# HC asks govt

The HC vacation bench of Justice ABM Khairul Haque on December 21 stayed the ban until resumption of the court after winter vacation following a petition filed by six civil society groups and a member of Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat, Bangladesh (AMJB).

The court had also ordered the government not to publish any gazette on the ban. The petitioners are AK Rezaul

Karim, an AMJB member and former deputy general manager of Bangladesh Bank, Odhikar, Sammilito Samajik Andolon, Ain O Salish Kendra, Karmojibi Nari, Jatiyo Ainjibi Parishad and Nijera

In his submission yesterday morning, counsel for the petitioners Dr Kamal Hossain said the Ahmadiyyas are living in the country for about a century and carrying out publication, sale and distribution of their publications for many years in Bangladesh without any disturbance and in full knowledge of the government.

No-one ever made any objection that the publications hurt religious sentiment of any community until certain vested interest groups led by Khatme Nabuwat started deliberately creating a climate of vilification against the Ahmadiyyas and got the order issued to fulfil their political gain,

A vested quarter is involved in it, not all Muslims of the country, Dr

"Since the ban, Khatme Nabuawat and its affiliated bodies including Amra Dhakabashi have been carrying out attacks on the Ahmadiyya community in the name of implementation of the impugned order.'

The ban is an infringement on the fundamental rights enshrined in the constitution, the counsel maintained.

The government has to mention the words and sentences (of the

Ahmadiyya publications) that resulted in the banning of the publications, Dr Kamal said, adding that the government did not

He also mentioned that the government placed a report before the UN General Assembly on September 16, 2004 stating that the rights of the followers of all religions including the Ahmadiyya sect are well protected in Bangladesh.

even publish a gazette notification

on the order.

During the hearing, ABM Nurul Islam, an advocate of the Supreme Court, urged the court again to appoint him the amicus curiae, but the court did not respond.

As he told the court that the government had already published gazette notification on the ban, the court, adjourning the hearing until noon, asked the attorney general's office to inform the court about the

When the hearing resumed at noon, Additional Attorney General Fida M Kamal told the court that he had received no instructions from the government on the matter.

The court later passed the stay order and issued the rule.

Advocate Salahuddin Ahmad, Barrister Sara Hossain and Barrister Taniib-ul Alam assisted Dr Kamal Hossain while Assistant Attorney General Razik Al Jalil assisteď Fida Kamal.

Abdul Hannan Al Hadi, a leader of the anti-Ahmadiyya group Hifazate Khatme Nabuwat Andolon, told The Daily Star after yesterday's order, "We're shocked at the court order. We'll form a movement against it.

"Islamist organisations will file two separate petitions against today's order," he said.

The government, on January 8, banned Ahmadiyya publications amid agitation by anti-Ahmadiyya zealots spearheaded by some leaders of Islamic Oikya Jote, a constituent of the ruling BNP-led

\$47 million. The explorer expects to supply 150mmcfd gas from these

three wells, taking the production to 200mmcfd from March.

But a Petrobangla expert rejected the projection. "The six-

year-old Sangu field produced over

180mmcfd from three wells in its prime time. Cairn did not do

enough homework to ensure the gas field's health and actual reserve," he

"We don't think Sangu is capable

of producing gas significantly now. Rather, we fear that its production may slump to 90mmcfd by March,"

The Feni Gas field, developed by

Canadian company Niko, was supplying 20mmcfd gas to the

national grid without any contract.

But its production has suddenly gone down to 7mmcfd in recent

supply from Feni as this is a very small field," said a Petrobangla

source. "To make up this shortfall, we will add 20mmcfd gas from our

on the planned Ashuganj-Elenga pipeline. Sources said Petrobangla

prioritised the Ashuganj-Elenga pipeline two years back but the

government delayed the project

"We were supposed to begin installation of the pipeline in December and January," said a

Headmistress Murder

**Guard confesses** 

to helping killers

A security guard yesterday told a

court that he helped three hitmen slaughter Siddheshwari Girls High

School headmistress Sabera

Sabera's Baridhara house, said

three men offered him Tk 20,000

for assisting them in killing Sabera

He accepted the offer and took

the three to Sabera's fourth-floor

house, Jahangir said while making

"I pressed the doorbell and we all

entered the flat as soon as Sabera

madam opened the door. I clasped

her legs while the three hacked her to death," Metropolitan Magistrate

Jahangir Alam, who recorded the

statement, quoted Jahangir as say-

ter Sharmin Alam Shampa, who

the murder, to leave no witness.

