## Bhola sinking

"Contact him later", "The minister is very busy now, and he does not want to talk to you on the issue," replies like these were offered to this correspondent by M Abdus Samad, personal secretary to the minister, as he tried to get an appointment with the

Officers and staff of the WDB and the Ministry of Water Resources have also failed to provide with an approximate date for the approval of the project. They expressed uncertainty over whether the project will be approved at all.

We sent a recommendation for the project as we got results from the 4 kilometre long embankment, built with concrete cement (CC) blocks and Geo bags, stretching from Tulatali to Dhania, at the northeastern side of the district," said Abu Taher Khandakar, superintendent engineer of Bhola WDB, who is in charge of operations and maintanance. But the rest of the district continues to be devoured by Meghna, he added.

Researchers, WDB officials, and the BDTRSC said on an average 150 to 400 metres of landmass has been eroded annually since 1970 from all sides of the island district. They apprehended that the Bhola town might fall into the river within five to seven years as the rate of soil erosion is much higher at the north, and north-eastern side of the district where the town stands.

"Meghna eroded over 400 metres of coastal land around the district in the last one year and the rate of erosion is very high at the town," Abu Taher told the Daily Star.

According to the latest report by the Institute of Water Modelling (IWM), Bhola , home to over two million people, had a landmass of 1550sq km in 1973, but now it has less than 1400sq km.

The size of Bhola town was  $513.18 sq\,km\,in\,1960\,but\,now\,it\,is\,only$ 500sq km. Dawlotkhan was 376.10sq km, now it is 176.01sq km, and Borhanuddin was 127.44sq km, now it is 113.49sq km.

The Coast Trust report concludes that rising sea level is causing the erosion by creating stronger currents in the rivers surrounding the island.

'As a result, fiercer river currents at the estuary continuously undercutting the landmass of the isle' Zahirul Haque Khan of the IWM said.

Due to heavy siltation, many shoals have emerged at many points on the Meghna river, forcing the course of water to divert into the land. With emerging shoals, soil erosion has turned severe in the last seven years, local residents and researchers said.

The river needs dredging immediately to maintain its original course or the rate of erosion will increase, said the researchers.

The researchers and engineers of the WDB suggested building of an embankment with a combination of CC blocks and Geo bags that would significantly cut the cost and at the same time make the structure more

Unabated erosion has particularly devastated Tulatali, Shibpur, Dhania, Bangachar, Nadir Mazhi and Elisha unions under Sadai

thana, Saidpur, Madanpur and Kaliya unions under Dawlotkhan thana, Mirzakalu and Hakimuddi unions under Borhanuddin thana, Mongalsikdar, Lord Hardinz, Gurinda, Kevamullah and Char Piarimohan unions under Lalmohan thana. Char Newton, Hamidpur, Kangaligani. Keramatgonj, and Baribhanga unions únder Charfassion thana, and the

Faiumuddin thana headquarter. Over 250 years ago people began to settle in Bhola, which is surrounded by the Meghna river at the north and the east, by the Tetulia river, a branch of Meghna, at the west, and by the Bay of Bengal at the south. The island is about 20 kilometres wide and 90 kilometres long.

About 50,000 people in the island district are now living miserable lives on different temporary embankments losing their farmlands, omes, cattle, and other belongings.

Last year scientists in neighbouring India warned that the coastal area of Bangladesh could see the sea evel rising about a half to one metre (1.65 to 3.3 feet) by the year 2020.

### Dense fog

FROM PAGE 1

rerouted to Delhi after it had failed to land at 3:25am in Dhaka while another flight from Yemen had to go to Kolkata due to heavy fog at ZIA.

Poor visibility also forced a flight of Kuwait Airways to delay its landing at ZIA for three hours.

Our Manikganj correspondent said nearly 10,000 passengers of about 200 buses remained stranded from 2:00am to 8:00am yesterday at both Doulodia and Paturia ferry terminals as no ferry could cross the river due to dense fog.

Almost 99 percent of the launches could not reach their destinations on schedule due to dense fog, said Shahabuddin Milon, vice chairman of the Launch Owners' Association.

