

## Complaint cell on cards to facilitate case filing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government plans to set up a complaint cell at the home ministry to help people refused by police stations file cases.

The idea was discussed at a meeting of the home ministry's monitoring cell yesterday in the wake of a series of complaints that police refused to record cases by the victims in various incidents.

Home ministry sources said the cell, likely to start functioning shortly, will receive complaints through telephone and fax and act accordingly.

The 33rd meeting of the monitoring cell formed to review sensational and important cases was chaired by State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar.

The meeting reviewed the recent cases concerning the murders of 11 members of a Hindu family at Banskhalhi in Chittagong, union parishad chairman of Ekshapur in Chandpur Rahmatullah at Pallabi and killing of Jubo League leader and businessman Azharul Haque inside the Chest Diseases Hospital in Mohakhali.

The state minister ordered the

investigation officers (IOs) to probe the cases quickly and properly.

In the Banskhalhi tragedy, 11 members of a family including a four-day-old baby were burnt dead as robbers set fire to their house in a remote village, about 30 miles south of Chittagong city.

The IO of Rahamatullah murder case told the cell eight accused were arrested and two witnesses gave judicial statements before a magistrate.

The meeting was told that the cell has listed 213 cases for review -- 49 are under investigation, 103 on trial while 39 have been disposed of. Nineteen other cases have ended up in acquittal of the accused, final report and death reference or are merely on record.

There were 319 accused in 39 disposed of cases; 81 of them were awarded death penalty, 107 life, 41 failed for varying periods, 120 fined and 98 acquitted.

The meeting was attended, among others, the cabinet secretary, home secretary, inspector general of police, secretaries at the Prime Minister's Office and the establishment ministry, and the attorney general.

## No job extension to education secretary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Secretary Shahidul Alam was not given further extension, as his two-year service expired yesterday.

A draft proposal of giving Shahidul, one of the most powerful bureaucrats in the civil administration, one more year contract was sent through the Ministry of Establishment to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia prior to her visit to Switzerland, but she declined it, official sources said.

Officials at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said unlike the past two years, the government has decided to give fewer extensions in the administration to reduce resentment against excessive contractual appointments in the civil service.

Around half a dozen contracts with top bureaucrats expired last month and except for Cabinet Secretary Saadat Husain, no-one was given extension.

The officials said contracts of some more secretaries will expire this month. They are President's Secretary Anisul Haq Chowdhury on December 14, Power Division Secretary SM Shamsul Alam on December 24, Primary and Mass Education Secretary Tehmina Hussain on December 30 and Local Government Division Secretary AYBI Siddiqi on December 31.

Contracts of several other high officials and heads of various government departments will also expire this month. Extension of those is unlikely, the PMO officials said.

## 13 BCL

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They alleged that proper evaluation of the student and die-hard activists with 'clean' image was not reflected in formation of the 101-member committee.

They conveyed the decision to Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, General Secretary Abdur Jalil and Joint Secretary and Chairman of Okay Commission of BCL Obaidul Quader.

The BCL leaders accused Chittagong city AL President MA Mannan and General Secretary ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury of directing the BCL's central committee to pick up non-students and persons with criminal records.

"General students won't accept this committee. It won't bring any good to the party, rather it will trigger internal feud," they alleged.

They said they made specific allegations against some of the new recruits to the Okay Commission in vain.

Hasan Murad Biplod read out a statement that disclosed names of 24 members including the president and general secretary that have criminal records.

## Third force

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Without mentioning any country by name, some AL leaders hinted that those finding their interests not served by the AL or BNP became active to shape a third force in Bangladesh.

The meeting, chaired by Hasina, ran four hours before an afternoon interval at 2:45pm and sat again after evening to lay out strategies for an anti-government movement.

Most central AL leaders opted for launching an immediate movement against the coalition, but some underscored disciplining the AL itself and wrapping up formation of fresh committees at thana and district levels.

Yesterday's meeting also endorsed the new committee of AL's Habiganj district unit and took up the issues of internal feuds.

The probe report on godfather-famed former AL lawmaker Joyal Hazari was not discussed at the meeting until early last night.

## No Bangladeshi

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notice issued by the Canadian government to its citizens travelling to Dhaka, the foreign minister said, "Both US and Canada are working in close cooperation and sharing each other's intelligence reports."

