Detention of 50 under **SPA** declared illegal UNB, Dhaka

A High Court bench yesterday held illegal detention of at least 50 people, including Monwar Hossain Dipjal, a Dhaka City ward commissioner and movie villain.

The bench comprising Justice MA Aziz and Justice Nazrul Islam Chowdhury passed separate orders on hearing the writs filed by the detainees challenging their deten-tion under the Special Powers Act.

Another bench comprising Justice Amirul Kabir Chowdhury and Justice Nizamul Huq declared illegal the detention of Golam Faruq Khan Kaiser, a lawyer of Chittagong.

Kaiser's detention was earlier held illegal twice.

Polls tribunal set up at each upazila

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) has set up an election tribunal at each upazila to hear and settle disputes on the ongoing Union Parishad polls.

water transit The upazila's senior assistant judge or the assistant judge was appointed tribunal judge, said an EC press release yesterday. **RAFIQ HASAN**

In the hill districts Khagrachhari Rangamati and Bandarban, the New Delhi has asked Dhaka to additional district magistrate will extend its transit facility through perform as tribunal judge

Meanwhile, an EC meeting reviewed the UP polls, with Chief Election Commissioner MA Syed in waterways for another three months. The Indian high commission in the chair Dhaka has written to the foreign

The meeting also attended by election commissioners Safiur Rahman and AK Mohammad Ali and senior EC officials was informed that the commission conducted polls in 615 out of 4,228 union parishads. The authorities suspended

sources voting in 35 polling centres as the Under the facility, India pays a situation went beyond control of the charge to transport goods to the presiding officers. The EC started receiving the

results of the UP polls from remote areas and has taken steps to publish them in official gazette, said the press release.

Govt to decide jute sector job cut soon

tion of anonymity

RAFIQ HASAN

A high-level meeting will soon decide on retrenchment of excess manpower in the state-owned jute mills, jute ministry sources said. The ministry is working on a

study report by a high-powered committee that has suggested retrenchment among other recommendations to make the mills viable. The nine-member committee

headed by former jute secretary AFM Sarwar Kamal made the recommendations in December. "At least 19 of a total of 23 state-

owned mills in the country could reach break even points if necessary steps are taken on the basis of our recommendations," said a member of the committee, on condi-

ministry to extend the transit facility

already okayed the proposal and

sent it to Prime Minister's Office for

final approval, according to ministry

The shipping ministry has

expiring on February 3.

Delhi seeks

extension of

A number of finance ministry officials were also included in the committee other than the high officials of the jute ministry and the state-run Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) The conditions of the other four

mills are so severe that they would never be viable, the member, also a high official of the jute ministry said referring to the committee recommendations

He however declined to say how many workers and employees the committee report suggested to be

axed Another member of the committee requesting anonymity told The Daily Star that at least 20 per cent of the workers would have to be

northeastern states through

rupees in charges, which it has

the India-Bangladesh cooperation

India owes over Tk 2 crore

The facility started in 1972 under

Bangladesh river routes.

promised to pay soon

the sources said

agreement on transit

retrenched

The committee suggested abolishment of a number of permanent posts in the mills like cook, sweepers and guards. It also suggested that the number of such high positions as manager, deputy manager and general manager be reduced.

The committee also recommended trimming staff at the BJMC headquarters. More than 500 officials and employees, including 42 drivers, work at the BJMC head office

The committee found excess staff, administrative mismanagement, rampant corruption and lack of initiatives to tap the capacity of the mills responsible for the huge SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Finally he

manages

to escape



Students of the Institute of Fine Arts stage a demonstration against administrative corruption, including leakage of question papers, in the city yesterday. They submitted a memorandum to the vice-chancellor

Axed bank MDs for review of **BB** decision

Mayoral candidate Shamsuzzamar Zaman managed to escape, after passing 20 hours inside three rooms of a bar association build-

It is not known how he could find a way out of the building, when it was surrounded by the police.

Advocate Shamsuzzaman Zaman, a former BNP leader, did not step down from the mayoral race, even after the 4-party alliance announced the name of district BNP president M A Haque as its

agreement and was renewed on ad candidate a few days ago. hoc basis. Initially, the transit agree-Zaman, who was staying in a ments covered periods of between room of the first floor, addressed a big six months and a year. But they are gathering of people at the bar buildnow signed for two to three months, ing at about 11.00 am yesterday. He claimed that there was no specific India wants to sign a long-term case against him, but some influential people were repeatedly asking The government formed a fourhim to quit the mayoral race. SEE PAGE 11 COL 6 SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet STAR REPORT The axed managing directors (MDs) of three private commercial banks yesterday appealed to the Bangladesh Bank (BB) to review its

decision, claiming they have not flouted any banking rule, banking sources said. The BB removed them for failing

sanctioning and monitoring loans. The three MDs are Mirza Eja Ahmed of One Bank Limited, Anwar Ahmed of National Credit and Commerce Bank Limited (NCCBL) and Mokhlesur Rahman of Dhaka

having links with any bank for the next two years. Then they will have to seek the central bank's permission if they want any position in any private bank

have appealed to the board of direc

DMCH burn unit in acute bed crisis

NAIMUL HAQ

Burn patients are not getting admission to the only burn unit in the country at the Dhaka medical College Hospital (DMCH), owing to an acute shortage of beds.

