# NEWS

## Hold referendum before gas export

### Seminar told in city

#### BSS, Dhaka

Speakers at a seminar yesterday urged the authorities concerned not to take any decision on export of gas without taking people's mandate.

Addressing the seminar they said the actual reserve and optimum uses of indigenous natural gas must be ensued before its export.

They observed that there is a significant difference between the proven gas reserves and gas resources in the country and it has already created confusion about the availability of gas for its future use.

National Oceanographic and Maritime Institute (NOAMI) organised the day-long national seminar on "Natural Gas Resources in Bangladesh: Its Reserve and Utilisation" at LGED Bhaban in the capital Former chairman of Petrobangla

SKM Abdullah, Prof M Nurul Islam of BUET, Chief Geologist of Unocal Bangladesh Dr AKM Shamsuddin. former chairman of PDB Nooruddin M Kamal, Dr Ijaz Hossain of BUET, Prof Hossain Mansur and Economist Prof Abul Barakat placed papers on the topic.

Former managing direction of BAPEX, Petrobangla, MA Matin, Geologist Dr Aftab Alam Khan, Prof Monirul Hag, former Petrobangla chairman MR Khan. Dr Edmond

### Uncle kills nephew for money

**OUR CORRESPONDENT,** Sirajganj

A maternal uncle allegedly killed his nephew for only Tk 5,000 at village Ghoishgati under Ullapara upazila in the district.

The body of victim Al Amin, 18. and so far arrested 1,400 people, was recovered from a bean field including 400 Bangalees from Tower yesterday. Hamlet areas

According to sources, uncle Shahadat Hossain demanded the money from his sister's husband Belavet Hossain few days back. But arrested the people, including 600 Belayet refused to give the money. vouths

Shahadat became infuriated and allured Al Amin, son of Belavet Hossain, to an unknown place and demanded the money again. As he was refused to give the amount, Shahadat chopped Al Amin to death. The body of Al Amin was brought

Sources said the team encircled to Sirajganj Sadar Hospital for the suspected houses at a time when the members of these houses autopsy.

A case was filed with Ullapara were preparing to take Sehri. thana in this connection. Police have the highest among the recovered arrested Shahadat. drugs

## Two killed in road mishap in Bogra

Gomes and Prof Golam Mohiuddin of BUET, among others, took part as the discussants.

Earlier. Chairman and Chief Advisor of the NOAMT Rear Admiral (Retd) MH Khan formally inaugurated the seminar as the chief guest.

The discussants underlined the need for developing national consensus to ensure long-term energy security of the country for sustainable development.

They also referred to the situation in Nigeria and Indonesia, and said Nigeria could not make economic progress by exporting its large quantity of oil and the economic performance of Indonesia was also not very encouraging. According to a survey of Petrobangla, the country now has a

total recoverable gas reserve of 15.51 TCF (Trillion Cubic Feet) in 22 fields. Of the total reserve, 4.27 TCF has already been consumed up to June 2001

### Rejoinder FROM PAGE 1

correspondents did not contact the BTTB chairman in connection with the report, Abu Syeed Khan, who wrote the story for The Daily Star, had talked to the chairman on this issue. We also have written documents to back up our report. We stand by our report.

400 Bangalees

Hamlet areas

**UNB.** Londor

million pound.

held from Tower

A special trained team of police

On December 3, police raided 14

houses of Bengali Muslims at

Green and arrested 18 people along

with heroin and cocaine worth of a

Sources said grade-1 heroin was

Tower Hamlet is famous for drug

trading and addicted people. Police

have been conducting raids not only

to arrest the people involved in drug-

has been conducting the raid titled

'Sabri' since October 15 and

### Thick fog disrupts ferry service

UNB, Brahmanbaria Movement of ferry between Bhairab and Ashuganj ghats remained suspended for about seven hours till 8:30 am yesterday due to thick

Several hundred vehicles remained stranded on both sides of the river Meghna for hours creating unprecedented traffic jam on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway.

The ferry movement was restored later but the traffic jam continued on the highway till noon causing immense sufferings to the passengers.

### Acid burn

FROM PAGE 12 Anwara was admitted to the Mymensingh Medical College Hospital where doctors suspect that both her eyes might be damaged.

