

# Malaysia plans to whip illegal immigrants

REUTERS, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia is stepping up a crackdown on illegal immigrants by planning to whip foreigners entering the country without valid documents even for a first offence, newspapers reported yesterday.

Only second-time offenders are currently liable to be whipped.

The New Straits Times quoted Immigration Department Director General Mohd Jamal Kamdi as saying changes to the Immigration Act would go to parliament next March.

"The amendments are more or less finalised," Jamal was quoted as saying.

Malaysia, a country of 23 million people, is a favoured destination for illegal immigrants from more populous, poorer Asian countries.

Authorities have stepped up their campaign against illegal immigration, sending back 2,500 Indonesian workers last month in the country's largest ever deportation exercise.

The government has said it aims to deport up to 300,000 overseas workers to free up jobs for locals affected by an economic slowdown.

In Dublin, Ireland, the bodies of eight would-be immigrants, three of them children, were discovered in a freight container in southeast Ireland on Saturday while five other people were found alive, police said.

"The discovery of the bodies, which Irish Prime Minister Bertie Aherm called an "appalling tragedy", comes a year and a half after 58 Chinese immigrants were found suffocated in a container in the southeast English port of Dover.

The bodies were in a container that had been picked up from the Belview port of Waterford about 48 kilometres from Wexford.

The driver apparently heard sounds coming from the container loaded with Italian furniture when he stopped in a business park and then discovered the human cargo.

The container was taken by rail to Belgium and left the port of Zeebrugge on November 30, arriving in Ireland on December 6.

Police said the dead included a boy aged around four, and a boy and a girl, both aged around 10 or 11 years.

# Law and order reviewed

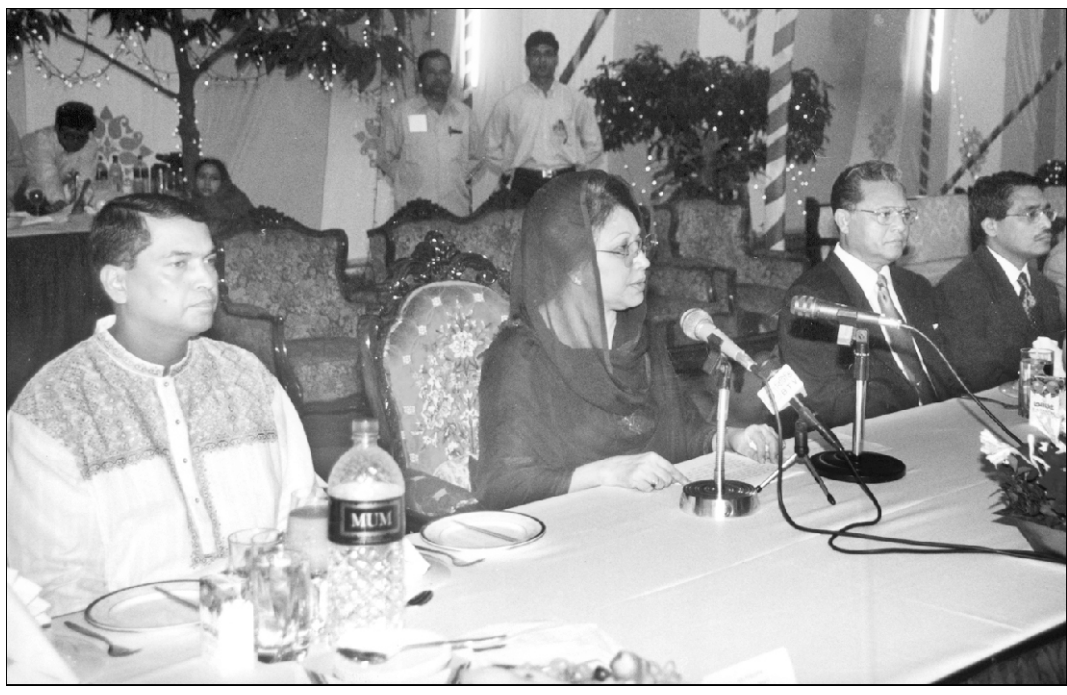
BSS, Dhaka

Law and order situation of the country was reviewed at an inter-ministerial meeting held in the conference room of the Home Ministry with Home Minister Altaf Hossain Choudhury in the chair.

The meeting on the country's law and order reviewed the overall progress in curbing terrorist activities as well as actions taken so far against hijackers, kidnapers and extortionists, an official handout said here last night.

