

## JMB kingpins

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Inspector General (IG) (Prisons) Brigadier General Zakir Hossain said the government has taken the decision perhaps because the number of condemned prisoners now is 862 whereas the capacity of prison cells for them is only one-sixth.

"Five to six condemned prisoners are now kept in a cell although each of them is supposed to be kept in separate cells," he told The Daily Star last night.

Asked why the government has kept the two top JMB men in a separate arrangement while many top criminals like Sweden Aslam and convicts of Bangabandhu murder case have been kept in prisons, the IG said, "Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai cannot be compared with others—they are convicted for totally different crimes. The government feels the need for ensuring special security for these two.

"Since the cells in prisons are overcrowded, the possibility of their communicating with others cannot be totally brushed aside," he said, adding that the two may convince

others inside the jail and thus establish communication with their men outside the prison.

The IG Prisons described the security at the isolated place as "more than sufficient".

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) is maintaining the security of the sub-jail.

The IG Prisons said, "Rab men have been deployed as they are more skilled than the jail guards. But the jail authorities are looking after the administration."

The home ministry and Prisons Directorate protested reports on the two JMB leaders being treated luxuriously in the sub-jail.

The IG Prisons said the rooms where they have been kept are smaller than the cells in prisons and there is no ventilation or electric fan. "Food is being supplied according to the jail code under our supervision," he said.

It is not possible for anyone to meet, talk or take photographs of the two JMB men or the rooms as no one except the officials concerned is allowed to enter the jail premises, he said.

## Voter list update

**FROM PAGE 1**  
pace even on the third day yesterday.

Unwillingness of the field-level election officials may have accounted for little if any progress in the first three days, they added.

"Only 15 of the required 25 officials are now working. The rest refuse to work as they grumble that they did not get payment for their work in preparing the controversial fresh voter list," Kazi Abdur Razzak, assistant registration officer (ARO) of Mohammadpur in the capital, told reporters.

Assistant officials in Mirpur area Mithun Mandal, Maolana Abdul Wahab and Kazi Shajahan told reporters that they are having difficulty in doing the job for shortage of forms and noncooperation of the respondents.

"It is also tough for us to continue the updating task along with our regular teaching jobs," Mithun Mandal said.

Our Rajshahi correspondent reports: The updating work is hardly making any progress in the city while it has yet to begin in the rural areas.

District election office sources said most of the AROs complain that their assistants have refused to work without payment of their previous remuneration.

"I have visited five households but none of them cooperated

## Striking teachers

**FROM PAGE 16**  
But teachers alleged none of these four representatives contacted them even after six days of the prime minister's directives. Only Deputy Minister for Information Abdus Salam Pintu contacted the teachers over cellophane last Thursday, they added.

State minister for education said he is not dealing with the situation and the minister for education is dealing the matter.

Meanwhile, the education secretary told The Daily Star last night, "I was not aware of any dialogues with teachers on strike that are supposed to take place."

The minister for education however could not be contacted. Selim Bhuiyan, chief co-ordinator of the pro-BNP Shikhhak Karmachari Oikya Jote, sat for an unscheduled negotiation with the education minister and the deputy information minister on Thursday night.

Other teachers' organisations, both pro-BNP and pro-Awami League, criticised Selim Bhuiyan's initiative.

National Front of Teachers and Employees (NFTE) will hold a grand rally at the Central Shaheed Minar today. Another faction of Oikya Jote led by Shariful Islam will observe a two-hour sit in programme on streets across the country on July 27 and hold a grand rally on August 2.

At the press conference, NFTE Chief Co-ordinator Quazi Faruque yesterday alleged no representatives on the behalf of the government contacted them. "We will decide after talking to our teachers whether we will sit for negotiations with the government or not," he said while addressing the conference at the National Press Club yesterday.

Oikya Jote led by Shariful Islam yesterday held a discussion at the Mohammadpur Central University College where teachers criticised the government's indifference.

Oikya Jote led by Selim Bhuiyan however said they would not come back from the strike until the government announce cent per cent basic salary from the government exchequer.

The teachers and employees have been observing indefinite strike at non-government high schools, colleges and madrasas across the country since July 6 demanding cent per cent basic salary from the government coffers and other facilities.

## Land phone

**FROM PAGE 16**  
receive the connection yet against their demand notes," according to a statement issued by BTB yesterday.

The finance and planning minister earlier this month approved the new connection fees. Connection fee of a BTB fixed phone had long been at Tk 18,400 but it was reduced to Tk 10,000 a couple of years ago.

