

## Sinister smoke

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brick kilns do not comply with the Brick Kiln Ordinance and are fitted with chimneys without any filter.

The majority of the kilns, according to sources, do not have any license issued by the district administration. The kilns use either imported low-quality coal or fuel wood throughout the season.

In October, the government told brick kiln owners that they could only start operating if they installed 120-foot-high chimneys.

The owners association reacted sharply to the government decision, saying they would need at least five years to install the chimneys at their kilns.

The government remained firm and told the owners they could start production of bricks if they gave a written undertaking, stating that they would install the chimneys within the next four months. The chimneys are designed to disperse exhaust further up into the atmosphere.

Abu Bakar, general secretary of the Brick Kiln Owners Association, told The Daily Star the government's decision was totally impractical. He said it would never be possible for the kiln owners to install the chimneys within such a short time.

"Firstly, only a small number of people in the country have the expertise to build the high chimneys. It is impossible for a single group of builders to equip the kilns with chimneys in such a short time. The cost of installing a chimney is around ten lakh taka."

Bakar said the owners are nonetheless getting their licenses renewed after giving written under-

takings.

"We are giving the undertaking despite being aware that it will not be possible to install the chimneys," Bakar said.

In a recent circular, the DoE has said the owners will have to obtain a yearly environment certificate before getting the license renewed from the district administration.

According to sources in the DoE, there are 4,080 licensed and unlicensed brick kilns in 57 districts of the country.

The DoE is yet to receive data from seven more districts. But the owners association insists that there are well over 8,000 brick kilns in the country.

Most of the country's brick kilns are situated around the capital, as demand for bricks here is very high.

At Doleshwar, owner of the Doleshwar Brick Agency, Mohammad Mamun, said owners like him are in confusion about the government move.

He said that the owners are not sure how long they would be able to continue with their business. Most brick kilns are situated on rented land, and the owners are not yet sure if they will invest such a big sum to install the chimneys.

A source in the DoE said that the government is now exploring ways to replace traditional bricks with block bricks.

Unlike block bricks, traditional bricks require earth and in the process of manufacturing these bricks agricultural lands across the country fast lose the topsoil.

## Detention of Nasim HC asks govt to explain

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday issued rule upon the government to show cause in 10 days why the detention of Bahauddin Nasim, assistant political secretary to former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, should not be declared illegal.

The court order came upon a writ challenging the second detention order issued on November 18 under the Special Powers Act.

Bahauddin Nasim was held from ZIA prior to his departure for USA on February 28. Later, he was shown arrested in a number of cases including sedition charge and detained under the Special Powers Act.

Advocate Abdul Matin Khasru moved the petition on behalf of Bahauddin.

## 2 killed, 30 hurt as bus, truck collide in Narsingdi

UNB, Narsingdi

At least two persons were killed and 30 others injured in a bus truck collision on Dhaka-Monohardi road at Kumardi in Shibpur upazila yesterday morning.

Witnesses said bus passengers Joyal Mia, 38, and Ismail Hossain, 35, died on the spot.

The injured were sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Bajitpur Zahirul Islam Medical College Hospital, Narsingdi Sadar Hospital and other private clinics.

Police seized the bus and truck, but the drivers of both the vehicles managed to escape. The bodies were sent to Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

## Buriganga

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It started at about 10:00am and ended at 4:00pm. A total of 85 structures were brought down during the third and the fourth day of the drive, Saiful Haq Khan, supervisor of the demolition drive, told The Daily Star.

Tomorrow is the last day of the six-day drive. The drive will be conducted in Keraniganj area today and tomorrow. Authorities have requested the encroachers to remove their structures from the banks of the river.

Meanwhile, activists of the Bangladesh Environment Movement (BEM) were present during the drive. They held a procession and rally on the Buriganga Bridge praising the BIWTA and asked the government to take proper initiative to make Buriganga pollution free.

They also demanded the implementation of the proposed water transport project.

Presided over by Mihir Biswas, secretary-general of Save the Buriganga Movement, Dr. Abu Naser Khan delivered his speech as a chief guest. Besides Dr. Nuruddin Md. Ashraj also addressed the rally.

## Two worlds

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salary only on king burgers (\$2), a Bangladeshi will be able to eat only 15 of them, while the Swiss have to devour 825 at \$4 apiece. Both are equally fond of it, though!

