

Foreign media in Asia

# Press watchdogs fear growing censorship

AFP, Hong Kong

Recent attempts by Thailand and Bangladesh to muzzle unflattering reports in international news magazines are raising concern among press watchdogs over increasing censorship of foreign media in Asia.

While communist China, Laos, North Korea and Vietnam, together with Myanmar's military regime, have long imposed strict controls on foreign journalists, Thailand and Bangladesh have by and large left the international media alone.

However, circulation bans, threats of expulsion and legal action levelled at two respected news journals over the past few months appear to indicate a discernible shift in tolerance levels in the two countries.

International rights groups were alarmed in February when the Thai government moved to expel two Bangkok-based journalists over a January article that touched on differences between the country's prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, and its revered King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

Labelled a threat to national security, Far Eastern Economic Review bureau chief Shawn Crispin and senior correspondent Rodney Tasker were eventually granted a reprieve in March after the journal issued an apology. However, renewal of their work visas later this year was made conditional on their future "behaviour".

Concurrently, publishers of the Economist were also forced to agree not to distribute its March 2 edition after being threatened with a ban as a result of an article on the monarchy deemed "inappropriate".

The two incidents prompted media watchdog Reporters Sans Frontiers to call on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) secretariat to act against "censorship and intimidation" of the press in its member countries.

Southeast Asia's bastion of media freedom.

"It is particularly concerning because Thailand has been a model for the region of how governments should treat the media and there are ominous signs that this is changing," she said.

Rather than limiting perceived damage to national interests, Menon argues such efforts to censor unwelcome reports exacerbate matters.

"Any restrictions on the local or international media are counter-productive. Whenever a government tries to suppress a story it becomes an even bigger story," said Menon.

"Governments would be better off leaving things alone. Taking journalists to court, threatening to expel them or using other authoritarian actions tend to backfire." Menon cites Bangladesh's ban on the April 4 issue of the Far Eastern Economic Review for being "anti-Bangladesh" as a case in point.

The Islamist-allied government of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia took objection to the magazine's cover story, which warned of the external impact of the country's radical Islamic movements.

"The circulation of the Review is not huge, particularly in Bangladesh, but it became an international story and people were going online to the magazine's website to look for news about it. Consequently it became a really big deal," she said.

The case hit the headlines again on June 12 when a 120 million-taka (two million-dollar) lawsuit was filed against the weekly by a member of a small Islamist party whose photograph was used to illustrate the article.

Elsewhere in the region, legal action brought against foreign publications and their correspondents is not a new phenomenon, particularly in Malaysia.

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's dislike of the international media for alleged biased and inaccurate reporting is legendary -- so much so that the veteran leader made a hat-trick of entries on the CPJ's list of the "Ten Worst Enemies of the Press" in 2001.

But whereas legislation or court action have been the Mahathir government's traditional tools of choice to suppress unwanted criticism, it has now resorted to blocking the distribution of offending media, according to Robert Broadfoot of the Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy.

"What we are seeing in Malaysia is a change in weapons used to fight perceived abuses by the foreign media," he said. "They haven't been using the courts and legal fines as they have in the past."

In February, circulation of the Far Eastern Economic Review, Time and Newsweek was blocked, apparently out of displeasure over their coverage of issues including Islam and terrorism.

The government though has denied any crackdown on foreign publications.

The CPJ's Menon believes the Malaysian authorities changed tactics to minimise the international fallout generated by expelling or taking legal action against journalists.

"Because governments get less censure for using bureaucratic methods to censure the press those methods are becoming more popular rather than kicking out a correspondent," she said.

It may be too early to properly comment on the impact of the past few months on foreign media in the region but in Menon's words, "it does seem like press freedom in Southeast Asia is particularly tenuous at the moment".

FROM PAGE 1

the way from Zero Point to the AL central office on the Bangabandhu Avenue.

The injured include BCL leaders -- Lipton, Biswanath, Alok, Qamrul, Malek and Ilyasuzzaman. Ilyas was injured in the eyes in clubbing.

Police described the incident as a chase and counter-chase between police and the BCL activists. But the BCL leaders termed the police action deliberate. A police press release said 'five to six' processionists were arrested.

At around 8:40am, two crackers were exploded near the AL office on the Bangabandhu Avenue.

In the morning, police prevented many AL women activists going to the Bangabandhu Avenue.

