Cache involvement

FROM PAGE 1

either: eking out a living by rearing hens.

Like other villagers, Pintu did not know the bags beneath piles of pineapples on the truck were full of bullets and explosives, locals said.

Samed, a rickshaw van-puller, told The Daily Star that Pintu asked him to carry some 'Indian goods' to his house.

But Jalal, cousin of Pintu, who was primarily found involved with the cache, rented Pintu's house at Tk 20,000 a month and lied to him that the bags were carrying 'Indian motor parts'. Pintu was also given Tk 5,000 in advance.

Mozam Mondol, a labourer who first unearthed the cache, said that when he wanted to see what the truck had inside, one of the two unknown persons beside the vehicle said, "There are bullets". With mention of 'bullets', Pintu fled and Altaf, who accompanied Mondol, called in police.

Meantime, Mozam chased the two unidentified men away and locals looted the bags from the truck in hopes that the loots would fetch some money. Police rushed in and asked the villagers to toss the looted bags into nearby ditches. The villagers obliged.

Pintu's wife Anwara Begum Bithi, his elder brother and Krishi Bank official Ruhul Amin Mintu and Abdul Zabbar's wife Rawshan Ara -- arrested in connection with the cache -- were all 'victims of circumstances', said police.

Kahalu police said the senior officers in Dhaka are dealing with the case and the main suspects Jogesh Dev Barman and Jalal are being quizzed by an interrogation cell taskforce.

The local investigators said Jalal divulged important information but remained tight-lipped about Jogesh Dev, pivotal in finding leads to the smuggling bid.

Jalal is a local middleman of smugglers and was tasked with ensuring a safe way for the truck to Dhamuirhat border in Naogaon through Bogra.

The truck was driven to Kahalu from Habiganj, stacked with ammunition and explosives -- believed to be smuggled into Bangladesh for shipment to another country, police quoted Jalal as saying during interrogation.

But the truck reached Bogra on June 27 and Jalal decided to stockpile some munitions at Pintu's house because of hartal next day and duped the poor man with Tk 20,000.

The police and BDR joint drives could not recover any bullets yesterday, but the tarpaulin covering the truck was recovered from a river. Police are still mounting guard in the village and many innocent men fled home for fear of harassment.

Meanwhile, a delegation of AL lawmakers led by Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdul Hamid reached Bogra yesterday noon to probe the haul. The team, including Faruk Khan MP and Motahar Hossain MP, will visit the place of occurrence in Kahalu today.

"It's a secret plan of the government to persecute our men and shift the blame for smuggling of ammunition onto the opposition," Hamid said denying the allegation against his party men of involvement in the smuggling bid.

15 feared dead in motor boat capsize in Meghna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Barisal*

Fifteen passengers are feared dead after a motor boat with about 70 passenger on board capsized in the Meghna off Hizla in Barisal yesterday afternoon, survivors and locals said.

Fishermen and villagers rescued 55 of the passengers from the river.

Shamsu Munshi, a survivor, told The Daily Star that the boat sank for overloading passengers and goods including rice, potatoes and betel nuts.

The boat, bound for Char Killabazar from Harinathpur Bazar in Hizla upazila, went down near Khunnibazar village, 20 minutes into its journey.

Fishermen rushed to the scene and swung into rescue operation.

Most of the passengers were women and children, survivors said.

Dhaka for go-slow

FROM PAGE 1

He said the government is considering the recent statement of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan that UN currently did not have the capacity to send security forces to Iraq.

Asked how much time the government might require to take decision on the matter, the foreign secretary said: "It's not an easy decision… one should not rush."

He, however, said Bangladesh very soon would be sending more than 1200 military personnel as peacekeepers to Congo under the UN.

Asked about Amnesty International's request to Bangladesh not to sign any agreement with the US regarding exemption of US citizens from any offences, including war crimes, Chowdhury said Bangladesh is not a state party to the International Criminal Court (ICC), but the US proposal in this regard is under study.

