperature may drop one to two degrees again.

## Deployment

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Mohammadpur in the city, Dr Kamal said all governments until now have used the police as an instrument of political dividends.

The present government after coming to power closed down many factories and evicted slum dwellers without creating alternatives, he said.

He also urged the government to save educational institutions from violence.

He called upon countrymen to unite against criminals and black-money holders.

Gono Forum leaders Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, Samsuddoha, Shamsul Alam Dudu, Abul Kasem, Advocate Sagir Anwar, Habibur Rahman, Mahbubul Alam Khan and Begum Jahanara, among others, spoke at the meeting presided over by Saifur Rahman Sayed.

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The BNP chief categorically said criminals would not have any place in her party or its front organisations. "Such elements must Leave BNP and its front organisations right now," she warned.

Referring to opposition warning to dislodge the present government within a year, she claimed, "The BNP and along with its allies will be in power at least for the next 15 years."

Khaleida asked leaders and activists of the JCD to build it as a 'genuine student-based organisation' and emphasised regular holding of its annual conference so that new leadership emerges each year.

The BNP chief advised them devote themselves to study to make themselves capable of facing the challenges of the 21st century.

Speaking at the occasion, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said JCD would comprise regular and genuine students only. Those who have completed studies should move to Juba Dal and other front organisations of the BNP, he added.

Chaired by JCD Convenor Shahabuddin Laitu, the gathering was also addressed by, among others, incumbent and former leaders of JCD, ministers and MPs.

## New BDR chief

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general officer commanding (GOC) of the Rangpur division.