Local people said there was a long dispute between Akkas Ali and his influential neighbours over 3.5 kathas of land and the attack might be a sequel to the conflict.

Police visited the victim's house and a case was filed with Trishal police station. None was arrested yesterday afternoon.

Earlier on September 2, the same miscreants physically assaulted Anwara and she had to be admitted to hospital. A case was lodged in that connection.

Besides, Anwara's brother Jamal Uddin, 24, have been missing for the last four months. Nobody knows who abducted him and whether he is alive or not

### Vass FROM PAGE 12 Carlisle top-scored for the

Zimbabweans with 16, the next best was Wishart with six in the first match of the triangular series played at the Sinhalese SC grounds. West

Police have chosen the time of Sehri Indies are the third team in the period of the Muslim community to tournament. conduct special raids for nabbing the Sri Lanka knocked off the runs in drug traders and addicted people,

4.2 overs The previous lowest one-day

international total was 43 by Pakistan against West Indies at Cape Town in 1992-93. That innings lasted 19.5 overs. It was also Zimbabwe's 17th one-

day international defeat in a row. Vaas' sensational spell broke colleague Muttiah Muralitharan's Shorditch, Bricklane and Bethnal world record of seven for 30 against

India at Shariah in 2000-01 The entire match lasted 108 minutes and 20 overs which was easily the quickest finish in one-day international history and the match aggregate was also the lowest.

## Armed miscreants

**FROM PAGE 1** Mohammod Mallick and Ahmad Ali. The seven killed in Kushtia include AL leader Muhit and Chhatra

## Case against Shahriar Kabir | Cong rejects proposed

Meanwhile, the High court on

within a week why the detention of

Shahriar under the SPA should not

be declared to have been made

The court issued the rule follow-

The High Court on December 4

When contacted, the duty officer

However, Haji Bashar, a com-

"Nobody knows where he is '

Karzai has promised to set up a

mander in the city who is aligned

with Nagibullah, said Omar was not

ing a writ petition filed by the writer's

brother Kalandiar Kabir, challenging

issued another rule on the govern-

ment asking it to show cause within

without lawful authority

the detention

#### FROM PAGE 1

Hasan and Additional PP Khorshed Alam went to the chamber of magistrate and filed the case, seeking warrant of arrest against the accused.

Earlier, OC of Airport thana Mohammad Shahadat Hossain got permission from the home ministry to file a case against Shahriar Kabir.

The complainant alleged that Shahriar went to Kolkota on November 11 and he gave an interview to the BBC Radio in which he claimed that many Hindus have crossed over into India after the recent incidents of attack on the minorities in Bangladesh.

Shahriar also made some still films on attacks on the Hindus, who left Bangladesh after the general election on October 1 and he does not accept the boarder between the two countries, Shahadat Hossain said in the complaint.

The writer was detained by the special Branch (SB) of police at Immigration Desk at Zia International Airport on his return from Kolkata on November 22 and later he was shown arrested under Section 54 of the CrPC. No specific

case was framed against him. Police also seized his passport, five video cassettes, 10 audio cassettes, 3 audio CDS and his cam-

The CMM's Court on November 23 placed the accused on a two-day remand for interrogation but later in the day stayed the order for two weeks

Magistrate Kazi Meraj Hossain The court also rejected

Shahriar's bail prayer and ordered sending him to Dhaka central Jail. Earlier, the District Magistrate

Shahriar under the Special Powers Act (SPA).

(PP) Abdullah Mahmud Hasan filed a Criminal Revision with the Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court seeking cancellation of stay of the order for remand of the accused. passed by the CMM's Court on November 23, Later, he (PP) with-

## Warlords fight over Kandahar

FROM PAGE 1 should run Afghanistan's second

biggest city. Three different leaders are vying for control, but the Shura also includes Hamid Karzai, the man appointed at UN-backed talks to lead Afghanistan's interim government from December 22

A multinational force is due to help keep the peace in Afghanistan once the fighting is over, which US Secretary of State Colin Powell, travelling in central Asia, said Britain and Germany had expressed interest in leading

But peace is not yet secured.

General Tommy Franks, commanding the US campaign, said on Friday many Taliban had given up, but his air and ground forces were attacking fighters trying to flee with their arms.

AP adds: Afghanistan's interim leader called on fellow Afghans vesterday to capture Laden and Mullah Omar and promised to bring the two men to "international justice.

