

## Dacoits loot rtd cop's house

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dacoits looted cash and valuables worth about Tk 11 lakh from the residence of a retired police inspector at Kazirgaon in Demra in the city yesterday.

A gang of about ten entered the first floor residence of Kazi Abdur Rauf in the early hours of yesterday by cutting grills.

They confined the inmates at gunpoint and looted Tk 2.5 lakh, 4500 US dollars, over 100 ounces of gold ornaments, a gun and other valuables.

Rauf filed a case with Demra police station. Police arrested one Mohammad Faruk, caretaker of a nearby house, his alleged involvement in the incident.

## Sculptures of Buddha stolen from temple in Barisal

A CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Eight touchstone sculptures of Buddha were stolen from a Rakhain temple in Barisal Friday.

A band of pilferers entered the Lakkhipara Rakhain temple in Kalapara Upazila, by breaking through the wooden floor of the temple and stole the sculptures worth more than Tk 5 crore at night, sources said.

Thoichajon Matubbar, monk of the temple, filed a case with the Kalapara Police Station yesterday in this connection.

None has been arrested yet.

## Kumari Puja

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The ministers visited Ramkrishna Mission and Dhakeswari Mandir in the afternoon.

Speaking on the occasion, Mannan Bhuiyan, who is also the BNP secretary-general, said the government believed in communal harmony.

"The government is committed to ensuring peace and harmony among all communities in the country as people of all faiths fought the Liberation War in 1971," he said.

He called upon people of all religions to build up resistance against crime and violence.

## Paper mills

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now living in a state of uncertainty.

Sonargaon Thana Police are allegedly showing no interest in handling the matter. The sales officer of Magura Paper Mills Md Iqbal Kabir said Sonargaon Thana Police initially refused to take a case in this regard. They however registered the case on October 12.

Despite several attempts, the OC of Sonargaon Thana could not be reached for his comments about the apparent police inaction concerning the matter. Tension was prevailing in the area till filing of this report yesterday.

## Mali govt resigns

AFP, Bamako

The government of the vast, poverty-stricken west African state of Mali resigned without public explanation Saturday after only four months in office, the office of President Amadou Toumani Toure announced.

The 21-member government of Prime Minister Ahmed Mohamed Ag Hamani was formed on June 14, one month after the election of Toure, a former military ruler who stood down for an elected civilian government in 1992 in the sub-Saharan country.

The key posts in the outgoing team were held by ministers close to President Toure.

The government oversaw legislative elections in July and early August in which neither of Mali's two dominant political blocs won a clear majority in the 139-member parliament.

Toure has said repeatedly he will govern with whatever party holds the parliamentary majority.

The prime minister presented his resignation and that of his government to President Toure and this was accepted, according to a presidential communiqué quoted on radio and television Saturday.

The president thanked the government team for the work it had done, the media reported.

Pending the appointment of a new prime minister Toure asked Hamani to continue handling government affairs.

In the absence of an official explanation for the government's resignation, analysts believe a change of government was expected after the election of a new national assembly as President Toure had always insisted he wished to rule with the majority to emerge from elections.

## 4 extortionists arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four toll-takers were arrested at the Mohakhali intersection in the city yesterday.

They were collecting tolls from passenger vehicles. The arrested are Harun, 42, Zakir Hossain, 40, Babu Malaker, 35, and Momin, 30.

Gulshan police also seized Tk 23,000 and some papers and receipts of toll collection from them.

The arrested admitted to having collected tolls in the name of trade unions, police said.

A case was filed with the Gulshan Police Station in this regard.

## Rubber garden manager abducted in Chittagong

UNB, Chittagong

Armed miscreants kidnapped the manager of Boalkhali Rubber Garden on Saturday.

Police and family sources said the miscreants belonging to Sujit Bahini picked up Tapan Khashtagir at gunpoint.

They later demanded Tk 10 lakh from his family over phone.

His family members informed the police, but they could not rescue him till filing of this report yesterday.

## Malaysia calls for urgent OIC meeting on Iraq

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia yesterday urged the 57-nation Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to call an emergency meeting in a bid to avert a US-led war against Iraq.

The organisation needed to speak with one voice on Washington's threat to invade Iraq and topple the regime of President Saddam Hussein, Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar told the official Bernama news agency.

"I will send the letter (calling for an emergency meeting) to the OIC secretary-general tomorrow."

"We must come out with one voice and our actions must be integrated," Syed Hamid said.

"This is the time for all OIC member states to issue clear statements on their respective stands and initiate diplomatic efforts and negotiations to avert a war on Iraq."

