

## Police forces turned into political lackey

### 35pc seniors shown the door on political grounds; party people inducted

**ZAYADUL AHSAN**

Forced retirement, contractual appointment, promotion and posting on political grounds in the last four years seem to have demoralised the police administration, which, many fear, will soon become a mere adjunct to the ruling alliance.

Pointing to the low morale of the police force, some top former and present officials said they are afraid the entire department would be dysfunctional if it is not freed from

political influence.

Speaking to The Daily Star, they also revealed various aspects of politicisation of the police department.

The government has sacked some 1,000 police for reasons, other than corruption. In course of time, six additional inspector generals of police (IGP), 19 deputy inspector general (DIG), four additional DIGs, 39 senior superintendent of police (SP), two assistant SPs, 448 sub inspector (SI), two sergeants, 15 Armed SI, 95 assistant

SIAs (ASI), 35 head constables, 12 nayeaks and 312 constables have been fired.

Most of the sacked were freedom fighters.

Departure of the senior officials, who happen to constitute 35 per cent of the total officials, has developed a serious vacuum in the police department.

Victimisation on political grounds in the department began immediately after the BNP-led four-party alliance assumed power in 2001. Thirty-seven senior offi-

cers were withdrawn from charges within 15 days of formation of the government. Later, all of them were sacked under a dubious provision of pension rules without assigning any reason.

As some of these officers challenged their dismissal in the courts of law, they found themselves subjected to further harassment by the government.

SP PR Chanda of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and ASP N Palit of Ukhia circle, for

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

## AL leader loses hand to bomb in Khulna

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna**

A ward unit president of Awami League (AL) was critically injured in a bomb attack in front of the party office at Phulbari Gate in Khulna last night.

Unidentified assailants hurled the bomb on Shaikh Yunus, 54, also the commissioner of ward No. 2 of Khulna City Corporation, when he was coming out of the office at around 9:15pm.

His right hand was severed on impact of the blast.

Yunus, who came under another bomb attack on January 4, was rushed to Khulna Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

AL activists and locals barricaded Khulna-Jessore Highway in protest at the attack. The demonstrations were going on till filing of this report at 11:30pm.



Rab men deployed with sniffer dogs at the Central Shaheed Minar as part of stepped up security ahead of Amar Ekushey and International Mother Language Day to be observed tomorrow.

## Cabinet talks much-changed procurement law today

**REJAUL KARIM BYRON**

The draft Public Procurement Law, 2006 has undergone a sea change with some sections deleted or modified and a few new ones added that frustrates the very aim of the law -- to bring transparency in public procurement, sources said.

The new-look bill that now lacks any clear-cut punitive provisions will be tabled at a cabinet meeting today, sources said.

The provision for an independent review panel has been drastically altered. According to the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

## 13 get Ekushey Padak, ministers dropped from list

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The Prime Minister's Office has approved the list of 13 personalities for the Ekushey Padak excluding the names of five nominated ministers.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia today presents the Ekushey Padak at a function at Osmani Memorial Hall in the city.

The award recipients are president's wife Prof Anwara Begum, University Grants Commission Chairman Prof Asaduzzaman, former vice-chancellor of Jahangirnagar University Prof

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

## BIRD FLU

### Strict border vigilance to prevent entry of Indian poultry

**PINAKI ROY**

The government has asked the Bangladesh Rifles and police to strengthen vigilance on the borders to ensure that no poultry products and pet birds enter into the country from India, where lethal avian flu virus H5N1 has been found in poultry.

Following the bird flu virus outbreak in Maharashtra state of India, the government yesterday called an emergency inter-ministerial meeting where poultry industry leaders were also present.

The meeting increased surveillance and decided not to import any poultry chicks from France where virus H5N1 was found recently.

Earlier, the government decided not to import chicks from some European and Asian countries including India where low and high pathogenic avian influenza virus was found.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Since early 2003, the H5N1 strain has killed at least 91 people, mostly in Southeast Asia. The virus can infect humans in close contact with birds.