Hamid Karzai did not elaborate. "His pledge came as rumours swirled among some US officials and tribal officials that Omar might still be in the surrendered city of Kandahar, Karzai said the whereabouts of Omar were unknown and that neither he nor bin Laden were in the custody of anti-Taliban forces. Reports that Omar had been captured, he said, were "all lies."

Earlier, AFP quoting British Qaida network and the Taliban's media yesterday said, Mullah Omar abandonment on Friday of has been captured and is being held Kandahar, the Islamic militia's near Kandahar in southern birthplace and power center.

Afghanistan Khaled Pastoon, a

drew the petition as he does not have the right to file any case on behalf of the state December 1 issued a rule on the era government asking it to show cause

aave the order following a petition by the defence lawyers for a stay of the remand order, saying that they planned to file a writ petition with the High court against the impugned order.

a week why the order for remand of Shahriar should not be declared to authority

gave one month's detention to the remand order. Metropolitan Public Prosecutor

Court on November 23, and fixed today for hearing on the issue. at Airport thana refused to give any information whether the complaint was taken as a regular case

Southern Afghanistan, saying the situation was too volatile. Karzai, who was picked earlier

this week to lead an interim governbeing held in Kandahar. ment for the war-shattered nation. said he had asked ordinary Bashar said, adding that sections of Afghans, as well as his own troops, the city had been carved up by rival anti-Taliban factions that were trying to arrest thousands of Arabs and other foreign fighters in Afghanistan to reach agreement on how its to defend the Taliban. should be administered.

Karzai's pledge "to deliver tribal commission to run Kandahar. Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar to international justice," came after President asks Washington raised strong objections to suggestions that Karzai businessmen to might have struck a surrender deal with Omar to allow the fugitive work to woo FDI Taliban supreme leader to remain in Afghanistan.

#### UNB, Dhaka Meanwhile, news came that a

key bridge between Uzbekistan and President Prof AQM Badruddoza Afghanistan would reopen soon, Chowdhury yesterday advised allowing humanitarian aid through members of the business commufor the first time since 1996. The nity to work for building image of the opening of the so-called Friendship country worldwide to attract more Bridge was announced Saturday by investment in the country. secretary of State Colin Powell and Uzbek President Islam Karimov in

He suggested them to keep a special budget for that purpose and promote country's cultural personalities who can contribute a lot to this the bridge's reopening in order to drive. speed up the delivery of food and

The president's advice came when a 5-member delegation of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) called on him at Bangabhaban. The delegation was led by DCCI President Benajir Ahmed.

Talking to them, President Chowdhury said the country had established democracy by holding timely and peaceful general elections during the last 10 years.

Moreover, the country has enough manpower and natural resources, the President said adding that these are all positive sides of a country, which should be widely publicised worldwide.

# anti-terrorism law

was done to ward off controversy

like the one recently set off by sei

zure of property of a carpet-maker in

Jammu and Kashmir for his alleged

Jammu and Kashmir state

overnment returned the property.

he Vajpayee government does not

have majority in the upper house of

Parliament, Rajya Sabha, to have

the proposed law passed there and

it remains to be seen what happens

to the fate of the bill expected to be

tabled in Lok Sabha. lower house

next week and then in the upper

Muggers snatch

recovered from them in the city in the

Khulshi thana police held two

nuggers with a gun and five rounds

of bullets from Batali Hill area at

around 10.00pm Friday. The mug-

gers were identified as Md Kabi

ist and muggers, was held with a

locally made LG from in front of Kafco

Oil Point under Karnaphuli thana at

police led by its Officer-in-charge

arrested four members of an organ-

ised gang of muggers on Friday night

during a two-hour raid in and around

the posh market areas of New Market

and Reazuddin Bazar.

A special team of Kotoali thana

around 10.30 pm on the same night.

One Jasim, 26, allegedly a terror-

Hossain, 24, and Md Sirajullah, 22.

house

FROM PAGE 12

last two days.

inks with militants in the state.

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New

India's main opposition Congress has refused to accept the anti-terrorism law the government of Prime Minister A B Vajpayee proposes to enact in Parliament even after some kev changes made by the Indian cabinet in certain provisions of the measure including the one relating to freedom of the press.

