

## Ministers without offices

FROM PAGE 1  
Peters do not have a separate office, nor are they likely to get any anytime soon.

The Awami League government had a total of 44 ministers before the end of its tenure, which also created similar problem though in smaller magnitude. Sitting arrangement of a number of joint secretaries and deputy secretaries were relocated at that time.

Officials at the Public Works Department (PWD) yesterday said they started getting requisition from different ministries for rearranging the existing set-up. But they said in some cases, it is not possible to make separate sitting arrangement for all the ministers since such arrangement also has to be made for their private secretaries and assistant private secretaries.

Sources said a number of state and deputy ministers may get their separate offices outside the Secretariat at any department or directorate of the ministries concerned. A number of ministries, including foreign and industries ministries are located outside the Secretariat.

Meanwhile, a number of the ministers have already started lobbying for getting government residences. According to sources, some ministers have already chosen government residences and asked for allotment.

## Baghdad could be next target

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worried of domestic or regional strife if the military campaign is broadened closer to home.

Anti-American sentiment has been growing among an Arab public which accuses the United States of protecting Israel and ignoring the rights of the Palestinian people since the uprising against Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip erupted just over a year ago.

King Mohammed of Morocco warned the United States to tread carefully in its fight against terrorism "to avoid fallout that could follow an action borne solely of revenge," in an address to a meeting of Islamic states on Wednesday.

The Egyptian president said the

PWD officials said such government residences on Hare Road and Minto Road, and in Dhanmondi and Gulshan areas do not total more than 35, and 26 of them are uninhabited at present. Senior Justices and senior secretaries have been staying at nine of those government residences, they added.

Cleaning and renovation of the houses are likely to be complete within next couple of days, while construction of 10 flats on Bailey Road is scheduled to be complete within next one month. "As far as I know, not a single minister has moved to the government residences," said a PWD official.

A senior PWD official expressed the hope that the office and housing problems are likely to be solved within next one month. A meeting of the Ministry of Publics Works, held on Saturday, discussed the issues.

Official sources said ministries concerned will take necessary steps to arrange residences for the ministers who won't get government residences. The minister or the relevant ministry will rent a house and government will bear the expenses, sources said.

However, sources said some minister are not that much interested in getting a government house since they have their own residences in the city, while some others have no objection to staying in a rented house.

next day that failure to find a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict would only spawn more terrorism.

Faced with such concerns, Bush restated Thursday his conditional support for a Palestinian state, but both the Palestinians and Syria, which has yet to regain the Golan Heights plateau occupied by Israel since 1967, asked him to back his words with actions.

"Now the time is coming for Bush to say to Israeli side you are delaying and not implementing the Mitchell plan," prominent Palestinian minister Saeb Erakat said, referring to the internationally-sponsored blueprint for ending the uprising.

## Nab trouble-mongers

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peaceful environment, so it is our first priority to curb terrorism. It's also BNP's pledge in election manifesto," said Chowdhury, who formally took office yesterday.

The minister blamed ramification of the problem posed by violence on the past Awami League government.

Referring to the bomb explosions across the country in the concluding period of Awami League rule from Udhich bombing to Narayanjanj the home minister said the nature of destruction and surroundings indicated that all the incidents were linked and committed by the same source.

He regretted that their party Chairperson Khaleda Zia had demanded judicial inquiry commission to unravel the mystery of the incidents, but her demands went unheeded.

"Now we would like to dig out the mysteries forming an inquiry commission," said the home minister who shouldered a responsibility on which the government's success or failure depends to a large extent.

He was asked about the Udhich bombing case in which Tariqul Islam, a top leader of BNP and now Minister for Food, was implicated by the CID police while Nurul Huda, now the inspector general of police, was his chief.

The minister, in this context, cited another incident. He said it was very much clear to the nation through media and photographs that "terrorists in a procession led by Awami League leader Dr Iqbal" killed four people opening fire on a BNP procession led by Mirza Abbas in the capital's Malibagh area.

## Al-Qaida : Quit Arab lands

FROM PAGE 1  
clearly listening. "It's just propaganda," White House spokeswoman Jennifer Millerwise told AFP, adding that the President's office would issue no further comment at the moment.

The ease with which bin Laden has managed to air his vitriolic statements to the world has greatly annoyed the US administration, even though it is not known when or where they have been recorded.

Britain said the comments from Laden's al Qaeda group were an admission of the network's role in last month's attacks on the United States.

"This latest statement is a clear admission of responsibility for the terrorist attacks in the US of 11 September," a statement from the office of British Prime Minister Tony Blair said.

Blair warned his country yesterday to prepare for casualties in the growing conflict in Afghanistan.