"It (the US proposal) is very much under microscope… we're studying all aspects to see whether it tantamounts to violation of human rights or not," he said, adding that some 40 countries, including five from South Asia, signed agreements with the USA.

Asked about the government efforts to exclude Bangladesh from the list of strict US immigration procedure, the foreign secretary said it is high on the agenda of government policy and would remain so. He, however, said that handling of Bangladeshis in USA has been distinctly different despite being put on the list.

Chowdhury also mentioned that a new immigration system planned by the US immigration department would cover all the countries of the world.

About entering into another trade agreement with USA that would require recognition of Israel as a condition as envisaged in a bill introduced in the US Senate, he said it is still a draft bill pending with the Senate.

The foreign secretary said Bangladesh wants to have an increased access into the US readymade garments market bilaterally and find a proper mechanism for that.

JEC meeting

FROM PAGE 12

always in favour of peace and stability, and will welcome and encourage any positive development in the region, he said replying to a question on the Indian prime minister's visit to China. Bangladesh has very good relations with both China and India, he added.

The SAARC Standing Committee meeting will begin in Kathmandu on July 8. Shamsher M Chowdhury will attend the meeting, which is expected to finalise the date for the next SAARC summit.

Responding to a question, he said the Vietnamese foreign minister and the state minister of Spain are likely to visit Dhaka during the current month.

Referring to Bangladesh's nomination to the Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC), he said the campaign would begin at a higher level soon.

On unearthing of ammunition in Bogra, the foreign secretary said the matter is being examined by the Home Ministry.

Replying to a question on visa of Monica Ali, Chowdhury said she is not willing to visit Dhaka now.

Judges' appointment

FROM PAGE 12

front of Supreme Court building from 9:00 am to 10:00 am.

Association leaders asked all judges to refrain from attending their offices.

Though additional judges Sheikh Rezwan Ali, Mohammad Anwarul Huq, Nazrul Islam Chowdhury, Syed Mohammad Dastagir Hossain and Mirza Hossain Haider were confirmed on Wednesday, Khandoker Musa Khaled, AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury, M Nizamul Huq and Bazlur Rahman were rendered unemployed.

Association leaders met journalists at a press conference at association president Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud's office after the meeting.

"We have called the boycott programme to protest against lack of transparency and politicisation of appointment and confirmation of judges, proved further by dropping of four additional judges at the time of confirmation," Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud said.

"Government procedures show decisions are not guided by evaluation of the qualification of the judges rather are based on political views," he said.

He said the debates going on in different forums over the appointment of judges are tarnishing the judiciary's image with controversy. "Though we are protesting every such government move, government is not paying any heed and acting according to its whim," he said.

Asked about the association's suggestion in this regard, he said chief justice's recommendation should be placed above all, unless there is any proof of corruption or anti-state activities against any of the recommended persons.

"At our meeting with Chief Justice K M Hasan, we mentioned two points to him one is lack of transparency and other is reflection of political agenda in appointment and confirmation of judges," Barrister Mahmud told reporters in the press conference.

"As the practice must be stopped at the earliest moment, we asked the chief justice, being head of the judiciary, to move on our behalf and initiate a dialogue with head of the executive to decide on a transparent procedure," he said.

"He agreed in principle," Barrister Mahmud said, adding the chief justice will have to consult modalities for holding such dialogue.

AL to host lunch for foreign envoys July 6

UNB, *Dhaka*

Awami League will host a luncheon for diplomats in Dhaka on July 6

Ambassadors and high commissioners of USA, UK, France, India and Palestine have been invited to the luncheon at a restaurant in Gulshan.

This is part of Awami League's current initiative to brief the diplomats on the country's latest political and economic development.

Earlier, Awami League briefed the envoys of OIC member countries in Dhaka.

BNP to complete council of all units by Oct 31

BSS, *Dhaka*

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) yesterday decided to complete council of all its units at different levels by October 31.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the party at its central office yesterday with secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in the chair.

Joint secretaries general in charge of different divisions submitted reports about the council of ward, union, thana, municipality, district and city units of their respective areas at the meeting.