Nicole Meier is a Swiss journalist on internship with The Daily Star

# Speedy trial law passed

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law, expressing concern that the government would use it to harass its political opponents.

They termed it a black, controversial, discriminatory and unconstitutional legislation, designed to persecute the opposition political parties.

The law empowers the government to select cases to be referred to special tribunals for speedy trial, a provision the opposition lawmakers strongly contested.

They suggested instead that special tribunals should try all cases for uniform application of law.

AL lawmaker and former home minister Mohammad Nasim told the House justice could only be ensured if all cases of the listed categories were referred to the special tribunal. "Otherwise, since the law empowers the government to select cases for the tribunal, the selection will definitely be made on political consideration."

Suranjit Sengupta termed the new law ultra vires the constitution, saying it contradicts certain constitutional provisions that guarantee people's fundamental rights.

AL legislator Mirza Azam said corruption should have been included in the list of offences for trial in speedy trial tribunals.

JP lawmaker GM Quader, meanwhile, argued against admissibility of audio-visual evidence under the new law, saying such evidence can

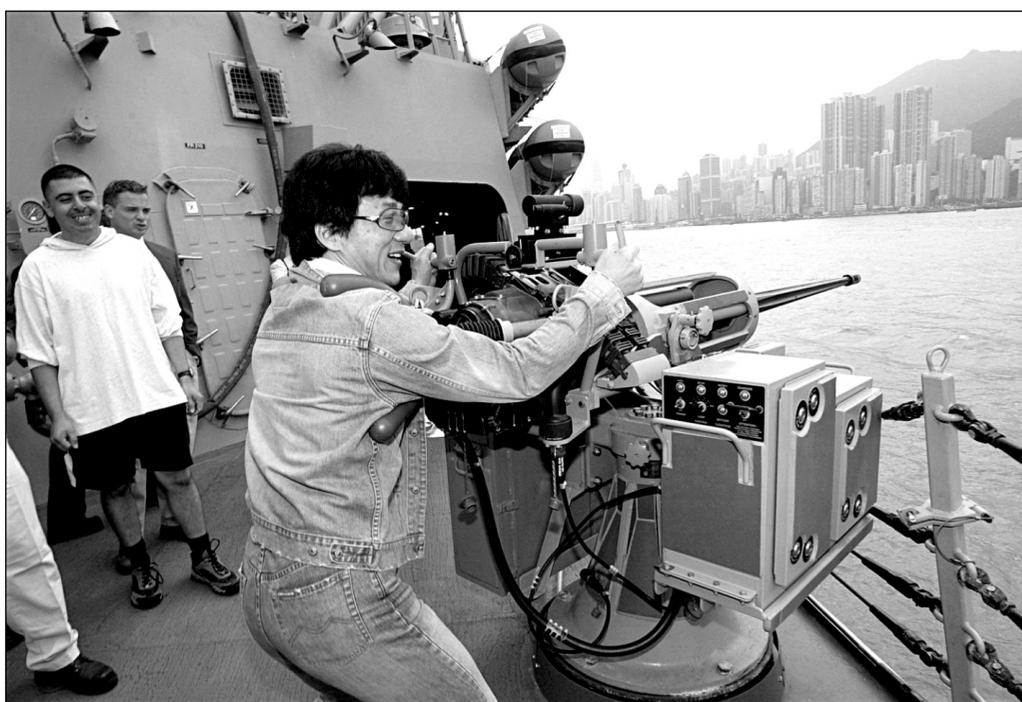


PHOTO: AFP

Service members smile as they watch internationally renowned Hong Kong action movie star Jackie Chan (R), pointing a machine gun towards the Hong Kong skyline yesterday aboard the US navy Guided Missile Destroyer USS Milius, currently on port call in Hong Kong. Chan, who visited the USS Milius at the request of its crew, was taken on a guided tour by the ship's captain Jeff Harley, and met with crew members and signed hundreds of autographs.

# PM: Smear campaigners

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ment for improvement of education and sought cooperation of all to make the initiatives a success. Khaleda suggested that the affluent people could open the door of education for many poor, meritorious students by introducing scholarships at universities.

Referring to the government move to curb copying and other forms of cheating in public examinations, she sought cooperation of all to eliminate the scourge.

She said her government has taken initiative to spread higher technical education side by side with general education at different levels. Prime Minister said her government has also introduced programmes to reach education to both the rich and the poor from primary to higher level. She informed the gathering that Tk 663 crore are allocated from the national exchequer annually to implement the scheme.