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State Minister for Home Affairs M Lutfuzzaman Babar, Secretary of the Home Ministry Dr. Saadat Hossain and high officials of the Police department attended the meeting among others.



Prime Minister Khaleida Zia addresses the members of Ansar and VDP during an iftar arranged at the Ansar and VDP Headquarters at Dhaka yesterday.

# Arafat to face down militants, calls for peace with Israel

AP, Ramallah

With many Israelis calling for his ouster and warplanes bombing the symbols of his power, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat insisted Saturday that he will not shy away from a confrontation with the militant Hamas and Islamic Jihad groups to revive what hope remains for peace in the region.

In an interview with The Associated Press in his headquarters in the West Bank city of Ramallah, Arafat said the Palestinian police have already arrested 17 key militants out of a list of 33 presented to him by American officials, and said he will continue pursuing the rest despite the continuing Israeli air strikes.

Asked whether he would be prepared to face down resistance by the militants and their growing legions of supporters, Arafat smiled and said: "You are speaking with Yasser Arafat. I know how to do it. I know how to do it."

Earlier in the week, Palestinian police faced an angry mob outside the home of Hamas leader Abed Yassin after he had been placed under house arrest and a Hamas supporter was killed in an exchange of fire.

Arafat was interviewed for an hour in his office in an imposing compound that once served as an Israeli military prison. It was just meters (yards) away from the scene of an Israeli missile strike earlier in the week that was widely interpreted as a message that the Palestinian leader was no longer fully immune.

Dressed in olive fatigues and trademark keffiyeh headress meticulously arranged to approximate the shape of historic Palestine, Arafat carried his own message largely aimed at America: attached to his lapels were tiny Palestinian and American flags, an olive branch and a pin depicting the Virgin Mary and baby Jesus.

Arafat said he was used to coming under Israeli attack, citing Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, in which Ariel Sharon then defense minister and now Israel's prime minister drove Arafat and his fighters to exile in faraway Tunisia.

"Do you think it is the first time he (Sharon) had done it?" Arafat said, referring to this week's rocket attack. "You have to remember Beirut."

terror in Israel, especially after Hamas suicide bombings a week ago that killed 26 people in Jerusalem and the coastal city of Haifa.

The attacks, within 12 hours of each other less than a week into the peace mission of retired Marine corps Gen. Anthony Zinni, badly rattled Israel.

Sharon placed the blame squarely on Arafat, and his message that by doing little to quash the radical groups up to now, Arafat bore the blame for their actions resonated widely in Israel and appears to have found support in the Bush administration as well.

American officials have termed Israeli air strikes in reprisal for the bombings self-defense, in contrast to the US criticism of previous Israeli military actions, including incursions into Palestinian territory and targeted killings of suspected militants.

Asked whether the United States has given the Palestinians guarantees that Israeli air strikes would stop while the arrests are being carried out, Arafat said: "They (the American envoys) said they will do their best. But the Israelis are not listening to anybody until now."

Arafat said he hoped the United States would take a firmer position with Sharon, and bar Israel from using American-made weapons in strikes against the Palestinians. In recent air raids, Israel used US-made F-15 and F-16 fighters planes.

"I am looking for them (the Americans) to make more pressure," Arafat said, adding that he hoped for the United States "not to let them (use) these American weapons against us."

Israel has dismissed Arafat's campaign against the militants as insufficient, saying that key masterminds of terror were still at large. The Palestinians say that in all, they have rounded up about 180 members of Hamas and Islamic Jihad but Israel says many of these are minor activists.

# AL: By-polls

FROM PAGE 12

polls to some of the seats vacated by Prime Minister Khaleida Zia and two of her cabinet colleagues on the plea that there was no congenial atmosphere for its participation.

In absence of candidates from main opposition party AL, candidates of all other opposition parties withdrew from the fray in four of the six seats, giving BNP nominees easy wins without any voting in the November 12 by-polls.

On the last day of withdrawal of candidature on October 27, the respective returning officers declared four BNP candidates including a brother of the Prime Minister elected unopposed in Feni-1, Bogra-7, Khulna-2 and Lumaxpur-2 seats, all vacated by Khaleida Zia.

But an Islami Jatiya Oikya Front candidate did not quit the polls race in Moulvibazar-3. He however lost to M Naser Rahman of BNP in the seat vacated by his father Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman.

A BNP candidate lost to an independent candidate in the by-polls in Manikganj-2 seat vacated by minister without portfolio Harun-ur Rashid Monno.