Congress spokesman S Jaipal Reddy on Friday dismissed "cosmetic" the changes effected by Vajpayee cabinet on Thursday evening and said the legal measure still remains "draconian.

The changes made by the cabihave been made without lawful net in the ordinance, which government proposes to convert into a parliamentary bill next week, were The HC issued the rule following a writ petition challenging legality of prompted by pressures from ruling BJP allies as well as with the aim of The Court also stayed the order making it acceptable to the for remand, passed by the CMM's

Opposition. One important change is that the cabinet reduced the operational period of the law from five to three years in keeping with the remaining term of present parliament so that a new house can take a fresh decision whether or not extend the law.

The cabinet scrapped a provision in the ordinance requiring a journalist to disclose his sources of information regarding terrorist activities following vehement objections to it from some constituents of Vajpayee coalition government, the Opposition and the journalists' trade unions and associations.

The alleged muggers are Md Abul Kalam Azam, 23, Bimol Kanti Das, The third important change 26, Md Nurul Alam, 28 and Md Rouf made by the cabinet relates to setting up of a judicial mechanism for forfeiture of terrorists' properties. Mia, 25. This, according to official sources,

No trace of Laden FROM PAGE 1 ing in the mountainous terrain helicopter gunships and more troops to its long border with

Meanwhile the New York Times reported yesterday that Pakistan's Afghanistan to prevent escapes. Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) spy AFP adds: Anti-Taliban fighters agency helped the Taliban at least flocked to the mountains of Tora until mid-October, one full month Bora yesterday in their search for after support for the regime was

supposed to have ended. Pakistani border guards let truck convoys loaded with rifles, ammunition and rocket-propelled grenade launchers for Taliban fighters drive into Afghanistan on October 8 and again on October 12, Western telligence officials told the Times.

Pakistan yesterday vehemently

Military spokesman Major

the New York Times was "absolutely

and I can name some foreign jour-

nalists from foreign newspapers

and news teams, who have nspectd

trucks with humanitarian aid going

from Pakistan to Afghanistan," he

When they have tried to find arms

shipments, let me say that there is

with "huge, enormous arms dumps"

He said Afghanistan was littered

no question of that at all."

left over from the 1979-89

"They have done it at random

"There have been people here

false and incorrect".

said.

mysterv An intensely private man, Omar infrequently appeared in public and denied the US press report. shunned photographers, leaving him with a virtually non-existent General Rashid Qureshi told a public profile. press conference that the report in

Meanwhile US-backed tribal fighters pounding a cave complex in the mountains of eastern Afghanistan were convinced they

Laden, one day after the Taliban

regime surrendered the southern

While anti-Taliban forces took

over Kandahar the whereabouts of

the militia's leader, Mullah

Mohammad Omar also, remained a

city of Kandahar.

were close to catching bin Laden. One Afghan commander Hazrat Ali, told AFP that his men were closing in on the world's most wanted man and his hardcore al-Qaida fighters holed up in the caves of the rugged snow-capped region of Tora Bora.

He said he had reliable informa-

tion from an al-Qaida prisoner that

#### UNB, Bogra

Two persons, including an officer of Grameen Bank, were killed and four others injured in a road accident on Bogra-Raishahi highway at Jamadarpukur in Sadar upazila Friday night.

Abdul Gafur, 30, senior audit officer of Grameen Bank Jamadarpukur Branch and Helal, 28, of Shalika village in Sadar upazila died on the spot

Surya Kanta, Zakir, Haider Ali and Grameen Bank officer Mustafizur Rahman were admitted to Bogra Mohammad Ali Hospital with multiple injuries.

Police said the accident took place at about 8:00 pm when a Dhaka-bound night coach hit a tempo standing on the roadside.

## Hasina off to US

FROM PAGE 12

As the BA flight failed to land at the ZIA due to dense fog, the opposition leader left the airport at around 10:00 am.

'There is an end to everything and the massive torture unleashed by the present government will also come to an end one day," she told journalists at the airport.

Commenting on the alleged repression on her party members by the BNP-led coalition government, Hasina said, "Those who plan to eliminate the Awami League through torture and repression are living in a fool's paradise.

Our leaders and workers are not being spared even in the holy month of Ramadan.

