

Joint forces nab 25 more criminals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As many as 124 people including 25 'listed criminals' were hauled up during the Operation Clean Heart across the country in 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday.

The joint forces of army, BDR and police recovered three pistols including seven revolvers, nine pipe guns, eight shot guns, one rifle and three other firearms along with 40 rounds of ammunition.

The latest spate of arrests pushed the number of people rounded up since the start of the anti-crime crackdown on October 17 to 9,447 including 2,081 listed criminals. The joint forces have so far seized 1,703 firearms and 28,548 rounds of ammunition.

Our Barisal correspondent reports that the joint forces arrested eight people including a ruling BNP leader and leaders of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) from Barisal, Patuakhali and Madaripur.

The arrestees are JCD leader Nixon, BNP Joint Secretary

Mofakher Islam. They also arrested another BNP activist Mamun Sardar from Banaripara and Tariqul Islam Babul from Babuganj. The joint forces also picked up Jahid Khokon, a listed criminal and son of Patuakhali municipal commissioner Yunus Mia.

Our Madaripur correspondent reports that the joint forces arrested Anisur Rahman and Lutfur Rahman Hawlader, a listed criminal of the district. They were later handed over to the Madaripur Sadar police.

In Patuakhali, the joint forces arrested two listed criminals and their wives and seized three firearms. A team of the joint forces raided Local Supply Depot (LSD) and recovered a revolver, a pipe gun and an air gun. They also arrested listed criminals Milon and Reaz from a room on the first floor of the LSD. Sources said they took refuge at the LSD at gunpoint.

Our Feni correspondent reports that the army arrested two listed criminals and recovered three guns from them. They are Shawkat Hossain Kiran and Mofizur Rahman.

In Jhenidah, the joint forces arrested two people, namely Fayeduddin Fayed and Rezaul Islam Golap. The forces also recovered a revolver and a gun.

Our Rajshahi correspondent reports that the joint forces arrested a BNP activist, Bellal Hossain, from the city's Duragapur area.

In Bagerhat, the joint forces arrested four people, including a Jubo League leader and recovered nine firearms. The arrestees are district Jubo League Vice-president Khan Mujibur Rahman, and alleged outlaws Abdul Azim alias Mohon and Mamun.

Our Rajbari correspondent reports the joint forces picked up two people. They are Babu Fakir alias 'Babu Dakat' and Abdul Mazid, a listed criminal of Pansha.

They also seized three pipe guns, one shooter gun and two cartridges from a club in Kathaltola area of Fakirhat Upazila.

The police headquarters in a press release said they arrested



The Bangladesh Railway razes illegal structures to the ground in a cleanup drive on both sides of a railway crossing on Sonargaon Hotel Road in the city yesterday.

BSF abducts Bangladeshi fisherman

BSS, Rajshahi

A Bangladeshi fisherman was abducted by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) from the Padma near Udoinagar village under Bagha upazila here Wednesday, BDR sources said yesterday.

They said BSF men abducted Shahidul Islam, 40, son of Lokman Bhuiyan of Chowmadia village under Bagha upazila, while he was fishing in the river, about 2 kilometers west of Udoinagar Border Outpost (BOP) of BDR at about 2 pm.

BDR sent a letter to BSF protesting the incident and urged them to sit for a flag meeting as early as possible to resolve the issue.

JP Ershad's, says EC

UNB, Dhaka

Resolving a longstanding dispute, the Election Commission yesterday permitted the Ershad-led Jatiya Party to register with EC as the main Jatiya Party while the Manju-led faction as Jatiya Party (JP).

The EC verdict came after hearing the lawyers and examining the records of the two sides.

"The verdict was given under Article 90A of the Public Representation Order, 1972, and Election Commission (Registration of Political Parties) Act, 2001," an EC announcement said.

Earlier, the EC had heard depositions by both Ershad and Manju-led JP groups following their applications for registration as political parties with the EC under the same name 'Jatiya Party'.

Chief Election Commissioner MA Syed read out the verdict in presence of representatives of the two sides.

