

## 3 killed in suicide bomb attacks in Israel, Gaza

AFP, Hadera

An explosives-laden car blew up near the central bus station in the second bomb attack in this northern Israeli town in six months, killing two presumed bombers and injuring at least 12 other people.

"A terrible disaster could have occurred but apparently it was a miracle more people were not injured," a spokesman for the state-run Egged bus company told Israeli public radio.

Israeli police said the two people killed were both apparently involved in the attack in Hadera, on the coast some 70 km northwest of Jerusalem.

Their vehicle was blown to bits, charred beyond recognition and strewn across a road near the bus station.

It was the first such attack in Israeli territory since the government announced Tuesday a "unilateral ceasefire" in the eight-month-old conflict with Palestinians, although the violence in the territories has not abated since then.

It occurred only hours after a militant from the armed wing of the fundamentalist Hamas movement blew himself up in a truck bomb attack against an Israeli army post in the Gaza Strip.

The army said no Israelis were injured in that incident.

The blasts came one week after a suicide bombing at a shopping mall in the nearby coastal resort of Netanya, which killed five Israelis and was claimed by the radical Palestinian movement Hamas.

A spokesman for Hadera police said 12 people were injured, one of them moderately, though media reports said some 30 were hurt, including many treated for shock.

## Tamil Nadu govt faces severe financial crisis

REUTERS, Madras

The newly-elected provincial government in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu is facing a severe financial crisis and is running on borrowings from the central bank, the state's Governor said yesterday.

Governor Fathima Beevi told legislators the new government of convicted former film star Jayaram Jayalalitha had inherited an exchequer with unpaid liabilities of 7.0 billion rupees (\$149.1 million) as of March 31.

"The state government is now forced to depend on borrowings from the Reserve Bank of India even to meet its day-to-day cash requirements," Beevi said in her legislative opening address.

Jayalalitha, who led her All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam to a landslide win in state polls this month, was appointed chief minister last week despite being barred from contesting the polls because of a graft conviction.

The controversy over Beevi's decision to appoint the former screen siren has triggered a slew of petitions in the courts challenging Jayalalitha's right to hold office.

Beevi said the new government would undertake "a fiscal course-correction exercise" to restore the financial health of the state and urged the public to support the measures.

She did not provide any details on the measures.

## Mamun realised ransom

FROM PAGE 1

While coming out of the hotel on October 14 evening, Mamun's accomplices Didar, Masum, Jaher, Shamim and Khorshed forced them into a car and took them to a house at Sanir Akhra in the city's Demra area.

The terrorists demanded Tk 1 crore as ransoms. As they refused, the gang tortured them. Mamun was also present during the torture, Didar told police.

At one stage, Narayan agreed to pay the ransom and asked his wife in Chittagong over mobile phone to come to Dhaka with Tk 1 crore.

His wife managed Tk. 25 lakh including Tk 18.35 lakh from encashed savings bonds of Sonali Bank. She came to Dhaka and handed over the money to the terrorists at the house. Narayan was released on October 16.

Being released, Narayan went to Tejgaon police station and filed an

## Shamsur Rahman murder

FROM PAGE 12

A top ranking leader of city Awami League termed Litu as innocent, particularly so far as Shamsur Rahman murder is concerned.

"We shall try to prove his innocence," the city AL leader said.

On the other hand, some other leaders of the party want Litu to be punished for his criminal acts.

Litu has denied his involvement in the murder of Shamsur Rahman.

Litu phoned this correspondent at midnight on Thursday expressing his regret for being chargesheeted in the murder case. I had a great respect for Shamsur Rahman as he was a close friend of my slain uncle JP leader Abul Kashem. I have been

## 30 shops, 7 houses gutted at Ramgarh

BSS, Khagracchari

Thirty shops and seven dwelling houses were gutted in a fire at Ramgarh bazar and its adjoining areas on Wednesday night.