Referring to moves to make education for women free of cost up to higher secondary level, the prime

minister said meritorious female students would be given scholarship and books free of cost and their examination fees waived. She said works are going on in full swing for establishment of Asian University for Women in the country where students would be provided with scholarships. She said that her government has also taken steps to make Madrasah education effective and scientific.

To increase computer literacy, Khaleda said, computers are being distributed among schools. A decision has also been taken to introduce "Prime Minister's Scholarship" for computer education for meritorious students and girl students of universities.

The prime minister said the government is making arrangements for internship for meritorious graduate and post-graduate students in the Bangladesh, Jatiya Sangsad and Prime Minister's Office so that they can be introduced to the highest executive and law making offices of the country.

Education Minister Dr Osman Farruk, State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Redwan Ahmed, Khulna City Corporation Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman and Khulna University Senate member and Bangladesh Cricket Board President Ali Asgar Loby, MP also spoke on the occasion.

Dr Osman Farruk said the public universities should generate their own fund. At present, about 99 per cent expenditures of public universities come from the national exchequer. Of the total expenditure, 90 per cent account for salaries of teachers and employees, which is not more than 60 per cent in foreign countries.

Redwan Ahmed said the Liberation War Affairs Ministry would allocate Tk 10 lakh for the development of Mukti Joddha Smriti Soudha at Gallamari, Khulna.

Khulna University Vice-chancellor Prof. Abdul Qader Bhuiyan said the prime minister would allocate Tk 6 lakh for improved diet for students on special occasions and Tk 5 lakh for their health care.

million people -- 34 per cent of whom live below the poverty line and 57 per cent are illiterate -- with pressures from the army and Kashmir-oriented elements of the Islamists to keep up massive defence spending.

It will also face pressure to slash creeping utilities prices and raise development expenditure, without abandoning Musharraf's tight macro-discipline which has curbed inflation, reduced foreign debt and multiplied foreign reserves.

"A big question is are they going to give in to political pressure and inflate the budget?" asked another Islamabad-based diplomat.

"The key task is to attract investment and the key challenge is to withstand huge political pressure to loosen fiscal discipline."

# Battle awaits 'all the king's men'

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tary-dominated National Security Council overseeing the government.

The new cabinet also faces a formidable two-pronged opposition from Bhutto's liberal PPP and the religious right and its allies, which hold at least 156 seats.

Together they are determined to undo Musharraf's self-appointed powers.

"This government will be under fierce attack from both the liberals and the rights," Alam said.

Jamali has pledged to continue Musharraf's economic and foreign policies -- wherein lies the new administration's biggest challenges.

Pakistan's intensive cooperation with the United States in hunting and crushing al-Qaeda remnants is under fire from the alliance of six Islamic parties, which made unprecedented gains in the October 10 polls, on the back of anti-US senti-

ment. The delicate allegiance to Washington was underscored by Jamali's omission of any direct mention of the United States in his post-election speech on the floor of the house on Thursday.

Musharraf's foreign policy has made Pakistan a "frontline state" and "won international respect," Jamali said, but the only country he lauded as an ally was China.

The coalition cabinet's main challenge "will be to balance a whole set of conflicting pressures from the assembly, the president, the army, the four provinces and the international community," an Islamabad-based diplomat told AFP.

"That will take exceptional political skills and a lot of luck."

Economically, the new cabinet must juggle unemployment and rising poverty among Pakistan's 145

million people -- 34 per cent of whom live below the poverty line and 57 per cent are illiterate -- with pressures from the army and Kashmir-oriented elements of the Islamists to keep up massive defence spending.

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# 18 listed criminals held

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nal, Shamim Mollik, from Tongbari upazila. They also recovered a pipe-gun and a gun in Manuhgao area in Srinagar upazila.

Our Magura correspondent reported that the army arrested two people and seized a pipe-gun from Sadar upazila. The arrestees, Sagar and Bablu, were later handed over to police.

In Kushtia, army arrested four drug peddlers in Harishankarpur area of the town. An army team raided the house of Hafizur Rahman Khokon and arrested three -- Bulbul Shaikh, Alam Hossain and Raj Moahmmad. Two hundred bottles of Phensidyl were also recovered from the residence.