"One of my launches, MV Paterhat, reached its destination Lalmohan seven hours after the schedule," he added.

News agency UNB reports that over 1,000 Dhaka bound passengers remained stranded at Maowa ferry terminal for 12 hours since 10:30pm on Friday due to suspension of ferry services amid dense fog creating a 4.5 km long traffic jam on the Dhaka-Maowa-Khulna highway.

Ferry services were also susendeď at Muktapur ferry terminal iday night due to foggy weather.

Ten large launches were tranded with passengers on the Padma, Meghna and Dhaleshwari rivers for the same reason, the UNB

Meanwhile, our Cox's Bazar correspondent reported that fishing Bay of Bengal has been severely hampered by fog and cold weather over the last three days.

At least 8,000 fishermen could not sail out with their boats.

Production of salt in the district has also been hampered due to dense fog.

"The High Court did not approve

the ongoing task. So it has automati

cally lost its validity. We hope those

who are responsible for undertaking

the task will stop," Election Commissioner AK Mohammad Ali

As they followed Kalu, he took

At around 3:00am, the hoodlums

ent out for another hunt and picked

eeping alone inside a nearby

in the garment worker who was

brought out a procession in the area

demanding arrest and punishment

Police rescued the girls from the ouse at around 10:00am and took

Following information from the

rls, police arrested Kalu from

"Kalu admitted to us that he took

Uncle of the girl who hails from

Habiganj filed a case with Pallabi Police Station accusing six people including Kalu of raping the girls.

The other accused -- Mohammad Ali, Milon, Shamsu, Dulal and Babul -

were evading arrest as of last eve-

the security of the world," Bush said,

recalling how Ahmadinejad had

alled last year for Israel to be "wiped

down any talk of immediate sanctions

Iran has however warned that a

referral to the Security Council would

bring serious consequences from its

"All voluntary means of coopera-tion" with the IAEA would end, Foreign Minister Manouchehr

This could entail an end to tougher

UN inspections of Iranian nuclear

sites or even result in a resumption of

full-scale uranium enrichment.

even military action.

Mottaki warned on Friday.

But so far the West has played

the teenager to them and raped her with five others," an officer of Pallabi

to the rapists.

aunia Bandh.

Police Station said.

FROM PAGE 16

off the map.

them into their custody.

them to a house where five criminals waiting from before beat up the girl's

2 young girls

their relative's house

### Execution of court

the much-awaited EC meeting today. The last time the commission sat was on August 6 last year.

Sources close to the CEC said he is unlikely to join the office until the government appoints two election commissioners. Aziz has already verbally asked the government to appoint two members in the commission in a bid to get majority support.

The CEC is unlikely to convene the EC meeting soon as the two other commissioners are opposing his moveforafreshroll.

Besides, the CEC is likely to file an appeal with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court against the HC's His counsel Khandakar

uncle and confined him in a room, police said, adding that the gang forcibly took the girl to a nearby house and raped her one after Mahbubuddin Ahmed yesterday said he will consult with the CEC and the another. EC secretary in a couple of days to take a decision. "If we feel it urgent, we'll file the appeal with the vacation bench as the

Supreme Court resumes on January 22 after the vacation," Mahbubuddin told The Daily Star yesterday.

By this time, the EC Secretariat will have more days to continue the work

for preparing the fresh voter list. The secretariat continued noncompliance with the HC directives

from January 5, the very next day of issuance of the directives. In accordance with the timetable declared by the EC Secretariat, the enumeration and all types of scrutiny of the collected information will be

completed by January 31 and a draft roll will be published on February 28. With 15 days to go for enumeration and scrutiny that began on January 1, the field-level enumerators and

supervisors continue their work in full They even worked during the Eid

vacation to complete the task in time. But they did not receive any orders from the EC Secretariat regarding the HC directives.

