

## BDR, BSF in shootout over camel smugglers

**STAR REPORT**

Bangladeshi and Indian border troops exchanged heavy fire for about five hours yesterday morning after smugglers tried to bring in camels at Shibganj in Chapainawabganj.

No casualty was reported in the shootout that started at 4:00am and continued till 9:00am; only a camel died.

"The Border Security Forces (BSF) entered Bangladesh territory chasing camel smugglers," said Lt. Col. Mominul Islam, commanding officer of the 6 Battalion of the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR).

"They first opened fire on the smugglers, killing a camel. At around 4:00am, they fired on the BDR camp at the Beel Bhatia."

BDR sources said the BSF troops from Piazpur Border Outpost under 63 BSF battalion in Malda district of West Bengal fired opened fire at the smugglers and then on the BDR camp.

As the BDR retaliated, villagers got panicky and they came out to know what had been happening.

The firing stopped following telephonic talks between BDR Sector Commander Kazi Anwarul Islam and BSF Deputy Inspector General Sree Ramesh.

Two company -- and battalion-level meetings were also held. Afterwards, additional forces from both sides were pulled out from border points.

The meeting agreed to maintain peace along the border. The situation is now normal.

BSF DIG South RP Singh claimed that the BDR fired 500 rounds of shots and BSF used 350 rounds during the border skirmish.

Trade at the Sonamasjid check post stopped for a few hours during the fight. Later, trucks with goods started rolling through the border point.

## Govt eyes visit with pinch of salt

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The government is worried whether the visit of the European Parliament delegation is aimed to justify the "unilateral" resolution taken on Bangladesh or to get a true picture of the events here.

"The resolution which the European Parliament had taken was unilateral and the information of the resolution were not correct. It was an injustice towards Bangladesh," said Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, secretary general of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and local government and rural development (LGRD) and cooperatives minister.

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## Euro Parliament team worried over human rights violations

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

A visiting delegation of the European Parliament has expressed its concern over violation of human rights and democratic norms in Bangladesh.

It, however, was optimistic that the government would address the issues.

At the end of a five-day visit, the delegation members at a briefing in the city yesterday also said they had the impression that there are 'some restrictions on freedom of press' and also 'tortures on journalists'.

They also expressed serious reservations about the recently passed indemnity law that puts the acts of the joint forces between October 16, 2002 and January 9, 2003 above civil law.

"This indemnity law casts a doubt on the real nature of the system of government of Bangladesh, as do the hampering of the work of the Election Commission, the persistent denial to create independent bodies to protect human rights, to fight the systematic and widespread corruption, or to enquire into misadministration (ombudsman), some of which are in direct contradiction with the very constitution of Bangladesh," they said in a written statement.

"Several people whom we have met during our stay mentioned the people in general welcomed the Operation Clean Heart. But it does not justify that people who are responsible for the custodial deaths or tortures during the anti-crime drive that began

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## Court martial of army men begins

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Court martial of Captain Atiqur Rahman and two soldiers began yesterday on charge of extorting money from an Indian hundi (money sent illegally) trader in the city.

"A Field General Court Martial began the trial of Captain Atiqur Rahman and soldiers Mizanur Rahman and Afzalul Islam at Savar Cantonment yesterday for their alleged involvement in the extortion of an Indian trader," said Lt. Col. Moahammad Nazrul Islam, director of the Inter Services Public Relations Department (ISPR) last night. He did not elaborate further.

Army sources said Captain Atiq did not get any assignments during the anti-crime joint drive that began

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## Hosts sweat to subdue minnows Canada



**REUTERS, East London**

Unimpressive South Africa ground out an 118-run victory over Canada in their World Cup pool B match yesterday, keeping alive their hopes of qualifying for the super six stage.

But the tournament hosts, who have to beat Sri Lanka in their final group game to have a chance of advancing to the next stage, dropped five catches as Canada, chasing 255 to win, finished on 136 for five after 50 overs.

Fast bowler Makhaya Ntini was the pick of South Africa's attack, completing figures of two for 19 from 10 overs, but left-handed opener Ishwar Maraj, dropped four times, anchored Canada's reply with an unbeaten 53 off 155 balls.

He became only the eighth man to carry his bat through the full quota of overs in a World Cup innings, while his fifty, which included six fours in 148 balls, was the third achieved by a Canadian at this tournament.

Earlier, Boeta Dippenaar rode his luck to rescue South Africa as Canada embarrassed the World Cup hosts with a determined bowling performance.

Dippenaar made 80 as South Africa struggled to 254 for eight from their 50 overs after being put in. Opener Graeme Smith also contributed a half-century.