Some people in national politics also have been tarnishing the country's image, he added.

Agency reports are not always based on facts as it happened in the case of Bolivia, where some Bangladeshi job seekers were erroneously detained and released later.

When asked about the killing of 34 alleged robbers by angry villagers in Noakhali, he replied his ministry was in touch with home ministry for detailed information on the incidents there.

Foreign Secretary Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury was also present during the press briefing.

## Antiwar trio blasts

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Tass news agency.

In Brussels, Arancha Gonzalez, trade spokeswoman at the European Commission, said the EU was asking the United States "to provide us with information so we can see whether or not their commitments" under the World Trade Organization "have been respected."

The Pentagon directive said restricting contract bids was necessary to protect essential security interests. WTO rules allow for exemptions based on national security.

## Jamal 'adductor' dies

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Shafiquddin Chowdhury.

Amar's lawyer Advocate Rananga Chowdhury said: "We believe Amar died because of police torture on remand. I submitted a petition praying for a court order for the presence of a magistrate and a forensic expert during the autopsy."

"The court responded positively and we will file a case against the policemen."

Advocate Rana Dasgupta, central joint secretary of the Hindu, Buddhist and Christian Oikya Parishad, said he heard the allegation that Amar was beaten up by policemen as he was revealing the names of their colleagues who gobbled up Tk 25 lakh given to them by Jamal's family to buy the magnate's freedom.

Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) Commissioner SM Sabir Ali said a three-member probe body headed by DC (Riot Control Division) Noor Md Molla was formed to investigate the causes of the death.

"We would take action on the basis of the probe report," he said.

The forensic test on Amar's body was conducted at the CMCH by Assistant Professor Pradip Roy and the autopsy at Chittagong General Hospital morgue in presence of Magistrate Humayun Kabir.

Details of the reports could not be known immediately.

The death of Amar, accused of links with a set of ransom-motivated kidnapping gangs operating in Chittagong and its environs, became a buzz of Chittagong yesterday.

Most people appeared reluctant to buy the police line, saying he was the latest addition to a long list of custodial deaths that have drawn

fire from human rights groups in recent years.

Most locals said Amar, who was accused in four other kidnapping cases in addition to Jamal's, had a good health and married on July 11 this year.

He is accused of kidnapping businessman Haji Munir of Khatusanj, Chandra Shekhor Das of Kotwali Police Station, BRTA employee Mostafiz and Meherunnisa of Panchlaish Police Station.

He was remanded for the first time on Wednesday after his arrest at Kaliaish in Patiya upazila early Tuesday morning.

A survey report of Odhikar, a rights group, says 56 people were killed by law enforcers and 61 others died in police and jail custody in the first nine months of the current year.

Another survey of Mass-line Media Centre says 1,859 people were victimised by law enforcers in 441 incidents in the first 11 months of this year.

One hundred and sixty-nine policemen were closed and 259 suspended for their involvement with repression on unarmed civilian, it said, adding 122 policemen were arrested and 130 cases filed against them over the period.

## Muggers

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of the Pubali Bank's Pahartoli branch was waiting for bus to go to his village home at Sitakunda at around 8:30pm.

The muggers opened fire on him to kill him on the spot and took away the sum he collected by selling his land property, family sources said.

A case was filed with Pahartoli Police Station. None was arrested till 7:30 last night.

## Pneumonia catches

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change in weather is actually an ideal condition for the micro-organisms to attack human lungs. Though adults have greater immunity than children they may also contract the infection.

Noted child specialist Prof M R Khan told The Daily Star, "The infection is mostly viral in nature and occurs mostly during pre-winter and post-winter seasons. We are receiving about 10 children a day who are in acute stage of infection."

Prof Khan also predicts worse scenario if mothers are not well aware of the prevention side of the disease. He said that because the disease is spread through droplets from sneeze and cough it is advisable to cover nose and mouth every time someone sneezes or coughs.

Dr Choudhury Md Haider, Director of Dhaka Shishu Hospital, said "Compared to previous years, the infection rate this year is higher. Most of my patients (children) have complaints of respiratory tract infection."