There is, however, no evidence still now that it can pass from human to human.

The recent bird flu virus outbreak in India poses a direct threat to the country's poultry industry as neither the government nor any private organisation has bird flu vaccines.

"We do not have any flu vaccination facilities in our country. We do not know what will happen if the flu starts to spread here," said eminent poultry vaccine expert Md Monzur Murshid.

"The government should have taken the issue seriously and arranged vaccines," he added.

Pharmaceutical company Roche has imported only 3,000 doses of Tamiflu vaccine, which is

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

## Power shortage may double in summer

### Generation-supply gap to hit 1,800 MW

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

With the summer nearing fast, the gap between the electricity supply and demand is widening, making the power crisis across the country even graver.

As many power plants closed recently have yet to resume production, the power shortage is likely to double during the coming summer and the gap between supply and generation may hit the 1,800 MW mark.

As of yesterday evening, none of the plants could start working. Although the officials say the currently the shortfall in power supply amounts to 800 MW a day, the actual figure hovers around 1,200 MW.

Officials said the existing power plants under the Power Development Board (PDB) yesterday evening generated 3,025 MW against a demand of 3,850 MW.

According to them, the demand during the peak season (summer) would go beyond 4,200-4,500 MW.

But the power generation capacity will remain almost the same unless the closed plants are in operation.

They observed that the shortage would remain high even after resumption of the plants, as the alliance government could not increase the generation capacity. The government in last four years could set up only 100-MW Tongi power plant.

The gap between demand and supply is increasing also for the government's giving new power connections without increasing the country's capacity to produce electricity, a source said.

As a result, power supply to many areas in Dhaka and elsewhere are disrupted frequently, meaning immense sufferings for the people.

The farmers seem to be the worst affected as they face tremendous difficulties in irrigation due to the energy shortage.

Sources said the power shortfall in the greater Dhaka was around

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## Gujarat poultry farmer dies of avian flu

**PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi**

A poultry farmer died of suspected avian flu in western state of Gujarat while health workers yesterday carried out mass culling and vaccination of chickens in neighbouring Maharashtra state, a day after India was hit by bird flu.

The 27-year-old poultry farmer from Nandurbar district of Maharashtra, who was admitted to a Surat hospital in Gujarat, died on Friday, District Collector of Surat Vatsala Vasudev said. They are awaiting the blood-test report of the dead to confirm if he died of the flu, he added.

Animal Husbandry Commissioner S K Bandyopadhyaya, however, said in New Delhi that no case of avian flu in human beings had been reported so far, adding that the situation was being closely monitored.

Ten people, including a mother and her son, were hospitalised in

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## WIDENING RICH-POOR GAP

### Nothing but age changes for the extreme poor

**INAM AHMED**

On this vast char land in the north, nothing changes but age.

In the fading twilight, Sakhina wraps the pink wrapper around her tight and walks fast, cutting across a wheat field. She has to reach Baraigram village before darkness descends. Her hopes are pinned there. She needs to urgently raise Tk 15,000 to see her 14-year-old daughter married off to a farmhand and the Baraigram villagers promised to see to it. In her 21 years of married life, Sakhina could not save a single dime and today, when the time has come for her daughter's wedding, she feels helpless.

"I am a labourer," she says. "When I came to my husband's home 21 years ago, he had nothing, not even a cow. And I still have nothing."

Not entirely true; she has got the marks of age and hardships on her face, deep lines run across her sun-burnt skin. And she has now two children, a paralysed husband who needs medicines every day, two ducks and two chickens. They all depend on Sakhina, who

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Sakhina, mentioned in the report, looks helpless as she neither can get microcredit nor does she have an access to any source of income.

## Kafco to set up \$500m second plant

**JASIM UDDIN KHAN**

Country's top joint-venture fertilizer company, Karnaphuli Fertilizer Company Limited (Kafco), will set up a second unit at a cost of \$500 million.