Fire brigade sources said, the bazar was engulfed by the fire originated from a nearby poultry farm due to electric short circuit on the night. Over 30 semi-pacca shops in the bazar and seven dwelling tin-shed houses in the adjoining areas were reduced to ashes. The property damaged by the fire was estimated at about Taka 90 lakh, sources said.

## Money recovered

FROM PAGE 1

to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DCMH) and arrested the bullet-hit muggers -- Munna and Sohagand recovered the money from their possession.

According to a DMP press release, SI Abdullah drew his salaries and other bills on Thursday and then went to Mitford Hospital to see the body of a relative, killed by muggers.

## Wedding

FROM PAGE 12

one of the most difficult that occurred in Israel," Sharon said. "I would define this as a national disaster."

By Friday afternoon, the death toll had reached at least 30 as body after body was pulled from the pile of rubble, concrete slabs and twisted metal. An army spokesman, Lt. Olivier Rafowicz, said dozens of people were still missing. The death toll was expected to rise.

Five bodies were found near a table, including a couple embracing each other, said Yehuda Meshi Zahav, head of an ultra-Orthodox rescue volunteer group.

Maj Gen Gabi Ofir, in charge of the rescue operation, said 309 people were taken to hospitals with injuries. Hospital doctors said many children were among them, including a 3-month-old.

Among the injured were the newlyweds. Assi was treated for minor injuries and released. But Keren, carried out on a stretcher in her fluffy white dress, suffered hip and chest injuries and might need surgery, doctors said.

## Locomotives

FROM PAGE 12

Besides, the contract accommodates supply of excessive spare parts. He alleged that if properly negotiated Bangladesh could have had saved a lot of money from this purchase and invested more in developing infrastructure.

He added that Rites had previously supplied locomotives by winning a competitive bid. As per the previous contract, it stationed a technical support team in Bangladesh.

The leader of the technical team is now maintaining high political liaison and is virtually pushing all the business deals behind the scene, the industry insider said.

However, a railway official said that the purchase was not over-priced. "Indian locomotives are cheaper than the locomotives made by any other countries," he said. "For instance, the price of one German locomotive is equal to three Indian locomotives."

He added that the government was pursuing all necessary rail infrastructure projects to link Dhaka with North Bengal. There was no shortage of fund. "By 2002, Dhaka would be directly connected to North Bengal through the Bangabandhu Bridge," he noted.

## Vajpayee formally invites Musharraf

FROM PAGE 1

Pakistan.

"We have to pick up the threads again, including renewing the composite dialogue, so that we can put in place a stable structure of co-operation and address all outstanding issues," including Kashmir," added Vajpayee.

He said that for the welfare of the people of India and Pakistan, there was no other recourse "but a pursuit of the path of reconciliation, of engaging in productive dialogue and building trust and confidence."

"I invite you to walk this high road with us," the Indian premier said.

"General Pervez Musharraf will send a reply shortly," a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry later said, giving no further details.

AP says, Gen Musharraf is placing no conditions on his acceptance of India's surprise invitation to hold bilateral peace talks, but believes the people of disputed Kashmir should also be included, Musharraf's chief spokesman said yesterday.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Gen Rashid Qureshi said "If the government of India is sincere, this is a welcome step."



PHOTO: INTERNET

UAE Minister for Higher Education and Scientific Research presenting the annual Sheikh Mubarak bin Mohammad award for Natural History to Dr Reza Khan, Director of Dubai Zoo, in Dubai Thursday. Dr Reza, a Bangladeshi zoologist, is also the author of two books, *Wildcats in the UAE* and *Indigenous trees in the UAE*.

## Larma on CHT situation

FROM PAGE 1

army", he claimed.

Forces opposed to the CHT agreement killed two supporters of the agreement at Naniarchar in Rangamati on May 21, he said.

He blamed the "vested quarter" and the "settlers" for all these acts of terrorism and said these are being done "to scuttle the agreement".

Larma reiterated his demand for a separate voter list for CHT, which will include only the "permanent residents". Election would not be allowed to be held in CHT without such a new voter list, he said.