# Blood crisis

FROM PAGE 1

20 and 8 bags a day on an average respectively while the normal rate of collection is more than 40 and 25 bags respectively.

The DMCH collected 109 bags of blood in the last 25 days while SSMCH collected only 26 bas in as many days.

Director of BRCS's Blood Programme Dr. Khandaker Zakaria Khaled said, "There is now a serious blood crisis. Everyday a lot of people who come to our centre at Mohammadpur return empty handed."

"Usually, we collect about 90 to 100 bags of blood a day at our Mohammadpur centre from donors, but collection has declined to as low as 50 bags," he said.

"Most of our donors cannot donate blood as they fast, but as an alternative, we have launched a special drive to collect blood from non-Muslim community members," he said.

# Shahjahan Siraj

FROM PAGE 12

after he was given charge of the district.

Sources said State Minister for Telecommunications and district BNP president Ahsanul Haque Molla, Prof Shahidul Islam MP and Bheramara upazila BNP general secretary advocate Touhidul Islam Alam and others were present in the meeting.

Two ministers were held hostage at the Circuit House for about an hour because of the infighting. Later they came out of the Circuit House under heavy police escort.

Chaos in the meeting began with Shahidul Islam MP making an indecent remark about the younger brother of Principal Sohrab Uddin MP who is BNP district organising secretary.

Shahidul Islam, MP from Kushtia-2 constituency was provoked by Sohrab Uddin who accused him and his brother of resorting to extortion at Bheramara-Pakshya ferry ghat.

Shahidul Islam MP was also physically assaulted during the chaos that forced the DC and SP to leave the meeting venue.

Later, Prof Shahidul in a statement said the incident was pre-planned and held Principal Sohrabuddin responsible for the unpleasant incident.

# Memo to US envoy Garments workers demand duty-free access to US

BSS, Dhaka

Leaders of garment workers yesterday submitted a memorandum to the US ambassador here, urging Washington to allow duty-and quota-free access of Bangladeshi garments to US markets to save the industry.

The memorandum was handed over to US Ambassador Mary Ann Peters by Garment Tailors Workers League (GTWL) President Shahjahan Khan, MP, general secretary Badruddoza Nizam and M Khurshid Alam and M N Zaman Chowdhury, president and general secretary of Bangladesh Garment Workers' Federation and M Gasuddin and M Delwar Hossain, acting president and general secretary of Dhaka City Garments Workers' Welfare Association.

In the memorandum, they also urged the US government to remove the hurdles to the export of ready-made garments.

They said the terrorist attacks on US on September 11 and the global economic recession triggered a crisis in the garment industry of the country.

They said closure of a large number of garment factories rendered a sizeable number of workers, mostly women, unemployed.

The miseries of the unemployed workers were compounded by the non-payment of their salaries, compensations and other arrears by the factory owners who shut down the industries or made job cuts disregarding the Labour Law and ILO convention, they added.

They said if the steps were not taken many more industries will be closed down soon, plunging the garment sector, one of the key contributors to the country's export earnings, as well as the nation into further crisis.

# Trains collide in Kosba, 10 hurt

UNB, B'baria

Two slow moving trains collided near Mandabagh railway station in Kosba upazila this (Sunday) morning resulting in injuries to ten persons.

Railway officials said wrong signaling caused the accident when the engine of one train and a bogey of another were derailed on Dhaka-Chittagong line.

Both were local trains, one bound for Chandpur from Bhairab and the other for Bhairab from Chandpur.

Those injured were given treatment in clinics nearby. Train services were not disrupted as the salvage train soon cleared the line.

# Shahriar

FROM PAGE 1

Metropolitan Magistrate Muhammad Shafiqul Azim Khan Siddiqui directed the officer-in-charge (OC) of Airport police station to take the complainant as a regular case and to go for legal action against the accused writer after investigation.

Earlier, the OC of Airport police station got permission from the home ministry to file the case against Shahriar.

The case alleged that Shahriar went to Kolkata on November 11 and gave an interview to the BBC Radio in which he claimed that many Hindus have crossed over into India following the recent attacks on the minorities in Bangladesh.

Shahriar also took some snaps of Hindus who left Bangladesh after the general election on October 1. The writer does not believe in the border between the two countries, the complaint said.

The writer was detained by the Special Branch (SB) of police at the 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 charges were framed against him till yesterday. Police also seized his passport, 10 audiocassettes, five video cassettes, three audio CDs and his camera.

Meanwhile, the High Court yesterday extended the stay order on remand of Shahriar till January 15.

