

## Two outlaws killed

**FROM PAGE 1** at a house in Harinakunda upazila of Jhenidah Thursday morning.

Following his confessional statement, the team took him to Harkandi to retrieve hidden fire-arms.

As they reached the spot around 4:30am, BCP cadres opened fire on them. Police retaliated which resulted in a half-hour-long gunfight. Tariqul was caught in the line of fire and hit by several bullets as he tried to escape police custody. He died on the spot, police claimed.

Police recovered a gun and three bullets from the spot but failed to capture any of Tariqul's accomplices.

Police said Tariqul was accused in a number of cases including four murder cases filed with different police stations of Chuadanga and Jhenidah.

In Pabna, Belal was killed in an encounter between his cohorts and Rab at Kuchiyamara village in Sadar upazila yesterday afternoon.

He was a regional leader of Purb Banglar Communist Party (ML-Lalpataka) and son of Kana Bakkar of Alkhar village.

"Belal was wanted in over a dozen cases, including seven for murder," Rab said.

The Rab sources said they had information that Belal along with his

accomplices was preparing for carrying out criminal activity in the area.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab-5 went to the area to arrest the outlaws at about 5:00pm. "As soon as the Rab men reached Kuchiyamara, the outlaws opened fire on the law enforcers from inside a house, forcing the Rab men to retaliate," the sources said.

Belal was shot during the encounter and died on way to Pabna General Hospital.

Later, the body was sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

A .22-bore revolver and three bullets were recovered from the scene, the sources said.

## Jumatul Wida

**FROM PAGE 1** munajat, seeking blessings of the almighty for peace, progress and prosperity of the nation.

Night-long special prayers, milad and religious discussions were held at mosques and other places in the country, including the capital.

Newspapers published supplements and Bangladesh Betar, BTV and private TV channels aired special programmes highlighting the significance of the Lailatul Qadr.

## Thousands pour

**FROM PAGE 1** normal price.

About two and a half million people have already left for their homes in the last few days and around three million more are expected to leave in the next few days. Eid will be celebrated on Tuesday or Wednesday depending on the sighting of the Shawal moon.

**SADARGHAT LAUNCH TERMINAL** A large number of tickets for the launch cabins have been booked by ruling party ministers, legislators, leaders and activists while the rest of the comparatively good tickets have already been grabbed by the scalpers, said ticket counter officials in the terminal.

About 250-280 launches, including around 100 vessels unfit to ply, leave Sadarghat Launch Terminal daily carrying passengers way beyond their capacity. This is happening despite the government's warnings of stern actions against unfit launches and overloading.

According to the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), around 110 to 130 large and small launches depart from Sadarghat and around 50 special launches and vessels have been added to handle the Eid rush.

Launches already declared unfit and abandoned have been pressed into "special service" ignoring the mobile courts' verdict.

This correspondent yesterday found a group of scalpers selling cabin tickets to the passengers at hiked up prices but there were no cabin tickets available at the ticket counters.

Passengers alleged that many brokers illegally occupy space in the launches before the vessels berth at the terminal and charge Tk 50 to Tk 80 from each passenger to let them sit there.

"I boarded the launch as soon as it reached the terminal but I could not get any space to place my bed sheet. I managed to get two spots after paying a broker Tk 120," said Arif Ahmed, passenger of a launch

heading for Bhola.

**BUS STATIONS** Employees of different coach services said the rush is not so heavy this year in comparison to previous years. The load is light because around 500 new buses have been added to different routes and people have five days to leave the capital, they said.

"Around 200 new buses have started to operate from Saidabad Bus Terminal alone in the last one year. We kept another 200 city-service buses on reserve to be put on inter-district routs during the final rush," ANMM Mujibullah Naser, general secretary of Saidabad Bus Owners' Association, told The Daily Star.

He also said the buses will make double trips to ease the pressure of passengers heading home on Sunday and Monday.

Employees at ticket counters of Gabtoli, Saidabad, Mohakhali, Jatrabari, Kalabagan, Motijheel and Shyamoli bus terminals said all tickets especially of Sunday and Monday have been bought in advance. They said most of the tickets were bought from October 8 to 12.

**KAMALAPUR RAILWAY STATION** Railway officials said apart from the standing tickets, they do not have any tickets for leaving Dhaka ahead of the Eid holiday. They said 12737 passengers departed from the capital in last 24 hours using 32 trains including 19 intercity trains. Around 5,000 passengers left Dhaka by four private trains, they added.

It has been alleged that brokers bought a good number tickets in advance but they could not sell them easily due to a vigilant mobile court.