The meeting was attended by joint secretaries general Tareque Rahman, M Asharaf Hossain, Abdullah Al Noman, Selima Rahman, Mirza Abbas, Nazrul Islam Khan and Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, says a press release.

Saddam's FM

FROM PAGE 12

downfall of Saddam, may have taken refuge in Austria have been circulating here for weeks.

Interior ministry spokesman Rudolph Gollia could not confirm the report.

"There is no indication that he is in Austria at this time, we have no knowledge that he is staying here," Gollia said.

But he added that reports that Sabri was using an Austrian mobile phone had meant the Austrian authorities were keeping a closer eye on rumours surrounding his whereabouts.

The Austrian authorities were "cooperating within the general framework of the fight against terrorism with the US embassy in Vienna," he said.

PMO

FROM PAGE 12

cases of eventualities like disasters and political stand-offs such as hartal," another official said.

The prime minister and other key decision-makers will be able to virtually visit important development projects. Describing the proposed system, one official said when a multimedia communication is intended, the person authorised by the PM's Office will convey the date, time and subject of the conference to selected parties.

All parties will take their seats in videoconference booths at their respective locations at the scheduled time. Each booth will have as many display panels as the number of participants, displaying the image of the participants.

When ready for the meeting, the prime minister will press a display panel to decide who she will talk to.

At anytime during the conference, she can call in additional participants or block off an existing participant temporarily or for the entire session. Blank screens will mean participants are absent.

The video-conferencing system will be installed by third-party vendors on a turn-key basis.

Khulna cops

FROM PAGE 1

unarmed at about 9:00am to investigate a criminal case. Locals alleged that none from the police camp came in aid of the two policemen although they cried for help. The camp is manned by one SI, one havildar and 20 constables, eight of whom were present there at the time, they said.

The OC said slain SI Shamsul Huq was instrumental in nabbing notorious armed cadre Jinnat Sheikh with a sawn-off .303 rifle and eight bullets from Nehalpur village in Rupsha upazila on Wednesday. He believes the killing might have been an act of vengeance by the PBCP.

Additional police forces have been deployed at Bamandanga and Shiali villages. A number of people, particularly youths, have moved to Khulna city and elsewhere, fearing police excesses in the name of combing operation.

Superintendent of Police of Khulna Habibur Rahman said bodies of the slain policemen were yet to be recovered despite search by divers till 6:30pm. A pair of footwears and two used shells of bullets were recovered from the place of occurrence.

Police took two persons into custody for interrogation from Fakirhat. They were seen at the bazar minutes before the killing, the OC said without disclosing their names.

Meanwhile, a mobile phone shop at the bazar was sealed by the police, and the owner has gone into hiding. The killers were sitting in front of the shop before the incident, witnesses said.

Fresh areas go under water

FROM PAGE 12

Our Rangpur Correspondent inform us that overall flood situation in the northern districts deteriorated further due to torrential rains and continuous onrush of upstream waters from India.

The Brahmaputra crossed its danger mark last night inundating a vast area in the basin, officials' sources in the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) said.

According to the BWDB, the Dharla river was flowing 29 cm above danger mark at Kurigarm point. The water level of the Brahmaputra river further rose by 25 cm during the last 24 hours and was flowing 15 cm above danger mark at Chilmari point yesterday.

The water level of Teesta, however, registered a fall by 43 cm.

Our Kurigram correspondent informed us that about 80,000 people were marooned at the different upazilas of the district. Vast areas went under water following breaches at TR embankment at Kanchipara, Fulchari Upazila caused by high velocity of surging water.

According to the Water Development Board (WDB) people from Sadar, Fulbari, Bhurungamari, Nageswari, Rajbari, Ulipur, Chilmari, Rowmari and Rajivpur upazilas of the district have been marooned due to rise of water in 15 rivers and tributaries are flowing through the district.

In Lalmonirhat, more than 30,000 people of Sadar, Aditmari, Kaliganj and Patgram upazilas are now marooned due to over flowing of the Teesta, Dharla, Rotani and Saniagan rivers. A total of 250 houses have so far been washed away by the Mohishkhoncha in Adtimari upazila.