The telecom regulator has so far allocated 35 licences to 19 private Public Switched Telecom Network (PSTN) operators in four zones – northeast, southeast, northwest and southwest – but could not grant licences for Dhaka zone due to legal battles with the private operators.

Bangladesh's mobile phone sector witnessed a staggering 144 per cent growth in 2005 due to the lack of BTB's fixed phone capacity. The central zone accounts for around 60 per cent of the total demand for fixed phones in the country.

Currently, only 5.33 per cent of the Dhaka population, estimated at 15 million, has a fixed phone and the pending demand with the state-run BTB is estimated at nearly a million.

The private sector is expected to introduce at least two million fixed telephone lines in the next three to four years, according to an estimate of state-run research body Infrastructure Investment Facilitation Centre.

## Karnaphuli bridge

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Department, the project director of the third Karnaphuli Bridge and China Major Bridge Company, which has recently been awarded contract for the bridge construction.

None of the respondents answered to this notice within its deadline that expired yesterday morning.

The notice says the authorities have taken initiative to construct the third Karnaphuli Bridge based on a pier dependent design defying experts' report submitted by the Water Resources Engineering Department of Buet.

It also said the Chittagong Port Authority and the Ministry of Shipping have recommended the construction of a suspension bridge and submitted a written objection to the pier dependent design.

The notice added if the construction of the bridge was based on the faulty design ignoring the experts' recommendation, it would cause excess sedimentation in the Karnaphuli river resulting in loss of navigability and adversely affect the port channel.

Therefore, such construction will cause injury to public property in violation of Article 31 and 32 of the constitution, the notice says.

Besides, the faulty design will also cause the rise of shoals and thereby threaten the existence of the port in the long run. Such a construction will do nothing but waste public funds, the petition said.

## 200 Bangladeshis

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Bangladeshis in Lebanon, which has been under attack from Israel for the past week. Most are migrant workers engaged in construction, hotels and textile sectors.

Countries worldwide are working to evacuate nationals from Lebanon.

More than 350 people have been killed in Israel's massive blitz against Lebanon, which was launched after the capture of two soldiers by guerrillas from the Shiite Muslim group.

## Hotelier

**FROM PAGE 1**  
The attackers introduced themselves as the members of Joy Group.

Joy, one of the 23 most wanted criminals of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, is believed to be operating his gang from a neighbouring country.

## Buriganga

**FROM PAGE 1**  
of the land and built structures on public land. Officials from the shipping ministry and Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) were accompanying the state minister.

"This process of recovering the shore and foreshore of the river will continue," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Quamrul said his office would officially notify the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) about dumping of garbage in the river. He also said he had directed officials to ensure that land recovered from encroachers are protected.

About 2,000 establishments occupied over 2,500 acres of land on both banks of the 34-kilometer stretch of the river. Moreover, a section of unscrupulous DCC garbage collectors are dumping kitchen wastes into the river filling up its banks at several spots of the river.

DC of Dhaka Mohammad Abdul Bari told The Daily Star he had already assigned a magistrate to start the process of recovering the Savutta canal in Zinzira.

"We shall start the process tomorrow," said Bari last night.

## Israel, Hezbollah

**FROM PAGE 1**  
the Middle East with Washington increasingly estranged from European and Arab allies over a conflict that has killed close to 400 people and triggered a major humanitarian crisis.

At least five people were killed in air strikes across southern and eastern Lebanon as Israel kept up its punishing war on Hezbollah following the seizure of a strategic border village by Israeli ground forces on Saturday.

In a wave of pre-dawn raids, fighter-bombers for the first time struck directly into the main southern city of Sidon, where tens of thousands of Lebanese have sought refuge from the relentless Israeli offensive.

A three-storey building housing a Hezbollah religious centre was hit. Israel also targeted Hezbollah's power base in Beirut's Shia-dominated southern suburbs and struck factories, roads and bridges in air strikes in the eastern Baalbek region.

Shia guerrillas responded with a new hail of rocket fire on Israel's third city of Haifa, killing two people.

Streams of people, many waving white flags, are making a desperate trek from southern Lebanon after Israel ordered them to leave their homes, raising fears it was planning a largescale ground invasion.

Close to 360 people have been killed in Israel's massive blitz against Lebanon which was launched after the capture of two soldiers by guerrillas from the Shia Muslim group in a deadly border attack on July 12.

A total of 37 Israelis have died. Syria, blamed by the United States for stoking the conflict, warned that if Israel invaded Lebanon it would have no choice but to respond.

"If Israel makes a land entry into Lebanon, they can get to within 20 kilometres (12 miles) of Damascus," Information Minister Moshen Bilal told the Spanish newspaper ABC.