Almost all day long, police barred the AL activists from the AL central office.

A procession, from the AL central office, led by Senior AL leaders, including Tofail Ahmed, Motia Chowdhury, Mohammad Nasim and Opposition Chief Whip Abdu Shahid, was intercepted by policemen.

Again in the afternoon, amid downpour, an attempt by some AL workers to bring out a procession

from the same office was foiled by the policemen.

Police blocked two roads of the Bangabandhu Avenue and made the entire area almost off-limits -- even to the common people.

Soon after the rain stopped at 5.30pm, the AL central office already flooded with rainwater got besieged again by police.

Oddly enough, police blew sirens to drown out the sound of slogans by the AL activists against the government, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and the proposed budget for the 2002-2003 fiscal.

Later, the AL central leaders addressed a gathering of several hundred AL activists at the central office and urged them to push ahead with the anti-government agitation.

Our Rangamati correspondent reports: District AL leader Ashutosh Barua and three others received injuries, one of them critically, in an attack allegedly by the ruling BNP-backed cadres on a pro-hartal procession. Seriously injured, the Jabo League activist, Md Abdul Kader, 25, was hospitalised.

Our Satkhira correspondent adds: Three pro-hartal persons, including Kalaroa Upazila AL

Convenor Moznu Chowdhury, were injured in an attack by the BNP-Jamaat activists during hartal hours at Kalaroa. Two others are Abdur Rahman and Laitu.

Our Khulna correspondent reported that the hartal in the city and elsewhere in the district passed off peacefully. Shops, academic institutions and banks remained closed.

Although the work at the mills and industries at Khalishpur and Atra-Mirerdanga was unhampered, picketers disrupted cargo handling at the Mongla Port.

Our CU correspondent adds: The academic activities of Chittagong University (CU) were disrupted due to the hartal.

Our Bogra correspondent reports: Activists of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) beat Vice-President of the AL district unit and Chairman of the Bogra Pourashava Rezaul Karim Montu, leader of the AL town unit Jebu and Sramik League leader Ruhul Amin in Samatha area at about 10:00am. They were involved in picketing.

UNB adds: The hartal passed off peacefully in Rajshahi.

# Bid to take away container using fake paper foiled

BSS, Ctg

Security officials of the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) yesterday foiled an attempt to take away a imported container full of cardamom (*elachi*) worth Tk 1 crore by an organised crime syndicate from inside the port jetty by submitting fake documents.

CPA sources said four persons arrested in this connection were the drivers and helpers of the trucks hired by the miscreants for carrying the cargo. They are identified as Nur Hossain, Mohammad Selim, M Monir and Aziz.

Sensing the likely danger in getting delivery of the cargo, syndicate member Pronob Kanti Roy, who earlier introduced himself to the port official as a staff of Brothers Overseas Ltd, a Clearing and Forwarding firm in Chittagong, managed to flee from the scene -- the delivery spot at Chittagong Container Terminal area.

CPA Director (Security) Lt. Col. Mohammad Sarwar Shaheed told this news agency last night that a three-member probe committee

was formed to identify the persons behind the forgery. Port thana police have been asked to nab the criminals.

The consignment was imported from Singapore by East West Traders at Khatungani in the city. But the alleged gang that tried to take away the cardamom had produced forged documents including bank receipt of duty payment to relevant authorities.

## Pvt Tvs

FROM PAGE 12

channels were barred from covering the opening sitting of the parliament's budget session on June 4. However, they were allowed to cover placing of the proposed budget for 2002-03 in the House on June 6 and its sittings on the following working days till Thursday.

The private channels were then told that they would be allowed to cover House proceeding on special occasions only.

# SOE sell-off stuck

FROM PAGE 1

But now the government intends to privatise them all.

But this is opposed by many policymakers. They argue that a few of the SOEs like Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, Petrobangla and T&T remain the government's top source of revenue earning despite their financial performance.

BPC, the sole oil importer for the country, incurred a loss of Tk 1544 crore in the last financial year but contributed Tk 3000 crore as tax for import of oil.

Besides, Petrobangla contributes Tk 1500 crore as tax and more than 160 crore as profit and T&T contributes over Tk 1500 crore as revenue. Some other SOEs also contribute a profit of around Tk 300 crore in a financial year.