Dr Md Shahidullah, head of neonatal unit of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital, calls the trend of the respiratory tract infection of children very unusual. "This year we have noticed many a newborn showing symptoms of pneumonia which is very unusual. But bronchitis is also on the rise and exceeds all records."

According to experts during the infection the lungs air sacs fill with pus, mucus, and other liquid and cannot function properly failing to replenish blood with oxygen. If there is insufficient oxygen in the

blood, body cells cannot function properly and may die.

Often pneumonia follows an infection of the nose and throat. When this happens, symptoms of pneumonia begin to appear two or three days after a cold or sore throat attack.

When pneumonia is caused by bacteria, an infected child usually becomes sick relatively quickly with high fever and unusual rapid breathing. When pneumonia is caused by viruses, symptoms tend to appear more gradually and are often less severe than in bacterial pneumonia. Wheezing may be more common with patients with viral pneumonia.

## Driver of killer vehicle held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The driver of the Ford sports utility vehicle (SUV) that knocked down and dragged a garment worker to death Wednesday morning was arrested at night the same day and produced before Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate's Court yesterday.

Driver Hanif, son of Ahmadullah Munshi, of Battola, Shahbajpur, Chandpur was arrested from Gulshan on Wednesday night.

Police told The Daily Star that a consultant firm in the city owns the Ford Explorer.

Garment worker Nahar Begum, was hit by the SUV north of Gulshan Shooting Club at 7:00am, and was dragged up to Tibet crossing after her sari got entangled with one of the rear wheel-rim covers of the vehicle.

## 87 states ink

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and to include internationally recognized concepts such as money laundering and influence peddling.

The convention treats corruption as something more than a simple crime, saying it destabilizes countries, slows development and erodes democratic institutions, such as elections.

On the other hand, it states that corruption is often driven by poverty which needs to be addressed globally.

Signatory governments commit to conducting business transparently, to hire and promote on merit and to streamline bureaucracies.

The drafting committee began its work in January 2002 and 128 UN members are collaborating in developing the convention.

The United Nations has distributed a manual with 44 legal, economical and political recommendations for countries to fight corruption.

Conference speakers included Transparency International president Peter Eigen, who said the organization's offices around the world were available to provide help and participate in overseeing the recommendations.

Eigen noted, for example, that no country had yet found a final solution to pesky issues such as financing political campaigns.

Spanish anti-corruption prosecutor Carlos Castresana said international juridical assistance under the Convention provides

## Khaleda

FROM PAGE 1

from international financial institutions."

Prime Minister Begum Zia called for resolute commitment to build the information society and implement the plan of action to be adopted in the WSIS.

"We live in an asymmetric world marked by wealth and poverty. The digital divide has widened the development gap. However, I believe that we have now devised a technology that can overcome these differences and lead to a global society with minimum poverty and maximum equity," she said.

"Information technologies have generated profound changes in human society. These are quite different from social transformation caused by earlier scientific advances," Khaleda said, adding that it is for the developing countries, particularly the least developed ones, to seize the opportunity and adopt ICT as a priority tool to fight hunger, malnutrition, illiteracy, discrimination against women, the aged and disabled.

She said Bangladesh has placed poverty alleviation on the top of its development agenda where ICT has a crucial role to play.

"I am happy that our national policy on ICT conforms closely with the outcomes of the documents we intend to endorse in Geneva," Khaleda said.

She said Bangladesh hopes to establish countrywide ICT infrastructure to ensure access to information by all its citizens.

"This will both empower people and enhance democratic values. It will also facilitate sustainable economic development, governance, e-commerce, banking, public utility services and a variety of on-line ICT enabled services," she said.

The Geneva summit is the first phase of the WSIS while the second phase will take place in Tunisia in 2005.

## White panel

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Social Science Faculty posts.

Prof Sadru Amin of the White Panel was elected the Arts Faculty dean when he defeated Prof Sharif Ullah Bhuiyan of the Blue Panel by 12 votes.

In the Science Faculty polls, Prof RIM Aminur Rashid of the Blue Panel was elected dean. He received 103 votes while his rival White Panel candidate Prof Tazmeh S Islam got 101.

Prof Sirajul Islam of the White Panel was elected the dean of the Business Faculty when he bagged 68 votes against his rival Blue Panel candidate Prof Mizanur Rahman. Prof Rahman received 47 votes.