In Khagrachhari, four alleged criminals were arrested and an unspecified number of firearms seized during a raid at Panchhari and Ramgarh during the last three days.

Army sources said an alleged criminal, Dulal, was arrested and 191 rounds of bullets were recovered from his possession at Panchhari. But Saiful Alam, accomplice of Dulal, managed to flee. Later, Dulal was handed over to police.

Sources said three of the alleged criminals were arrested in Ramgarh alone. The joint forces of army, BDR and police raided a house and recovered a gun and ammunition.

Meanwhile, joint forces arrested Abu Ahmed alias Ayub Ali, a notorious criminal of Bolipara. A stolen motor bike and five knives were also recovered from his possession. They also hauled up Korban Ali and Abdul Hannan, wanted in Alam murder case, from Hatir Kheda area. Later, they were turned over to the Ramgarh Police Station.

In Khulna, the army arrested a listed criminal in Sheikhpura area and recovered a pipe-gun from his possession. They also arrested six other listed criminals from different parts of the city and recovered two pipe-guns. The arrestees are Anis, Badsha, Rabiul, Khokon, Monir and Mostafa.

Our Sirajganj correspondent reported that the joint force rounded up six people, including a leader of Jaliyatabadi Jubo Dal, in Sadar and Kazipur upazila. The arrestees are Taleb Liton, the Jubo Dal leader,

# Pak 'drug trafficker' dies in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An on-trial Pakistani national arrested on suspected involvement in drug trafficking died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) Saturday night.

The dead, M Ibrahim, 40, son of one Mosai Khan of Khejuri than of Teogia in Peshwar, was one of the three arrested from Room No. 906 of the Hotel Razmoni Isa Kha at Kakrai in the city on September 20, 1999.

Tipped off, a team of Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) arrested Ibrahim and two others -- Alekzan from Peshwar and Rais Khan from Karachi - while they were about to hand over 24.1kg heroin to buyers.

The heroin - worth about Tk 25 crore - was the biggest-ever haul the DNC has made.

The three were believed to be members of international gang of drug smugglers. A case was filed against them under Narcotics Control Act.

Sources said Ibrahim was admitted to the DMCH for operation on November 21 as he was suffering from infection in his leg.

Ibrahim's body was kept in the DMCH morgue after autopsy yesterday.

Sources said the Pakistan High Commission in Dhaka was informed about the death.

# Energy security'

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scopes for investment, if given autonomy."

At present, the government is not willing to invest in the gas sector and donors do not want either, he said. As a result, Petrobangla had to go to the IOCs, he explained.

Professor Badrul Imam of Dhaka University said that there was not any case in the world that a country with only a proven reserve of little over six TCF gas went for export.

He said it is important to properly estimate the total gas reserve, referring to the two gas committees that did not think of the reserve position.

Professor Dr Ijaz Hossain, head of the Department of Chemical Engineering, BUET (Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology), said it was possible to record four to five per cent GDP in the past few years.

If the same rate of GDP growth can be attained in 20 years, the scenario will change substantially. But if there is no energy, it will never be possible, he said.

Azimuddin Ahmed, chairman of the Gas Utilisation Committee, said the government was compelled to increase gas price 51 per cent in five phases from mid-1998 to April 2002 when the IOCs supplied 13 per cent of the total gas consumed from two fields -- Jalalabad and Sangu.

The gas consumption growth has risen by seven per cent a year over the five years.

"We have to consider the PSCs only...not the reserve for 50 or 60 years. Signing a PSC and denying export are contradictory. Limited export means the export issue might be considered with the share of IOCs, not Petrobangla," he added.

Nooruddin Mahmud Kamal, former chairman of the Power Development Board, said the country should have one reserve number and it should be the proven reserve of 6.4TCF. But there are at least four reserve figures at present, he said.

State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources AKM Mosharraf Hossain said the capability of BAPEX has weakened over the last

10 years.

A huge amount of foreign exchange will be required to pay the IOCs and invest in the gas sector, he said. "I don't think we would be able to arrange several billion dollars for investment and payment to the IOCs."

The government will hold a public discussion on gas export shortly and the issue will also be raised in the House for discussion, he said.

Speaking as special guest, Abul Hassan Chowdhury, Awami League leader and former state minister for foreign affairs, underscored the strengthening of Petrobangla and BAPEX.

Former president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh Forrest E Cookson said that as the issue of gas export is limited to the IOCs' share of new discoveries, it means the decision would favour the export.