Earlier, the court stayed the order for remand following a writ petition, challenging its legality and fixed the hearing yesterday.

# 14 beaten to death

FROM PAGE 1

"We have no other choice but to take the law in our own hand because the police patronise the muggers, dacoits and terrorists," Rahman, a citizen of Kalabagan said adding that the police are not interested in arresting the criminals because of their give and take relationship.

Among the 14 victims, four were killed in a single incident in the city's Sutrapur area, four in Dhanmondi, two each in Demra and Shayampur and one each in Tejgaon and Hazaribagh. In all the cases, the killings followed mugging in their respective areas.

The witnesses told The Daily Star that such painful incidents happened because the police were never available to help the victims of mugging. But the main reason why mobs killed the alleged muggers is the belief that if they were handed over to the police, the law enforcers would simply let them go in exchange of bribe.

On the other hand, upon arriving at the spot the police quickly dismissed the cases by identifying the victims as muggers who were beaten to death after being caught red-handed. In some cases, police identify mob-victims as accident-victims. Thus police disposed of most of the cases without going into the depth of the actual incidents.

Asked about the steps police are going to take against the present trends of mob-beating, DMP Police Commissioner Mohammad Abdul Quyum told this correspondent that they are going to increase their vigilance. "We have to build the

confidence of people on the police personnel by discharging their duties more seriously" the commissioner added.

In some cases terrorists killed their opponents in public giving it a colour of mob-beating, said an witness.

In a recent incident, terrorists killed one member of a family out of his house at Kalabagan and hit him in the head. He died on the spot. But the police later reported that an alleged mugger was beaten to death by an angry mob when the mugger tried to mug a pedestrian, a journalist who witnessed the incident said.

"Innocent people will be victimised if such mob-attacks are allowed to continue in present manner" said a resident of Basiruddin Road where a total of four incidents of mob-beating took place in a week.

The home minister recently said his office has taken all initiatives to improve law and order in the city and elsewhere in the country. Additional police have been deployed to save the innocent people from muggers and terrorists. Plain-clothes police have been asked to keep vigilance near the business centers in the city, he added.

The people of different mugging-prone areas say they are sick and tired of growing mugging incidents. The muggers are going unchallenged with the support of law enforcers. Police never come forward to help the people and punish the culprits.

# Three secretaries

FROM PAGE 1

None has yet been named for the post of information secretary. Competent sources said former establishment secretary Syed Marghubur Murshed, who went on leave preparatory to retirement on November 19, is expected to get a contractual appointment soon and may be placed in the information ministry. He served as information secretary during the rule of the Caretaker government.

Ministry sources said the donors allegedly put pressure on the government to withdraw Quadri from the ERD.

However, no official confirmation of the reason behind his transfer was available.

# BIWTA

FROM PAGE 12

from running the risk of arrest", said an official concerned.

The twelve people arrested were picked up from different areas of Kamrangirchar and Keraniganj area along the river.

Most of the arrested had recouped the foreshore after their unauthorised structures were demolished during earlier BIWTA drives.

BIWTA said their officials are now visiting different areas along the river every two or three days. Another fresh drive is likely to be launched after Eid, they said.

# UZ Parishad Act

FROM PAGE 1

With committee chairman LGRD and Co-operatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in the chair, the meeting recommended that the MPs will have an office with small number of staffs at the upazila level so that they can contribute their parts to local developments. "Special allocation will be there for the MPs", an official attending the meeting said.

The proposal will soon be sent to the cabinet for its approval.

After the cabinet's approval, a bill will be placed in parliament in its second session in the middle of January next to give back the authority of holding the Upazilla Parishad Elections to the Election Commission.

The immediate past government vested this authority on the LGRD ministry.

The meeting, held at the LGRD ministry conference room, was attended among others by Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed, Industries Minister MK Anwar, Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Khondoker Mosharraf Hossain and Information Minister Abdul Moeayen Khan.

Cabinet Secretary Dr. Akbar Ali Khan and Secretary for Local Government Division AYBI Siddique were also present.

# 100-day agenda

FROM PAGE 1

100-day programmes within the timeframe.

"No negligence or reluctance in implementation would be tolerated," the Principal Secretary said, advising all concerned to rapidly complete the targeted works through proper inter-ministerial integration without wasting time.

The meeting was told that the process of repealing the Public Safety Act and the Special Powers Act would be completed soon and the proposals would be placed in the cabinet for its approval.

Besides, review of the cases of political detainees and people detained without trial is now in progress. "Necessary measures will be taken soon on completion of the review," the meeting noted.