Flood control devices and roads at many points have become vulnerable due to continuos erosions of the Teesta river in the district.

In Nilphamari, more than 18,000 people are still marooned in the Domar and Dimla upazilas due to floods in the Teesta. All the gates of Teesta Barrage have been opened by the BWDB to save the Barrage as Inda has opened all the gates of their Gajaldoba Barrage, about 64 kilometres in the upstream from Teesta Barrage point.

In Gaibandha, more than 25,000 people of Fulchari, Sundarganj, an Shaghata upazilas have been marooned due to floods in the Teesta, the Brahmputra, the Jamuna, the Gaghot and the Bangali rivers.

According to the related officials 35 villages in these two upazilas are worst hit.

Our Netrokona correspondent said, with fall of water level in four major rivers in the district, the flood situation has improved slightly. But in absence of relief materials, the sufferings of the flood-hit people have increased. Large numbers of people are pouring into the district headquarter in search of food and jobs.

The worst affected upazilas are Durgapur an Kalmakanda. The river Someshwari has engulfed a vast areas of Kahmarkhali bazar in Durgapur upazia, rendering many people homeless.

Diarrhea and other instestinal diseases have borken out in the upazilas. Affected people have been passing their days in great hardship for want of flood, drinking water medicine and other necessities.

Noose for Pasha

FROM PAGE 1

Alam Khan acquitted Mahbubur Rahman, driver of the microbus used to pick up the victims from their residence.

Pasha was also fined Tk 50,000.

He has seven days to appeal to the High Court against the verdict.

The judge began to read out the highlights of the 56-page judgement at 11:45am in the crowded courtroom. Security blanketed the court premises during the delivery of the judgement.

On hearing the ruling, a resolute Pasha in the dock shouted, "Sir, I'll appeal to the higher court against your verdict."

The court handed down the judgement in 38 workdays after examining 17 of 29 prosecution witnesses.

After the delivery of the verdict, police took Pasha to Dhaka Central Jail.

Mahbub, who was on bail, also went to the court to hear the judgement.

Pasha called Ribel and Jewel out of their Mohammadpur Housing Estate residence at 30 minutes apart in the morning.

He shot Ribel dead in front of Raju Homeo Hall on Tajmahal Road and Jewel at Line-K on Kazi Nazrul Islam Street, both in Mohammadpur.

The father of the victims, Amzad Hossain, filed the case with the Mohammadpur Police Station on the day of the killings and police arrested Mahbub soon after the incidents.

The case was transferred to the Detective Branch (DB) of police on the following day. The DB submitted the chargesheet to the court on June 27, 2001.

The court indicted Pasha on August 19, 2002 and fixed the date for delivering the verdict on completion of cross-examination of witnesses on June 25.

Metropolitan Public Prosecutor Abdullah Mahmud Hassan moved for the state while Advocate Syed Rezaur Rahman for the accused.

The defence lawyer said he would appeal to the High Court against the verdict.

VICTIMS' FAMILY HAPPY

The victims' family expressed their happiness at 'the triumph of justice over heinous crime'.

"I am happy with the judgement," said Hanufa Begum, mother of Ribel and Jewel, breaking down in sobs on the court premises.

Her world has never stopped crying ever since the killing of her beloved sons.

"We'll be happy if the High Court upholds the judgement and the verdict is executed," said Hossain, father of the victims, in an emotion-choked voice.

He lauded the officials involved in the trial, including the judge, for the quick verdict in the case.

Poly, sister of the slain brothers, said she was happy as the killer was punished in the end.

The metropolitan public prosecutor, Abdullah Mahmud Hassan, thanked his colleagues for helping him in moving the case on behalf of the state despite threat from 'Kamal Pasha's henchmen'.

IOJ gives govt 7 days

FROM PAGE 1

putting off the resignation move, mindful of the overall situation, said IOJ sources.

"We sought appointment with the prime minister within a week to put forward our issues. The resignation will be withdrawn, if our demands are addressed," said IOJ Senior Vice-Chairman Muhiuddin Khan.