"Two to 12 compartments will be added to each train leaving Dhaka in the last two days before Eid," said Nitendra Saha, stationmaster of Kamalapur Railway Station.

## 200,000 sticks, oars

**FROM PAGE 1** to The Daily Star last night that they have made preparations in this regard.

Sources said in a bid to keep the country's educational institutions closed, the BCL also plans to go for an indefinite strike at all institutions.

Sources in the opposition alliance said their leaders at different district and upazila units are also making thousands of oars and poles. Each upazila unit has been asked to prepare 10,000 oars and poles, sources said, adding that the senior leaders have also instructed for supplying several thousand oars and poles to the capital within a couple of days.

At a joint meeting with all thana, ward and union presidents and general secretaries of Dhaka city units of opposition combine, Maya directed the leaders to keep the oars and poles ready.

Sensing that the government may not accept its major electoral reform demands, including the issue of Justice Hasan, the senior leaders of the opposition combine issued secret instructions to all of its city unit leaders in this regard a few days ago.

"If our demand for electoral reforms is not met through the dialogue and if BNP-partisan Justice Hasan takes charge of the caretaker government, resistance will be built up in the capital as well as the district and upazila headquarters," 14-party Coordinator Abdul Jalil told the meeting.

Explaining the necessity of the electoral reforms and referring to Hasan's political affiliation with BNP, the AL general secretary asked the leaders to prepare grounds for building resistance against the Hasan-led caretaker government.

tions even on Eid day...The time to protect people's voting rights will not come too often," he said.

Jalil said BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told him that the government will give its final decision over Justice Hasan on October 23. "If the ongoing political crisis is not resolved through the dialogue, we will not have any alternative but to forge all-out movements to realise our reform demands."

The AL-led opposition combine sits today with all of its front organisations while all upazila and district units of its front organisations will also sit simultaneously.

As a warm-up to its movement, the opposition will stage country-wide demonstrations tomorrow before the final round of talks. Observing the day as the "reform proposals implementation day", it will hold a massive rally on Bangabandhu Avenue and bring out a procession.

Senior opposition leaders will instruct their activists from the rally.

The opposition combine also plans to go for a countrywide indefinite hartal and blockade programmes alongside marching towards Dhaka.

AL Presidium Member Tofail Ahmed told The Daily Star that they will do everything to press home their reform demands.

"Not only will the capital be besieged, resistance will also be built in villages, upazilas and districts. Indefinite countrywide hartals and blockade programmes will be announced to press home our demands," Tofail said.

## Americans see reasons to vote against Republicans

REUTERS, Dallas

President George W Bush won re-election in 2004 cast as a strong wartime leader, but in this year's congressional races his handling of the Iraq war has given many voters a reason to vote against Republicans.

Bush's Republicans are fighting to keep their control of the US Congress, but polls and analysts suggest Democrats could capture the House of Representatives and possibly the Senate.

Republicans have sought to keep the focus on individual races, the war on terrorism and the economy rather than Bush, but Democrats appear to be gaining ground in their attempts to capitalize on the unpopularity among voters of the Iraq war.

"We have such a big mess in Washington. Bush is terrible and Iraq was a disaster," said 56-year-old Bill Caster of Kansas City, Missouri.

"It's time for a change. I want to fire every Republican in Washington," said Caster, who described himself as a political independent in a battleground state where Republican incumbent Sen Jim Talent is fighting a strong challenge from Democratic state Auditor Claire McCaskill.

Analysts say it all comes down to Iraq.

"The president is a bigger factor than usual this year and the biggest negative of his right now is the war in Iraq," said David Bositis of the non-partisan Joint Centre for Political and Economic Studies.

Bush and the Republicans faced more bad news in the wake of the killing of 11 US soldiers on Tuesday in one of the bloodiest days in the war for US troops in a surge of attacks on American forces battling soaring sectarian violence.

"He (Bush) needs to hurry up and get out of there. He is losing too many lives. Why do they want to fight those people for the oil?," asked Paula Lange of New Orleans. She spoke in a trailer next to the home she is rebuilding after it was destroyed last year by Hurricane Katrina.

An ABC News/Washington Post poll released last week showed Bush was playing a bigger role in voting intentions than he did during the previous congressional elections in 2002, with expressed opposition to him as a factor more than doubling.

Thirty-five percent of the registered voters said their vote for Congress would be cast in opposition to Bush versus 18 percent who said it would be an expression of support for him. The rest, 47 percent, said he was not a factor.

## 9/11 remains

FROM PAGE 16 the job well."