"What will we do? Stand by our arms folded? Absolutely not. Without any doubt Syria will intervene in the conflict."

Israel, which has called up thousands of reserve soldiers and massed its troops on the border, seized control of the strategic town of Marun Al-Ras on Saturday after sending tanks, bulldozers and armoured cars rolling across the border.

A spokesman for UN peacekeepers said fighting was continuing Sunday in the area, where five Israeli soldiers and several Hezbollah militiamen have been killed in recent days.

As international efforts to end the conflict gathered pace, there was growing criticism of Israel's offensive, which has left Lebanon virtually cut off from the world, made hundreds of thousands of refugees in their own country and destroyed billions of dollars of infrastructure.

"The whole thing has to stop. It's no natural disaster but a man-made crisis. This is a senseless war. It should never have started. It should never have been carried out like it is now," UN relief coordinator Jan Egeland said.

He was in Beirut to launch an appeal for millions of dollars in aid to help the half million civilians displaced by what the United Nations says has created a "catastrophic" humanitarian situation.

But the White House said Saturday it was sticking to its policy. "We are keeping to our adopted position. Israel has the right to defend herself," a spokesman told AFP, as the United States was expediting an arms shipment of precision bombs to Israel from an arms deal struck last year.

Justice Minister Haim Ramon said the aim of the offensive was to keep Hezbollah – which controls southern Lebanon in the absence of the regular Lebanese army – at least 20 kilometres (13 miles) from the frontier.

"For Israel, there are no longer civilians in southern Lebanon," Ramon warned. "We want to uproot Hezbollah but in a prudent manner to prevent losses."

He said the current offensive would not match the magnitude of the 1982 invasion, which left about 20,000 people dead, traumatising Lebanon and plunging Israel also into a lethal quagmire.

Lebanon's parliamentary speaker Nabih Berri said meanwhile that Hezbollah has agreed to the Lebanese government dealing through a third party with Israel on a prisoner swap involving the two Israeli

## Barapukuria coal mine

**FROM PAGE 1**  
However, the Barapukuria coalfield development started in 1994 while the actual development started in 1996. The development activities came to a halt when the entire mine area was flooded in 1998.

The project is already eight years behind schedule because of flaws in the design, which have also raised the building costs, according to BCMCL official sources.

To develop Barapukuria coalmine, CMC agreed to spend money for developing the site and signed a contract with Petrobangla to provide \$194.91 million in 1994.

As per the agreement, CMC provided \$194.91 million for Barapukuria coalmine project with five per cent interest under supplier's credit agreement, and BCMCL have to return the investment to CMC within eight years in 17 instalments, according to sources.

The BCMCL paid CMC four instalments until June 2004. The fifth instalment of \$13.689 million, which was due on December 2004 later extended to December 2005, is yet to be paid.

The BCMCL has no operational

soldiers. Israel has so far ruled out any swap either for the two soldiers held by Hezbollah or another servicemen who was captured last month by Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip, triggering a similar offensive.

On Saturday, Israel had pounded television transmission stations and mobile telephone masts in raids across the country that left five dead, including a television station employee.

Britain's junior foreign office minister Kim Howells made London's most unequivocal criticism yet of Israel's offensive, in stark contrast to the line taken by Washington.

"These are not surgical strikes. It's very difficult to understand the kind of military tactics that are being used," Howells said in Beirut.

"If they are chasing Hezbollah, then go for Hezbollah. You don't go for the entire Lebanese nation," he said. "I very much hope that the Americans understand what's happening to Lebanon – the destruction of the infrastructure, the death of so many children and so many people."

Israel said it opened a 50-mile-long and five-mile-wide (80-kilometre by eight-kilometre) safe passage to Beirut for ships and aircraft, a humanitarian corridor to allow aid to the Lebanese.

Israel's air and sea blockade put Lebanon's only international airport under of action, and the bombing of houses, roads, bridges, factories, warehouses and trucks created scenes reminiscent of the 1975-1990 civil war.

But US President George W. Bush maintained his backing for Israel's campaign as Rice prepared travel to the region in search of what she described as a long-term solution.

"I believe sovereign nations have the right to defend their people from terrorist attack, and to take the necessary action to prevent those attacks," Bush said in his weekly radio address.

Underlining the repercussions of the conflict on the whole region, he said Syria was "a primary sponsor" of Hezbollah and has given the militia Iranian-made weapons.

Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Mukdad has said Damascus is ready to open a "dialogue" with the United States to resolve the crisis.

Foreign governments also continued to evacuate their citizens, mainly to the neighbouring island of Cyprus, which is battling to find temporary accommodation and flights for the estimated 70,000 evacuees at the height of its holiday season.