"If you take military action there are always risks," he told the Observer newspaper.

Al-Qaida group also urged Muslims to protest and "maintain the pressure" on their government amid continuing US-led strikes aimed at removing Afghanistan's ruling Taliban militia.

Wednesday and said the body was opposed to the spread of anti-terrorism military action beyond Afghanistan to any other Arab or Islamic country. They also called for innocent lives to be spared.

Meanwhile, Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar pledged in an interview printed yesterday that his Islamic militia will teach the United States "a much more bitter lesson" than that taught to the Soviet Union in the 1980s.

"It's true that we have not started our real battle against the United States because of their technological superiority," he told the Saudi daily Al-Watan.

"But God willing we will not greet them with roses," Omar said.

"They will be taught a much more bitter lesson than that taught to the Russians," Omar said in a telephone interview from Afghanistan, the Arabic language daily said.

Defeated Soviet forces pulled out of Afghanistan in 1989.

He reiterated the Taliban's total refusal to hand over Osama bin Laden.

"We have said if Washington has the evidence providing his (bin Laden's) involvement and is confident of that, why don't they give us this evidence and we are ready to try him in Afghanistan or by a committee of Islamic scholars from three countries.

## US-led war against Afghanistan

# Covert raids, helicopter attacks in next phase

AFP, Washington

The next phase of the US-led war against Afghanistan will include more bombing, covert raids and large-scale helicopter attacks, the Washington Post reported yesterday citing military experts.

The military strategy is designed in part to demonstrate that the US military is engaged on the ground in pursuit of terrorists, defense officials told the Post.

Over the next month, the US military will hammer the Taliban militia's 55th Brigade, a seasoned assault force made up mainly of several thousand Arabs and other foreigners, sources told the daily.

Destroying the unit is seen as crucial to crushing the Taliban and terrorist network led by Osama bin Laden, the newspaper said.

The Post also quoted military experts as saying US troops soon would join forces with rebels already working to overthrow the Taliban, coordinating US airstrikes and rebel ground attacks aimed at weakening the Afghan rulers.

Meanwhile, US jets raided the eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad early yesterday pounding the darkened and curfew-bound town with bombs, some aimed at military bases, witnesses and news agencies said.

However, by dawn the city was quiet and as the curfew was lifted

with the call for morning prayers people began to emerge onto the streets.

Residents of the city, a key target for US fighters because of the guerrilla training camps that have surrounded it, went about their daily business, trying to ignore the nightly bombardment and unable to flee to nearby Pakistan because the border is closed.

The first strikes in the bombardment hit an army installation in the east of the city, injuring at least six people, the private Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) said.

Two more bombs exploded on the outskirts of the city. Jalalabad, long surrounded by militant training camps including some for bin Laden's al Qaeda network, has seen particularly heavy bombardment since the United States launched its first strikes on the night of October 7.

US planes aiming at positions of the Taliban's No. 1 Corps in the east of Jalalabad dropped several bombs and some hit houses in the area, AIP quoted a Jalalabad official as saying.

Another report adds: A major part of the Afghan capital's communication links with the rest of the world has been cut after overnight US bombing, Taliban officials said.

They said the raids appeared to have cut 90 telephone links operated by a Chinese and Pakistani company connected to a microwave exchange at Lataband, around 35 km east of the capital. "There is no more contact through these lines," one official told Reuters.

The only links now remaining are through the Afghan Wireless Company. A Washington report adds: A US warplane mistakenly struck a residential area near Kabul Saturday with a satellite-guided bomb, apparently after a wrong digit was entered as the target's coordinates, Pentagon officials said.

The intended target was a military helicopter at Kabul airport, about a mile from the residential area, the Pentagon said in a statement expressing regret for any loss of civilian life.

"A US Navy F/A-18 Hornet missed its intended target and inadvertently dropped a 2,000-pound (900-kilogram) GPS-guided Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) in a residential area near Kabul airport, Afghanistan," the Pentagon said.

The statement said preliminary indications were that the accident had occurred as a result of a "targeting process error."

Pentagon officials said that at some point a wrong number apparently was entered for the target's coordinates.

## Laxmipur Jubo Dal leader captures restaurant!

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Laxmipur

A BNP-backed Jubo Dal leader has allegedly captured a restaurant at Chawkbazar in the town at gun point.

The owner of the restaurant alleged that Alamgir Hossain, a local Jubo Dal leader along with a group of terrorists attacked his restaurant on October 6 and forced out the manager and the supervisor from there.

They also snatched the key of the cash box and looted money and goods worth Tk 30,000.