Hasina said she had asked her party men to have patience and prepare for a greater antigovernment agitation. "The Awami League is born through movement and it faced many a odd in its long history."

She said she had already directed her party activists to identifv and make a list of those who are perpetrating torture and killing. "We'll build resistance and give them a befitting reply."

Asked about the ensuing byelections to five parliamentary seats, Hasina said her party would contest the by-polls if only a conge-

related crimes but also to nab the people involved in stealing, ticket lifting, driving car without licenses and other crimes

### Judiciary

FROM PAGE 12 that the judiciary is accustomed to must be changed with great caution." .... We cannot afford to import something from outside to which we are not accustomed.

He suggested thinking twice before jumping to any decision in the matter of case and court management system to avert "crash landing of the project".

Chairing the concluding session Justice Mohammad Fazlul Karim said the project is aimed at helping judges improve the case and court nanagement system Law Commission Secretary

Iktedar Ahmed, Judges, representatives from the World Bank and senior government officials were present.

nial environment prevailed

"We have doubts about a congenial election atmosphere. We've asked the candidates concerned to remain ready for elections in case they feel that peace will prevail for elections. Only then they would take part." she said, adding that her party was not opposed to elections.

> "Awami League believes in election, but the government's torture and repression have not stopped as yet," Hasina said.

About her party's joining the parliament, the opposition leader accused the ruling coalition of already destroying the environment for doing so. "Despite having so many members in the parliament, they (government) suffered from quorum crisis (during the maiden

session)," she noted. Describing her US trip a 'purely personal one', Hasina said: "I'm going to Miami to meet my daughter Putul and spend some time with my granddaughters."

Senior AL leaders including Abdus Samad Azad, Zillur Rahman, Abdul Hamid, Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Abdul Jalil, Abdul Matin Khansru and Mosharaf Hossain were present at the airport to see the party chief off.

League activist Jiku. He rest are Anwara Begum, Helaluddin, Abdul Gaffar. Tunu Khatoon and an unidentified young man, the sources said.

Union Parishad Chairman Mizanur Rahman, Daud Hossain, Laskar Sardar, Shajahan, Mosharaf Mondol and two unidentified persons were killed in Chuadanga during the same period.

AL leader Adhir Kumar Biswas and businessman Shaheb Ali and Hossain were killed in Magura.

Those killed in Jessore are Sufia Khatoon, Shammi Akhtar, Parveen Begum, Mine Khatoon and Jalal Molla

The eight killed in Satkhira are Sohrab Hossain, Mahbub Hossain, Abdul Mannan, Sharif Ghazi, Nazrul Islam, Shana, Rezaul Karim and Abul Kashem. In Meherpur, the three killed are

Yusuf Shaikh, Mohirul and Yusuf Fazlur Rahman

The two killed in Narail are Azanur Islam and Deen Mohammod. The two killed in Jhenidah are Abdul Hye Shamim and Mamtaz Begum.

## Khaleda urges

FROM PAGE 12 causes of economic disaster, social instability and disorder," the PM said

Khaleda sought cooperation of Bangladesh Rifles in a "second freedom fight" she waged for freeing the country from terrorism, corruption and poverty that impeded the nation's progress.

The PM called upon the BDR personnel to help her government increase revenue incomes by combating illegal cross-border trade that crowds out formal trade and business.

The Prime Minister urged all BDR personnel to perform their duties consciously to further enhance the dignity and tradition of the institution through their dedicated service to the nation.

She told the meet that all steps would be taken to build BDR as a modern force according to the demand of the 21st century.

Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar and Director General of BDR Brig General Rezagul Haider received the PM on her arrival at the BDR headquarters.

Omar was being held under tribal for an anti-Taliban faction, said Omar was being detained in a "friendly environment" by a local warlord regarded as supportive of

the hardline Islamic militia, the times newspaper said. friendly environment." Khaled The BBC said the warlord was former Mujaheedin commander

Mullah Naqibullah, who was appointed provincial chief in Kandahar after the Taliban with-Following the Taliban with-

drawal, tensions were running high in Kandahar, with rival armed groups -- one under Mullah Nagibullah and the other under Gul Agha -- claiming control of key parts of the city.