Kafco Managing Director Peter A May, in an interview with a selective group of journalists at his Dhaka office yesterday, revealed the company's investment plan for the second unit with a capacity of producing 2,500 tonnes of fertilizer a day.

He said Kafco emerged as the highest profit earning corporate venture in Bangladesh within a short span of time since its establishment.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

## CEC keeps his two old colleagues in dark

### Reviews progress of voter list preparation

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Aziz and two new election commissioners yesterday sat to review the progress of the controversial work of preparing a fresh voter list but refused to reveal details to the media.

The two other election commissioners, M Munsef Ali and AK Mohammad Ali, who have all along opposed the preparation for the fresh voter list, were not invited to

the discussion on the field level task, which ends today.

"I don't know anything about the meeting. Nobody informed me about it," Mohammad Ali told The Daily Star.

The officials at the Election Commission (EC) Secretariat attending the discussion, however, refused to call it a "meeting", saying they only reviewed the progress of the ongoing task.

The field level task for collecting and scrutinising information of prospective voters has continued ignoring the January 4 High Court (HC) directives for revising the existing electoral roll.

Meanwhile, sources said the field level information collectors have not yet reached many eligible voters.

EC Secretariat officials yesterday said the work on the draft voter list will start tomorrow and continue up to March 12. In case any voter was missed during the work of collecting information, his/her

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## Bangladesh meet Sri Lanka in first ODI today

**BISHWAJIT ROY from Bogra**

The Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra will be baptised as an international venue today when Bangladesh take on visiting Sri Lanka in their first one-day international of a three-match series here.

The day-night affair will start at 1:30pm.

The match will be marked by the retirement of former Bangladesh captain Khaled Mahmud, who on Sunday has decided to quit from the international game.

ESPN and the state-run Bangladesh Television (BTV) will telecast the match live from the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

## 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Special Publications

**Chintito**  
A "Star" in Birth  
Price: Tk 275.00

The collection contains the famous columns of Chintito from the broadsheet version and the Star Weekend Magazine published between 1995 and 1997.

**Book of Bangladeshi Writing**  
Edited by Khademul Islam  
Price: Tk 100.00

The Daily Star Book of Bangladeshi Writing represents a groundbreaking attempt on the part of the country's premier daily to promote and showcase English-language writing by Bangladeshis at home and abroad.

**Star Toons**  
A Cartoon Guide to Bangladesh  
Sharier Khan  
Price: Tk 200.00

A selection of cartoons by Sharier Khan depicting various aspects of life in the country—social, political and cultural, and his character-based comics The Adventure of Arvik and Joy and Babu come in this collection.

Available at following outlets

<p><b>Dhanmondi</b> Gyankosh - Road # 4; Ph # 8623251; &amp; Sobhanbagh Madrasa Market; Ph # 8112441 Etcetera - Concord Royal Court, Road # 27; Ph # 9138432 Nandan - House # 37, Road # 27; Ph # 8127085, 8112471 <b>Shahbagh</b> Pathak Samabesh, Aziz Super Market; Ph # 9662766 <b>Bally Road</b> Sagar Publishers; Ph # 9358944</p>	<p><b>Paltan</b> Shahitto Prokash - Pritom Bhaban; Ph # 7171410 <b>Gulshan</b> Nandan - North Avenue; Ph # 9862637, 8850049 Etcetera - Gulshan Avenue, Road # 140; Ph # 8826858 Book Film Music - (a Pathak Samabesh branch), 411 Tejaon Link Road; Ph # 9861003 Priceclub - Progoti Sarani, Kuril Badda; Ph # 8812519, 9883842</p>	<p><b>Air Port</b> The Book Worm - Ph # 9120387 <b>Karwan Bazar</b> Kiosk - Sonargaon Hotel; Ph # 8111641 ext-4938 The Daily Star - 19 Karwan Bazar; Ph # 8124944, 8124955, 8124966 <b>Outside Dhaka</b> Please ask your local newspaper agents/hawkers for your copy</p>
--	---	---

**The Daily Star**  
Your Right to Know  
www.thedailystar.net