



## 14 Hizbut men held in Kushtia, leaflets seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Police and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) in a joint raid Thursday night arrested 14 operatives of the Islamic militant outfit Hizbut Towhid from the Borobazar area in Kushtia town and confiscated a large number of leaflets from them.

The arrested men are Aslam, 20, Mahatab Uddin Driver, 52, Shahidul, 38, Poran, 22, Rafiqul, 45, Mostafizur, 23, Ashraf, 25, Kamal, 22, Rezaul, 50, Anisur, 22, Maruf, 18, Arzu, 24, Abu Taleb, 55, and Manik. They were holding a secret weekly meeting at the 'Alor Disha' office, police said.

The arrests follow a September 14 order from police headquarters in Dhaka asking all police stations to

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

# Arms cache seized from deep CHT forests

## Army suspects subversive activities

STAR REPORT

Army and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) forces have seized a huge stash of modern firearms and highly powerful ammunition raiding terrorist and criminal bases in Bandarban and Rangamati and arrested an alleged gang leader after firefight in Khagrachhari.

Sources said the BDR paramilitaries raided two terrorist hideouts in the deep forest of Dochhari in Bandarban's

Naikhongchhari upazila on Thursday night.

They recovered 130 kilograms of powerful plastic explosives, 26 containers of other explosives, 226 grenades, 61 M-16 rifle bullets, 18 containers full of chemicals, 50 time-regulating watch used in explosive devices, a shotgun, 12 detonator boosters, 40 battery connectors and a range of other accessories.

Ammunition experts of Bangladesh Army suspect the arms

and ammunition might have been gathered to launch 'massive subversive activities'. They, however, did not give details.

Militant operatives of Myanmar frequent Naikhongchhari, but it was not immediately clear who used the two dense forest dens.

UNB adds: Acting on a tip-off, a team of army carried out a pre-dawn raid on a criminals' den at Shilapara in Sadar upazila in Rangamati yesterday and seized a cache of arms after a firefight.

They recovered four rifles, three light guns and 30 bullets and some important documents from the base, but could not capture any of the gang operatives who melted into the forest after the gunbattle.

Locals alleged that a gang backing the 1997 Peace Agreement on the Chittagong Hill Tracts had long been running abductions, extortion and other crimes from the hideout there.

In Khagrachhari, army men

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

# UNGA demands Israel drop threat to Arafat

REUTERS, United Nations

Side-stepping a US veto in the Security Council, the UN General Assembly voted overwhelmingly yesterday to tell Israel to drop a threat to harm or deport Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

The 191-nation assembly, where Washington has no veto, voted 133-4, with 15 abstentions, in an emergency session to adopt a resolution demanding that the Jewish state not carry out a policy to "remove" Arafat. The United States and Israel voted against the resolution.

Arab and nonaligned nations asked the assembly to act after the United States on Tuesday killed a

virtually identical measure in the 15-nation Security Council.

It was the 26th US veto of a Middle East resolution in the council, Palestinian UN envoy Nasser al-Kidwai said.

Acting at the request of European Union delegates, resolution sponsors agreed at the last minute to a series of changes intended to broaden support for the measure, including phrases condemning Palestinian suicide bombings as well as Israeli targeted killings of Palestinian militants.

Israel touched off an international outcry last week when, acting after back-to-back suicide bomb

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6



## Maiden Dhaka bus reaches Agartala

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A regular bus service between Dhaka and Agartala was launched yesterday, adding a new chapter to Bangladesh's cross-border overland communications with its neighbour.

The bus service that goes into commercial operation today is the second Indo-Bangla direct road link, with the first between Dhaka and Kolkata since 1999.

Communications Minister Nazmul Huda and Indian Minister for Surface Transport and Highways BC Khanduri jointly inaugurated the Dhaka-Agartala bus service at a colourful function at the Roads and Highways Department in Dhaka yesterday morning.

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, State Minister for Communications Salahuddin Ahmed and Tripura's Chief Minister Manik Sarkar also attended the function.

