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Battalion Ansars retrenched in 1994 formed a human chain in front of the Secretariat yesterday demanding their reinstatement.

— Star photo

Feud over reorganisation of JCD Falu, Lokman harassing us, say wives of 3 BNP men

Feuds among BNP high-ups over reorganisation of the central committee of its student front JCD have led to hostilities affecting three families including that of party leader Quamruzzaman Ratan, reports UNB.

"We have been threatened over telephone that if Ratan does anything against Pintu and Laltu committee, he will be murdered," said Noor-e-Zannat, wife of Quamruzzaman Ratan, a BNP central leader, at a press conference yesterday morning.

Dr Rajina Mahbub, wife of Ratan's business partner and former JCD activist Ruhul Alam Al-Mahbub alias Manik, and wife

of Rabiul Awal Lavlu, also spoke at the conference.

The Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal committee was dissolved amid internecine clashes. As the opposition party high command now has reportedly decided to revive the committee with Pintu and Laltu as president and secretary respectively the old rivalries have surfaced again.

"Our lives are under serious threat, our husbands are fleeing home to save their lives, police and ruffians can kill us any moment," Zannat said in a written statement.

She blamed Mosadeq Ali Falu, Assistant Private Secretary to

opposition leader Khaleda Zia, and Lokman Ahmed Bhuiyan, Chief Private Security personnel of Khaleda for harassing them in various ways.

She said they filed a "false case" of snatching gold bar through one Ali Ahmed against her husband and his business partners to destroy them politically and socially.

All Ahmed lodged the case on November 21 with Tejgaon police accusing Ratan, Manik and Lavlu of snatching gold bars from an autorickshaw passenger on Shaheenbagh Road near Prime Minister's office on November 18.

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Arafat, Barak speak over phone, agree to keep low-level security

JERUSALEM, Nov 24: Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat spoke by phone today, their first contact in more than three weeks, and agreed to resume low-level security cooperation, Barak's office said, reports AP.

Arafat was meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow today when Barak placed a call to Putin's office. After getting Barak's permission, Putin handed the phone to Arafat so the Palestinian leader could speak with Barak.

The Israeli and Palestinian leaders agreed to resume low-level security cooperation and to reopen Israeli-Palestinian liaison offices in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Barak's office said in a

statement.

Israel on Thursday had ordered the Palestinians to leave the 10 offices, by then only regular channel of contact between the sides, after an Israeli officer was killed by a bomb planted in one of the shared compounds in the Gaza Strip.

Israeli-Palestinian security cooperation was one of the cornerstones of interim peace accords. In two months of fighting, contacts between security officials from both sides were cut and replaced with angry accusations. Israel said Palestinian security agents were often involved in attacks on Israelis,

while Palestinians complained that Israel used excessive force against Palestinian demonstrators.

A resumption of security coordination, even if only at level of officers in the field, would be a first small step toward rebuilding trust and ending violence.

Arafat told Barak that he would try to do everything he can to stop the fighting, according to the Israeli statement. Arafat's senior aides were with him in Moscow, and were not immediately available for comment.

Despite the renewed contact between the two leaders, their first since Barak spoke with Arafat by phone on Nov 1 violence persisted today.

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Factional feud Jubo League office ransacked at Khilgaon

By Staff Correspondent

Some local youths ransacked an Awami Jubo League office at Meradia in the city's Khilgaon area on Thursday night.

Four youths led by Kazal and Tofail went to the ward unit office at about 6 pm and ransacked it.

Police said the incident was a sequel to previous rivalry between the two faction of local Jubo League.

A case was filed with Khilgaon thana in this connection, but none was arrested till writing of this report last night.

Two girls abducted

By Staff Correspondent

Two girls were abducted by unidentified measerants in separate incidents in the city on Wednesday.

Murium alias Anni, 4, daughter of Azharul Islam was abducted by unidentified kidnappers while she was playing..... Ahmed Nazir Road of Paikpara in Mirpur at about 11 am Wednesday.

Later The kidnappers demanded Tk 10 lakh as ransom from Anni's relative over telephone at Azimpur.

They again talked with the relative and asked to her send their representative with the money to Bhairab Bridge.

But the caller did not mention the time for receiving the ransom.

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A fashion show organised by Fashion Connection 2001 at Aarong Bhaban at Gulshan in the city yesterday.

— Star photo

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Promoting idea of 'safe sex' remains a far cry

Star Report

Only 4.3 per cent or about 1.1 million out of 26 million couples in the country use condom; that too, mainly for birth control and not for protection from sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

This was revealed in the 1999-2000 Bangladesh Demographic Health Survey (BDHS) report, a copy of which was recently made available to The Daily Star.

Promoting use of condom, making it cheaper and overcoming superstitions are major challenges now to save the future generation from AIDS, the report said.

Most of them do not know that use of condom is a very effective way to protect one from deadly STDs including AIDS, and there has been no substantial effort to create public awareness about this.

Although the actual number of HIV infected people in the country is not known, experts fear, it is spreading "quite fast". Some put it at 33,000 while the government puts it at less than 20,000.

Intravenous drug users, commercial sex workers, professional blood donors and the huge number of young men who return from abroad is increasing the risk of spread of HIV infection, the report said.

Commenting on the situation a senior health ministry official said, "Since there is no mechanism for serological (blood) test to confirm their infection status, we simply assume that those who travel may come back with HIV since the countries they visit have high rates of the infection."

Many of those transmit the virus to their wives, and their babies are born with HIV virus.

A researcher at ICDDR,B said, "Increasing the rate of condom use is a major challenge. It is very low among married people. Unmarried people generally avoid it."

Even health workers and many health officials do not know that condom is a very effective measure against such diseases.

"I am not certain how condom can protect one from AIDS," a family planning worker in Munshiganj thana in Satkhira district told this correspondent.

A nurse working in a thana health complex in Jessore said, "Condom is used for protection against unwanted

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