## Pre-poll

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Metropolitan Police, deputy commissioners and officers-in-charge, also ordered the law enforcers to raid hotels and slums in the city and its outskirts.

Babar ordered the officials concerned to sit with the opposition leaders to know details of their foot-march programme for working out the security strategy.

The meeting decided that Rab men will keep watch from building tops and, if necessary, hover the sky in helicopter.

Denying the opposition's allegation of "mass arrest" ahead of their foot-march programme, Babar said the ongoing operation is a regular drive to arrest the wanted and listed criminals and those facing arrest warrants.

The minister ordered the Detective Branch and Special Branch men to visit the police stations to see if any innocent people are arrested, meeting sources said.

"We want to ensure that we leave behind the law and order situation in a good shape when we hand over power to the caretaker government," said Babar.

## Govt's borrowing

**FROM PAGE 1**  
commercial banks. "The ministries and autonomous bodies deposited Tk 10,367 crore in different banks in the third week of June," he said.

The BB withdrew the money through reverse repo to avert any inflationary impact of such huge deposit in commercial banks, a central bank source said.

Another source, however, blamed the government borrowing on Tk 1,000 crore bond to the Sonali Bank to repay the BPC loans.

## Aziz

**FROM PAGE 1**  
He however did not explain why these 'some people' are, nor did he refer to the civil society and professional bodies that have been repeatedly demanding his resignation and also that of two election commissioners.

Responding to a query on the Supreme Court Bar Association's (SCBA) demand on Saturday for resignation of the CEC and the two others by July 31, Aziz said, "I don't care what the Supreme Court Bar (Association) demanded."

Asked if there is a conspiracy against the Election Commission (EC), Aziz, who suddenly invited reporters to his office room, said he does not understand conspiracy.

About the views of experts and civil society members on preparing the voter list, and the prevailing situation in the EC, Aziz said one does have to pay tax to express one's opinion.

"There would have been surplus revenue collection had tax been imposed on talking," he quipped.

On the writ petitions challenging preparation of the fresh voter list 'unilaterally' decided by him, he said, "The voter list was already prepared... But the writ petition was filed on falsehood... It was a design."

The August 6 decision on preparing the fresh voter list was taken by the EC unanimously, he claimed.

The move was mired in a controversy since the very beginning. The media extensively reported various irregularities in the process. At one point, the AL challenged legality of the move in two writ petitions filed with the High Court (HC), and the court on January 4 asked the EC to revise the existing electoral roll, instead of preparing a fresh one.

The EC however did not follow the HC directives and completed field-level tasks of preparing the new voter list and published the draft of it on May 3. And the EC filed an appeal with Supreme Court (SC) against the HC directives.

The SC on May 23 declared the draft electoral roll illegal.

## 3 yrs in jail

**FROM PAGE 16**  
hearing of the case ever since. The case file then reportedly went missing for over three years.

As a result, Mostafa has been in confinement in jail without trial.

In a recent development, Dhaka District and Sessions Judge directed all trial courts to update the present position of all cases.

This directive pressed the court staff to trace Mostafa's case file and place it before the judge on July 12 this year for setting a date of next hearing of the case.

After examining the case, Judge (in charge) Mohammad Golam Hossain of the Third Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court fixed September 9 for hearing on charge framing against the lone accused Mostafa.

The court also directed jail authorities to produce Mostafa before the court on the scheduled date and inform the assistant public prosecutor (APP) and the defence lawyer about the issue.

When reached, Mohammad Zahanir Alam, peshkar (staff) of the court told The Daily Star that he joined the court on June 15, 2004 and he cannot be held responsible for the incidents occurred before that date.

His predecessor, court staff Obaidur Rahman, should be able to explain why the case file was not placed before the court for over three years, he added.

Obaidur Rahman said he was not aware as to how the case file went missing.

District and Sessions Judge Mohammad Rafiqul Islam told The Daily Star that he would investigate into the matter and take necessary action against those who are responsible for the incident.

He also said the matter is very important as a man has been in custody without trial due to negligence of the court staff.

## Gas blocks

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Gas Transmission Company Limited (GTCL), a subsidiary of state-owned Petrobangla, implemented the project aimed at improving gas supply to the industries at Ashulia in Savar and its adjoining areas.

DQE, a Chinese contractor, with its local associate Pipe Business (Bangladesh), laid the gas pipeline as contractor of the project.

The energy adviser said the country will produce an additional 200 million cubic feet gas per day (mmcf) from October this year, raising the total production to about 1800 mmcf.