Currently, the unit has 124 burn patients against only eight beds, forcing the extra patients either to go to other wards where vacant beds are available, or to find space on the floor.

This is for the first time the unit is facing such a crisis, an official of the unit told the Daily Star yesterday. And doctors attributed such rise in burn cases to the dry season.

On every admission day (Wednesday), on an average the unit has to admit 20 patients now, instead of the usual five to eight. But that is not enough to deal with the rush of patients. Surgeons said many burn patients requiring immediate treatment were asked to come back later or have their names included in the waiting list.

Dr Md. Abdur Rashid, one of the surgeons, said, " Many of the patients who do not get admission need emergency surgery as burn causes severe injury and

Nilufa, 35, with 70 per cent burn, Ayesha, 15, with 34 per cent burn, Parvati, 19, with 25 per cent burn, Nazma, 35, with 30 per cent burn and Sabina, 11, with 23 per cent burn are some of the patients now accommodated on the floor

"I was refused admission twice at the hospital, but when I finally got admitted I had no bed," said Nazma from Manikganj who is now on the floor.

Dr Rashid also said. "Previously we never had such rush of patients in desperate need of surgery The number of patients is increasing rapidly but the capacity of the burn unit is not."

Dr Samanta Lal Sen, Chief of the proposed 50-bed burn hospital, explained, "We are working day and night to perform surgeries but burn injuries cannot be healed with just one surgery."

He continued, "Often it requires multiple surgeries and so after the first surgery, patients are asked to stay back for observation. But even post-operative patients are frequently accommodated on floors or forced to share beds, which are quite unsafe for the SEE PAGE 11 COL 2



to protect the interest of the banks in

Bank Limited. The BB also barred them from

According to sources, the MDs

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Criminal cases Court summons **Om Prakash**, 7 others

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka, yesterday issued Summons on businessman Om Prakash Chowdhury (Agrawal) and seven others in connection with seven criminal cases.

Judge Motiur Rahman, after scrutinising the necessary docu ments, issued the order.

The Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAC) on Tuesday filed the cases against them for taking loans from different banks against export orders from a Hong Kong based company to ship apparel.

The seven others are Panka Saha, Narayan Chandra Bhowmik, Uttam Kumar Saha, Sanjay Kumar Bhataria, Chandan Chakraborty Radha Krishna Sharma and Hare Krishna Saha.

Criminal held, arms recovered STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective police yesterday arrested a notorious criminal of Dhaka University area, Shahrier Hossain alias Rabin, with some firearms and ammunition

He was nabbed from a house at Riazbagh Taltala in Khilgaon area and a pistol was recovered from his possession

Acting on his confession, police later recovered a shotgun, a singlebarrel rifle, a .32 foreign-made revolver and 274 rounds of ammunition from his rented house at Dilu Road in the city's Moghbazar.

They also arrested Rabin's friend and caretaker of the house Arif Hossain

Police said Rabin is a close associate of Sadek Abdullah, son of former opposition chief whip Abul Hasnat Abdullah



A worker sets up a stall at the Bangla Academy yesterday on the eve of Ekushey Book Fair. The traditional fair is expected to start on February 1.

Scientists dispel fat food cancer scare

School of Public Health.

acrylamide people are taking in is

probably not sufficient to increase

the risk of cancer." she told Reuters.

health risks of acrylamide cannot be

Although conclusions about the

REUTERS, London

Fatty, fried foods such as potato chips and fries may contain a substance that can cause cancer in animals but the levels are not high enough to increase the risk of the disease in humans, researchers said on Tuesday.

Swedish scientists sparked a worldwide food scare last year when they found high levels of acrylamide, a possible human carcinogen, in high carbohydrate foods including crispbreads, certain cereals and cooked potatoes. But new research by scientists at

the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston and the Karolinska Institute in Sweden -- the first to look government food safety agency. at acrylamide in terms of human diet and cancer risk -- found it may not

be as dangerous as people have been led to believe. cesses and in laboratories and ir water purification, is labelled as a "There was a lot of concern in probable carcinogen based on data the public that was raised from the from animal research.

initial findings of acrylamide in food, But Mucci said doses given in said Dr Lorelei Mucci of the Harvard animal studies were several times higher than what humans would be "This study provides some exposed to through diet or other evidence that the amount of sources.