"We are trying hard to complete our task in time. But we don't know what will be the fate of the task as we are not complying with the court's directives," a district election officer told The Daily Star yesterday, asking

not to be named. Senior EC Secretariat officials started working on Friday, two days before the Eid vacation expires, to

coordinate the ongoing task. "We are continuing the task of preparing a fresh roll, as we did not receive any guidelines from the commission," a senior official told

The Daily Star yesterday. The two election commissioners said the work of preparing the voter list is not being done in accordance

with the HC directives. They said the existing roll is not being used as the basis of the preparation of the fresh roll as directed by the

### Hajj stampede

The latest stampede was inevitable due to the rush of pilgrims anxious to leave Mina at the same time after the stoning rite on the last day of the hajj, or the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, Turki suggested. He said this was made worse by the

conduct of many unruly pilgrims carrying luggage and even umbrellas overtheirheads "The real reasons for the stampede

can be linked to the dynamics of the masses involved in the hajj," he said.

Nearly 70 percent of the some three million pilgrims amassed in Mina before the stampede wanted to leave after the stoning ritual, he said adding that almost 600,000 alone had gathered at the entrance of the bridge nours before the countdown to the

"This is where the problem lies, he added. "In many cases the rush of the masses overtakes security forces. Turki said the Jamarat bridge will be torn down next week to pave the way for a major renovation that will

eventually create four levels by 2008. Authorities had promised similar improvements in the aftermath of a stampede in 2004 that killed 251

Turki said no lateral expansion can be made to the bridge because the sacred limits of Mina, which covers an area of about 6.8 square kms, are

proscribed by the religious establish-The kingdom's ultra-conservative

clerics also have the last say as to when and how long pilgrims can perform Several fatwas (religious edicts)

were issued over the past years allowing the ritual to take place from midday to midnight and sometimes beyond But Interior Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdul Aziz said Friday that clerics

must look into the possibility of allowing the stoning before midday. "Our learned clerics must distill from God's commands and the prophet's teachings what will make the stoning easier for pilgrims... this is very important and they have the duty to protect the lives of Muslims," he

Some pilgrims continued to flock Saturday to the Al-Muayasem morgue to search for their missing loved one amongs the pictures of the dead posted on a wall or shown on a television screen.

Turki suggested that families of the dead may be compensated, as was the case with the 76 killed in the collapse of an old hostel in the heart of Mecca on January 5.

"This compensation is in no way an indication of our responsibility for what happened, it is more a form of commiseration with the pilgrims," he

#### **BSF**

FROM PAGE 16

guards of Chowhati outpost entered 3-km inside Bangladesh territory and abducted Sujan. Zaman, Hashem, Faroog and Alam at gunpoint. They physically tortured the Bangladeshis before handing them over to the Bongaon

BSF at a flag meeting with BDR yesterday could not give valid reason for intrusion and kidnapping the Bangladeshis. BDR

demanded their immediate return. Local BDR commander Lt Col Shahed confirmed the incident.

#### Road mishaps

FROM PAGE 1

vehicle and release it after taking bribe. It is a way of making money," said the advocate, requesting ano

Shajahan Khan MP, executive president of Bangladesh Sharak Paribahan Sramik Federation admitted that many inexperienced drivers are on the road and said they have been demanding training for drivers by the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA).

"We did a survey which revealed that only 20 percent accidents occur due to faults of drivers and the rest occur for other reasons," he said.

Regarding punishments he said, "We have laws but those are not executed properly.'

"If my bus is involved in an accident leading to a person's death, I have to pay Tk 10,000 to the police. If nobody is killed but the accident is of a serious nature then the rate is reduced to Tk 5,000," he

said requesting anonymity. "The more unfit buses are on the road, more the police are earning a quick cash," he said.

There are three factors behind all accidents -- inexperienced drivers, rundown roads and unfit vehicles, said Dr Mazharul Hoque, director of

Accident Research Center. "If all the government agencies would carry out their duties properly, the number of accidents would be reduced," he said.

On the highways, no government agency works to control the speeds of the motor vehicles or to check the licenses of the drivers.

While visiting Friday's accident spot in Savar with a team from the Accident Research Center, The Daily Star correspondent spent almost two hours on the Dhaka-Aricha highway but could not see any highway patrol.

"Almost all the vehicles have been violating speed limits but no agency is here to take care of it," said Dr Mazharul.

Dr MA Momen, director of the BRTA, said accidents could be reduced if all the government bodies worked together.