The gas production will be increased by another 500 mmcf from March 2007, he added.

Energy Secretary AMM Nasir Uddin, Petrobangla Chairman Mosharrif Hossain Bhuiyan and GTCL Managing Director Manzur Moshed Talukder were present at the function.

## Japanese FM

**FROM PAGE 1**  
This will be the first Bangladesh visit by a Japan foreign minister in 18 years, officials said.

Taro Aso will meet President Iajuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan and other important government leaders, and may offer to dispatch a Japanese election monitoring team to next year's general elections in Bangladesh, officials said.

The Japan minister will also meet Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina and ruling BNP Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman.

"The visit is going to be very important one in our bilateral relations on many counts, as Japan is our largest development partner and a major investor," Foreign Minister Morshed Khan said yesterday.

Japan stood beside Bangladesh and contributed to rebuilding the war-ravaged nation after 1971. As the largest bilateral donor, Japan has been extending all cooperation in infrastructure and socioeconomic development of the country.

Appreciating Japanese contribution, Morshed Khan especially mentioned the country's assistance for construction of major bridges including the Jamuna multipurpose bridge, Chittagong Airport, Sonargaon Hotel, BTV building and hospitals.

Morshed Khan, who will hold official talks with his Japanese counterpart Taro Aso tomorrow, said Japanese assistance will be sought for the construction of Padma Bridge and the deep-sea port in Chittagong.

"We will review the existing cooperation and explore new areas of cooperation," he added.

Feasibility study on the \$1.2 billion Padma Bridge has been completed while an agreement was signed with a Japanese company to conduct feasibility study on the proposed deep-sea port, officials said, adding that the two sides will discuss how to promote trade and investment

## Quake triggers tsunami

**FROM PAGE 16**  
the tsunami, the agency said, without explaining why the toll had dropped by more than 50 from the previous day.

But following the release of the new toll figures, local officials said at least four more bodies had been found in and around the town.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, during a whirlwind visit to the disaster zone, on Friday ordered local authorities to speed up clearing the rubble and debris left by the receding waves.

Yudhoyono said the ruins and debris would otherwise continue to cause "psychological trauma" for the local population.

Officials said Sunday the clean-up effort was to last until August 3.

"More reinforcements have since arrived from the surrounding district, bringing the total number of soldiers involved in the clean up and search operations to over 1,000," said Wasdi bin Umri, spokesman for Ciamis district.

The spokesman told AFP that nearly 1,000 police were deployed in Ciamis to help, while the local administration had mobilized 300 personnel in addition to more than 600 volunteers.

The search for bodies and clean-up operations were also continuing in neighbouring Cilacap district, with local officials "mobilizing all our effective personnel," according to district spokesman Arismanandar.

Officials were trying to reassure frightened survivors living in special camps, afraid of another tsunami, that it was safe to return home, the

between the two countries.

Although GSP facility allows duty-free access of most Bangladeshi products to Japan, the bilateral trade is heavily tilted towards the economic superpower.

In fiscal year 2004-05, Bangladesh's exports to Japan were worth \$122.42 million while imports cost \$548.74 million, leaving a trade deficit of \$426.32 million.

The two countries signed an agreement providing scope for Bangladeshi workers to acquire training and technical expertise at private companies in Japan for two years.

During the talks, the two foreign ministers are also expected to exchange views on Saarc and crises in North Korea and the Middle East. Japan was granted an observer status of the South Asian forum at the 13th Saarc summit in Dhaka.

The two foreign ministers will attend a joint press conference after their meeting.

Taro Aso will make courtesy calls on President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia tomorrow.

He will leave Dhaka tomorrow evening for Kuala Lumpur. In Malaysia, he will attend an ARF meeting and meet his counterparts from the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) plus China, and South Korea, for the regional talks that open next week.

## 8 suspected

**FROM PAGE 16**  
anti-Maoist group in neighbouring Chattisgarh state.

Andhra Pradesh is one of the worst affected of the 13 Indian states where the leftist extremists are active and have killed thousands of people over the past three decades.

The rebels claim to fight for the rights of landless labourers and poor peasants.

spokesman said.

"We are spreading the message from the meteorology office which says that the number of aftershocks have been continuously dwindling from Monday and that there was no more danger of tsunami," he said.

Meanwhile, on Sulawesi, to the northeast of Java, a 6.6-magnitude undersea quake in Tomini bay sparked a tsunami warning and prompted the governor of Gorontalo to order precautionary evacuations in coastal areas.

"I have ordered the people on the coastline, through the radio, to evacuate... I have also instructed all district heads to evacuate the