Syed Hamid said he feared an attack on Iraq would "arouse anger and feelings of marginalisation among Muslims and even moderate Muslims will eventually be influenced and become extreme because their moderation was not reciprocated."

Malaysia, a mainly Muslim Southeast Asian nation which has supported the US war on terrorism, is due to take over the chairmanship of the OIC after a summit here in October next year.

Qatar is the current chair of the group, which is based in the Saudi Arabian city of Jeddah.

## Taslina Nasrin gets jail term for 'Lajja'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Controversial feminist writer Taslina Nasrin has been given one year's prison term for her derogatory comments on Islam in several of her books including 'Lajja'.

Magistrate Shah Alam delivered the verdict in absentia in a Gopalganj court on Saturday for 'hurting religious sentiment of the Muslims'.

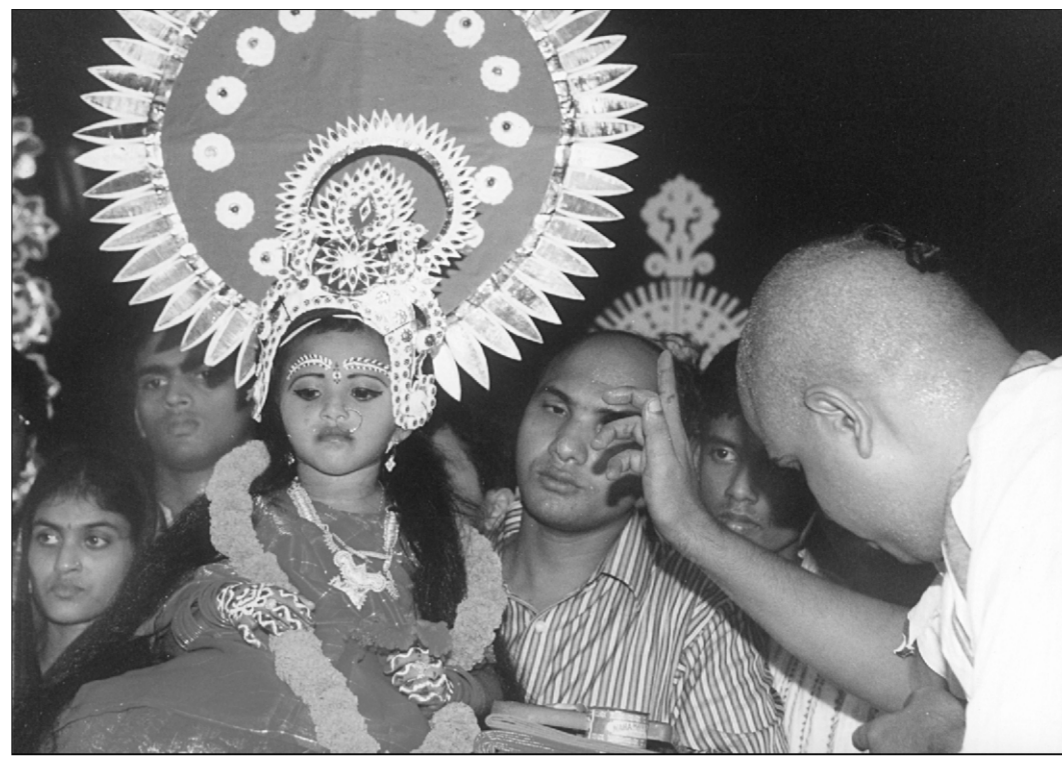
It followed a suit filed by one Dabiruddin Azad in 1999, accusing Taslina of writing 'offensive comments' about Islam.

This is first sentence against the writer who is living abroad since fleeing Bangladesh eight years back in the face of death threats by some religious extremists.

Appearing before the trial court, she can now appeal before higher court against the verdict.

Taslina, now in Sweden, came to Bangladesh in 1998 to see her ailing mother but left after her mother's death.

She had been in India recently in connection with publication of her latest book 'Wild Wind' (Utol Hwa in Bengali). The 'Wild Wind' and two of her earlier written books -- 'Shame' (Lajja) and 'My Childhood' (Amar Meyebela) -- are banned in Bangladesh.



A Hindu priest worships a girl symbolising the 'Kumari' (virgin) form of Goddess Durga at the Ramkrishna Mission in the city yesterday. (Story on front page)

PHOTO: STAR

## US forces rumble

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called on to spearhead a land assault on Iraq.

The V Corps is the Army's only corps headquarters based outside the United States, and its combat units - including the 1st Armoured Division and the 1st Infantry Division - are specifically trained for fighting in Europe or the Middle East. The V Corps is commanded by Lt. Gen. William Wallace and has 41,000 troops.