He told reporters that the meeting of Majlish-e-Sura, the highest policymaking body of the IOJ, reviewed all aspects of Amini's decision to step down from parliament and concluded that his step was correct.

Amini was also present at the meeting, which decided to send a seven-member high-powered delegation to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to push for implementation of their demands. The IOJ contacted Prime Minister's Political Secretary Mosaddak Ali, seeking an appointment with her.

The IOJ, part of the ruling four-party alliance, splintered into two -- one led by Azizul Haq and the other by Amini.

Sura members think the IOJ has been facing 'disregard and neglect' by the government, and most cabinet members have been undermining IOJ leaders and activists irrespective of their positions, Muhiuddin alleged.

"Amini's decision to resign from parliament was an outburst of his pent-up feelings. We respect his sentiments and the decision. Amini did not make the decision to resign to become a minister," he said.

Amini, the IOJ chairman, told newsmen that he accepted the Sura decision. "I tendered my resignation on my own and now it is the Majlish-e-Sura to decide whether or not I will resign."

The IOJ vice-chairman recalled that it was a collective commitment to stand against the Awami League, hold general elections and form government together, but the government gradually sidelined the IOJ after coming to power. "Nowadays the government does not even consult with us for any decision," he complained.

Over the last two years, no IOJ leader has been appointed to any government post, although the party was out on the streets together with others during every movement, he said.

About half a dozen IOJ activists were killed, many became disabled and an unspecified number of leaders and activists landed in jail or were framed in false cases during the AL rule, he said.

Muhiuddin took a swipe at the Jamaat-e-Islami, another component of the alliance, and alleged that the social welfare ministry slashed its grants for orphanage centres, as Jamaat Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujaheed is its minister.

He further accused the minister of providing only the Jamaat-backed orphanages with the grants and of approving funds upon recommendations from Jamaat activists. "To get government grants, the orphanages have to have Jamaat supporters…we cannot accept this policy," he said.

Muhiuddin also blamed Jamaat for including Moududi's books in madrassah syllabus and listing them as references.

The social welfare minister ruled out the allegation against him of providing grants only to Jamaat-backed orphanages and said it is not wise to make any divide between Jamaat and non-Jamaat orphanages.

About the IOJ allegation against ministers of neglect to its leaders and activists, Mujaheed said the prime minister instructed all ministers to do job until 2:00pm and meet visitors on a prior appointment basis. "I follow her instructions strictly." He also denied the allegation of carrying out party activities in his ministry.

On introduction of Moududi's books in the madrassah syllabus, he said, "As far as I know, no book of Moududi was introduced as yet. Moududi's books can be listed as references with the books of other important writers."

"Jamaat is a big party with huge workforce and network. We don't need to include Moududi's books in syllabus. Our activists are enough to bring the books to people's doorsteps," he claimed.

150 conditions

FROM PAGE 1

completion of the prior actions (the conditions). The prior actions are consistent with the government's medium-term policy framework."

To qualify for more loans, the government will have to fulfil conditions in financial sector, public administration, education and health sectors by July 2004, the WB document says.

According to the conditions, the government will have to ask all ministries to publish annual reports to be submitted to the relevant parliamentary standing committees within a specified time.

The government will have to initiate preparation of a Freedom of Information Act and introduce a mechanism for fast track promotions and performance-based salaries.

The government will also have to improve the health sector governance by initiating actions to develop a unified regulatory structure for the provision of public and private health services.

It will also need to limit concessional borrowing including suppliers' credit to less than 2 per cent of GDP and also classify Annual Development Programme as core and non-core projects.

In the banking sector, the government will have to rationalise the staff of the Bangladesh Bank, complete the process of selling off Rupali Bank, secure management support for Janata and Sonali banks and complete audits of the nationalised commercial banks.

If these actions are taken in FY04, the government will get $550 million including $150 million in development support credit-2.

By July 1, 2005, it will have to fulfil even more conditions like reducing the top tariff rate to 25 per cent and eliminating all quantitative restrictions.