However, the cases of those arrested for murder, rape and possessing illegal arms will not come under the review.

The meeting was informed that law-and-order situation had already improved and the number of criminal incidents would further decrease in the coming days.

The government directed the police to file cases under specific section of the Arms Act. So far a total of 846 firearms have been seized and 237 identified criminals arrested and 408 cases filed against them since the new government took over.

# 4 alleged muggers killed

FROM PAGE 1

As the passengers cried out for help, other passengers along with transport workers and porters chased the alleged muggers who tried to flee through Kaptnazar.

The local butchers who were about to open their shops at that time, heard the mob and came out with machetes and allegedly attacked the muggers. It turned into a gory scene as blood spilled on the road and the victims screamed and begged for their lives in vain.

It took only a few minutes for three of the muggers to drop dead on the spot. Another critically injured person died on his way to the hospital.

Police recovered all the three bodies from the spot and sent them to the Mitford Hospital for autopsy. The other body was sent to the morgue from the hospital.

Some local people however said the victims were killed by their rivals following a dispute over toll collection and other criminal activities in the area.

Officer-in-charge of Sutrapur police station Rabiul Islam said primary investigations revealed that the victims were muggers and they were beaten to death for committing

mugging.

"We are looking for the killers, but they have gone into hiding," the OC said. He said the police are investigating the matter.

Narsingind Bus Stand is within 100 yards of the Sergeant Ahad police box at Gulistan.

Police, quoting the local traders, said transport workers, porters and local traders of the area were fed up with the gang of terrorists who used to create troubles for customers, passengers and passers-by. They also said businesses were seriously hampered because of acts of terrorism in the area.

With the murder of the five alleged muggers, death from mob beating rose to seven in the last two days. Two alleged robbers were killed by a mob Saturday when they tried to escape after committing dacoity at a house at Palshpur in the city's Shyampur area.

In another incident, an unidentified young man caught at Kalabagan along with two others for their alleged involvement in mugging was beaten to death by a mob on Thursday night. Another victim in the same incident died at the hospital yesterday evening.

# Control of Kandahar

FROM PAGE 12

Another report says, a peace deal struck by Karzai has so far proved a failure in Kandahar, boding ill for hopes of an end to the country's tribal and ethnic infighting.

Hamid Karzai, chosen as the chairman of a six-month cabinet during landmark inter-Afghan talks in association with Sheikh Altuf Rahman and Moshed Imtiaz Pappu, former and present president of the Chittagong University Debating Society (CUDS).

The seminar was jointly organised by the Chattogram Nagorik Uddog (CNU), Chittagong University Debating Society (CUDS) and Action Aid Bangladesh (AAB).

According to statistics given in the keynote paper, two women were raped daily and a girl on every alternate day, as reported to the parliament by home ministry, during 1995-96.

Six cases of rape were reported daily in 1997 and 25 per cent teen-aged maid servants reported sexual harassment.

In 1997, six women were murdered every day. In 1997, each month saw three women sustaining acid burns. In 2000, this increased to more than 11 cases a month.

Looting and sporadic fighting among various anti-Taliban forces tapered off in the city late Saturday. However, the situation remained tense, hampering relief efforts after weeks of intensive US bombing, according to AP.

The factional skirmishes prevented Afghan Red Cross workers from recovering bodies from streets and homes, said Michael Kleiner, a spokesman for the International Committee of the Red Cross in Kabul.

Hamid Karzai, who will take office on Dec. 22, wants to set up a tribal commission to administer Kandahar.

Talks were under way yesterday to settle the matter with the city's former governor, Gul Agha, and other power brokers, including Mullah Naqibullah, who took Friday's Taliban surrender.

Sources in Kandahar said Agha's forces held control of most of the city, which he had ruled until his expulsion by the Taliban in the mid-1990s.

Before the Taliban rose to power and threw them into a loose coalition, the factions now in Kandahar had been bitter rivals.

Meanwhile, opposing tribes fought overnight in southern Helmand province for the control of its capital Lashkargah, the Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press reported. It said fighters from the Noorzai tribe, led by Abdul-ur Rahman Jan, seized the city and forced Barakzai tribesmen out. At

least seven fighters from both sides were killed and several others wounded.

The report could not be independently verified.

AFP adds: Afghan residents pleaded yesterday for the rapid arrival of an international peace-keeping force as evidence of lawlessness and anarchy escalated after the defeat of the hardline Taliban regime.