South Africa, though, made the worst possible start, crashing to 23 for three as debutant medium-pacer Ashish Patel picked up two early wickets.

After starting with a wide, Patel, who ended with three for 41, settled into a good rhythm, moving the ball through the air.

He conceded just one run in his second over and then struck in his third, Herschelle Gibbs (eight) well caught down the leg side by wicketkeeper Ashish Bagai.

Patel's 39-year-old strike partner Davis Joseph picked up the wicket of Gary Kirsten for a duck six balls later, Bagai again the catcher as Joseph seamed a delivery sharply across the left-hander.

Things got worse in the next over when Patel struck for a second time, Jacques Kallis (one) mistiming a pull straight to Nick Iffill at mid-on.

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## Christina Rocca due tomorrow

**BSS, Dhaka**

US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Christina Rocca will arrive here tomorrow on a two-day official visit, a Foreign Ministry official said.

"The US official will be discussing matters relating to bilateral issues apart from world events and developments in the Middle East," the ministry official told BSS yesterday afternoon.

During Rocca's visit her Bangladeshi counterparts would raise the issue of excluding Bangladesh from the list of countries whose nationals are required to register with the US Immigration and Naturalization Service.

## 8 cops charged with Bangabazar extortion

**COURT CORRESPONDENT**

Two speedy trial courts in the city yesterday framed charges against 10 policemen and an informant for extortion.

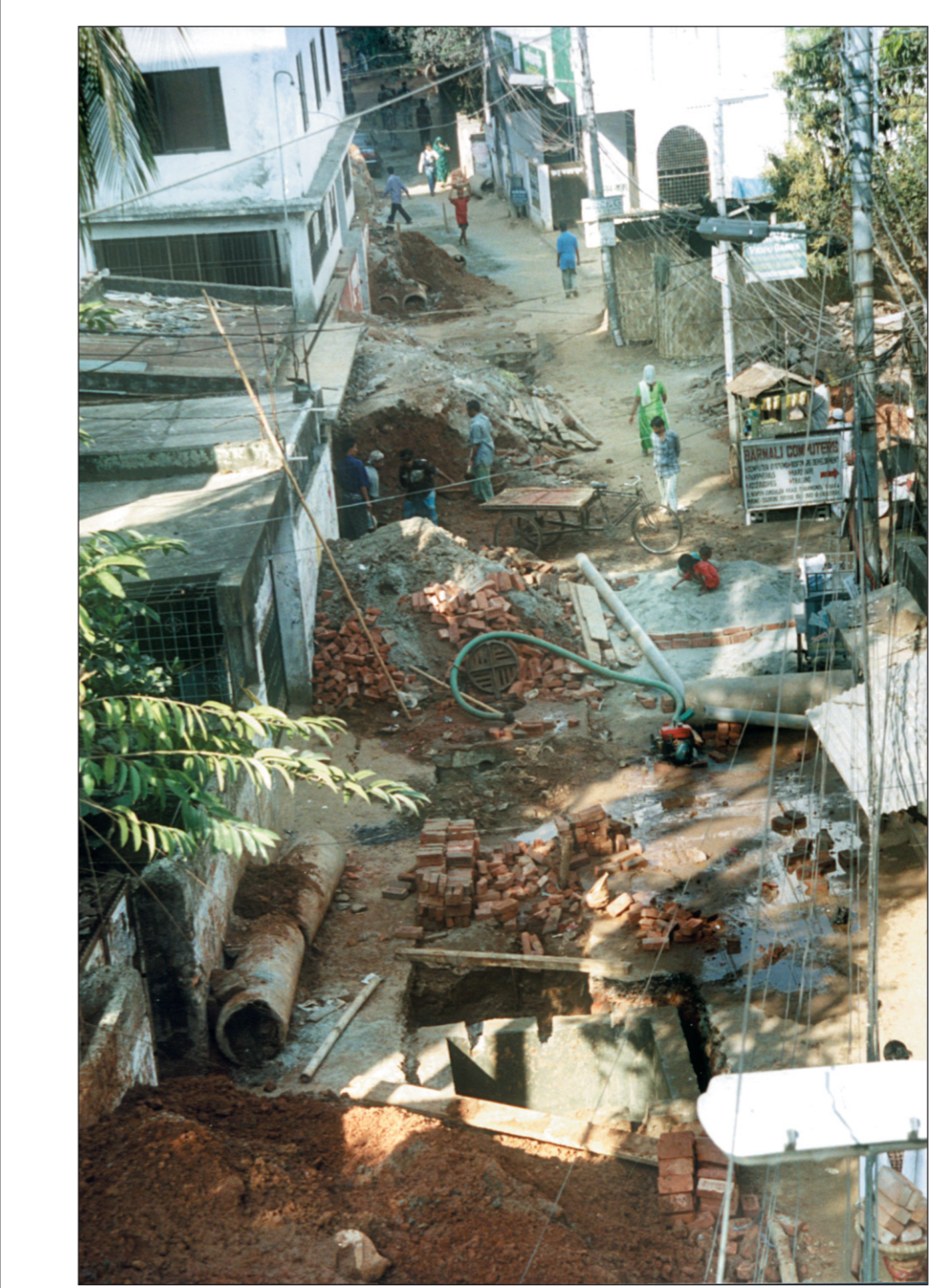
The Speedy Trial Court- 2 framed charges against eight policemen and an informant in the Bangabazar extortion case.