The press conference was arranged to mark formation of a 65-member National Convening Committee of Bangladesh Adibashi Forum (BAF), of which Larma is the convenor. It was formed at a meeting here on Thursday with Larma in chair.

Sanjib Drong, its member-secretary and Anil Yan Yun, head-man of the Khassia tribe from Maulvibazar, were also present at the press conference.

Larma read out a statement containing an eightpoint demand of the BAF, which include immediate suspension of work of the Eco-Park project at Madhabkundu in Maulvibazar.

Larma said Khassia and Garo people are being driven out of their lands at Madhabkundu and at least 500,000 trees worth Tk 11 crore in forests there are threatened. He questioned the wisdom behind the expensive project, driving out the adibashis (tribal ethnic minority) from their ancestral lands while "the government is talking about distributing khas lands to the landless".

Larma, also questioned another such tourism project at Madhupur in

Tangail district in the lands of Garo people. Sanjib Drong said the project was taken up in 1997 without informing the adibashis.

He demanded preference to adibashis in distribution of khas lands and permanent settlement of their land right.

Larma said BAF has been formed to protect the ethnic rights of adibashis.

He alleged that since independence, Adibashis, who comprise 45 tribes including those in CHT, are deprived of their constitutional recognition as indigenous people and of their ethnic rights, which is threatening their existence.

Larma demanded exemplary punishment to those who raped the three women at Khagrachhari and the killers of Gidita Rhema, a Garo woman in Madhupur.

## Filling stations defy ban

FROM PAGE 12

oil also reduces longevity of engines, experts say.

The ban followed a prolonged campaign by different groups and the media.

The government in its January 1 order also said that import or sale of lubricating oil below Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation's (BPC) specifications would be liable to action under the Petroleum Act, 1974 and the BPC Ordinance, 1976.

The order prohibits production, import and marketing of lubricating oil below API SC/CC grade engine oil for motor vehicles and APITC or JASO FB for two-stroke engine of auto-rickshaws.

It also prohibited bulk supply of lubricating oil by tank lorries and said it could be marketed only in drums, cans or sachets with the quality, grade and price marked on

the containers.

"Industrial grade" lubricating oil also cannot be imported, blended or sold without specific demand letter of any company.

But the order remains in paper five months after its issuance.

Even T2 engine oil imported by BPC for two-stroke auto-rickshaws is not being used by any one simply because low grade or recycled engine oil is available at petrol pumps and shops. The BPC recently imported 60,000 ml of T2 engine oil from Singapore.

Talking to this correspondent, some auto-rickshaw drivers said they are unaware of availability of T2 engine oil. "Mixing mobil (engine oil) with petrol reduces fuel consumption", one of them said.

The World Bank, in cooperation with an NGO Society for Urban Environmental Protection (SUEP)

recently trained 1000 auto-rickshaws drivers on use of proper engine oil.

SUEP on April 17 wrote a letter to the Bangladesh Petrol Pump Owners Association, urging it to take steps to make T2 engine oil available to auto-rickshaw drivers. But the letter went unheeded, says Akhtar Hossain Babu of SUEP.

When contacted, Lt Col (Rtd) Abdul Mannan, BP, President of Bangladesh Petrol Pump Owners Association, said the loose engine oil being sold in petrol pumps and shops now is from the old stock.

He said the association has notified all its members to comply with the BPC directives. "The new order means a price increase by 44 per cent. We have requested the authorities to consider the price for the sake of farmers", he added.

## Beyond the long arm of law

FROM PAGE 1

faithful agents, who bring in arms to the city through road or waterways and also deliver these to buyers. Among known agents are Helal Akbar Chowdhury Babar and Didarul Alam Masum of the ruling Awami League-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League; Nitole and Shahidul Alam Jashim of the main opposition BNP-backed Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal; and Fazzal Hoq, Bidhan Barua and others of the now-defunct NDP.