All these could contribute more to the national exchequer if the government could get rid of unhealthy trade unionism in the SOEs, ensure a politics-free and healthy administration and decide on direct subsidy to the SOEs instead of showing the subsidised amounts as their losses.

"The fact is Bangladesh can not impose the economic price of gas, petrol, power or fertiliser because people will not be able to afford those. If the SOEs concerned are privatised, will the government control market prices? If so, those industries would be shut down and the nation will face unbelievable crises," said an expert in the petroleum sector.

Some policymakers simply echo the prescription of the donors while others question the justification of privatising profit-making units after seeing the result of hand-over of around 500 industries to the private sector.

"The government might be benefited by handing over those SOEs to private sector, but ultimately the national would not," said a top government policymaker.

"Some of the SOEs are still profit-making while some others can be made profitable by giving proper attention and required government support. Change in ownership is not the only solution," he said.

He referred to the fate of Dhaka Vegetable Oil which was a profit-making and very well performing industry. The industry was closed down after it was handed over to the private sector.

Bangladesh Economic Review 2002 projected that out of 40 SOEs, 24 are likely to make profit while 14 others are likely to incur loss in the current financial year. The total loss of the 14 SOEs is, however, much higher than the total profit made by the 24 SOEs. However if the amount of tax being paid by the SOEs is taken into account, no SOE would incur loss.

The biggest problem the SOEs face is the lack of their control over prices, which are determined by policymakers. For instance, the price of petrol, gas and power is determined by the government.

"Even if those SOEs are privatised they will have to be closed down if the government continues to control their prices. But if the prices are fixed by the SOEs themselves or if the government pays them directly for all the subsidies instead of passing those on them, they can make profit effortlessly," said another top official.

Besides, most of the SOEs are over staffed and suffering from acute mismanagement.

The Ministry of Industries has meanwhile sent to the authorities concerned a list of "well-performing or promising" SOEs under three corporations.

"Some of these industries will continue to make profit while the rest can be made profitable if the government takes proper initiatives," said a ministry official.

But the apparent government stand to privatise all the SOEs has changed the focus of the problem

with SOEs which are either making profit or have the potential to become profit-making.

Due to the government stand, there is sluggishness among officials and employees of those SOEs which are performing better or have the potential to perform well, the top level policy maker observed.

Economist Pro Muzaffer Ahmed identified mismanagement as the major problem in SOEs. According to him, efficient and qualified people were not appointed as top officials of the most of the SOEs.

While talking with The Daily Star he said, "You can not expect an organisation to run properly as long as you keep on politicising it."

"It is still possible to make SOEs profit-making. Political commitment is most important. If government wants to solve the problem, it has to bring in professional management," he said.

# PM's directive

FROM PAGE 12

The Detective Branch (DB) of Police is investigating the killing case.

Sabequn Nahar Sony died on June 8 during crossfire in a gunfight between two factions of the JCD mainly over a tender bidding to construct the BUET teacher's housing project.

Joint Secretary of the suspended Central Committee of the JCD Benzir Ahmed Titu and his associate Mushfiq Uddin Tagar led the Dhaka University-based gang while its Assistant Organising Secretary Mukammel Hayat Muki led the BUET-based group in the gunfight.

Despite instructions from top-notch government policymakers, police are yet to arrest the main suspect Muki and his accomplices namely Sharif, Saiham and Nesar based on the BUET campus, and Titu and Tagar on the Dhaka University campus.

Sources said an influential leader of Chittagong and an MP of Dhaka city patronise Muki while Titu and Tagar have connections with an influential commissioner of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and with Tokai Sagar, one of the top 23 listed criminals.

Sources in the JCD said most of the main suspects left the city to escape the arrest.

While talking to The Daily Star yesterday, students and teachers of BUET expressed their dissatisfaction over the slow investigation process by detectives. They suspect that influential bodies of the ruling BNP are trying to save these criminal elements and cover up the issue fearing that these criminals would eventually slip pass the law in the course of time.

However, the police are interrogating two accomplices of the main suspects -- Munna and Swapan -- who were arrested earlier for their alleged connection with the shoot-out.

The investigation officer (IO) of the case Assistant Commissioner (AC) Akteruzzaman told The Daily

# Spain shoot Irish out

FROM PAGE 1

they equalised with a penalty in the last minute," he added.