V Corps recently redesigned its main command post, making it completely modular and more mobile.

The battle staff of US Central Command, which would have overall responsibility for war in Iraq, is planning to move to an air base in Qatar next month from its headquarters in Tampa, Florida. The move is billed as an exercise, but officials say the staff - including the commanding general, Gen. Tommy Franks - may remain in Qatar in anticipation of a presidential decision to go to war.

Franks already has his naval command staff in Bahrain and his air command staff in Saudi Arabia. In an interview for Sunday editions of The New York Times, Rumsfeld said he had ordered new war plans that would allow the military to begin combat operations on shorter notice and with smaller numbers of troops.

"Looking at what was overwhelming force a decade or two decades ago, today you can have overwhelming force, conceivably, with lesser numbers because the lethality is equal to or greater than before," he said.

Precision weapons, better intelligence and quicker deployment would enable the military to deliver "fewer troops, but in a faster time that would allow you to have concentrated power," Marine Corps Gen. Peter Pace, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the Times.

One of the key worries about building up forces in the vicinity of Iraq is the possibility that Saddam could launch a pre-emptive strike using biological or chemical weapons. Thus the Pentagon is considering additional protections, such as the vaccine for the virus that causes smallpox, as first reported in Saturday's New York Times.

US officials suspect that Iraq has strains of the smallpox virus that could be used against US troops, although the Iraqi government insists it destroyed all its biological weapons after the 1991 Gulf War.

The Health and Human Services Department recently informed the Pentagon that it would make about 1 million doses of the smallpox vaccine available for inoculating troops. The White House has not yet decided whether civilians will be offered the smallpox vaccine.

Vaccinations for troops could begin as early as November, officials said. First to receive it would be those whom the Pentagon calls "first responders," troops responsible for responding to domestic disasters such as a bioweapons attack. They include medical specialists. Next to get it probably would be troops in combat units designated to deploy first in a major military crisis abroad, such as the Army's airborne infantry.

As many as 500,000 troops might eventually be inoculated, according to another senior defence official. Of the 1.4 million men and women in the active-duty military, fewer than half have ever received the smallpox vaccine, the official said.

## Cell phone

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facility and actual export volume.

Saifur also said the earlier promised mid-term review of the budget in December might not be held in the parliament.

"If the budget does not need any major changes, then I think we will not have to go to the parliament for the review," Saifur told newsmen.

"So far, the revenue earning is on the right track and so is the public expenditure," he said to back up his argument not to hold the mid-term review in the parliament.

However, Saifur earlier said the review would be held in the parliament for transparency and involving lawmakers in the process.

Meantime, the finance minister has asked the two commissions - the public expenditure and revenue reform commissions - to submit their reports by November for the review.

However, Chairman of the Revenue Reform Commission Mir Mustafizur Rahman told the meeting that the report would not be ready by November and would take one more month.

## Hanif

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case, got approval from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) for submission of the charge sheet on October 2.

In the case filed with Motijheel police station, it has been alleged that Anwara Begum, wife of former DCC chief Engineer Mohammad Shamsul Haq Bhuiyan, had filed an application in 1985 with the then DIT (now Rajuk) seeking allotment of five kathas of land in the city's Banani area on forged documents. But the application was cancelled on scrutiny.

Later, Mohammad Hanif made arrangements for allotment of the same land in the name of his wife in 1996 by missing power.

The BAC filed the case against the accused on April 7.

## Police dragnet

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They swooped on several houses before panic-stricken villagers could understand what had happened.

Failing to resist, many villagers fled away and the outlaws looted at their will.

Ahmed Ali, a Jamaat worker in Puspapara village, filed a case accusing 40 people of Siddiknagar and Bainapara villages. Police arrested ten of the accused.

Like police, many of the villagers also think that the attack was the outcome of feuds between residents of Puspapara and adjoining Siddiknagar village.

The outlaws were hired by a vested group, they claimed but could not elaborate.

Some villagers said there was no activity of outlaws in Puspapara and Siddiknagar villages earlier as those were controlled by Jamaat during last several months.

Some of the villagers alleged that they informed police on the night of the incident but police reached there at about noon on the following day.

Talking to this correspondent, M Khurshid Hossain, acting superintendent of police in Pabna, said the incident was a sequel to disputes between people of the two villages and the outlaws were hired. Police is

investigating, he said.

According to police sources, activities of outlaws increased in the northern districts since a split in PBCP in May, 2001.

One group built its strongholds in remote areas of Chalan Beel and Haitee Beel and some other areas of northern districts under the leadership of Tutul Dakta of Kotchandpur in Jhainadaha and Madhu Babu alias Shafi of Dinajpur.