Smugglers feel comfortable using the waterways, detective branch sources said. Sometimes fake funeral or bridal party is arranged to carry arms through land route. And sometimes drivers of high government officials are bribed to carry arms in their cars. Ambulance is another popular choice. In fact, the sources said,

they would use any vehicle that does not raise police suspicion.

A Daily Star investigation found out that last December's consignment of 16 AK-56 rifles had been delivered to Shamsul Alam Master.

"Five Star" Group of Dhaka bought four of these 16 assault rifles, an arms dealer told this correspondent requesting anonymity. Taiyab Group of Fatikchhari, terrorists loyal to Jatiya Party in Dhaka, and SQ Chowdhury Group also purchased two apiece, while Alam Master kept two for himself. The arms dealer could not tell what had happened to the remaining four AK-56s.

Alam Master, meanwhile, refuted allegations of his involvement in illegal arms trade.

"Since the early-1990s, some people have been propagating

against me," the local Jatiya Party leader told The Daily Star. "I still have to refute this kind of allegation. It is actually part of a design by the vested quarters to divert attention of the authorities."

In last one year police have only recovered 200 light firearms. In September 1998, police recovered two AK-47 rifles from Kazal Mollik and Ismail, front-liners of SQ Chowdhury Group. Following the eight-murder last year, they recovered another AK-47 from the city.

Sources attribute police failure in recovery of illegal arms to political pressure on the one hand and bribery on the other.

## Benazir plans to visit India to promote peace efforts

AFP, Islamabad

Former Pakistani prime minister Benazir Bhutto plans to visit India to promote peace efforts in the region, a statement by her Pakistan People's Party (PPP) said yesterday.

The announcement of the planned visit comes after Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's offer to Pakistani military ruler General Pervez Musharraf to resume peace talks.

Vajpayee on Wednesday decided to invite Musharraf to New Delhi for peace talks which were frozen between since a bloody conflict in Kashmir's Kargil region in 1999.

Pakistan has said Musharraf would respond positively to the invitation.

"PPP supports the process of dialogue between India and Pakistan," a spokesman said adding that since the General had already said he was prepared for talks, any time and any place, "Benazir will also visit New Delhi some time this year."

But he added that the PPP was not optimistic about the chances of a breakthrough in any Vajpayee-Musharraf talks.

"General Musharraf is a military dictator. History proved that

## 46000 phones

FROM PAGE 1

an existing telephone exchange can be increased by 'installing cards' and for this, no investment for new infrastructure is required.

The Ministry of Finance has allocated Tk 26 crore for the project, the MOPT official said.

Some 1.75 lakh applications for telephone are pending with BTBT. It has some 2.75 lakh telephone subscribers in the capital and a total of 6.24 lakh in the country.

The new telephones would be given to the applicants according to their serial and on priority basis, one source said.

BTBT officials said the Board would be able to earn Tk 8.5 crore from the 'demand note charge' and its revenue earning would increase significantly following installation of the new telephones.

## Two Chinese military ships to visit India

AFP, Bombay

Two Chinese military ships will visit India early next week as part of a goodwill tour, officials said yesterday.

"The missile destroyer Harbin and the tanker Taicang will be visiting Bombay for three days beginning Sunday," Commander R. Madhusoodanan, a defence spokesperson told AFP.

Rear Admiral Zhang Yan, deputy commander of the north sea fleet of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) navy would lead the two ships.

"On Monday morning Rear Admiral Yan will call on Vice Admiral Vinod Pasricha, flag officer commanding-in-chief of (India's) western naval command and the mayor of Bombay," Madhusoodanan said.

He added that Bombay, India's commercial capital, was hosting Chinese military ships after a gap of seven years. The last such visit was by a Chinese military training ship.

"Social exchanges" and "good-will football matches" between Indian and Chinese naval personnel and performances by the visiting military band were some of the other programmes in the itinerary.

Madhusoodanan said there were currently no plans to hold joint manoeuvres between Indian and Chinese navy ships.

The Chinese ships leave Bombay on Wednesday.

dictators go to war and democrats build peace," the spokesman said.