clutched Shampa's hands and they

knifed her to death," Jahangir told

The hired men left the spot after

the double murder giving him only

Tk 200, Jahangir, who was taken to

the magistrate on completion of a

He could not say who master-

The identities of the killers and

who hired them could not be

known, as the investigation officer

(IO) did not give any details for the

Jahangir was alone on duty on

the night of the gruesome murders.

minded the incident or what their

five-day remand, added

the magistrate.

motive was.

sake of probe.

appeared on the scene at the end of

"We also killed Sabera's daugh-

his confessional statement to a

metropolitan magistrate's court.

Iahangir, one of the guards of

Begum Baby and her daughter.

on the night of December 16.

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The solution to the crisis hinges

Fenchuganj field by this week."

citing lack of funds.

Petrobangla source.

"We never banked on the gas

alleged, opting not to be named.

## Gas crisis set

### FROM PAGE 1

was delayed by about a year for lack

Experts at Petrobangla and Power Development Board (PDB) said the gas crisis is going to hit the country hardest in the next summer when demand for power will shoot up to nearly 4,000megawatt, a requirement projection for this

The present slump in gas supply has slightly reduced generation of power and the crisis is more felt in domestic supplies in different areas of the capital

More than 90 percent of 3,400MW power is generated by gas. Both Petrobangla and PDB, however, are puzzled at the demand spiral in winter as requirement for power usually falls in this season.

Most of the industries have turned to captive power generation in the last two years for chronic load-shedding. The industrial belts are presently generating more than 1,000MW gas-fired power, pushing up the demand significantly.

"To make matters worse, the Sangu gas field is showing signs of rapid depletion," said a Petrobangla source. Gas supply from the Sangu field, operated by British company Cairn, came down to 115mmcfd from its 135mmcfd last year.

Cairn is now busy drilling three additional wells at Sangu, spending

## SQ Chy FROM PAGE 12

"I came here (Hasina's Dhanmondi residence) to invite her (Sheikh Hasina) to my son's wedding," Salahuddin Qader Chowdhury told the journalists waiting outside Awami League president's resi-dence Sudha Sadan. Asked whether Hasina accepted the invitation, Chowdhury declined to comment and asked newsmen to inquire with Hasina.

Chowdhury, who enjoys the status of a cabinet minister, reached Sudha Sadan at 11:30 am and came out at 12:45pm. Wedding of his son Faizul Qader Chowdhury is scheduled for January 5.

AL sources said Hasina regretted that she would not be able to attend the ceremony, as her out-door movements have been restricted on grounds of security after she narrowly escaped a grenade attack on August 21 last year.

Chowdhury and his wife waited at the living room for Hasina to come down from her first floor room, they were served with sweetmeats. Hasina's son Joy and daughter-in-law Christine were not home at that time. The Chowdhuries, however, inquired about the couple's well-being.

## Injunction

FROM PAGE 12 appealing for declaring those illegal and seeking injunction on their confirmation, duty assigning and drawing salaries.

The court, on June 23, passed a temporary injunction until disposal of the case.

After the RU authorities appealed with the District Judge's Court, Rajshahi against the injunction, the Additional District Judge's Court vacated it on July 14 last year.

Advocates Ruhul Quddus Babu, Reazuddin Khan Reza and Nazneen Nahar Dipu moved in the High Court for the petitioner.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Aslam's counsel said the RU authorities had appointed the 546 employees bypassing appointment

## **ACC** move

FROM PAGE 1

drawing the fuel allocated for the

The ACC has given four days time for the ministries to reply to its query and has formed a fourmember investigation committee, which is to submit its report within "We have received the letter and

assigned an official to obtain information about 14 cars under three completed projects of the information ministry. We will send the facts gathered to the ACC in due time,' Information Secretary A M M Nasiruddin, who was transferred to the Privatisation Commission yesterday, tells The Daily Star.

One of the secretaries says the misuse of project cars arises mainly out of a fear of red-tapism. When a project is over, the ministry con-cerned applies to the establishment ministry to get the project vehicles allotted for its use. The establishment ministry forwards the application to the finance ministry, who may then seek clarification. The applicant ministry formally gets the vehicles only after the finance ministry okays the transfer.