Tutul Dakta, a physician by profession, was leading the outlawed groups in Natore, Rajshahi, Naogaon, Pabna and Shiraiganj. He had his chamber in Rajshahi city till he went into hiding early this year when he became identified.

Two others -- Abdul Quader and Quamrul Master -- were known to be leaders of outlaws in Pabna.

Talking to this correspondent, a highly placed police official in Rajshahi said the police force is inadequate and not properly armed and equipped with logistics to face the outlaws.

Another official said most of the influential persons sheltering the outlaws are members of political parties including the ruling parties.

## Housewife gangraped in Feni

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Feni

A housewife was gangraped by miscreants at village Alipur in Dagonbhuiyan upazila of the district at midnight on Saturday.

According to police and local people, the victim Rahima Khatun, 28, along with her husband Mohammad Hanif was going to her father's house at Char Majlish in Sonagazi upazila. When they reached Alipur, a gang of local miscreants swooped on them. They roped Hanif to a tree and gangraped Rahima.

A case was filed with the Dagonbhuiyan Thana. The victim was admitted to the local health complex.

## Three factories gutted at Lalbagh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A midnight fire burnt out property worth about Tk 71 lakh of three factories in the city's Lalbagh area yesterday.

Sparked by a transformer blast at about 2:45am, the fire engulfed Kamal Biscuits and Bread Factory, Ibrahim Sawmill, Haji Abdur Rashid Sawmill and Dulal Stationery on the Baby Das Ghat Lane, said fire-brigade sources.

Eleven fire-fighting units from Sadarghat, Pallabi Lalbagh and the Fire Brigade Headquarters doused the fire in about two hours.

Additional police forces were deployed in the area.

## Two murdered

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Meanwhile, armed dacoits stabbed Abul Kashem, Nurunnahar Begum and Mahfuz during a robbery at a house at Bhongra village in Banskhali upazila Saturday night.

They were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where Kashem died yesterday morning.

## Advani

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Advani said India was willing to talk to the government in Pakistan, be it civilian or military, but only if Islamabad gives up its support for Islamic militants.

"The government has taken the stand that we will be willing to address with Pakistan all issues including Jammu and Kashmir only if it abandons the path of cross-border terrorism, which it has not done and does not appear inclined to do.

"So at the present time there is no question of dialogue," he said.

Advani added that Pakistan's secret service, which New Delhi claims sponsors the Islamic militants launching raids into Indian territory, was the only loser in the just-completed state assembly election in Indian-administered Kashmir.

"The real winner in the Jammu and Kashmir elections is the press of India," Advani told the press conference.

"The only real loser ... is Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI Islamabad's secret service) and its subsidiary agencies," he said.

The fact that 46 per cent of voters cast their ballot in a poll violently attacked by Islamic rebels, Advani said, "is a victory for Indian democracy and highlights the strength of the process in this country."

## Arsenic mitigation

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The government has so far taken three projects in joint venture with donor's assistance including the Bangladesh Arsenic Mitigation Water Supply Project, he said.

The minister underlined the need for adopting the technology to ensure safe drinking water on a priority basis.

Bhuiyan said every district should have a laboratory to test the extent of arsenic contamination. The minister also suggested arrangements for supplying pure water to villagers through pipelines from aquifers that are not arsenic contaminated.

The minister told the roundtable that the arsenic mitigation project funded by World Bank had some defects like the non-involvement of the DPHE, responsible for supplying pure drinking water. Work has been going on to find a remedy to this problem.

The roundtable was told that three crore people across the country drink arsenic contaminated water from 27 percent tube wells across the country.

In the keynote paper, Joint Secretary of Local Government

## Hajj pilgrims

FROM PAGE 12

The government rented more than 3,000 houses in Makkah and Madina in A and B categories for pilgrims who will perform Hajj under its arrangement.

The offices of the Islamic Foundation in 64 districts will keep in touch with the families of the pilgrims and provide all information about their stay in Saudi Arabia.

Last year, 40,000 pilgrims performed Hajj. Of them, 3,500 pilgrims were under government arrangement.

Religious Affairs Secretary Khwaza Abdur Rahman and Joint Secretary MA Akbar were also present at the conference.

Division Syedur Rahman identified some problems acting as impediments against the arsenic mitigation programme.

Lack of testing laboratories and monitoring organisations were mentioned as some of the main problems.

Noted scientist Dr. Safi Ullah said a geo-chemical mapping to identify arsenic intensive areas could be carried out and called upon the government to involve local scientists in the mitigation programme.

