

# The Daily Star

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## Army pullout begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The army started pulling back to barracks yesterday after nearly three months of a countrywide anticrime drive.

The pullout of troops from districts and upazilas, beginning yesterday afternoon on a government order, will be completed by this afternoon, army sources said.

However, the anticrime drive by the joint forces will continue. The troops will be stationed at the divisional headquarters and back to cantonments. Some army camps will be set up in the places without any cantonment.

"An army company will be kept alert in Sylhet, Khulna and Rajshahi each and, if necessary, the troops will be called in to assist law enforcers," said an army official.

Another company will be stationed in Barisal Sadar, as there is no cantonment.

Even if Dhaka and Chittagong have cantonments, sources said, some army camps may be set up

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PHOTO: STAR

Army men load paraphernalia into a pickup to pull back from a camp on the Dhaka University campus upon a government order on pullout of troops deployed in the Operation Clean Heart.

## Indemnity will be explained in JS, says Moudud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed yesterday said the recent ordinance indemnifying actions of the joint forces during the 'operation clean heart' will be placed before the parliament and made a law.

"I will give answers in parliament and the opposition will get a lot of scope to debate and criticise it", he said responding to criticisms of the ordinance.

He was speaking at the launching ceremony of a book -- "South Asia: Crisis of Development: The Case of Bangladesh" -- written by him. The University Press Limited (UPL) published it.

Apparently giving an excuse for being involved in preparation of the ordinance, Moudud said, as a minis

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## EC yet to get full list of UP poll finalists, symbols distributed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of contenders for the upcoming Union Parishad (UP) polls now stands at 1,65,608, with an exit of 9,086 from the race, according to Election Commission (EC) sources.

The figure of finalists may rise, as the EC is yet to get all the lists from across the country. The commission received candidate lists from 3,529 UPs out of 4,230 until yesterday.

Of the candidates, 17,666 are vying for chairman, 1,13,119 for general member and 34,823 for women's reserved seats of member in the polls beginning on January

25.

The election authorities distributed poll symbols among contenders yesterday after candidature was finalised locally.

On the last date of withdrawal, 1,954 candidates for chairman, 5,816 for general member and 1,316 for reserved seats chose to stay off the election.

Earlier, the election authorities validated 2,04,378 nomination papers out of 2,12,239 submitted for the three categories.

The contenders went on full-scale electioneering in their areas long before the distribution of symbols.

The EC has already sent ballot papers and necessary materials to remote areas. The appointment of election officials is almost finalised.

The officials at the upazila level will submit law and order reports on their areas in the five-day election training from January 13 at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

The commission may review its stance on security arrangement, as the government refused to deploy the army to maintain law and order during the polls.

## Ovens on low gas flow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gas supply to thousands of houses and restaurants in the city hit a low over the last couple of days.

Sources in Titas, the gas transmission and distribution company, put the low pressure of gas down to its increased consumption because of cold front this winter.

The city dwellers are consuming more gas to boil water and dry clothes. To make matters worse, garment factories have also increased gas consumption.

The flow of gas goes even lower in the morning and evening when its consumption is extremely high. After sundown, the supply comes to normal, the sources said.

Residents of at least 45 areas lodged complaints with Titas about the low pressure of gas prevailing for the last six days.

The most affected areas are Rampura, Gulbagh, Mirpur, Mohammadpur, Zoar Sahara, Tallabagh, Agargaon, Pallabi, Kalyanpur, Shekhertek, Adabar, Shahjahanpur, Uttara, Kachukhet, Goran, Shyampur and Old Dhaka, official sources confirmed.

If the cold snap continues in the

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## Tannery relocation in bureaucratic tangles

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government initiative to relocate the Hazaribagh tanneries is now on shaky grounds because of bureaucratic tangle.

The Tk 277 crore project is also facing uncertainty due to 'unrealistic conditions imposed by the tannery owners', who declared they would not co-operate in the relocation scheme until their demands are

met.