Families of more than 1,100 of the victims of 9/11 have never received any remains of their loved ones.

The campaign group is to hold a news conference over the latest discovery later on Friday.

Abandoned site  
The material excavated from the manholes was removed from the site without anyone noticing it contained the remains, said utility company Consolidated Edison.

On Thursday, the Port Authority contractor spotted the remains, the agency said.

Some of the remains were as big as arm or leg bones, said Steve Coleman, a spokesman for the Port Authority.

Construction workers have been instructed to look for human remains and notify the medical examiner's office when they find them.

"No official identifications have been made at this time and the New York City Police Department and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner are heading up the investigation," said Patrick J Brennan of the Mayor's Community Assistance Unit was quoted by the AP news agency.

The discovery comes just weeks after the fifth anniversary of the attacks.

Earlier this year, construction workers in New York discovered 74 bone fragments from 9/11 victims. The remains were found mixed in with roofing material at the condemned Deutsche Bank building, which stands next to Ground Zero.

## Zia fertiliser

FROM PAGE 16 again on October 16, the factory stopped due to leakages. After repairing, the authority resumed production on the night of October 18.

The BCIC authorities had given ZFCL a production target of 4,50,000 tonnes of urea this financial year. But ZFCL has already shown signs of failure to fulfil the target.

In 2005-2006, the factory suffered a production loss of 1,25,000 tonnes of urea as it remained inoperative for 73 days due to technical faults while the production target was 4,20,000 tonnes.

The factory could not achieve its production target in 2004-2005 too. Costly overhauling and repeated repair works in the factory have now come under question.

## Illegal centres selling

FROM PAGE 1 the blood might have deadly diseases like HIV and hepatitis.

There are about 150 blood banks operational in the capital and around 500 outside it, concerned sources said.

"We know that 29 percent of professional donors have hepatitis B, 3.8 percent have hepatitis C and 30 percent have syphilis," a DMCH physician said citing a recent survey.

A large quantity of blood at the blood banks of hospitals comes from poor people. A number of them are intravenous drug users who sell their blood to meet their drug habit money.

Experts say at least five tests are required to obtain blood safely from a donor, excluding cross-matching and group-matching tests. The tests are hepatitis B, hepatitis C, HIV, malaria and syphilis. In most cases, illegal private blood banks do not perform those tests but they mark the bags that the tests were conducted.

"They probably conduct only the group-matching test as it is easy to perform," Magistrate Keramat Ali, who has been raiding the illegal blood banks, said.

The blood business in private sector is booming as government hospitals fail to provide the required amount of blood. The DMCH blood centre alone needs around 100 bags a day but it can only provide 40 bags.

Describing his experience, Keramat Ali said he found private blood banks not even preserving the blood properly. "They preserve the blood in a regular refrigerator whereas special refrigerators are required," he said adding, "The environment of the private blood banks is very dirty."

"Even the reagent they use to identify the blood group had past its expiry date in a number of blood banks," he said.

The mobile court discovered many blood banks that do not have approval from the director general of health and in a number of cases

they even failed to show their trade licence, the magistrate said.

According to the mobile court sources, dishonest businessmen, most of them retired doctors of blood collection centres in government hospitals, are directly or indirectly involved with illegal blood banks. They allegedly have under-hand dealings with concerned government high officials.

"What the mobile court is doing is good but only Tk 50,000 fine is not enough punishment for the culprits," Prof Nazrul Islam said.

"An unauthorised blood businessman can ruin a person's life. They can infect someone with virus like HIV," he said adding, "They have already infected thousands of people, so the government needs to monitor these businesses strictly."

## WB okays

FROM PAGE 16 portation in the country.

The project will help the government to increase the railway's operational autonomy, improve its management structure and commercial orientation, modernise the financial management and cost accounting system, and enhance the incentive structure and career development for railway staff.

Weak governance in the railway sector combined with inadequate budget allocation has resulted in a dilapidated railway infrastructure and inefficient rail services.

"Improving governance of Bangladesh Railway will improve the investment climate and contribute to Bangladesh's economic development and poverty reduction efforts," said Christine Wallich, World Bank country director for Bangladesh.

"It will do so by improving the quality of transport services available to businesses and passengers and making Bangladesh's economy more competitive in the region," she added.

## N Korean leader

FROM PAGE 16 whether it be bilateral talks or six-party talks." Kim was quoted as telling a Chinese envoy, the mass-circulation Chosun Ilbo reported, citing a diplomatic source in China.

Kim told the Chinese delegation that "he is sorry about the nuclear test," the newspaper reported.