Pakistani journalists with good contacts in Kandahar said tensions were running so high that armed conflict could erupt at any time. Pakistani border guards refused to allow journalists to cross into

protection in Kandahar. An ally of one of the Kandahar's tribal faction heads told Britain's Channel 4 News that another local faction head was holding Omar "in a

Tashkent, the Uzbek capital.

opening had been delayed.

US officials have long awaited

medical supplies into northern

Afghanistan, but until Saturday the

Omar and bin Laden could still be in

Afghanistan, despite heavy US

bombing around Tora Bora, the

eastern hide-out of bin Laden's al-

He also rejected reports that

Karzai said that he thought both

Pashtun is an ally of Agha. Mullah Nagibullah and Karzai jointly negotiated the Taliban surrender of the southern city, but Agha felt he had been cut out of the deal. Agha's tribesmen had been fighting around the Kandahar airport and

controlled part of the road to Pakistan. Agha and Nagibullah have had strained relations for years since the

Mullah refused to side with Agha against the Taliban in the early 1990s.

On Friday, Andrew Card, President Bush's chief of Staff, told reporters on Air Force One that US officials are "pretty sure" Omar is still in Kandahar.

## Unexplored gasfield deal

#### FROM PAGE 1

drew.

area in 1959. But after drilling an exploration well in the western Chhatak area, the authorities lost interest to drill further due to lack of any big prospects

When the US oil company Occidental signed two production sharing contracts (PSCs) for blocks 12. 13 and 14 in 1995, the Chhatak field was 'ring fenced' or kept reserved for Petrobangla affiliate BGFCL. Chhatak field is located inside Occidental's blocks.

When the government started considering to award Chhatak field to Niko, Occidental's successor Unocal objected to the move. As per the PSC. if the government wants to open up a ring-fenced area located inside the PSC blocks for fresh exploration, the PSC operator should get the priority in the task. In the past. Occidental had also submitted a proposal to explore and develop the ring-fenced east Chhatak gas field, but the government ignored it.

As per Niko's old proposal, the Canadian company would enter into joint venture agreement with BAPEX under which it would have a minimum of 60 per cent share and BAPEX a maximum of 40 per cent, depending on the discovery and investment. BAPEX would acquire the three gas fields of Feni, Kamta and Chhatak from BGFCL.

Sources said, although BAPEX with the Canadian firm.

President Chowdhury said Bangladeshis living abroad are eager to invest in their homeland and the members of the business community should coordinate with them and help them utilise their idle money in the country's development.

The members of the DCCI delegation appreciated the private sector market policy of the government and stressed the need for diversifying the country's export.

led by the Principal and Member Secretary of the Medical and Health Welfare Trust, Prof AM Mujibul Huq, called on the President.

They apprised the President of the overall activities of the Uttara Medical College and Hospital. The President gave them a patient hearing.

of the city early hours yesterday.

alleged involved in the dacoity.

516,000 from him at gunpoint.

his residence at Uttara Sector-4

and cash at gunpoint.

Inmates of the house said the

Police arrested two persons for

BSS adds: Uttara police said a

group of eight to 10 hijackers stopped a private car of Gazi Nasir

Ahmed, a businessman of Uttara, in

front of National Bank, Uttara branch

dacoits entered the house at about

3am and looted the gold ornaments

will have 40 per cent share, the BAPEX originally entered into an

financial arrangement in the joint agreement last year with Niko to venture proposal has been conduct a joint study on three gas designed in such a way that the fields of Kamta. Feni and Chhatak. Bangladeshi exploration company Niko argues that the eastern part would not see any profit before 10 of Chhatak was the main attraction years if any of these gas fields of the whole deal and if Petrobangla produce gas commercially. Niko excluded it from the proposal, the economics would suffer heavily.

would get priority in cost recovery. Niko has been pursuing this Previously, Malaysian national oil company Petronas gave a similar proposal by not participating in the block negotiations since 1999. In proposal involving BAPEX and some ring-fenced gas fields, but it order to make a speedy deal with never got through. the government, the Canadian company wanted to avoid signing of the PSC, but sought tax relief, an

Dacoits killed incentive given exclusively to PSC FROM PAGE 12 operators only. of Tk 70 thousand from the residence Niko had recommended a price of Hajee Jasimuddin in Badda area

of 1.6 dollars per unit for the joint venture's gas, equivalent to that asked by the PSC operators in the country. The PSC operators can charge a minimum gas price of 1.2 dollars and a maximum of 2.7 dollars per unit

In response to Unocal's object tion to awarding Chhatak gas field Niko, the government had to decided that once the Canadian company's proposals were accepted, the government would seek similars or better offers from other oil companies through 'switch challenge' bidding. If no oil company can match the Niko proposal, then the government would sign a deal

Later, a 15-member delegation

Another anti-Taliban commande active in the region, Haji Mohammad Zaman, said that bin Laden was spotted in the area earlier this week

bin Laden was in the area.