But, he says, this process can take quite a while, two to three years even. That is why the ministries tend to bypass the process of getting permission and starts using the cars directly violating the rules.

Another secretary describes what typically happens to 'project vehicles': As soon as a project ends, the ministry concerned allots the project vehicles to its officials without observing the proper procedures. The ministries have a high demand for cars and this is how that demand is met. However, some officials, who are not entitled to cars, also use such project vehicles by dint of their 'connections'.

Meanwhile, ACC Commissioner M Maniruzzaman Miah has become aggrieved at the commission for not informing or consulting him before taking the step about the project cars. "I came to know about it from newspaper reports," Miah tells The Daily Star.

The ACC staff and officials also have discussed Miah's grievance. An ACC official says three members run the commission together, so, there is no justification for taking such a decision without informing Miah. This may dampen the commission's team spirit, he

But the other commissioner, Maniruddin, explains, "Maniruzzuman Miah is looking after administrative issues and am looking after investigation. Therefore, I took the chairman's permission and sent the letter."

ACC MEETS PRESIDENT The three-member ACC yesterday met President Iajuddin Ähmed

and sought his support in discharg-

ing its duties. ACC Chairman Justice Sultan Hossain Khan and commissioners Maniruddin Ahmed and Maniruzzaman Miah apprised the president about the structure and activities of the commission.

Though the commission was formed on November 21, it is yet to formulate its rules and regulations to function effectively.

A Banghabhaban statement termed the meeting a 'courtesy call', during which the president welcomed the commission and wished its success in building a society based on justice. He expressed the hope that the commission members would be able to ensure justice in all cases and thus fulfil the people's expectations.

## Benapole land

Export Association, Transport Owners Association, C&F Employees Union and Land Port Handling Workers Union are firm not to call off the strike unless the increased godown and equipment charges are withdrawn.

The government incurs a loss of Tk 4 crore to Tk 5 crore if imports and exports remain suspended for a single day, C&F Agents Association sources said

The five trade unions enforced the indefinite strike on January protesting the increase of godown tariff by five times at one go.

UNB adds from Benapole: Five striking associations in a meeting this afternoon threatened to go for tougher action if the previous tarrif rates are not restored.

Speakers at the meeting presided over by Nazimuddin said they were not opposed to a tolerable increase in godown tariff. They also demanded development of infrastructure in the port for quick loading and unloading and stopping pilferage of goods from godowns and sheds.

Meanwhile, export and import through the Satkhira Bhomra land port also remained closed since Thursday following a conflict between the traders and the BSF at Ghozadanga port on the Indian

## 70 RMG workers

FROM PAGE 12 Talking to The Daily Star MA Salam said, "Immediately we sent the sick workers to hospital and clinics, from where they were released after receiving first aid. The trouble resulted from a sudden leak in a boiler pipe. But we have taken measures to repair it."

"We have also halted operations at the factory to allow the workers to rest and return to their homes,

# Aid operation

The US said it would deploy up to 1,500 marines for tsunami relief in Sri Lanka after sending 17 Navy helicopters to Aceh, some of which were swarmed by hungry

Ahead of a crisis summit in the Indonesian capital Jakarta on Thursday, countries rushed to outpledge each other with Japan offering 500 million dollars to tsunami victims and Taiwan raising its contribution to 50 million, bringing the total above two billion dollars.

But the massive scale of the human tragedy remains daunting and UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said it could take five to 10 vears to reconstruct from the titanic wall of water that tore apart the Indian Ocean coastlines. In Aceh, which was closest to

the epicentre of the December 26 deep-sea tremor which registered 9.0 on the Richter scale, volunteers desperately tried to bury thousands of corpses rotting in tropical temperatures in hopes of curbing the spread of disease. Agoes Kooshartoro, who leads about 100 Red Crescent volun-

### teers in Aceh, said many others were also suffering disease, particularly of the lungs, after the tsunamis swept away the sanitation infrastructure. "Many people have died because of this

### **POSSIBLE OUTBREAKS** OF DISEASES

The World Health Organisation said it was also seeing growing reports of potentially deadly diarrhoea outbreaks in displace-ment camps in Sri Lanka and

"It needs a few more days before we can state that we are confident that we've been able to avoid major outbreaks of disease, David Nabarro, the top WHO official dealing with humanitarian crises, told reporters in Geneva.