"These data suggest the doses of acrylamide people are taking in can be effectively detoxified," she said, referring to her research, which is published in the British Journal of Cancer.

drawn from one study, Mucci said The American and Swedish the research is a starting point that researchers studied the diets of 987 could help to address some of the concerns raised by Sweden's patients with either cancer of the National Food Administration, a colon, bladder, rectum or kidney and 500 healthy people to determine Acrylamide, a colourless comwhether levels of acrylamide pound used in manufacturing pro-SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

motorcade PALLAB BHATTACHARYA. New

In the second major lapse in Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's security in just over a week, a private car attempted to intrude into the motorcade carrying him in the southern part of the Indian capital late last night.

Delhi police sources said a personnel of the Special Protection Group, accompanying the prime minister, opened fire at the white car. a Maruti Esteem. which tried to get into Vajpayee's motorcade. The prime minister was returning from Delhi airport to his official residence, after a tour of the western states of Gujarat and Maharashtra.

The incident took place near a traffic signal when the prime minister's car was approaching. The windscreen of the car

PHOTO: STAR bearing registration number of neighbouring Haryana state, develе d

Direct feeder

with Yangon

vessel

service

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

to be set up in city

BSS, Dhaka

The government has decided to set up a medical university and two general medical hospitals in the city to make quality medical service easily available.

The decision was taken at a presentation session on the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare here yesterday with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the chair.

The decision followed recommendations of relevant committees and physicians' demand to make medical education well-coordinated at the national level and improve medical services.

The IPGMR and all the 12 medical college hospitals of the country will be brought under the proposed National Medical University.

The two proposed 500-bed general hospitals will be set up in

Mirpur-Pallabi area and Bashabo-Khilgaon-Mugdapara area to cope with the increasing pressure on medical sector.

During her interventions in the three-hour meeting in the International Conference Centre. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia directed the authorities concerned to take necessary steps to ensure easy availability of medical services to the people, particularly the poor.

She said all district hospitals should be made self-reliant so that people, especially the poor, do not have to rush to cities for treatment. Attended by a number of senior

ministers and government officials. the meeting decided in principle to introduce a three-year Health. Nutrition and Population Programme from July next by maintaining sector-wide approach and enabling the health and population sector to render their services under separate organisational structures like before. This decision was taken as per recommendations of the IMED and London School of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene.

The meeting decided in principle to allow foreign specialist doctors to render medical services in Bangladesh on condition that two local Bangladeshi doctors are associated with each of them.

The decision will help Bandladeshi patients get improved medical services, enhance expertise of local physicians and save a lot of foreign exchange that is now being spent as many patients go

Bangladeshi,

workers clash

clashed in Malaysia's northern

Penang state in a dispute over the

Four workers were admitted to

hospital after the fight, in which

clubs, stones and bottles were

used, and 271 arrested, the official

The fight began when a group of

140 Vietnamese workers attacked

some 40 Bangladeshis at the

upcoming Chinese New Year holi-

davs, police said vesterday,

Bernama news agency said

in Malaysia

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

abroad for treatment. The meeting decided to fill the SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Sharon's second term Vietnamese Palestinians warn of more violence

AFP, Gaza City

Leading Palestinian figures warned of a new rise in violence in the territories as official election results published yesterday gave Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's rightwing Likud an overwhelming victory.

"Matters will go from bad to worse, the peace process will be further suspended,

SEE ALSO PAGE 5 the situation will deteriorate on the ground and

Israeli's military violence will escalate," top Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erakat told AFP Tuesday. "Sharon proceeded to reoccupy

the West Bank during his first mandate, he will now go on to reoccupy the Gaza Strip during his second mandate," Erakat predicted, as

Wednesday's official results Riot police were called in when showed Israel had been pushed hundreds of garment factory workfurther to the right. ers from Bangladesh and Vietnam

He added, however, that "we respect Israel's democratic choice and (Palestinian leader) Yasser Arafat invites the Israeli government to continue negotiations where they stopped in Taba (Egypt)" in January 2001

Every West Bank town, except for Jericho, has been reoccupied by the

Israeli army since last June in a bid to dismantle militant cells there. And a Sharon spokesman said Sunday Israel could retake the entire Gaza Strip if Palestinian armed groups lunch more rockets 0 r С

entrance of an apartment block which serves as their hostel. Bernama said. Other Bangladeshis s then joined in. SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

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opens today STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg Singapore-registered cargo con-

tainer MV Orient Vision sets out on the sea today to introduce direct feeder vessel service between southern port city of Chittagong with the Myanmar capital of Yangon.

The feeder service on this new route was agreed recently during talks aiming to boost trade between Bangladesh and Myanmar, official sources said.

Singapore-based feeder vessel operator Orient Express Lines' representative Nelum Attanayake, who he is now here to attend today's ceremony, told reporters here that the freight charge will reduce by 15 per cent.

Orient Express owns the cargo container.