The accused are Sub-inspector Gulzar Ali, Assistant Sub-inspector Sikder Abdul Halim and constable Motalab Hossain of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), constables Shafiqul Islam (1), Mahub Alam, Jamal Hossain and Shafiqul Islam (2) of the Special Branch (SB), constable Nawsher Ali of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police and informant Nuruzzaman alias Swapan.

Magistrate AKM Moksudur Rahman fixed March 8 for trial of the case.

In the case filed with the Ramna Police Station on February 6, it was alleged that the nine were caught when they went to Bangabazar

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As if unrepaired roads were not bad enough, the authorities dug up the Bhuter Goli lane to lay sewerage lines and left the work unfinished to heighten sufferings.

## Not quite a fun ride

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

If you are resisting the temptation to enjoy some bumpy rides in theme parks like the Fantasy Kingdom thinking it would be an extravagance, there is a cheaper way to entertain yourself.

Take a rickshaw-ride on the roads around the Green Road and you will experience the thrill similar to a roller-coaster ride.

As you travel through the pock-marked Central Road, the deep sloughs give you all the excitement of an astronaut exploring a new planet. And all that excitement is tripled when three of you are riding a rickshaw together.

If you are planning to seek a job as a circus trapeze performer, you are welcome to try your skills on the overhead electric wires swinging very low at the West End Street.

Not interested in trapeze? Then you can spend some quality time playing hide and seek with your friends inside the maze of the Free School Street. Do not forget to carry a compass if you plan to come back home at the end of the day.

There is further entertainment at the North Circular Road. A ground for hurdle race has been prepared there by dumping huge cement pipes on the road. Bhuter Gali will offer you the same facilities as well. Just hop over the big concrete slabs on the road and you shed some extra kilos.

But you had better not do it at Kathal Bagan. Some manholes there are gleefully welcoming you with their mouths open. Once you fall into their prey, a journey to the centre of the Earth is awaiting for you.

Now, Crescent Road is a place where the condition of the road has deteriorated to the extent of allowing only a rickshaw to traverse through whatever travel worthy space there is.

If you strongly believe in moving forward in life, this is the place where you can not stick to your philosophy. Moving backwards seems he solution to the problem.

South African batsman Boeta Dippenaar tries to scoop one over Canadian wicketkeeper Ashish Bagai's head during his fighting 80 in the World Cup pool B match at Buffalo Park in East London yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

PHOTO: STAR

## Turkey nods to US military use of its land

**AFP, Ankara**

The United States and Turkey have agreed the military part of a deal to deploy US troops here for an Iraq war, the defence ministry said yesterday, ahead of a debate by MPs on Ankara's full approval.

Defence Minister Vecdi Gonul, quoted by the Anatolia news agency, said the military track of the deal was "complete" but gave no further details on when it would be signed.

However, the Turkish parliament put off a decision to allow the US to use its territory as a springboard in a war against Iraq till Saturday.

Meanwhile, Moscow yesterday said US President George W Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin have agreed to find a mutually acceptable solution on Iraq through the UN Security Council.

The announcement came just a day after Putin declared for the first time that Russia would not support a new joint US-British resolution threatening Iraq with the use of force.

"While discussing Iraq, both sides expressed a desire to speed up work in the UN Security Council for finding a mechanism for action that would guarantee the interests of the entire international community," the Kremlin said in a statement following telephone talks between the two leaders.

Russian and Chinese Foreign Ministers Igor Ivanov and Tang Jiaxuan, meeting in Beijing, issued a joint statement saying war in Iraq "can and should be avoided," while neither revealed whether his country would use its veto power to block the resolution introduced Monday.

France, the fifth veto-wielder, has sidestepped the issue by saying a veto would be unnecessary since the

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