"We have only 50 inspectors for the whole country. We cannot simply inspect the licenses of the drivers due to lack of manpower. Police could do it," he said.

### Govt discloses names

NEWS

The list of 11 missing Bangladeshi pilgrims is given below:

1. Mohammad Jamshed Ali, 70, son of late Armamud Munshi of village Killapara, Nalitabari of Sherpur district (Pilgrim no.

2. Joaher Ali, 60, son of late Moyezuddin, village Banipara Hemnagar, Gopalpur of Tangail district (Pilgrim no. 990699)

3. Danes Ali Fakir, 79, son of late Nowab Ali Fakir, village Banipara Hemnagar, Gopalpur of Tangail district (Pilgrim no. 990698) 4. Abdul Malek, 71, son of late

Shaheb Uddin, village Mahanandapur Abadatnagar, Shakhipur of Tangail district (Pilgrim no. 990672) 5. Abdul Motaleb Darjee, 70, son

of late Shekai Darjee, village Jangalia, Adi-Jangalia, Kaliganj of Gazipur district (Pilgrim no. 990625) 6. Monshi Fazlur Rahman, 61, son of late Alhaj Monshi Sona Miah, village Jajaerakuti, Kasba of Brahmanbaria district (Pilgrim no.

7. Hamidur Rahman, 60, son of late Ayubullah Sarker, village Uttar Balubari, Sadar thana of Dinajpur district (Pilgrim no. 992110)

8. Emadad Ali Shah, 59, son of late Ahshan Uddin Shah, house-66, plot-3, New Town B-2, Dinajpur Sadar (Pilgrim no. 992107)

9. Md. Habibur Rahman, 68, son

of late Ashir Uddin, Fulbari Bus Stand, Dinajpur Sadar (Pilgrim no.

10. Mazedur Rahman Choudhury, 67, son of late Nasar Uddin Choudhury, village Middlebari, Dinajpur Sadar (Pil-grimpa 982 109) grim no 992109)

11. Abdullahil Kafi, 55, son of late Mojnu, village New Ghasipara, Dinajpur Sadar (Pilgrim no. 992085) The four injured Bangladeshi pilgrims undergoing medical treat-

1. Mahabub Mohammad at Al Noor Hospital 2. Mozibur Rahman, son of

ment are:

Abbas Ali, at King Abdul Aziz Hospital 3. Mohammad Nurul Hoque at

Ajiyad General Hospital 4. Ahmed Noor at Ajiyad General

Hospital The foreign ministry press release further said that the Bangladesh Missions in Saudi Arabia are trying to get detailed information about the deceased Bangladeshi pilgrims, including their addresses in Bangladesh.

Besides, the missions authorities continued search for the missing

Further information may be available on the following tele-phone numbers in Saudi Arabia: Bangladesh Hajj Mission in Makkah: +966-2-5367381, Consul of Hajj: +966-504321527 (Mobile).

## Rejoinder, our reply

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sign contracts with other bidders within a given time frame. But the recommendations of the TEC can only be approved or rejected by the approving authority, in this case the Council Committee on Government Purchase.

The rejoinder also mentioned that CJ Kabir, who was a participant in the same tender, was on the three-member review panel. The ministry claimed Harbin's

first venture, the 80 MW Tongi power plant, "is running in good The ministry also defended the 10 percent down payment to Harbin in the 90 MW Fenchuganj power plant project. It said this was

the respective contract document with approval of the competent Regarding bribing of a section of PDB and power ministry officials by Harbin's business lobby, the ministry said, "Appropriate lawful action against the culprits" will be taken if concrete and definite information

done "in observance of the terms of

**OUR REPLY** The Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) of the finance ministry representing the government formed the review panel headed by none other than the immediate past law secretary Mohammad Asaduzzaman, an experienced bureaucrat and legal expert. Prior to the January 2 purchase committee meeting, the committee chairman and Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman had approved the summary prepared by the IMED upholding the review panel's decision on the bidding for