Benazir last travelled to India in 1972 when she accompanied her late father Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to the signing of a bilateral peace accord in Simla.

The former prime minister whose two tenures in office ended prematurely on charges of corruption and misrule, had planned to visit India in May 1999 but was forced to cancel when the border conflict in Kashmir erupted.

Benazir left Pakistan shortly before she was convicted for corruption in 1999. She has since been living in exile in London and Dubai.

Her conviction was last month overturned by the Supreme Court which ordered a retrial of her case.

The government has said Benazir, wanted in several other cases also, faces arrest if she returns home.

## One held with arms in Rajshahi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police arrested a youngman from Aiganj area under Rajpara thana yesterday morning for keeping illegal arms.

The arrested was identified as Kartik, 20, of village Haragram under the same thana.

On the basis of his confessional statement, Rajpara thana police recovered a shutter gun with two bullets from his village home.

A case was recorded with Rajpara thana in this connection.

## Nepali women march hundreds of miles to protest dam project

AFP, Kathmandu

Several hundred Nepalese leftist women are marching hundreds of kilometres (miles) to protest against a dam project in the rugged southwest they believe is being illegally constructed by India.

But expressing its surprise, the government Friday insisted the dam project had not even started yet and appealed to the women to turn back.

"The Nepalese Ministry of Water Resources expresses surprise at the protests carried out by various left forces and denies reports that the Indian government is unilaterally constructing a dam on the Mahakali river," the ministry said in a statement.

The All Nepal Women Association, which is closely associated with the Nepal Communist Party-Marxist and Leninist, launched their march earlier this week.

They were acting on local reports that India had gone ahead and dammed the Mahakali river, located in the Purnagiri area some 475 kilometres (296 miles) southwest of Kathmandu.

Nepal and India have pledged to jointly build a dam on the shared Mahakali under a bilateral agreement they endorsed in the late 1990s, but the ministry said actual construction was still far off.

"Local press reports said that a high dam was being constructed in the Purnagiri area of Daldeldhura and Kanchanpur districts in the lowland tropical region to the far southwest, are baseless," the ministry said.

"Only environmental and socio-economic studies have been carried out.

"It will take a long time before the two sides decide on where to construct the re-regulation dam for the multi-purpose high dam project," it added.

## Death of doctor's wife

FROM PAGE 1

The report said her finger nails turned blue and there were bruises on her right wrist and bloodstains on her left wrist which bore marks of injection.

Police suspected that she might have been killed with a lethal injection.

Dr Jalil went to Dhanmondi thana on Thursday night and told police his wife committed suicide and that he would not file any case in this regard, thana sources said.

But Nazrul said he went to Dhanmondi police to file a murder case but police refused to accept the case.

Despite repeated attempts, Dr Jalil could not be contacted at his khilgaon residence or at BMCH.

Autopsy of Julekha's body was done at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) yesterday. A team led by Dr Nasimul Islam, head of DMCH forensic department, conducted the autopsy.

When contacted, Dr Islam declined to say anything about the autopsy. Other sources, however, said various samples from kidney, stomach and liver were sent for chemical test.

Julekha's father Shabuddin

Mollah took the body to their village home at Shaturia in Manikganj yesterday.

Family sources said Jalil hails from a nearby village and knew Julekha for about eight years. When she passed HSC examination, Jalil arranged her study in nursing in Dhaka.

They got married at a Kazi office at Kallanpur and later Jalil took away the marriage certificate from there.

Julekha's family members said Jalil has three other wives. His first wife, a doctor, is staying at a house at Dhanmondi which is owned by Jalil. His second wife was a domestic help at his residence and she now stays at a house at Agargaon Talata, owned by her husband.

Since her marriage, Julekha was staying at a house at Kallanpur. Her husband forced her to have abortion each time she conceived, relatives said.

Jalil married for the fourth time and was staying at a house in Khilgaon, they said.

They also said that before leaving house on Thursday, Julekha had told her nephew Helal that she was going to meet her husband and would be back with some money from him.s