Election Commissioners Safiur Rahman, MM Munsef Ali and AK Mohammad Ali were also present.

Tinni murder Models Pallab, Ria quizzed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) yesterday quizzed models Ria and Pallab as part of its investigation into the murder of Tania Mahub Tinni.

Police said they extracted some valuable information from the two.

"Both of them said they knew Tinni and former lawmaker Golam Faruk Ovi well...they revealed some other information which could not be disclosed for the sake of investigation," Additional Inspector General of Police (CID) Ashraf Huda told The Daily Star last night.

Interrogation of Ria and Pallab came after Tinni's husband Shafkat Hossain Piyal, now in the Dhaka Central Jail, mentioned their names as acquaintances of Tinni during interrogation, said sources.

The CID called in the two to its Malibagh office for a three-hour interrogation about Tinni and Ovi, who has been absconding since the murder.

Meanwhile, the CID team quizzed a drama actor named Jitu on Wednesday.

Keraniganj police recovered the body of Tinni, a model and actor, from beneath the Buriganga Bridge on November 16 and handed it over as unclaimed to the Anjuman

Blix sees nothing new in Iraq dossier

AFF, REUTERS, United Nations

Chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix yesterday said there was "little new information" in Iraq's weapons declaration to the United Nations.

Blix said this would dominate the talks he and International Atomic Energy Agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei would hold with the UN Security Council. The two are to give their first evaluation of the Iraqi declaration to the Security Council.

"We are going to say that there's been prompt access to sites all over and there has been a good deal of help on the logistical side," Blix said of the inspectors' work in Iraq.

But, he added, "the absence of

supporting evidence" for Iraq's claims it has destroyed all of its weapons of mass destruction, "is what we are talking about mainly."

In its declaration submitted to the United Nations earlier this month, Baghdad denied it had any weapons of mass destruction.

Following the Security Council meeting, the United States was to publicly accuse Baghdad of failing to come clean in its weapons declaration and call for tougher arms inspections in Iraq, but not immediately, officials said Wednesday.

Britain, Washington's main ally in the Iraqi standoff, said the omissions would not be an immediate

trigger for war.

Blix is expected to tell the Security Council that Iraq has left questions unanswered in its 12,000-page weapons declaration.

He is unlikely to go as far as saying Iraq is in violation of a UN resolution on disarmament, as the United States appears set to do once Blix has spoken.

In Iraq, Blix's weapons inspection teams continued the hunt for banned weapons ahead of his announcement.

President Bush has threatened to clean Iraq by force if it does not come clean on whether it has weapons of mass destruction or is trying

AL condemns police action on newsmen

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League leaders yesterday met the journalists leaders (BFUJ and DUJ) at the National Press Club and expressed their solidarity with the movement against "torture and repression on the press."

The AL team led by Presidium Member Abdur Razzak, MP, conveyed the sympathy of party chief Sheikh Hasina to the journalist leaders and condemned Wednesday's police action on the newsmen.

They also protested the recent arrest and harassment of the journalists.

KM Jahangir, MP, Prof Abdul Mannan, Mohammad Akhtaruzzaman, Abdur Rahman and Habibur Rahman Khan were in the Awami League team.

BFUJ President Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Shafiqur Rahman, DUJ general secretary Mollah Jalal and Enamur Reza Dipu were present during the meeting.

President for eco-awareness

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday called on experts to raise the issue of environmental degradation arising from climate change and other factors.

The issue should be addressed at different forums so that international co-operation could be obtained to look into the problem, he said.

"Without regional and international co-operation Bangladesh would not be able to address the problem alone," the president said in his speech as the chief guest in the inaugural session of the three-day 'International Conference on Bangladesh Environment-2002'.

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BAPA) organised the conference with the assistance of Bangladesh Environment Network (BEN), Department of Geography and Environment of Dhaka University (DU) and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET). It was held yesterday at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city.

Several experts both local and international, parliament members, environment activists and civil society representatives attended the inaugural session, with the minister for environment and forest as the special guest.