Chandpur power plant. However, the purchase committee members at the January 2 meeting did not truly discuss the review panel report or hear what its members had to say, meeting sources told The Daily Star. The committee took the decision upon hearing only the versions of the PDB and the Power Division, who selectively highlighted the misleading price difference between the bids by Harbin and the 'second lowest' bidder CMEC. Neither the Power Division nor the PDB explained the wide price difference caused by Harbin's omission of essential spare parts from its proposal. And this has been possible because there was no valid technical proposal attached to the Harbin's

financial proposal. The rejoinder's claim that the review panel is supposed only to advise the procuring entity and has no right to do anything beyond that s but a partial interpretation of the PPR Regulation 53 (6), which spells out a number of actions to be followed by the review panel while handling an objection. The PPR Regulation 53 (8) on the other hand gives a clear-cut directive on how to conclude arbitration saying, "The decision of the Review Panel shall be final and a Procuring Entity shall act upon such findings.

The rejoinder claims that the Harbin bid was not flawed. But, as because it was flawed, an aggrieved bidder spent Tk 5 lakh to lodge a formal complaint with the IMED and the government's own review panel declared it grossly flawed. The complaints had accused the PDB and the power ministry of siding with Harbin, and the IMED, being a non-partisan government organ, has the highest credibility in this issue. The Daily Star has copies of four documents where the PDB asked the bidders qualified in the first stage of the tender to submit their revised technical and financial proposals in the second stage of bidding. But Harbin did not submit the technical proposal at the sec-ond stage and the PDB made an exception by receiving that pro-

posal 11 days after the deadline. The rejoinder questions the neutrality of review panel member CI Kabir. Since it is a government panel, the onus of selecting its members goes to the government. The Daily Star finds that CJ Kabir does not have any stake in the current bidding, while his 10-vear experience as a TEC member of the PDB in the past makes him a competent candidate for the review panel.

The rejoinder claims that the TEC recommended in favour of accepting Harbin's bid. But it omitted the part where the TEC described how the Harbin bid had deviated and noted, "The proposal of Harbin may be accepted subject to acceptance of the above deviation by the Cabinet Committee on

Economic Affairs.' Though the rejoinder claims that the Harbin-built 80 MW Tongi power plant is running in good condition, it has been generating no more than 30 MW power since December 1 last. This plant has a record number of shutdowns and keeps on tripping frequently. It even tripped the day the prime minister inaugurated it.

We stand by our report.

# Cold brings sufferings

A number of parents with their children were found to have been crowding the entrance to Dhaka

Shishu Hospital yesterday. Rejected admission to a Mirpur clinic, two relatives took four-day-old twins to the hospital as the newborn infants could not breathe well. Sensing the emergency, onduty doctors agreed to admit the twins, although the 387-bed child

hospital had no accommodation. But luck was not in favour of Mamtaz Begum, who rushed to the hospital from Manikganj with her two-year-old child suffering from breathing difficulties.

"I will now go to Dhanmondi and see if other private hospitals or clinics have seat for my child," she

On duty doctor Prakash Chandra

Roy of the Shishu Hospital said they

are providing outdoor treatment to over 200 patients everyday. He said there was an unusual rush of patients due to the cold wave last week during the Eid vacation, and it was hard for them to manage

At least 60 child patients are receiving treatment at the Paediatric Ward of Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH), 30 at Holy Family Red Crescent Hospital and 20 at Bangladesh Medical College Hospital. Most of them are suffering from bronchiolitis, pneumonia, asthma, meningitis, cold, cough and fever.

Prof Abid Hossain Molla, head of the DMCH paediatric department, said the appearance of such coldrelated diseases is like the epidemic

The number of patients suffering from these diseases across the country is supposed to be much higher, he said, adding, the patients

whose conditions deteriorate seriously are only admitted to the Lack of care during winter, especially for the children below two years, causes such diseases. But prevention is possible by protecting

fied at primary stage. "The problem with most of the parents is that they fail to identify he rate of heartbeats of their children," said Prof Abid.

the children from cold, and cure is

much easier if the disease is identi-

"If the heartbeats of a child under two is more than 60 times a minute and their chest's lower part goes down while breathing, they are affected by pneumonia or bronchiolitis," he said. If the children's nostrils get jammed for any reasons, the par-

ents should consult a doctor, he

said. "Otherwise, they might get trouble with lungs leading to He could not give any specific number of deaths caused by coldrelated diseases. However, press reports available have documented a number of such deaths in the coldprone northern and hilly southeast-

Above all, the living places of the children should be neat, clean and warm so that no germ can affect them. "If the children can suck breast properly, they are most likely to be free of any danger," the doctor

ern part of the country.