Irish coach Mick McCarthy was devastated but full of admiration for his team after the shoot-out, which the Irish squad watched with linked arms on the touchline.

"I'm very proud -- we didn't deserve to lose in the end, we deserved to win a normal win. Sickening," he said, but he added: "There are no recriminations, we've had a wonderful, wonderful World Cup."

The Spanish, who now play either co-hosts South Korea or Italy next Saturday, looked to have sealed a place in the last eight for the first time since the 1994 finals thanks to an eighth minute goal from striker Fernando Morientes.

But Ireland, masters of the last-gasp comeback, drew level in the final minute of normal time when Swedish referee Anders Frisk awarded a penalty when Spanish captain Fernando Hierro pulled the shirt of substitute Niall Quinn in the area.

Striker Robbie Keane, who scored in the dying seconds against Germany in the first round, scored from the spot to send the game into golden-goal extra time -- hours after Senegal reached the last eight with only the second golden goal of World Cup history.

Spain coach Jose Antonio Camacho said the referee had made a mistake by giving Ireland the penalty. "It was not a penalty and we had three or four chances ruled out for offside," he added.

Casillas had earlier saved a penalty from Ian Harte in the 63rd minute after a foul in the area by defender Juanfran on winger Damien Duff, who was a constant thorn in the side of the Spanish.

Spain made the perfect start with the early goal from Morientes. Right back Carles Puyol sent in a crisp cross from the right and Morientes brushed off his marker Gary Breen to score with a glancing header past Ireland goalkeeper Shay Given.

But Ireland, whose World Cup campaign suffered a serious setback before the tournament when they lost their best player Roy Keane after a bitter row with McCarthy, tested the Spanish until the final whistle.

The Spanish had the ball in the net again in the 25th minute when Luis Enrique poked home after a clever move involving Raul and Morientes but the goal was disallowed because of offside.

Keane's pace was a constant danger to the Spanish and two minutes before halftime his overhead kick went just over the bar.

Spain played the more attractive football, however. Morientes had a chance to give Spain a 2-0 lead just two minutes into the second half but Given managed to block his shot from just inside the box.

The Spanish desperately needed a second to make the game safe as Ireland kept threatening their defence, which has looked shaky at times during the tournament.

In the 51st minute, defender Hierro had to clear the ball off the line after striker Kilbane pounced to shoot after Casillas dropped a

cross.

Then Ireland missed a perfect chance to get back into the game in the 62nd minute when Juanfran brought down Duff.

Harte struck the spot kick hard but too close to Casillas diving to his right and Kilbane failed to hit the rebound into a gaping net.

Duff almost grabbed an equaliser in the 80th minute with a wonderful run on the right which he finished with a long-range shot which just went past Casillas's right-hand post.

In the 84th minute, Casillas saved the day again, bravely blocking an acrobatic close-range effort from Keane, who broke clear in the box.

Spain, having used all their three substitutes, played extra time with 10 men after Albelda stayed off after aggravating a groin strain but Ireland were unable to score that elusive winner.

Senegal edged out Sweden 2-1 earlier on Sunday, thanks to the second World Cup golden goal and the first of the tournament.

**TEAMS**

Spain: Casillas, Puyol, Helguera, Hierro, Juanfran, Baraja, Valeron, De Pedro (Mendieta 66), Luis Enrique, Raul (Luque 80), Morientes (Albelda 71).

Booked: Juanfran, Baraja, Hierro

Goal: Morientes 8

Republic of Ireland: Given, Kelly (Quinn 55), Staunton (Cunningham 50), Breen, Harte (Connolly 82), Finnian, Kinsella, Holland, Kilbane, Duff, Keane

Goal: Keane 90 (penalty).

Spain win 3-2 on penalty shoot-out

Attendance: 38,926.

Referee: Anders Frisk (Sweden)

## Minor boy

FROM PAGE 12

Friday that Tayeb, a student of Class VI of Teknaf Pilot High School, apparently became a victim of mischief mongers.

On May 20, a police task force in a surprise raid on the Burmese Market at Teknaf arrested Shahadat Hossain, an alleged smuggler, for selling liquor. Police also recovered liquor from his business house.

Shahadat has dispute with his neighbour, Tayeb's father. To take revenge on him, Shahadat named young Tayeb, his elder brother Yasin and three others as accomplices in liquor business when police interrogated Shahadat. Accordingly, police filed a case against all of them.