In the Social Science Faculty polls, Blue Panel's Prof Hanur Rashid was elected dean ahead of his rival White Panel candidate Prof Abu Ahmed. He beat Prof Rashid by five votes.

Prof Saiyad Salehin Kadri of the White Panel defeated Blue Panel's Prof Shaheed Akther Hossain in the race for the Biological Science Faculty dean's position. Prof Kadri secured 86 votes while Prof Hossain received 58 votes.

Dr Nayeema Haque, the White Panel candidate for the Law Faculty election, beat her rival Blue Panel candidate Prof Mizanur Rahman by six votes.

Prof Abdur Rashid of White Panel was elected dean of the Pharmacy Faculty, as he beat Blue Panel candidate Prof ABM Farook by nine votes.

The election was held at the Teacher-Student Centre of DU from 10:00am to 2:00pm. Prof Rashidul Hasan, DU treasurer, conducted the polls.

## Relic comes

FROM PAGE 1

Torches blazed along pathways, guards mounted watch and uniformed caterers served food in a symbolic throwback to the halcyon days. Other decorations lent a majestic atmosphere to Lalbagh Fort that came into being in 1678.

Prince Mohammad Azam, the then viceroy of Bengal, began the construction of Lalbagh Fort along the Buriganga river to ward off the Arakanese and Portuguese pirates and invaders.

The Institute of Architects, the Bangladesh chapter of Arcasia Forum, an international association of architects, staged the show as part of its 12th programme, Byanjona.

Education Minister Osman Farruk and ruling BNP lawmaker Nasir Uddin Pintu were among the audience that also includes architects from 17 countries around the world.

"Shows like this are held at the Delhi Red Fort. We just experimented here. If the government comes forward, it can be a regular event," said Shaokor Majid, chief media coordinator of the programme.

The Delhi Red Fort presents a 62-minute light and sound show regularly with the state-of-the-art technology, attracting a lot of tourists and earning hefty proceeds.

"Although far short of the Delhi standards, our audience applauded and appreciated our event," he said.

"The speciality of this programme is the surround sound system. No-one tried anything like this here before," said Sound Engineer Nurul Momen.

Pintu told The Daily Star, "I have sent the prime minister a project proposal for a light and sound system similar to the Delhi Red Fort's. It will cost Tk 3 crore."

"I have suggested that a private company be given the contract for the show. If it doesn't work, I will approach the finance minister for funds," Pintu said.

## Kuril arms haul

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their primary investigation that links the November 30 seizure of four AK-47 rifles, two revolvers, 20 grenades, a high-frequency wireless set and hundreds of bullets, to a group of 'insurgents'.

They also mentioned the smugglers used Dhaka as the 'transit route' for the arms.

A CID official however sounded optimistic about the case.

On why the case was handed over to the CID, Deputy Commissioner of Detective Branch Farooq Ahmad said, "Investigators need to visit and raid places outside Dhaka and only the CID can do it."

**MORE POLICE FINDINGS**

Shortly after midnight of November 30, a truck from an unspecified northern district pulled in Rampura and its helper got down on the pretext of fixing engine. The trucker unloaded four cartons of arms from under his seat and the helper stashed the cache in the tin-roofed signboard shop of Manik, who was arrested in Kuril the same night.

A gang of 'Angulkata' Robin, Uttara's Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal leader Lincoln and Manik sought assistance from Jahangir, nephew of the local ward commissioner and one Mukhles in the smuggling bid.

The group, based in Moghbazar, also hired Uttara's Rubel alias Aziz and one Shamsu.

Jahangir and Mukhles were on the watch for the truck and remained in touch with its driver by cellphone until the vehicle delivered the arms and drove back to Uttara.

**TWIN ARRESTS**

The gang was busy loading magazines of the firearms in the shop under the cover of dark. Curious, a night guard went close to the shop and wanted to know what was happening but was scared off by

the gangsters.

A police patrol, called by the guard, saw the gang with firearms in hand and informed high officials who raided the shop.

The area came alive with exchange of gunshots between the gang and police in the raid that led to the arrest of Manik and Rubel and seizure of the firearms and ammunition.

The intelligence report says the arms were unloaded in Dhaka, as the smugglers were unpaid for the task.