The delegation led by State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan met Kim on Thursday and returned to Beijing later that day ahead of US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's arrival in the Chinese capital Friday. China is viewed as a key nation in efforts to persuade the North to disarm, as it is the isolated communist nation's main trading partner.

North Korea has long insisted that the US desist from a campaign to sever its ties to the international financial system. Washington accuses Pyongyang of complicity in counterfeiting and money laundering to sell weapons of mass destruction.

The North has refused since last November to return to the nuclear talks, which also include China, Japan, Russia and South Korea. Pyongyang has sought bolster its negotiating position by a series of provocative actions, test-firing a barrage of missiles in July and performing its first-ever nuclear test Oct. 9.

In Beijing China and the United States pressed North Korea on Friday to return to talks on ending its nuclear arms programme and called for full implementation of UN sanctions imposed on the country after its October 9 atomic test.

The crisis trip by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to east Asia has been overshadowed by speculation that communist North Korea might be about to detonate a second nuclear device.

But Chinese officials suggested that their envoy, sent by President Hu Jintao to Pyongyang earlier this week, had made progress in bringing North Korea back into line.

"Fortunately my visit this time has not been in vain," the envoy, Tang Jiaxuan, said at the opening of his meeting with Rice, referring to his trip to Pyongyang. Reporters were then ushered from the room.

China, a traditional ally of North Korea, is seen as having the greatest potential leverage over its neighbour.

Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing said Tang and the North Koreans also discussed how to kick-start stalled talks on Pyongyang's nuclear programmes.

"At least it increased mutual understanding. Everyone discussed how to restart progress in the six-party talks as quickly as possible," Li told reporters.

The six-party talks, which bring together the two Koreas, the United States, Japan, Russia and host China, stalled last November after Washington imposed restrictions on Pyongyang's external financing.

At a joint briefing with Rice, Li appealed for calm and a diplomatic solution to the crisis.

"We hope all relevant parties can maintain cool-headedness, adopt a prudent and responsible attitude and stick to the general direction of a peaceful resolution through dialogue," Li said.

## Rice presses China on HR rights record

REUTERS, Beijing

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice yesterday pressed China on its human rights record, but Beijing countered it had its own problems with the United States.

With Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing at her side, Rice told a joint news conference she had brought up several human rights issues during their meeting, whose main aim was to discuss North Korea and Iran's nuclear programmes.

Rice did not provide specific details, but a prominent case that rights groups have said tops US concerns is that of New York Times researcher Zhao Yan, who was sentenced in August to three years in prison on fraud charges.

In addition, the United States has been pressing for the release of Boston-based democracy campaigner Yang Jianli, who was arrested in 2002 after stealing into China.

"We talked about human rights issues and the importance of several cases," said Rice, who is on the last leg of her Asian trip to discuss North Korea. She is due in Moscow on Saturday.

Yang, who has doctorates from the University of California at Berkeley and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, had lived in the United States for more than a decade but opted not to take US citizenship.

The top US diplomat said the cases she raised and other human rights issues would be discussed in further meetings.

China sees US criticism of its human rights record as an attempt to interfere in its domestic affairs. While it has given its people greater economic and political freedoms in recent years, it has also clamped down on critics.

Li, who did not allow any questions at the news conference, countered he had raised his own list of human rights issues with the United States.

"I also gave her a list of two cases involving two Chinese citizens," he said without providing details.

## Shop owner

FROM PAGE 1 were locked in a feud over the matter. Later, Parvez filed a general diary (GD) with Mohammadpur Police Station.

Lipi claimed that Masum along with a number of local goons sprayed bullets at Parvez near his shop around 7:00pm yesterday.

Both were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared Parvez dead.

## Sri Lanka stay

FROM PAGE 1 118-9 in the 39th over before the last-wicket pair of Vettori and Jeetan Patel (10) added 47 valuable runs. Left-handed Vettori boosted the total with three consecutive boundaries off Chaminda Vaas in the 49th over which cost 19 runs.

Sri Lanka needed to win the Group B encounter at the Brabourne Stadium to stay in contention for the semifinals after losing their opening match to Pakistan in Jaipur.

The wicket continued to assist turn despite the International Cricket Council's pitch consultant Andy Atkinson spraying it with a glue, Polyvinyl Acetate, before the start to help bind it for 100 overs.

The pitch, that turned from brown to white after the spray, had been criticised over the last week for breaking up in the second innings, causing a string of low scores. New Zealand, however, had themselves to blame for the sluggish display that saw the first nine wickets fall in quick time.