On return home from school on June 2, Tayeb, as usual carried food to his brother in the Burmese Market where they have a shop. And the police caught both the brothers and sent them to jail 'hajal'.

An investigation, Manabhadhkar Bastabayan Sangstha found young Tayebur innocent.

Questioning the wisdom of police action against a minor boy, the lawyers of the Sangstha are preparing to provide legal aid to secure the release of Tayebur Rahman.

FROM PAGE 12

Friday that Tayeb, a student of Class VI of Teknaf Pilot High School, apparently became a victim of mischief mongers.

On May 20, a police task force in a surprise raid on the Burmese Market at Teknaf arrested Shahadat Hossain, an alleged smuggler, for selling liquor. Police also recovered liquor from his business house.

Shahadat has dispute with his neighbour, Tayeb's father. To take revenge on him, Shahadat named young Tayeb, his elder brother Yasin and three others as accomplices in liquor business when police interrogated Shahadat. Accordingly, police filed a case against all of them.

On return home from school on June 2, Tayeb, as usual carried food to his brother in the Burmese Market where they have a shop. And the police caught both the brothers and sent them to jail 'hajal'.

An investigation, Manabhadhkar Bastabayan Sangstha found young Tayebur innocent.

Questioning the wisdom of police action against a minor boy, the lawyers of the Sangstha are preparing to provide legal aid to secure the release of Tayebur Rahman.

FROM PAGE 12

Friday that Tayeb, a student of Class VI of Teknaf Pilot High School, apparently became a victim of mischief mongers.

On May 20, a police task force in a surprise raid on the Burmese Market at Teknaf arrested Shahadat Hossain, an alleged smuggler, for selling liquor. Police also recovered liquor from his business house.

Shahadat has dispute with his neighbour, Tayeb's father. To take revenge on him, Shahadat named young Tayeb, his elder brother Yasin and three others as accomplices in liquor business when police interrogated Shahadat. Accordingly, police filed a case against all of them.

On return home from school on June 2, Tayeb, as usual carried food to his brother in the Burmese Market where they have a shop. And the police caught both the brothers and sent them to jail 'hajal'.

An investigation, Manabhadhkar Bastabayan Sangstha found young Tayebur innocent.

Questioning the wisdom of police action against a minor boy, the lawyers of the Sangstha are preparing to provide legal aid to secure the release of Tayebur Rahman.

FROM PAGE 12

Friday that Tayeb, a student of Class VI of Teknaf Pilot High School, apparently became a victim of mischief mongers.

On May 20, a police task force in a surprise raid on the Burmese Market at Teknaf arrested Shahadat Hossain, an alleged smuggler, for selling liquor. Police also recovered liquor from his business house.

Shahadat has dispute with his neighbour, Tayeb's father. To take revenge on him, Shahadat named young Tayeb, his elder brother Yasin and three others as accomplices in liquor business when police interrogated Shahadat. Accordingly, police filed a case against all of them.

On return home from school on June 2, Tayeb, as usual carried food to his brother in the Burmese Market where they have a shop. And the police caught both the brothers and sent them to jail 'hajal'.

An investigation, Manabhadhkar Bastabayan Sangstha found young Tayebur innocent.

Questioning the wisdom of police action against a minor boy, the lawyers of the Sangstha are preparing to provide legal aid to secure the release of Tayebur Rahman.

## Rubel murder

FROM PAGE 1

people, including AC Akram Hussain on September 24, 1998.

The court framed charges against 14 accused, including AC Akram Hussain and Mukuli Begum, a local Awami League leader, on May 10, 1999.

Eleven of the 14 accused are now detained in jail custody. They are AC Akram Hussain, Inspector Aminul Islam Khan, Sub-Inspectors Haiyatul Islam Shakur and Amir Ahmed Tareq, ASI Abdul Karim, Havildar Nurazzaman, constables Ratul Parvez, Quamrul Hasan, Mir Faruk Hossain and Mong She Oen and Mukhul Begum.

Three other accused -- SI Nurul Alam, constables Abul Kalam Azad and Mohammad Zahir Hossain -- have been absconding since the incident.

# Golden Senegoal

FROM PAGE 1

Victory means Senegal are the first African side to qualify for the last eight since the Roger Milla-inspired 'Indomitable Lions' of Cameroon at the 1990 finals in Italy.