Claims by political and military leaders that a multi-national presence was unnecessary and unwelcome were dismissed on the streets by people seeing growing signs of the corruption and violence that stained the Mujahedin years before the Taliban.

Kabul, the supposed showcase city of post-Taliban Afghanistan, is safely accessible only by air with bands of armed thugs and former soldiers marauding the surrounding roads.

In other "liberated" cities, especially Mazar-i-Sharif, Kunduz and Kandahar, fighting and looting are rife as tribal infighting and battles for power take over.

The Palestinian leader has been under mounting pressure by the United States and other nations to crush the Hamas and Islamic Jihad movements that have been waging a campaign of

# Human rights

FROM PAGE 12

amendments only after two years of its formulation and enacted a black law like the Special Powers Act in 1974," he said.

He also said that the president was empowered to announce emergency while one-party rule was imposed on January 25 in 1975 to violate basic rights of the people.

"Newspapers were closed down, political parties were banned and judiciary was made subservient to the administration," he said.

He said basic rights of the people were restored and judiciary got the independence when Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman came to power through sepyo-janata revolution on November 7, 1975.

# Mockbul's son

FROM PAGE 12

on behalf of the petitioner.

The counsel filed another writ habeous corpus petition challenging detention of Moqbul Hossain who was arrested under section 54 CrPC and subsequently given detention in jail under the Special Powers Act.

The petitioner is likely to come up for hearing tomorrow (Monday).

# Dense fog

FROM PAGE 12

Natore to Dhaka now takes about three hours more eight hours instead of five hours.

A number of bus passengers who came to the city from Rajshahi and Bogra yesterday said the vehicles moved very slowly as visibility was restricted to only a few yards. At some places, vehicles skidded off the road, they said.

However, no casualty was reported in any road mishap in the northern region till last night.

# Laden, Omar elude capture

FROM PAGE 12

Zaman told an AFP reporter.

AP from Washington adds: US officials have obtained a videotape of Laden that provides the strongest evidence to date that the al-Qaida leader was connected with the Sept 11 attack on the World Trade Center, The Washington Post reported yesterday.

In the 40-minute tape, bin Laden described the damage around the fallen twin towers in New York as greater than expected and praised Allah for greater success than anticipated, the newspaper said, quoting unidentified senior government officials.

The tape was said to have been found in a private home in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, and US

government officials are debating whether and how to make it public, the Post said.

While officials have said they intercepted communications that allegedly tied bin Laden or associates to the attacks, they have refused to release any materials, citing intelligence concerns.

Some officials hope that making the tape public could counter concern in the Muslim world that bin Laden has been unjustly accused of involvement in the attacks, the Post said.

The videotape makes it "very clear that bin Laden not only had advance knowledge but is proof he was responsible for planning," one senior official who had seen a transcript of the tape told the Post.

# DUTA polls

FROM PAGE 12

Pledging to uphold the Dhaka University Order-1973 and democratic values both the panels have included elaborate development programmes for teachers in their election manifestos.

They promised to help run the university administration neutrally irrespective of their party affiliation and work for a violence-free campus.

Blue Panel candidates in their manifesto have alleged that since the BNP-led coalition took power the government has been interfering in the university activities violating its autonomous status as it has removed senate-elected vice chancellor by using an over hundred-year old 'black law'.

White panel teachers in their manifesto said they would resist any move against the welfare of the teachers by the present university authorities although they are the supporters of the group.

They also accused the then Awami League-backed administration for misappropriation of funds, irregularities in appointing new teachers and other administrative corruption.

Meanwhile, the Blue Panel-backed teachers have alleged that the White Panel candidate for the post of general secretary Prof. Earul Kabir is contesting the poll despite he is still engaged in a government-run nutrition project on lien and yet to join university. Thus he has no 'moral right' to contest the polls, they said.

Prof. AFM Yusuf Haidar and Prof. Earul Kabir will contest for the posts of DUTA president and general secretary respectively from the White Panel. Blue Panel's candidates for the posts are Prof. AZM Nowsher Ali and incumbent general secretary Sharif Ullah Bhuiyan. Other nominees of the White Panel are: Vice president- Prof. Abul Khaer, treasurer-Prof. Anwar Hossain, and joint secretary-Tahmina Akhtar Toft.

Blue Panel's candidates for the posts of vice president, treasurer and joint secretary are Prof. Hossain Monsur, Dr. SM Mahfuzur Rahman and Dr. Mujib Uddin Ahmed.

Both the panels are also contesting for 10 posts of executive members.