The hotel owner filed a case with Sadar thana on October 10 accusing Alamgir Hossain in this connection.

Police are yet to arrest the accused and recover the looted cash and goods till the writing of this report last night.

## Human chain in Ctg

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The minority community leaders at the meeting were very critical of the role of the immediate-past caretaker government. They said its 'mysterious' outlook on and indifference to such heinous crime had instigated a certain quarter to unleash a reign of terror and repression on the religious minorities across the country.

The leaders urged all pro-democratic people of the city, irrespective of their caste and creed, to join the human chain and raise their voice against all such evil-doers and evildoers.

Presided over by veteran revolutionary Binod Bihari Chowdhury, the meeting was also addressed, among others, by noted academician Prof. Anupam Sen, veteran journalist Sadhan Kumar Dhar, Father Joseph Jibon Gomez, advocate Purnendu Bikash Chowdhury, Adv. Subash Chandra Lala, Adv. Rana Das Gupta, Dr. Mridul Dey, Parimal Chowdhury, Prof. Ranjit Kumar Dey and singer Kalpana Lala.

Jubo Dal leader FROM PAGE 1  
by Khulna police on July 7 last year on charge of demanding toll at gunpoint from a businessman at Haji Mohsin Road. A case under PSA was recorded against him on specific charge of extortion. Court sentenced him to 14 years' rigorous imprisonment.

Last month, he was released on bail granted by the High Court, police said.

According to local people, after his release from jail on bail, Didar made an abortive attempt on the life of the complainant in the case. He was also one of the suspects in another case regarding the murder of BNP activist Shujai in 1995, police said.

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## Dhaka denies

FROM PAGE 1  
plaint the Foreign Office reiterated the government's policy not to harbour or allow use of the country's territory by any terrorist groups against the interest of any country.

Incidentally, such allegation came when different Islamic organisations in countries across the world staged protests against US military strikes on Afghanistan aimed at hunting down Osama bin Laden following devastating attacks on America allegedly masterminded by the Saudi dissident.

Women constitute FROM PAGE 12  
Emphasis should be given on full utilisation of the existing quota, rather than its increase.

On the other hand, the women and children affairs ministry with the help of the establishment ministry should monitor the status of female quota filled by different organisations and identify the barriers in this regard, it said.

The workshop also recommended that legal provisions should be made so that a female worker is not separated from her husband due to transfer.

A woman has to play a dual role as a mother/housewife and a professional, so it is necessary to create an atmosphere in which working women can 'accommodate both home and profession,' the recommendation said.

## Shibir: JU halls?

FROM PAGE 12  
Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, the students observed.

When asked, President of JCD, JU unit, Ashraful Alam Jewel denied having any meeting or contact with the ICS.

"The JCD proved its anti-ICS position whenever the ICS had attacked the campus earlier," he said.

Talking to The Daily Star, students said that there were a number of ICS activists among general students and different student organisations and some have taken the guise of Tabligi activists. Moreover, a great number of ICS activists have recently taken shelter in the nearby villages of Gerua, Pandua, Kalabagan and Bishmail and so on. They are in close contact

with teachers, officers and employees who have pronounced political bias towards the ICS or Jamaat, for that matter.

An ICS activist reportedly confided in a student that about 350 ICS activists are, at present, studying at the university. They may gather as many as 5000 ICS activists in half an hour from areas around the campus, the student quoted the ICS activist as saying. The ICS captured two JU male students' hall on November 9, 1995, but were driven out of them by police and general students after ten hours. A total of 37 ICS activists were arrested during the incident.

On July 1, 1996, the ICS took control of AFM Kamaluddin Hall. JU students under the banner of All Party Students' Unity locked in a fierce clash with the invaders and after seven hours, ousted them from the hall. Twenty-six ICS activists were arrested then. The students also beat up teachers suspected to have involvement with the ICS.

After the incident, JU teachers, students, officials declared the campus free from ICS activists.

## BNP attack

FROM PAGE 12  
the spot and rescued AL leader Nazima Begum, 35, and BCL leader Selma, 22, and sent them to local Ibone Sina Hospital.

Police said unidentified attackers hurled two bombs on the door of the AL office as the two were entering it to attend a meeting.

Shopkeepers pulled down their shutters fearing outbreak of violence in the area.

Meanwhile, district AL senior vice president Adv Abdur Rahman blamed the armed cadres of BNP for the attack.

Earlier at about 7:30 pm, BCL leader Mehedi, 22, was stabbed by unknown miscreants at Baro Bazar in the town.

Two cases were filed. An Awami League activist was beaten up mercilessly allegedly by the BNP supporters at Harinakunda Bazar in Jhenidah yesterday.