Senegal -- who scored a stunning 1-0 upset of champions France in the World Cup's opening match -- now face either Turkey or Japan on Saturday in Osaka for a place in the semi-finals.

Camara, who like the rest of the Senegalese side plays his football in France, was delighted with the result.

"The coach told me 'only winning counts'. So we went out and won and there's nothing more to say," Camara said.

"We're not here on holiday, so we will try to forget today's match and move on to playing either Japan or Turkey.

"We are going to party tonight and then concentrate on the next match," the Sedan player added.

Senegal's French coach Bruno Metsu -- the man credited with transforming the 'Lions of Teranga' into the rising power of African football -- said he had sympathy with the Swedes.

"It must be hard for Sweden to accept a defeat like this after their earlier performances," said Metsu referring to the Swedes' first round where they topped the 'Group of Death'.

"Sweden had gone 16 games without losing so we're happy to have ended their streak. I have a great team in the making here after our victories over France and Sweden -- they didn't just come by chance."

Metsu said he didn't mind who his team faced in the quarter-finals.

"We would be happy to play Japan in Japan but coming up against Turkey will be very different. I'm optimistic that we can go forward to the semi-finals," he said.

Camara's winner came after the sides finished an even match locked

FROM PAGE 1

Victory means Senegal are the first African side to qualify for the last eight since the Roger Milla-inspired 'Indomitable Lions' of Cameroon at the 1990 finals in Italy.

Senegal -- who scored a stunning 1-0 upset of champions France in the World Cup's opening match -- now face either Turkey or Japan on Saturday in Osaka for a place in the semi-finals.

Camara, who like the rest of the Senegalese side plays his football in France, was delighted with the result.

"The coach told me 'only winning counts'. So we went out and won and there's nothing more to say," Camara said.

"We're not here on holiday, so we will try to forget today's match and move on to playing either Japan or Turkey.

"We are going to party tonight and then concentrate on the next match," the Sedan player added.

Senegal's French coach Bruno Metsu -- the man credited with transforming the 'Lions of Teranga' into the rising power of African football -- said he had sympathy with the Swedes.

"It must be hard for Sweden to accept a defeat like this after their earlier performances," said Metsu referring to the Swedes' first round where they topped the 'Group of Death'.

"Sweden had gone 16 games without losing so we're happy to have ended their streak. I have a great team in the making here after our victories over France and Sweden -- they didn't just come by chance."

Metsu said he didn't mind who his team faced in the quarter-finals.

"We would be happy to play Japan in Japan but coming up against Turkey will be very different. I'm optimistic that we can go forward to the semi-finals," he said.

Camara's winner came after the sides finished an even match locked

FROM PAGE 1

GM.

Titas GM Mokhesur Rahman was made GM of Bangladesh Gas Field Company Ltd. (BGFL) and GM of GTCL MA Baset was transferred to Titas.

Titas Deputy General Manager (DGM) Ashraf-uz-Zaman was transferred to Wesgas as DGM.

Three managers of Titas were also transferred. Managers Abdus Sobhan was transferred to Wesgas, Mujibul Haq to Petrobangla and Syed Md Osman Gani to Petrobangla.

GM of Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration Company Ltd (BAPEX) AQM Selim was made GM (Services) of Titas.

"The changes were made to uproot negative trade unionism in Titas," said one source. Many top officials of the company were involved in such unionism. The transfers were not prompted by the powerful Titas trade unions, the source noted.

Meanwhile, three ruling party-backed trade unions in Titas continue to interfere in administrative affairs of the company despite their May 16 promise to refrain from this. Conflicts among the three unions over domination are also affecting the working atmosphere.

After May 16, the authorities have transferred 19 officials as per a list given one of the three unions -- Habib-Shahnoor-led union. The group is a dominant force there.

Sources said the Habib-Shahnoor group under the banner of Jatiyatabadi Sramik Karmachari Union has prepared another list of 68 employees for transfer and posting. In addition, it is now preparing a list of officials for suspension.

Meter readers cum union activists are draining out as much as Tk 200 crore gas sales revenue of Titas a year in the name of system loss.

FROM PAGE 12

Rezaur Rahman, Abu Sayed Sagar and Mokhesur Rahman Badal submitted two petitions -- one for bail and the other for Selim's treatment in jail custody.