In the financial sector, the government will have to introduce a voluntary retirement scheme for the NCB staff, phase out BB refinancing for directed and concessional credit programmes, further rationalise the national savings schemes to reflect market-determined interest rates, initiate privatisation of a second NCB and other issues.

In the energy sector, the government will have to transfer operations and management of 50 per cent of the electricity and gas distribution market to the private sector and issue tender documents inviting bids for at least another 25 per cent of the market.

The government will have to pass the Freedom of Information Act and ensure that every ministry has fully functional financial management units.

With these conditions met, the government will get $700 million including $200 million in poverty reduction support credit-1 in FY05.

On May 17, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman wrote a 22-page letter to James D Wolfensohn, president of the WB, highlighting the achievements and steps taken and his commitment about the steps which would be taken in the future.

Hasina calls to unite

FROM PAGE 12

Moududi's books in madrassahs and schools as textbooks, the opposition leader said people would not tolerate this as, she said, Moududi and Jamaat do not believe in Islam.

To European countries, she said, the present government projected itself as secular, but to the Islamic countries as "followers of Islam". Such falsehood by the alliance government is now clear to all.

About recovery of ammunition and explosives in Bogra, Hasina observed that the ammunition and explosives could not enter the country without government patronisation. She blamed BNP for its involvement in it.

"Even a lunatic will not believe that a union-level poor leader of Krishak League is involved in it," she said and questioned why the government tried to suppress the names of Jamaat men and why police are harassing journalists of ATN and Channel-i, who came up with true reports. "Let the government tell wherein these ammunition were made and where those were being supplied to."

About the government's economic reforms, she said reforms do not mean closing down mills and factories and throwing the workers out of job. She referred to the closing down of Adamjee Jute Mills and sacking of thousands of workers.

Hasina said instead of increasing wages and salaries of the workers and government employees, the alliance government has increased the salary of prime minister, ministers and MPs. She called for bringing down prices of essentials.

Listing the success of her past government, Hasina said the major success of the AL government was in bringing self-sufficiency in food, but BNP had criticised that saying self-sufficiency would stop foreign aid.

Hasina criticised slashing of the Annual Development Budget by Tk 5,000 crore. She said 90 to 95 per cent of the ADP was implemented during the AL time, thus strengthening the country's economy. In the last 21 months this government could not take up any new development project as the people in power are engaged in plundering national wealth, she alleged.

Earlier, Hasina inaugurated the conference by releasing balloons and pigeons. The inaugural function was presided over by Abdus Salam Khan, president of the Jatiya Sramik League and Ahsanullah Master MP read out the report of the general secretary.

Deputy speaker

FROM PAGE 12

boycotting the House unless its three-point demand is met.

The demands are expunction of the state minister's derogatory remarks against Hasina, an apology by the state minister and running of the House as per the rules of procedure.

The budget session may be extended by a week till July 22, parliament secretariat sources said.

To resolve the standoff, the deputy speaker sent the opposition deputy leader Abdul Hamid a letter on June 28 inviting him to a dialogue with BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain.

But Hamid wrote back to the deputy speaker on June 29, asking him to take effective steps to resolve the crisis. Hamid also noted that after the state minister unleashed invectives against Hasina -- which eventually led the AL's boycott of the House -- more treasury bench lawmakers followed suit without any objection from the Chair.

Clarification

FROM PAGE 1

It said the news quoted the minister as saying that "he received a letter Tuesday evening containing the recommendation of Chief Justice KM Hasan for confirmation of all the **nine** additional judges before expiry of their two-year tenure yesterday."

The clarification said this information was incorrect. It added that the minister informed (the BSS) about the receipt of the letter from the chief justice, but he said nothing about the contents of that letter.

Our reply

The BSS copy that we used for the report said, "Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed told newsmen at his secretariat chamber today that he received a letter on Tuesday evening containing the recommendation of Chief Justice KM Hasan for confirmation of the services (of) **all** judges of the High Court division."