Hospital sources said the BNP men attacked AL activist Tiliu, 35, on his way back home from the Harinakunda Bazar in the morning. He was admitted to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital with broken right hand and leg.

Meanwhile, 10 houses of the minority communities of Harinakunda upazila were damaged allegedly by the BNP activists Saturday night.

## PM: Expatriates

FROM PAGE 1  
Zia congratulated her on the overwhelming victory of the BNP-led 4-party alliance in the October 1 elections.

At the end of the meeting, special munajat was offered seeking divine blessings for progress and peace of the country as well as success of the new government.

Khaleda returns home today after spending four days in Saudi Arabia. She will arrive at ZIA at 8.30 am, official sources said.

## Mminister's son

FROM PAGE 1  
Following press reports on the two incidents, the home ministry last night asked the police authorities in Kushtia and Meherpur to arrest the two culprits, BNP sources said.

They said Prime Minister Khaleda Zia might sack the state minister on her return from Saudi Arabia.

UNB adds: Reza Ahmed alias Bachhu Molla, son of the state minister for post and telecommunication, yesterday admitted that his associates forcibly took brother of The Daily Jugantar correspondent to him and secured a written undertaking to produce his brother within five days.

He, however, denied that his henchmen took away bamboo from the grove of reporter Zahurul Islam as reported in national dailies yesterday.

Reza told newsmen at the local press club that Zahurul Islam, being a supporter of Awami League gave misleading and false reports therefore, tarnishing his image. That is why, his associates were enraged.

He said Awami League activists had perpetrated inhuman repression during the last five years. "Now there is some backlash. But I am trying to pacify my associates," said Reza who is also a central leader of Jubo Dal.

Replying to a question, he said, "Zahurul Islam should wait for 15 days to return home, until I calm down my associates enraged by his false reporting.

He was accompanied by leaders of BNP and its front organisations of Daultatpur.

# No change in foreign policy

FROM PAGE 1  
industry, commerce, manpower, labour and tourism so that a unified thrust could be made "to mobilise and market the resources and derive the maximum economic benefit".

Continuity of policy Assuring continuity in the country's foreign policy, Prof. Chowdhury said, "We will continue to work with our friends, neighbours and in all international fora as before. There would be continuity but we shall improve upon it."

The three priorities for maximising economic diplomacy are -- to attract foreign investment, to coordinate with other ministries to increase exports and to maximise the resource utilisation of the manpower working abroad, which, according to him, was estimated to be over two million.

Two-week time The foreign minister said he already has had a planning session and briefed top diplomats in the ministry, who are working to send out directives to all the 48 missions

of the country.

He also said he expects a balance sheet available before him within another two weeks on the output of the missions as against the tasks assigned and the inputs given to them.

Afghanistan situation Asked about Bangladesh's position on the current US attacks on Afghanistan and whether Dhaka will continue to extend facilities to the US, a position taken by the immediate-past caretaker government, in case of retaliatory attacks, the foreign minister replied: "We have just taken over. It is our first working day. It will be discussed in the first cabinet meeting."

He, however, added that as a member of the OIC, Bangladesh would certainly agree to the OIC stand.

Links with Laden The foreign minister himself read out the text of press statement issued earlier in the day, dismissing as "unfounded and baseless" the reported comments by India's external affairs minister that

Harkat-ul-Jihad had been carrying out its activities in Bangladesh and had links with Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaida network.

"Bangladesh does not harbour any terrorist outfit," he categorically said. Responding to another question, he said that the issue of BSF attacks and killing of BDR personnel and Bangladesh nationals would be taken up with the Indian authorities.

Political appointees Responding to a question, Prof. Chowdhury said all political appointees have been given the opportunity to tender their resignations.

"We don't want to create any bad precedence. Instead of recalling political appointees, we are giving them an opportunity to submit their resignations voluntarily. That should be the custom. It is up to the new political government to retain old appointees or give new appointments."

He cited the example of an ambassador -- appointed by the BNP government -- who had

offered his resignation as soon as a new government was elected.

NAM Summit Asked if his government will continue preparations for holding the NAM Summit, he said, "it was too early" to say anything about it, but following the events of September 11 the government will review the matter of holding the NAM Summit and various other policy aspects.

On-arrival visas Prof. Chowdhury said the government would greatly liberalise the visa regime, which will enable nationals of several countries to obtain on-arrival visas so that there is an inflow of large number of tourists into Bangladesh.

PM foreign tour Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, he said, has invited Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to visit India. Besides, the Chinese ambassador, who met him yesterday, has also extended an invitation to the premier. He said the prime minister will decide which foreign trips to take and in which order.