### Burns drops

the US Embassy official gave assurance that more officials from the State Department would be visiting Bangladesh soon.

A senior official of the foreign ministry also said, "If he (Burns) does not come, a high level visit from US will definitely take place soon," he told UNB. According to a State Department

announcement, US Undersecretary Burns will travel to UK, India Pakistan and Sri Lanka from tomorrow to 25. Tomorrow in London, Burns will

take part in consultations with officials from the United Kingdom. Germany, France, Russia and China on the diplomatic way ahead in dealing with Iran's continued defiance of the international community.

The undersecretary will then travel to India and hold discussions aiming to advance the new strategic partnership between the two countries. Burns and his Indian counterpart, Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran, will hold the fourth meeting of the Joint Working Group on Civil Nuclear Cooperation and discuss further implementation of the initiatives agreed upon in the July 18 Joint Statement.

On his first trip to Pakistan, Burns will meet with senior Pakistani officials and leaders to discuss broadening the US-Pakistan bilateral relationship, to review Pakistan's progress towards full democracy, to explore ways to foster greater regional cooperation and to express the United States' continued support for earthquake relief and reconstruction efforts.

In the final stage of his tour, the undersecretary will visit Sri Lanka and discuss the current status of the peace process with the Sri Lankan government, Norwegian Special Envoy Erik Solheim and others to reiterate the US desire to see all Sri Lankans work for peace. He will call upon the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Felam to resume talks on strengthening the Ceasefire Agreement as

### 21 perish

FROM PAGE 1 reports thousands of poor people in the district are passing their days in abject misery for want of warm

clóthes. Kasir Uddin, 40, of Kijishahar Village in Sadar Upazila, raising the death toll to 18 in the district.

Thakurgaon Civil Surgeon MA Momin said children were being admitted in large number to the local hospitals with diseases caused by the stinging cold. BDNEWS adds: Three people

died of cold and cold-related dis-

eases vesterday in Dinaipur, while

the normal life remained paralysed by the unrelenting cold wave. The deceased are 2-day-old Babu, son of Mahbubur Rahman of Kaharol Upazila, and Abu Bakar Siddique, 65, of Raghunathpur Village and Nurjahan, 42, of Fakir

#### Bazar under Parbatipur Upazila. Trip to Pluto

FROM PAGE 16 planet at all --neither resembles the rocky bodies of Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars, nor the giant gaseous planets of Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune. For years after its discovery 75 years ago, it was considered a planetary oddball.

Pluto's class of planetary bodies, ice dwarfs, isn't so odd after all. In fact, ice dwarfs are the most populous group in the solar system. Now, scientists have a chance to learn more about them and the origins of the planetary system. "Just as a Chihuahua is still a dog, these ice dwarfs are still planetary bodies," said Alan Stern of the

Southwest Research Institute in

Boulder, Colo., the mission's

principal investigator. "The misfit

But in recent years, astrono-

mers have come to realize that

becomes the average. The Plutolike objects are more typical in our solar system than the nearby planets we first knew.' When the 7-foot-tall New Horizons spacecraft reaches Pluto as early as 2015, the spacecraft will study the ninth planet's large moon. Charon, as well as two other moons just discovered last year. The \$700 million mission should provide scientists with a better understanding of the Kuiper Belt, a mysterious region that lies beyond

Neptune at the outer limits of the planetary system. Besides being home to Pluto, the Kuiper Belt is believed to hold thousands of comets and icy planetary objects that make up a third zone of the solar system, the rocky and gaseous planets making up the other two. Scientists believe they can learn about the evolution of the solar system by studying the Kuiper Belt since it possesses debris left over from the formation of the outer solar system. Depending on its fitness after arriving at Pluto, New Horizons will attempt to identify one or two

objects in the Kuiper Belt. "It provides for us a window 4 1/2 billion years back in time to observe the formation conditions of giant planets," Stern said. "This is a little bit about rewriting the textbooks about the outer planets.'