The familiarity of bin Laden's features, linked to the sizeable reward, has resulted in hundreds of bin Laden 'sightings,' from the streets of New York to Dhaka.

Bin Laden has variously been seen beardless and wearing a Western-style suit, hiding under a "burqa"the all-covering garment Mullah Omar made all women in Afghanistan wear in publicor is tanning himself on a beach in India's Goa

Fighting between the anti-Taliban and al-Qaida forces, sometimes hand-to-hand, intensified as the fundamentalists retreated toward the Tora Bora complex of fortified caves and tunnels.

A Pakistani intelligence source said most of the area is under the control of tribal forces, and that the al-Qaida fighters, most of them Arabs, were believed to be scatter-

#### Haroon Habib FROM PAGE 12

ernment on a two-year contract.

tioned in the contract that he would

go back to his original position upon

expiry or non-renewal of the con-

tract and his position in the organi-

But the Ministry of Establishment

has placed his service under the

Ministry of Information while termi-

nating his contract. "And it's the

breach of contract and appoint-

court that Haroon Habib, a well-

known freedom fighter, was never a

government officer, but a perma-

nent staff of the BSS, which is run by

Barrister Amir-ul-Islam told the

ment," he said.

its own service rules.

sation would be maintained in lien.

Moving the writ, Barrister M Amir-ulsaid. Islam pleaded that Habib, who is a permanent journalists and Special

He, however, said that he had no Correspondent of the BSS, was appointed chief of the state-run news agency by the previous gov-He said it was specifically men-

Sources claim that only a few cable operators, who have the right connection, influence or muscle power, have been able to fend off the extortionists away.

FROM PAGE 12 A Bench of the High Court Division comprising Justice M Abdul Matin and Justice M Marziul Huq issued the rule, returnable within four weeks, after hearing the petitions of

Separate writ petitions filed by the three high officials of the government made the Secretary, Deputy Secretary and Senior Assistant Secretary of the Ministry of Establishment respondents.

"The BSS authorities have also refrained from paying his salary and The petitions were placed by president of the Supreme Court Bar other benefits since August 2001 when he was illegally replaced by Association advocate Abdul Baset Majumder and general secretary Advocate Momtaj Fakir, former the then caretaker government," he said. DAG KM Saifuddin and advocate

at Sector 7 at about 9.30 am. The After the hearing, the court hijackers exploded several home-Abu Sayeed Ahmed. decided to analogously hear the made bombs, surrounded the private present writ petition along with the and snatched away Taka 1973, were removed by the BNP-led previous one in which the caretaker coalition government on the allega-The businessman was going to government's decision was chaltion that they had actively particithe bank to deposit the money from lenged and a HC bench issued rule pated in the activities of the previous upon the government in August last. ruling party Awami League.

invasion, when Moscow and Washington sent billions of dollars worth of arms and equipment to the front line of the Cold War

"There is a surplus of that, in fact they can export that," he said. adding that the weapons used by the Taliban were from the Soviet era. Pakistan's weaponry comes mainly from China and the United States

## IV network

FROM PAGE 12 Road and forced him to subscribe to their service instead of the one he

had earlier subscribed to. A cable operator in city's Mohammadpur area, Naser Iqbal was murdered last month. Though the COAB leaders are yet to know the motive behind his killing, sources say the incident was linked

to his business. The COAB leaders last month drew the attention of the home ministry for help to stop different types of harassment on cable operators. The situation has

improved a little since then. SM Anwar Parvej, president of COAB, talking to The Daily Star

"We (cable operators) are going through a very bad time.

nformation about the incident of Palki Video in Kalabagan since that cable operator is not a member of COAB.

## 3 joint scys

the three officials.

The officials, mostly recruited in