They stated that three other accused arrested on the same charge were earlier granted bail, and that Selim required medical treatment as he had been physically tortured by DB police during interrogation.

The prosecution opposed both petitions.

After hearing both sides, Magistrate Jagannath Das Khokon rejected the bail petition and sent Selim to the Dhaka Central Jail. The court also directed jail authorities to take necessary steps for Selim's treatment in case of his illness.

Selim was picked up by DB police on June 12 under Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) from in front of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industries at Motijheel. Later, he was shown arrested in a regular case filed with the Lalbagh thana in connection with the fire incident at the telephone exchange and placed on a two-day remand.

FROM PAGE 12

Rezaur Rahman, Abu Sayed Sagar and Mokhesur Rahman Badal submitted two petitions -- one for bail and the other for Selim's treatment in jail custody.

They stated that three other accused arrested on the same charge were earlier granted bail, and that Selim required medical treatment as he had been physically tortured by DB police during interrogation.

The prosecution opposed both petitions.

After hearing both sides, Magistrate Jagannath Das Khokon rejected the bail petition and sent Selim to the Dhaka Central Jail. The court also directed jail authorities to take necessary steps for Selim's treatment in case of his illness.

Selim was picked up by DB police on June 12 under Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) from in front of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industries at Motijheel. Later, he was shown arrested in a regular case filed with the Lalbagh thana in connection with the fire incident at the telephone exchange and placed on a two-day remand.

FROM PAGE 12

Rezaur Rahman, Abu Sayed Sagar and Mokhesur Rahman Badal submitted two petitions -- one for bail and the other for Selim's treatment in jail custody.

They stated that three other accused arrested on the same charge were earlier granted bail, and that Selim required medical treatment as he had been physically tortured by DB police during interrogation.

The prosecution opposed both petitions.

After hearing both sides, Magistrate Jagannath Das Khokon rejected the bail petition and sent Selim to the Dhaka Central Jail. The court also directed jail authorities to take necessary steps for Selim's treatment in case of his illness.

Selim was picked up by DB police on June 12 under Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) from in front of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industries at Motijheel. Later, he was shown arrested in a regular case filed with the Lalbagh thana in connection with the fire incident at the telephone exchange and placed on a two-day remand.

# New regional forum

FROM PAGE 12

How should we manage our high potential?"

The ACD will be unlike other regional groupings such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) or the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), as it exclusively involves all Asian countries, Yongyuth said.

"This is the first time the whole of Asia will talk. It will be historic because most of foreign ministers will gather to attend the meeting," he said.

"It's not about politics. It's only about social and economic (issues), much more than security or politics," he added.

The ACD idea was raised formally for the first time last year, reportedly at the ASEAN foreign ministers meeting in Hanoi.

"This is the prime minister's initiative," Yongyuth said. "He told Mr. Surakiart, and Mr. Surakiart explored it at Vietnam," he said, referring to Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathirathai.

But the Thai press is yet to be convinced of the forum's usefulness.

"On the surface, it is a great idea to have Asian countries sitting down and discussing frankly any issue they want to raise. But in practice, it will be just another talk shop," the Nation newspaper editorialised yesterday.

"The ACD should have been more carefully constructed ... Apparently, the Thaksin government has rushed the whole thing through in the belief that the ACD will help boost its sagging international image."

One columnist noted the shortness of the ACD session, which will run for just over four hours on Wednesday.

"An early impression is that not

FROM PAGE 12

Chowdhury in the Bangabhaban. The president wished the newly appointed army chief every success in performing his responsibilities.

The new army chief visited the Shikha Anirban at the plantation in the afternoon and placed floral wreath there paying homage to the martyrs from the armed forces in the War of Liberation in 1971 and signed the visitor's book.

A smart contingent of Bangladesh Army presented a guard of honour while buglers played requiem. The National Flag and army ensign were kept at half-mast paying respect to the martyrs. Senior officers of army headquarters and formation commanders of Dhaka were present on the occasion.

A smart contingent of army also presented guard of honour to the new army chief at Army Headquarters. He inspected the guard and took the salute.

Earlier in the morning, outgoing army chief Lt. General Harun-Ar-Rashid went to the Shikha Anirban and placed floral wreath to show respect to the martyrs from the armed forces in the War of Liberation.

A smart contingent of army presented guard of honour to the outgoing army chief at the army headquarters. He inspected the guard and took the salute.