A successful journey to Pluto will complete a survey of the planets that NASA began in the early 1960s with the Mariner program's exploration of Mars, Mercury and Venus by unmanned spacecraft. The best images of Pluto currently come from the Hubble Space Telescope, but they suffer from low-resolution fuzziness, making it difficult for scientists to interpret

### Charge sheets in Ctg

submit the charge sheets a few days ago, it could not do so because confessions of the arrested JMB men under section 164 were not available at the time.

"Since two prime accused in the three cases, Mohammad and his associate Naimuzzaman alias Jafar, have made their depositions before the court under section 164 have any bar to submit the charge sheets now," Rab sources said vesterday.

After being given the charge of the investigations of the cases, Rab now has confessional statements of all the accused in its hands, the battalion claimed.

The elite force in a midnight raid on December 13 arrested Mohammad and Naimuzzaman and recovered a huge quantity of explosives, bombs, arms, books on militant activities and bombmaking materials from a JMB den in the city's Kattali area under Pahartali police station. Following confessions of the arrested two, the battalion also arrested two more JMB men, Rafiqul Islam alias Noman and Monirul Islam, the next morning from Foy's Lake and Bohaddarhat areas.

Rab officials already interrogated the four during their remands for 42 days in five-phases. The Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC) in Dhaka also interrogated them twice.

JMB chief Shaek Abdur Rahman, Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) chief Siddiqul Islam alias Bangla Bhai, JMB military chief Ataur Rahman Sunny, its Chittagong division chief Mohammad, its Cox's Bazar commander Naimuzzaman, and its cadres Noman and Monirul were implicated in the charge sheets, sources said.

Rab officials declined to disclose the identity of the other implicated person.

The charge sheets will be submitted under section 3 and 4 of the Explosives Act and section 19 (ka) and 19 (cha) of the Arms Act, sources said.

Rab said it will implicate JMB Majlish-e-Sura members Raqib Hasan alias Hasan Mahmud, Faruk Hossain alias Khaled Saifullah, Mohammad Salehin alias Salah Uddin, bomb expert Jahidul Islam alias Mizan and few others in the charge sheets later on after getting their complete home addresses.

The battalion said after submission of the charge sheets the four JMB men arrested in Chittagong will be interrogated for ten more cases filed in connection with the bomb attacks on August 17, October 3 and November 29.

Final reports in six of the ten cases and charge sheets in three cases had already been submitted. But following orders of the court, further investigations of the cases are going on.

### Pressure on DU

FROM PAGE 1

authorities are trying to politicise it by such recruitment, said a teacher of the Faculty of Social Science, requesting anonymity.

The selection for the recruitment is scheduled for tomorrow. Meanwhile, sources said the DU authorities have shifted the selection committee meeting to March 3 as the pro-opposition and left-leaning teachers and also another section of pro-government teachers opposed the recruitment.

CU professor Mahbub Ullah,

also chairman of the Sonali Bank, is

the chosen candidate of the pro-

government DU teachers. However, Prof Mahbub has been out of academic study for the last few years, serving in different administrative positions. He was the pro-vice chancellor of the National University during the previous BNP government, said a

class in his honours and 40th in the second class in master's degree in economics from DU. A DU source said the other applicants for the post include one with first position in the second class in honours and fifth in the first class in master's degree in the same subject from DU and another

He stood seventh in the second

with masters' and PhD background from London University. The latter has also experience as a fellow and visiting professor at

with the deadly H5N1 strain and on others hospitalised with flu-like symptoms. Among the 18 cases confirmed by Turkish authorities,

Most of those who died had been in close contact with infected

"We have some question marks. Rodier said.

the opportunity we have to learn about this disease." A senior ministry official told the AP that the WHO would be granted permission for its

do to support efforts in Turkey to deal with and prepare for avian Turkish officials were slaughter-

provinces. "We're trying to break the link between birds and humans by destroying fowl," said Hurrem Bodur, a senior Turkish health official. "Most of those fowl might have been culled in vain, but there is no other way to break the chain."

some foreign universities and a publication on development economics in both recognised national and international journals, sources said.