The inaugural session was also

Envoy in Kolkata refutes 'terror' allegation

SAKYASEN MITTRA, Kolkata

It was an evening meant to clear misunderstandings and mistrust slowly developing between the people of West Bengal and Bangladesh.

A discussion was held on alleged cross-border incidents and smuggling that have been bugging both the countries for the last couple of months.

However, it turned out to be one of swapping allegations by Indian politicians and Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Tufail K Haider.

There were four speakers at the discussion - Mohammed Selim of CPI(M), Saugata Roy of Trinamul Congress, Col. (rt.) Sabyasachi

Bagchi of the BJP and the Bangladesh high commissioner. The Centre for Peace and Progress, an NGO in Kolkata, arranged it at the Academy of Fine Arts on Wednesday evening.

The first three came down hard at the government of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia for what they said supporting terrorism against India. The Bangladesh envoy however was adept enough to refute the charge and clearly state that his government was also against terrorism as was the rest of the world.

Haider said, "The allegation being raised every now and then that we are fostering anti-India feelings is completely wrong.

"Like the rest of the world, our

government is also against terrorism of any kind. The Indian government has been stating that ISI has built bases in Bangladesh. It is completely wrong. We are not aware of it. Is the Indian government aware of all the bases that the insurgent groups have in the north-east (of India). It is very easy to bring an allegation, but very difficult to prove it."

Col. (rt.) Sabyasachi Bagchi, a member of parliament from BJP raised the topic. He alleged that the incumbent Bangladesh government was not mindful of the security issue of the minority community.

He said, "The allegation that I am raising is after going through various

UP polls Nomination filing till Jan 1

UNB, Dhaka

Intending candidates for upcoming Union Parishad elections will now be able to submit their nomination papers to the respective returning officers during the office time any day till January 1, according to an EC press release issued yesterday.

Election Commission (EC) in its earlier announcement fixed only January 1 as the date for submission of the nomination papers of the UP elections to be held from January 25 to March 16 next year.

Returning officers, UNOs, dis

Teachers boycott exams, agitate at Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Over 200 schoolteachers of Gaibandha went on the rampage after boycotting a teacher certificate exam yesterday in protest against the alleged harassment of a female examinee by authorities, while authorities blamed the teachers for orchestrating the boycott after failing to copy during the exam due to strict vigilance.

Sources said on the first day of the annual examination of the C-in-Ed training course yesterday, a total of 207 teachers of different non-government primary schools of

Gaibandha sat for the exam at the Gaibandha Primary Teachers' Training Institute centre.

Shortly after the exam began, the examinees allegedly demanded of the authorities to relax the strict vigilance against unfair means, but to no effect. Soon the examinees turned violent and staged a boycott. Subsequently, they attacked the office of the superintendent of the training institute, cut off the phone line and threw bricks, sources said.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Dec 20		5-16 pm
Dec 21	6-37 am	

Prayer Timings		
Dec 20		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-00
Juma	12-15	1-20
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-21	5-27
Esha	7-30	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

2-stroke polluters to be seized after Dec 31

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday decided to seize two-stroke autorickshaws, if found plying the city streets after December 31.

Sources said 40 check posts, nine mobile check posts and 12 special teams of the Traffic Department of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) will be deployed in the city to implement the government decision.

The decision came yesterday at a meeting, chaired by Communications Minister Nazmul Huda.

Earlier on September 1, the government banned 12,500 two-stroke three-wheelers.

Now about 7,000 of these ply the

city streets but will be banned from January 1.

The meeting also decided that two-stroke three wheelers which have already been converted into CNG-run three wheelers, would be sent to the BRTA for fitness examination if found plying the streets after the deadline.

Moreover, starting today, the BRTA would not provide registration or route permits to CNG-run three wheelers that have not been installed with meters.

The meeting was informed that nearly 4000 minibuses, 2,500 four-stroke Mishuk, 5000 taxicabs and other buses including the Volvo ones are running in different routes.



Members of the Dhaka University Teachers Association (DUTA) walk in a silent procession yesterday before submitting a memorandum to the prime minister, demanding release of Professor Muntasir Mamun.