The inauguration over, two buses left Dhaka at 10:00am on maiden trips to Agartala, the capital of Indian state of Tripura, with Huda

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4



PHOTO: STAR

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Sarkar talks to journalists, while Communications Minister Nazmul Huda looks on aboard a bus from Dhaka to Agartala, the capital of Indian state of Tripura, after the launch of a direct bus service between the two cities.

# Ctg crime bases to have security forces' camps

NURUL ALAM, Chittagong

The government is planning to set up security camps in the remote hilly northern region of Chittagong to flush out organised gangs operating from bases there.

The plan to set up the camps in Fatkhchhari, Razgan and Rangunia has already received a nod from the top level of the administration and is now awaiting cabinet approval, officials said.

The government scheme came in the wake of a spate of abductions, killings and other crimes in Chittagong.

"A full-scale operation will be

launched against the abductors and criminals after the cabinet approval," a highly placed official source said, requesting anonymity.

Police believe that over 20 criminal groups, maintaining close links with armed gangs in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, take shelter in the forests of the hilly region after committing crimes in the prime port city.

Police lack requisite arms and logistics to raid the outlying hilly pockets to arrest the criminals and wreck their networks, officials said.

Some of them alleged that a string of previous attempts to dislodge the gangs proved futile because of the 'sinister nexus' between the law-

enforcers and gangsters.

At least 12 incidents of abduction have shocked the people of Chittagong since the kidnap of business magnate Jamal Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury on July 24 from the city's bustling Chawkbazar area.

Police believe Jamal was kept the first few days of his captivity in a Fatkhchhari hideout by the hostage-takers seeking Tk one crore as ransom.

In the face of large-scale joint operation by the police and paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles, he was shifted to Lakkichhari upazila in Khagrachhari hill district, they said.

A surprise drive to free Jamal about a month ago in Fatkhchhari

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

## Policeman, wife murdered in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Unidentified assailants on Thursday hacked to death a retired police constable and his wife at Araji Shajjarha village under Dumuria upazila.

Witnesses said Mujibar Rahman, 50, and Fatema Begum, 38, were in the balcony of their residence when a gang of five attacked them at around 10:00pm. Both of them died on the spot.

Police said Mujibar, who hailed from Gopalganj, retired from service 15 months back.

Police believe the murders are a result of land dispute. A group of miscreants instigated by Fatema's first husband made several attempts to grab their land property, which Fatema inherited from her father.

She filed a case with Dumuria Police Station accusing five. Police pressed charges against them last week but they were out on bail.

Locals said Mujibar filed a general diary (GD) seeking their protection only 10 hours before they got killed.

## Housewife found dead in city, homicide by husband alleged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A young housewife was found dead at her house in the city's Hazaribagh Thursday night.

The body of Shamima Akhter, 30, was found hanging from a ceiling fan at her house.

The victim's maternal relatives alleged that her husband, Mohammad Salauddin, had strangled her for not paying him Tk 2 lakh that he demanded recently, and later hanged the body to fake suicide.

An anonymous phone caller claiming to be Nasima's relative informed Hazaribagh police about the death at 9:00pm on Thursday, following which police recovered

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

# Official talks Dhaka for increased job quota, Seoul's call to take back illegals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka at official talks yesterday requested Seoul to increase job quota and recruit fresh workers, and South Korea promised to consider the appeal but tagged a condition that Bangladesh bring back its illegal workers.

At the hour-long meeting at the South Korean embassy in Dhaka, Korea appreciated performance and sincerity of Bangladeshi workers but said the workers who overstayed their five-year term should return home for future employment, said

meeting sources.

Korea also requested Bangladesh to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in view of a new law there to be enforced from August next year and to make recruitment through the official channel.

Bangladesh gave assurance that the MoU would be signed if it did not harm its national interest, and requested Korea to send a draft of the proposed MoU.

The government will have to get approval from the cabinet and parliament for signing the MoU,

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

# Billing scam in BTTB uncovered

ABU SAEED KHAN

The Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) has detected an unusual fraud in its telephone bill processing by a private contractor.