Four candidates applied for the

post advertised back in September 2004. Although the authorities gave

three weeks' time for applying, the process of recruitment has been hanging for the last 16 months, The pro-opposition and leftleaning teachers meantime met with the DU vice chancellor (VC), also the chief of the professor recruitment committee, times and demanded fresh adver-

The Daily Star that the selection committee might not sit on January 16. "I think the applicants qualified. However, the selection committee will obviously

# WHO plans

three were siblings who died last

week. The three were the first known deaths from the virus outside of East Asia, where at least 77 have been killed by an outbreak of bird flu since 2003. The WHO said Friday that a 29-year-old Indonesian woman who died this week had tested positive for bird flu, bringing its toll worldwide to at least 79 people, WHO has so far only confirmed two out of the three

deaths in Turkey were from the H5N1 strain.

The new thrust, if approved by Turkey's Health Ministry, would give WHO investigators a chance to take a closer look at cities and villages where H5N1 has taken hold to determine how the virus is spreading and who appears to be at whether people were carrying the virus -- even if they had not developed symptoms -- and whether they showed evidence of antibod-

We may gather elements that show us how things are changing, He said Turkey's Health Ministry was "open and aware of

investigation. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said Friday that the United States would send influenza experts to Turkey assess the avian flu situation there, see what lessons have been learned, and make recommendations on what the United States can

ing thousands of birds as a precaution against the disease. As of Friday, workers had killed 455,000 fowl, Agriculture Minister Mehdi Eker said. His office said bird flu was confirmed or suspected in birds in 26 of the country's 81

demanded impartial appointment to the post. Talking to The Daily Star, a number of teachers said the authorities are trying to recruit the CU professor in a bid to increase their vote ahead of the dean election next month.

VC Prof SMA Faiz last night told

tisement for the post. They also

recruit the best candidate on the basis of merit," he said. Regarding fresh advertisement for the post as demanded by opposing teachers, he said, "The

situation does not demand

The task of destroying poultry

was getting easier as residents

became aware of the health crisis,

said workers in Seslitas, 15 miles

readvertising for the post.'

#### outside the city of Dogubayazit where the three children died last

**UK** minister

FROM PAGE 16 Christians and indigenous groups is also a serious issue," Howells "We also have ongoing con-

cerns about use of the death pen-

alty and legal and penal systems

that do not have the appropriate probity or capacity and about the safeguarding of women's and children's rights along with those of the disabled and other vulnerable groups," he added. On his Bangladesh visit last November, Howells underlined UK's commitment to support human rights in Bangladesh during discussions with senior government representatives, human

rights campaigners and represen-

tatives of religious and ethnic minorities, he said. On the security of high commission staff following the attempt on the life of Anwar Chowdhury Howells said, 'The security of staff is a top priority and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office makes every effort to manage the risk and fulfil its duty of care to all its staff world-wide. Since the grenade attack in Sylhet in May 2004 [on] the British high commissioner...we have taken every available opportunity to stress to the Government of Bangladesh the importance of bringing the perpetrators to justice, not least for the relatives of

Howells, who is also responsible for South Asia including Bangladesh and counter terrorism, said it is obviously vital for the Government of Bangladesh to conclude credible investigations into this, and other attacks, as soon as possible. "Most recently, during my visit to Bangladesh in November 2005, I spoke to senior members of the Government of Bangladesh about our concern at the failure so far to bring the perpetrators to justice."

those who tragically died."

Meantime, Lord Avebury, vice chair of UK Parliamentary Human Rights group, has requested the Bangladesh high commissioner in the UK for a meeting with British parliamentarians at House of Commons to discuss the present crisis and the forthcoming general

#### The criminals left the house An owner of 10 buses that operraping the girls until dawn. ate on a particular city route said they have 'contracts' with the Around three hours later, uncle of in 2003 when many children died. the teenage girl managed to come out from his confinement and informed the locals of the matter who later police.