Stephen Fleming, who made a match-winning 89 against South Africa, failed to score in his 193rd one-day as captain, equalling the world record tally of former Sri Lanka skipper Arjuna Ranatunga.

Lou Vincent was bowled by Farveez Maharroof attempting a rash pull shot, Hamish Marshall cut Lasith Malinga to point and Scott Styris was caught behind off Sanath Jayasuriya's fourth delivery.

Muralidaran, who came on to bowl in the 26th over, shattered Jacob Oram's stumps with his fourth ball and ended Astle's long vigil at the crease by having him caught at deep mid-wicket by Malinga.

## BNP ready

FROM PAGE 1 Minister Moudud Ahmad on Thursday said. "There is no scope to reach a consensus through the ongoing dialogue ignoring the constitution."

Some BNP sources however said many of the senior party leaders want a resolution of the political crisis over the reform issue before handover of power to avoid confrontations on the streets.

But a section of party leaders are opposed to meeting the AL demand on Hasan issue as, they say, this might lead to loss of the BNP's political might during the caretaker government's tenure, helping the opposition in the next election.

## Sri Lanka says

FROM PAGE 16 sides to stay the course for the planned talks but a surge in violence risks undermining the meeting in Geneva.

The military statement said the navy intercepted the rebel craft off Nagarakovil area on the Jaffna peninsula. The military said two rebel vessels were destroyed and other Tiger craft were damaged.

It said many rebels were wounded and two sailors suffered minor injuries. The military was firing shells and mortar bombs to prevent any rebel vessels landing along the nearby Jaffna coast.

There was no immediate comment from the LTTE.

Scores of people have been killed in the past few weeks in the island nation in fresh fighting that has left a 2002 truce in shreds and dimmed hopes of a breakthrough in Geneva, the first such dialogue since February.

Rebels fired mortar bombs at an army base in the eastern Batticaloa district late on Thursday, sparking army retaliation. There were no casualties, the military said.

Both sides also had artillery duels overnight on the Jaffna peninsula but no details of casual-

## Power gets

FROM PAGE 1 previously raised the power tariffs in September 2003.

The tariff will remain unchanged for those residential consumers who use electricity up to 100 units, as per the new circular from the power division.

According to the new prices, the power tariff increased to Tk 3.15 from the existing Tk 3 per unit for those residential consumers who consume more than 100 units to 400 units while per unit tariff will be Tk 5.25 instead of Tk 5 for those using above 401 units of electricity.

The tariff for irrigation purposes was raised to Tk 1.93 per unit from the existing Tk 1.84 per unit.

For small industries, the flat rate per unit will be Tk 4.02 during peak hours, which is currently at Tk 3.83. During off-peak hours, the tariff will be Tk 3.20 against the current Tk 3.05, and during peak hours it will be Tk 5.62, which is at Tk 5.36 now.

Power tariff for non-residential consumers was raised to Tk 3.35 per unit from the existing Tk 3.20.

For commercial consumers, the flat rate of power will be Tk 5.30 per unit against the current Tk 5.04. During the off peak hours, the price will be Tk 3.80 against the current Tk 3.60 and in peak hours Tk 8.20 against the current Tk 7.82.

## Yunus slams

FROM PAGE 1 was "equally as condemnable as acquiring new capacity".

"So we should raise our voice globally. This is one weapon we don't want to see anywhere in the world."

Yunus also said he was ready to bring his microcredit banking concept to the impoverished people of North Korea, in co-operation with one of its banks.

"If their banking people (would) like to talk to me, I would like to do that," he said.

Yunus said the Nobel Peace Prize had made an "amazing difference" to him, with his bank gaining greater international attention.

Yunus has not received an invitation from North Korea, which ranks near the bottom of most of the world's poverty indices, but other communist states such as China and Cuba have sought his help with microcredit.

"If Beijing can take it as a political decision and adopt it as an official policy of the Communist Party of China, I don't see North Koreans would have any problem," Yunus said.

"It's a total change of life," he said, adding the prize would help

ties were immediately available.

The continuing violence came as U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher is visiting the country, where Tamil Tigers have been fighting for an independent homeland since 1983 for the ethnic Tamil minority.

More than 65,000 people have died in the two-decade conflict.

Since July, violence has surged leaving around 1,000 people dead, including many soldiers, alarming Colombo's main donors.

"Richard Boucher wants to send a message there should be an immediate cessation of violence," U.S. embassy spokesman Evan Owen said. "It is more important to talk now than ever as Sri Lanka is in danger of going to all-out war."

On Wednesday, the rebels launched a sea-borne suicide raid on a naval base in the southern city of Galle, losing 15 cadres and