Official finds of the BTTB reveal that the chequerer is at the risk of losing Tk 20 lakh because of the malpractice by the contractor, Delta Network System (DNS). The BTTB authorities have recommended blacklisting the firm, but the government is yet to act on it.

Officials of DNS admitted to "printing telephone bills with wrong amounts" but claimed the error was not of the magnitude that should put them on the blacklist.

In January 2002, the BTTB engaged DNS as one of the three

contractors to print the telephone bills of Gulshan, Tongi, Moghbazar and Sher-e-Bangla Nagar telephone exchanges. The BTTB pays DNS Tk 2.20 for printing each of the bills of 157,792 telephones of the exchanges.

Billing data of the telephones are recorded on magnetic tapes of the exchanges. The BTTB provides the tapes to DNS, which transfers all billing data to its computers for processing and delivering the bills to the BTTB.

The BTTB officials say DNS is contractually obligated not to modify any billing data without its consent. But in April 2003, the BTTB accounts department detected abnormally reduced bills of 29 telephones under Gulshan

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

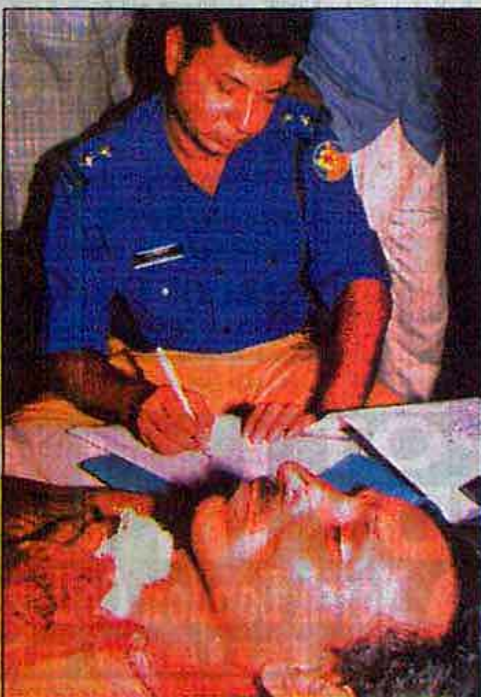


PHOTO: STAR

Bank guard Abu Taleb Munshi, left, undergoes treatment at DMCH after suffering stab injuries from Javed Mia, an electrician, whom he killed in knife attacks at Kazi Alauddin Road in Old Dhaka yesterday. A policeman, right, checks the blood-smeared room of the Sonali Bank where the killing took place.

## Mukherjee murder Mourning in Jhenidah, four arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Four young men were taken to custody yesterday for interrogation in connection with the killing of elderly physician Sudhir Kumar Mukherjee.

They are Rashid and Saiful of Dhobabila village and Jhanu and Mostafa of Kestopur village under Jhenidah Sadar Police Station.

Dr Mukherjee, 82, a widely respected doctor and founding president of Khulna division's Bangladesh Medical Association, was stabbed to death by a gang of four at his residence in the town on Thursday.

A freedom fighter and former general secretary of Chuadanga district Awami League, Dr Mukherjee was cremated in state honour at Mahishakunda crematorium yesterday.

Earlier, the coffin was kept at Madan Mohan temple in the town where thousands of people, including political leaders, lawyers, physicians and freedom fighters, paid tributes to the slain physician, also the president of district puja udjapan (observance) committee.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

## Stabbed bank guard kills attacker

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Sonali Bank guard killed his attacker who started stabbing him indiscriminately inside the bank at Kazi Alauddin Road in the city yesterday, bank sources said.

The deceased was identified as Javed Mia, 28, an electrician from the city's Jatrabari area.

Kotwali police took injured bank guard Abu Taleb Munshi and Javed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), where doctors declared the latter dead. Taleb was shifted to Chest Diseases Hospital and Javed's body was sent to Mitford hospital for autopsy.

Sources said Javed went to the first floor of the bank branch and knocked the door at about 8:00am yesterday. Taleb was preparing his

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

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