The export of less than three TCF gas will not be commercially viable and the IOCs have to discover at least six TCF gas in that case, he explained.

## DCC probe

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ministry of local government, rural development, and cooperatives formed the inquiry committee, as newspaper reports, including that of The Daily Star, alleged that musclemen deployed by the commissioners manipulated the bidding process.

These reports said that the commissioners got 10 per cent commission, and the executive engineers of the ten zones of the DCC got 2 per cent commission from the contractors getting a chance of collecting and dropping the tender schedule.

Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka will talk to LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuyan to take proper action in this regard within a day or two.

The DCC on October 12 floated a tender with October 28 as the deadline for submission of schedules. But several DCC enlisted contractors could not collect the schedules and failed to participate in the bidding.

## Four bills

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the returnable vested property.

The original law, enacted on April 11, 2001, made it mandatory for the government to publish district-wise lists of the returnable vested property within 180 days. But, the government failed to maintain the deadline due to unavoidable reasons, said the statement on the bill's aims and objectives.

The second amendment to the law says that the deputy commissioners would control the vested property to be listed and would lease those out unless returned to the owners.

Objecting to the introduction of the bill, Awami League (AL) lawmaker Suranjit Sengupta said the proposed amendments would allow the government to take unlimited time to return the vested property. "In fact, the government is going to make the law 'clinically dead.'"

Land Minister M Shamsul Islam, who moved the bill, said the AL government had framed the law in such a way so that it never came into force. "You (Sengupta) made the law, but never enforced it," the minister pointed out.

# Five BTV men placed under Information Ministry

UNB, DHAKA

Five officials and employees of the state-owned Bangladesh Television (BTV) have been withdrawn and their services have been placed with the Information Ministry.

They are Director (News) AKM Hanif, Executive Producer (News) Shah Muhammad Hashim Reza, Producer (News) Muhammad Saifullah, cameraman Mohammad Moniruzzaman and Sub-assistant Engineer Tariqul Islam Khan.

A letter signed by the Information Secretary yesterday said the officials and employees were withdrawn from BTV and their services were placed with the Ministry. The letter did not elaborate the reason behind their withdrawal.

Sources concerned said these officials and employees earned the stick for perhaps showing the session of the Jatiya Sangsad empty on BTV during its proceedings a few days back. They were earlier rebuked verbally.

# Govt changes tone

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some areas there are crime-prone. He suspected that sophisticated arms like AK-47, M-16 rifles recovered from those areas might have been smuggled from Myanmar and the Indian seven-sister states. Troops and law enforcers have intensified their drive in the crime-prone areas, he said.

To another question he said inquiry committees are probing the deaths during the on-going anti-crime drive to find out whether those were due to negligence by the troops. Any one found guilty must be punished, he said.

About inquiry into the death of Kala Faruque, Khondok Monirul Alam said, "This is a serious matter and there may be involvement of many sides in it, and this is why the inquiry committee is carefully investigating the death."

The PIO declined to comment when asked how Dhaka City Corporation Ward Commissioner and film actor Dipjal, who has criminal background, was allowed to leave the country while army recovered seven firearms from his house.

He said it is true that seven arms have been recovered from Dipjal's house but he does not know whether those were licensed or not. The PIO said the army drive has brought relief to the people as law and order has improved greatly. People are now feeling encouraged to take stance against criminals.

In many places people are helping the army to nab criminals,

he said. "It's a good sign." The PIO informed that 1,167 firearms and 26,276 bullets were recovered and 6,892 people arrested till yesterday since the drive began on Oct 17. Of the arrested, 1,651 are 'listed criminals', 5,023 'non-listed criminals' and 218 are 'suspected criminals'.

## Piyal

**FROM PAGE 12**  
access, from under the Buriganga Bridge on November 16.

They kept the body at the police station for four days. But as no claim regarding the body was received, it was handed to the Anjuman Mafidul Islam for burial.

Unidentified miscreants killed Syeda Tania Mahbud Tinni and dumped her body under the bridge. According to the post-mortem report, her death was caused by head injuries.

Later her uncle, father-in-law and husband Shafakat Hossain Piyal identified her body on seeing a photograph in a daily.

Piyal was shown arrested and placed on remand for interrogation.

On completion of remand, he was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). Keraniganj police had investigated into the murder case for more than a week but failed to arrest anyone involved in the killing.