The Leather City project is scheduled to be completed by 2005.

Since the country's independence, successive governments have recognised the need to shift the highly polluting tanneries from Hazaribagh. But a concrete move never came for lack of funds and proper planning.

Now, the present government has announced that the tanneries

must be shifted to Savar with proper treatment plants.

A committee comprising tannery owners and government officials has also visited Savar and Kaliakoir and selected a site for Leather City.

Pressure from foreign buyers, environmentalists and local people has caused tannery owners to agree on transferring their businesses to the proposed Savar site.

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## Mercury dips further

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The temperature continued to drop across the country yesterday.

The lowest temperature yesterday, 5.4 degree Celsius, was recorded by the observatory station in Rajshahi, while the temperature in the capital dropped to 10.4, the lowest this winter, though there was mellow sunshine for a couple of hours in the afternoon.

On Thursday the lowest temperature recorded in the country this winter was in Syedpur - 6.0 degree Celsius, while the temperature recorded in the capital was 10.7 degree Celsius. The highest temperature recorded in the country yesterday-

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## Views on Indemnity Ordinance



Moinul Hossain Chowdhury



Barrister Rokonuddin Mahmud



Shahdeen Malik

## Army discipline may be affected: Gen (rtd) Moinul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former advisor to the last caretaker government, Major General (Retd.) Moinul Hossain Chowdhury sounded a note of caution that giving outright indemnity to the members of the joint forces would affect military discipline.

While commenting on the 'Joint Drive Indemnity Ordinance, 2003,' the ex-advisor observed that since the army was called out for 'assisting the civil administration', it is already covered by protections guaranteed by article 132 of the

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## Contrary to spirit of Constitution: Rokonuddin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Barrister Rokonuddin Mahmud believes that giving retrospective effect to indemnifying the actions of the joint forces, during the anticrime drive, went against the spirit of the Constitution.

According to him, the government should have resolved the indemnity issue at the very outset when the army was called out for launching the operation.

Commenting on the 'Joint Drive Indemnity Ordinance, 2003' promulgated on January 9, Barrister

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## Stain on country's image: Shahdeen Malik

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Human rights activist and lawyer Shahdeen Malik expressed his concern that the promulgation of the Ordinance, indemnifying the actions of the joint forces during the anticrime drive, might lower the country's standing in the eyes of the international community.

"Bangladesh is a signatory to the 'Convention against Tortures' and also a party to the International Criminal Court. These convention and court uphold the spirit of justice. So we've to be very careful so

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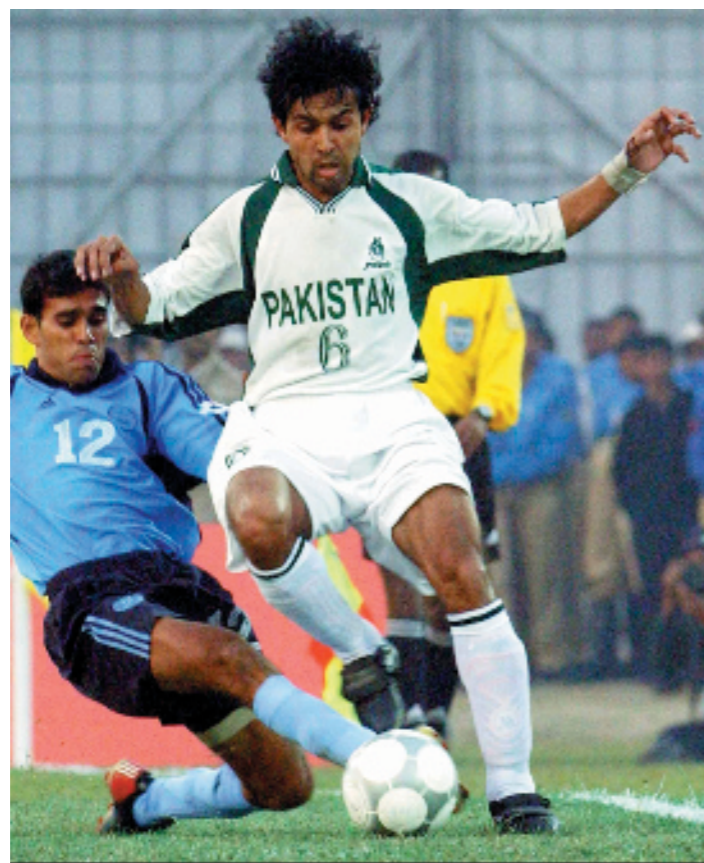