State Minister for LGRD and Co-operative Ziaul Huq Zia and Deputy Minister for Local Government Secretary AYBI Siddiqui spoke on the occasion.

## Khasru

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opposition leaders and activists and torture on Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and Bahauddin Nasim, Khasru said.

"Even a single word cannot be done without paying tolls to the government-blessed extortionists," he said.

By nominating 33 identified criminals for the Dhaka City Corporation election, the government proved that entertaining their interests is its main task.

Magistrates and police officers are unable to work freely due to the influence of the ruling party leaders and activists.

Advocate Khasru demanded punishment to the culprits responsible for the Shamsunnahar Hall incident and make the judicial inquiry commission report public.

He also urged the government to complete the Bangabandhu Murder Case by adopting proper measures. Awami League Presidium Member Abdul Jalil, leader Matia Chowdhury, Rahmat Ali, Shudhanshu Shekhar Halder and Sahara Khatun were present on the occasion.

## Midnight mayhem at Bali bars

FROM PAGE 1

rightful name -- murder."

In Australia, which is believed to have lost many nationals in the explosion late Saturday, Prime Minister John Howard said nations must keep up the battle against terror in all its forms.

The European Union also sharply condemned the act, which it described as "barbaric and heinous".

The EU's Danish presidency, offering support to the Indonesian government to track down those responsible, urged the "Indonesian authorities to spare no efforts in finding and bringing to justice the perpetrators."

EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana said it was clear that the "war against terrorism is a long way from being finished."

A spokesman for British Prime Minister Tony Blair said: "The Prime Minister... completely and utterly condemns this appalling terrorist act."

French President Jacques Chirac also expressed his horror, saying, "Once more blind terrorism has struck, in the most gratuitous, cowardly and savage manner."

Italy's President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi declared it to be a "very grave act of terrorism" while Swiss Foreign Minister Joseph described the attack as a "hateful crime".

Russian President Vladimir Putin, also opposed to US military action against Baghdad, said in a message to Australia's prime minister: "International terrorism again and again presents the civilised community with frightening lessons."

As well, he sent condolences to Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri, saying: "These tragic events confirm that the global community needs to coordinate much more closely its fight against international terrorism -- the scourge of the 21st century."

Pakistan's foreign ministry spokesman Kamran Niaz did not

hesitate to blame terror for the carnage, saying: "The government of Pakistan strongly condemns the terrorist attack."

Bangladeshi Prime Minister Khaleda Zia also condemned the "heinous act of violence".

Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer suggested the attack may have been linked to al-Qaeda.

He said Australia has been concerned about the possibility of a terrorist attack in Indonesia since an organisation called Jemaah Islamiyah (Islamic Group) tried to attack Australian, British and US targets in Singapore late last year.

"Jemaah Islamiyah, JI as it's known, does have links to al-Qaeda, it has financial as well as personnel links to al-Qaeda, and it's conceivable that an organisation like that could be behind this action," he said.

In the Philippines, officials said there was no evidence to link the blast with a wave of deadly bombings in the southern Philippines, which is home to Muslim separatists the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the smaller Abu Sayyaf kidnap gang.

"Nonetheless, we are monitoring any terrorist threat here as well as continuing with our intelligence information sharing with other countries," military spokesman Brigadier General Eduardo Purificacion said.

Indonesian Vice-president Hamzah Haz partly blamed poor intelligence and security measures for the overnight blast.

Meanwhile, a number of nations including Japan, Portugal, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands issued travel warnings, asking people to postpone their visits to the popular tourist resort island until further notice.

And in Taiwan, an order has been issued to step up security around airports, harbours and embassies, police said.

The attack comes just weeks after the US reopened its diplomatic

missions in Indonesia following a shutdown over the September 11 anniversary caused by fears of new attacks by al-Qaeda.

It also follows a wave of al-Qaeda linked attacks over the past week - on US soldiers in Kuwait and a French oil tanker in Yemen - which in turn followed new broadcast threats attributed to al-Qaeda leaders.

Shortly after the blast at 11:00pm Saturday in Kuta, a second bomb exploded near the honorary US consulate on Bali and another blast occurred outside the Philippine consulate in Central Sulawesi province. Neither blasts caused casualties.

There have been no claims of responsibility for any of the attacks.

Witnesses said the car bomb here devastated the Padi bar and the Sari Club across the street, which has a garden that was popular with young foreign tourists, and also ripped apart nearby shops and vehicles.

"There are charred and mangled bodies everywhere, it is unbelievable," said French photographer Cyril Terrien. "I have never seen such an appalling thing in my