We took "all" in the BSS copy for all the nine judges. We regret the error caused due to the vagueness of the BSS copy.

Charges pressed against six in Dr Aftab murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Sylhet*

Detective police yesterday pressed charges against six persons for the murder of Dr. Aftab Hossain, about 10 months after the gruesome killing.

The accused in the chargesheet are Noman uddin Murad, Jashim Uddin, Sujan Miah, Abdul Ali, Luthfur Rahman and Sufian Ahmed.

Noman and Jashim, said to be Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal cadres, are absconding and the others in jail custody.

Dr. Aftab, assistant director of Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, was killed on the night of September 14 last year as he refused to pay toll to the gang.

The charge sheet stated that Sujan Miah took the doctor to a remote village in Golapganj upazila for Tk 10,000 on the plea of attending a patient. Then he turned the doctor over to the other members of the gang, who stabbed him to death.

Sujan gave a confessional statement before a magistrate.

The gang had earlier demanded a handsome amount from the doctor, who had a chamber for private practice at Dhakadakshin Bazaar for over two decades.

The case was handed over to detective police following alleged inaction of

Golpaganj police. Widespread public protest at such inaction had led to transfer of some senior police officials including the superintendent of police of Sylhet.

Hit-and-run driver still at large

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police failed to arrest even after 60 hours the car driver who knocked down a doctor from his motorbike and dragged him to death.

The Mohammadpur Police Station said Investigation Officer of the case, Noor-e-Alam, raided several places but failed to nab him.

Police, however, did not confirm whether they got whereabouts of the driver or the owner of the car.

Sources said police did not seem serious about arresting the driver who brutally killed the doctor despite appeals from people on the road.

Physicians and employees of the Pongu Hospital brought out a procession from the hospital to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) yesterday and held a rally at the BSMMU *bot tola* and moved on with another procession to the Bangladesh Medical Association.

Dr. Mohammad Shajahan Ali, a medical officer at the Pongu hospital was hit by a car Tuesday in front of Sobhanbagh Mosque at 11:00am. The car dragged him for more than a kilometer as his leg got tangled in its bumper.

ntv

FROM PAGE 1

Rahman, told reporters at a briefing at the city hotel.

"We hope people will also love the technical excellence of our programmes," Enayet added.

Earth station, the telecast system of ntv, was set up by local and American experts.

The channel already signed a contract with Cable News Network (CNN) and it will able to update information eight times a day through satellite connection.

People from any part of the country, Asia and Australia and most parts of Europe and Africa will be able to watch ntv which gives top priority to news service.

"We have set up a computerised telecast system with two modern studios," Enayet said.

Executive Director of ntv Hasnain Khurshed, Director Mohammad Yunus, Programme Director Shamsuddin Haider Dalim, eminent citizens, high government and civil officials were also present at the ceremony.

3 Iraqis killed

FROM PAGE 12

The soldiers returned fire in self defence, killing the gunman and wounding a boy, who was with the gunman," according to a military statement.

Both of the wounded were evacuated to a military field hospital and were in a stable condition, it added.

In Baquba, 60 km northeast of Baghdad, one Iraqi was killed when a small bomb exploded during a protest to demand the release of local Shiite Muslim leader Ali Abdul Karim Madani, arrested overnight by US forces, witnesses said.

US forces then opened fire in the their direction, wounding four, before breaking up the protest with the help of Iraqi police and tank support, they said.

The attacks come as just the latest strikes on US troops in and around the Iraqi capital, which have increased in recent days, prompting concern that US forces in the country are overstretched.

US forces have suggested that the upsurge may be in reaction to a major sweep it is carrying out north of Baghdad in the hunt for former regime loyalists and Fedayeen militia fighters it blames for the attacks.

That operation, dubbed Desert Sidewinder, had detained a further 32 suspects, according to a military statement.

"The 1st Marine Expeditionary Force received information that the detained individuals were collecting weapons for an attack on coalition forces," it said.

A US Marine was killed and three others were injured while they were clearing a minefield near Karbala, southern Iraq, on Wednesday, another statement said.