**MYSTERIOUS MUSA**

In the wake of the seizure, one Musa was seen frequenting the houses of the arrestees. A day into the incident, Musa arrived at Mokhles' home in combat dress with another four on a pickup. They took a motorbike and left the area after they visited the houses of two other suspects.

## Hartal observed at Bhola

UNB, Bhola

A dawn to dusk hartal was observed here yesterday to protest the suspension of launch service on Charfashion-Dhaka route.

People under the banner of 'Sangram Parishad' took out processions in the district town and put up barricades on the Bhola-Charfashion road during the shutdown.

The demonstrators damaged about 50 rickshaws and forced the shop owners to keep the shutters of their shops down, police and witnesses said.

Direct launch service between Charfashion and Dhaka remained suspended since December 7.

## Blast claims

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Yehuda Halevy street in Israel's business capital.

"The target of the criminal attack was Zeev Rosenstein and the blast occurred when he left the shop," said Tel Aviv police district commander Yossi Sedbon. "He was injured along with his bodyguards."

Police said two people were killed immediately in the blast. A third victim died later in Tel Aviv's Ichilov Hospital. The Magen David Adom ambulance service said it treated 26 wounded.

A Reuters correspondent saw one body, limbless, on the floor at the front of the money-changer's shop.

"Rosenstein was slightly hurt but he is all right and being treated in hospital," said his lawyer, Keren Nahari.

Rosenstein was arrested earlier this month on suspicion of involvement in what police described as the killing of criminal rivals but was released without charge.

Witnesses at Gaza said yesterday it was the biggest Israeli raid in the area since ceasefire talks involving the Palestinian authority and militants broke down last weekend.

At least 17 Palestinians were wounded, including four children and several gunmen, doctors at Rafah hospital said.

An Israeli military source said troops were on a mission to detain a wanted Islamic Jihad militant and returned fire after encountering resistance from gunmen who attacked them with anti-tank missiles and automatic weapons.

Troops believed they killed

three gunmen, the source said.

Witnesses said infantry and 20 armoured vehicles, including tanks, took part in the raid as helicopters flew overhead.

Colonel Pinhas Suarez, commander of the operation, said his forces took the wanted man, Khaled al-Qadi of Islamic Jihad, into custody after he tried to flee.

"He had planted numerous explosive charges on the road (leading to) the border terminal (with Egypt) and also was involved in planning attempts to infiltrate Israel and carry out attacks," Suarez told Reuters in Jerusalem by telephone.

The army demolished Qadi's family home before pulling out.

At least 10,000 mourners, shouting for revenge, marched in funeral processions for the dead. About 100 armed militants, firing in the air, also took part.

"Sharon prepare coffins," protesters chanted in warning to the Israeli prime minister.

Hamas and Islamic Jihad, dedicated to Israel's destruction, have carried out suicide bombings inside the Jewish state and attacked soldiers and Jewish settlers in the Gaza Strip and West Bank during a Palestinian uprising that began in September 2000.

Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qurie described the raid in comments to reporters in the West Bank as a crime and an "ugly aggression against our people".

Israeli forces regularly conduct searches in the Rafah area for militants and tunnels used for smuggling weapons from Egypt.

## Govt promises

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embassy in Dhaka and other US interests in Bangladesh," the warning said.

"US citizens in Bangladesh should remain vigilant, particularly in public places frequented by foreigners, including but not limited to hotels, restaurants, shopping areas and places of worship. They also should avoid demonstrations and large crowds," it pointed out.

Citizens planning to travel to Bangladesh were advised to consult the department's consular information sheet for Bangladesh and register with the embassy in Dhaka.

The announcement is effective until March 9, 2004.

An official of the US embassy in Dhaka told The Daily Star the announcement was prepared on the basis of a report sent by the embassy.

Asked whether it was linked to series of suicide bombings in Istanbul and other Muslim countries and attacks on Ahmadiyas in Bangladesh, the official seeking anonymity refused to comment.

"The public announcement is part of a regular evaluation of security of US interests worldwide and it was also circulated to some other countries," he said.

Asked if it would affect US investment in the country, he said it had nothing to do with investment.

"It has been issued for public awareness and also to assist US citizens. US investors are free to invest in Bangladesh and the warning would not ham