## AL continues thana level meetings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League continues to hold meetings at the thana level in Dhaka in an apparent endeavour to revamp the party at grassroots level.

The party has initiated the groundwork for boosting workers' morale at grassroots level following a poor public response in the October 10 siege programme that the party enforced after rejecting the October 1 election as 'blatantly rigged'.

Sources said, the process would go on till the AL finally decides to call a specific agitation programme for cancelling the 'rigged election' and against the post-election violence it holds the 'BNP-Jamaat terrorists' responsible for.

Central AL leaders are now attending the thana level meetings everyday. Two such meetings were held yesterday, one at Sabujbagh and the other at Lalbagh. AL presidium members, Amir Hossain Amu and Abdur Razzak spoke in those meetings respectively. Besides, AL

candidates Saber Hossain Chowdhury and Haji Md Selim who contested this year's parliamentary elections from the two constituencies respectively also addressed meetings in their respective areas.

A similar meeting was also held at Dhanmondi yesterday while another is scheduled for today at Ramna.

Meanwhile, AL president Sheikh Hasina stayed indoors at her Dhanmondi residence for most of the day yesterday, coming out only in the evening to chair a routine meeting of the Bangabandhu Memorial Trust at Bangabandhu Bhavan.

She was told at the meeting that the Trust had so far granted over Tk 41,73,000 as stipend to 353 poor but meritorious students in the country.

The meeting took an obituary reference condoling the death of former police officer Abdur Rahman, who was a witness in the Bangabandhu Murder Case.

## Temple advises

FROM PAGE 12  
and development programme of the government during the meeting, officials said.

The World Bank country director pointed out to the newly appointed finance minister the latest economic position, difficulties and resource constraints, position of foreign exchange and remittances.

He informed the minister about "government's huge bank borrowings depriving private sector," and continuous loss in state-owned enterprises, which accounts for 8 per cent of the budget deficit.

Considering all this, Temple advised taking "stern economic measures" and reform programme in which case, he said, the World Bank and other donor agencies will give assistance.

Finance Minister Saifur said "every possible measure would be taken to revitalise the economy" and thanked the WB director for assuring assistance.

## NAM summit

FROM PAGE 12  
"The present fragile economy of the country cannot bear the burden of spending Tk 10,000 million to nail a coffin," BNP's Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman told a group of reporters yesterday.

The minister, on the first day of office, criticised the way Awami League had handled the economy and said the budget would be revised to manage the economy.

Saifur Rahman asked Special Assistant on Foreign Affairs CM Shafi Sami to find a way out of the programme for holding the NAM Summit.

A total of Tk 6,000 million has already been spent on building the infrastructure to hold the conference of heads of state or government of the Third World countries.

The new finance minister yesterday ordered stopping all further spending for the giant scheme.

NAM-related activities, including allocation of newly-built flats, have also been ordered to halt.

## Anthrax in Florida

FROM PAGE 12  
sent from Malaysia to a Microsoft office in Reno came back positive, but added that the risk to public health was "very, very low."

The anthrax scare began last week when a photo editor for The Sun in Boca Raton, Florida, died of the inhaled form of the bacteria. The American Media Inc. building where Bob Stevens worked was sealed off after anthrax was found on his keyboard.

Two other employees turned out to have anthrax in their nasal passages, but neither has developed the disease. Both are taking antibiotics, and one has returned to work.

Meanwhile, AFP from Geneva says, a stock of anthrax spores produced in a laboratory run by the Red Cross and the UN food agency in Kabul intended for animal vaccinations is harmless, a Red Cross

spokesman said yesterday.

"This stock, which is known under the international code name of 34F2 Sterne, is by definition harmless," said spokesman Kim Gordon-Gates.

The strain has been produced in the lab, jointly managed by the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) and the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation since 1997, for vaccinating cattle.

Afghanistan has some 15 million farmers, according to Gordon-Gates.

France's intelligence service, according to the French newspaper Le Journal Du Dimanche, is concerned the anthrax spores produced in Kabul could be obtained by those loyal to Osama bin Laden and used in possible biological weapons attacks.

## Bangabandhu Murder Case

FROM PAGE 1  
Hearing of the Leave to Appeal in Bangabandhu murder case has been fixed for October 28.

On August 16, Justice Mohammad Golam Rabbani felt "embarrassed" during the hearing of the case. As a result, it became necessary to restructure the Appellate Division Bench for hearing the case.

Rabbani expressed his embarrassment when lawyers of Maj (ret) Bazlul Huda, one of those sentenced to death by the High Court Division of the SC, expressed their 'no confidence' in him. Chief Justice Mahmudul Amin