PHOTO: AFP

Pakistan's Sarfaraz Rasool (R) comes under attack from behind by Sameer Naik of India during the opening match of the third SAFF Championship at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday (Story on page 13).

## Football fiesta to help deepen ties among SAARC nations: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Kicking off a South Asian soccer extravaganza, SAFF Football Championship 2003, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday hoped that the sporting spirit of the tournament would help further intensify the existing cooperation among the regional nations.

She expressed her hope that the 3rd SAFF Football Championship would help the participating countries come closer to one another.

Besides the seven SAARC nations -- Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka -- Afghanistan is also participating in the 10-day meet at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Defending Champions India took on Pakistan in the opener while Sri Lanka played against Afghanistan in the second encounter of the day featuring the teams from Group A.

The four other teams -- Bangladesh, Nepal, Maldives and Bhutan -- have been placed in Group B of the tournament.

On arrival at the stadium yesterday, Khaleda Zia was received by State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman and senior officials.

Ministers, President of the Asian Football Confederation Mohamed Bin Hammam and Chiefs of the three services were also present.

Two helicopters of Bangladesh Air Force carrying the national flag and flags of the participating countries flew low over the jam-packed National Stadium.

Young boys and girls from all over the country presented folk and other traditional dances with music while Baby Nazneen and co-artists riding a vehicle in the shape of a large football went around the stadium singing the theme song.

The prime minister, amidst a burst of claps and cheers from the stands, released pigeons and balloons in the air marking the opening of the football fiesta.

She also released a commemorative stamp of Tk 10 denomination to

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## Muntasir hospitalised

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka University History Professor Muntasir Mamun, who was freed from jail Thursday, was admitted to Dhaka Community Hospital for treatment, family sources said yesterday.

Prof Mamun was arrested on December 8 following the serial bomb blasts in four movie houses in Mymensingh. He was released Thursday from Dinajpur jail.

Meanwhile, journalist Shahriar Kabir went to a private hospital for medical check-up yesterday, his family sources informed.

## Sri Lanka defeat Afghanistan

### Pakistan's surprise win

SPORTS REPORTER

Sri Lanka got off to a winning start in the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Championship with a solitary goal victory over minnows Afghanistan in their opening Group A clash at the floodlit Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Skipper Dudley Steinwall scored the match winner 42 minutes into the first half to ensure three points for the islanders.

Earlier in the day's first game, Pakistan posted a surprise 1-0 win against favourites India at the same venue.

Sri Lanka, the second highest FIFA ranked country (139) in the tournament after India (127), and coached by a Brazilian, failed to impress against the newcomers from Afghanistan who had the

crowd behind them for their spirited display.

The Lankans, however, were tactically superior and that ultimately made the difference.

Sri Lanka could have gone ahead in the 22nd minute when forward Jayasuriya got the ball from a Weerasinghe pass in side the danger area. But he failed to keep his composure and shot wide of the near post.

The much-expected lead came at the stroke of the breather when the Lankans got a free kick on the left flank. Jayasuriya floated the ball into the Afghanistan box and following a melee it fell invitingly for Steinwall who placed the ball home with a left footer.

Back into the international scene after two decades in isolation,

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