### **RESCUERS READY TO CALL OFF SEARCH**

AP from Banda Aceh reports: With many thousands still missing, rescuers in the part of Southeast Asia that suffered most from last weekend's earthquake and tsunami stood ready to call off their search for survivors.

Hungry Indonesians welcomed a dozen American Seahawk helicopters as they delivered biscuits, energy drinks and instant noodles to devastated villages on the west coast of

More than 80,000 were killed on the island, and officials say that number could climb past 100,000. No survivor has been found for three days.

"There is very little chance of finding survivors after seven days," Lamsar Sipahutar, the head of Indonesia's search team. "We are about to stop the search-andrescue operations. If you survived the earthquake, you probably were killed by tsunami.

## **DEATH COUNTS**

AFP reports: Sri Lanka said it had confirmed 29,729 dead from the tidal waves, while more than 16,000 people were injured.

In Thailand the death toll was Sunday revised down slightly to 4,798 as several bodies had been double counted. Some 2,402 foreigners were listed among those who died, official data showed.

The exact toll, however, will likely never be known, with the United Nations saying the num-ber of people killed may be around 150,000.

## **DISASTER RELIEF SUMMIT**

US Secretary of State Colin Powell is due to head to the region to take part in the Jakarta disaster relief summit which will also include Annan, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Australian Prime Minister John Howard.

## Kids' fight

government schools including Government Laboratory High School belong to group 'Ka'.

Other schools under the group are Mirpur Government High School, Motijheel Government Girls' High School, Khilgaon Govt High School, Nawabpur Govt High School, New Government Girls' High School, Islamia Government High School, and Mohammadpur Government High School.

The test for 'Kha' group will be held tomorrow. Schools under 'Kha' group are Motihjheel Boys High School, Narinda Govt High School, Government Muslim High School, Banglabazar Government Girls' High School, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Govt Boys' High School, Government Boys' School under Tejgaon Science College Dhanmandi Govt Girls' High School and Dhanmanďi Kamrunnesa Govt Girls' High School.

The test for 'Ga' group will be held on December 6. Schools under 'Ga' group are Dhanmandi Govt. BoyS High School, Armanitola Govt. High School, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Ğovt. Girls School, Tikatuli Government Kamrunnesa Girls High School, Tejgaon Govt. Girls' School, Dhaka Collegiate School, Gano Bhaban Government School, Tejgaon High

Government schools are still most preferred educational institutions due to low tuition fees and opportunity for education unto Secondary School Certificate (SSC) in the same institution.

### **HC stays hearing** on rule on editors for 2 weeks But Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra of Thailand, another hard-hit country, said Sunday without explanation that he may

not attend the Jakarta summit as

he went on a new tour of the

devastated resort island of

would co-ordinate all European relief efforts for the tsunamis.

network ABC, said he had not

spoken since the disaster to US

President George W. Bush amid

speculation of a rift over whether

the UN or Washington would

spearhead the monumental aid

EC COMMITS 23M EURO

BSS from Dhaka reports: The

European Commission has com-

mitted 23 million euro to three

tsunami-hit countries and is con-

sidering to channel more 70 mil-

lion euro as humanitarian aid to Sri

Lanka, the Maldives and

committed 23 million euro for the

crisis. And there is reserve of more

than 70 million in the ECHO bud-

get to respond to the emergencies,'

Louis Michel, EU commissioner for

development and humanitarian

AP reports from Banda Aceh;

Elephants were brought in to help remove debris in the ruined pro-

vincial capital of Banda Aceh and

in southern Thailand, where

resorts were destroyed and thousands killed along a world-famous

mounting its largest operation in

southern Asian since the Vietnam

War, delivering supplies from the

aircraft carrier USS Abraham

Lincoln stationed off Sumatra and

sending a flotilla of Marines and

water purifying equipment to Sri

A leader of an outlawed party was

killed allegedly in crossfire

between his accomplices and

police in Bhatkoi village in

Amirpur village caught Sweet alias

Tiger Killer, 26, a fugitive criminal

wanted in a number of cases, and

handed him over to police

in Dakkhin Hindupara to seize the firearms and came under attack by

his accomplices, the sources said.

during a 'shootout', as police returned fire. Police seized six

bullets and other weapons from

marks for stipend introduced by

arrange special tuition for those students to make the objectives of

the government's stipend

follow the contributions of the

country's legendary teachers, who

had spread the light of education with dedication and perseverance

to build up a talent and knowledge-

Education Minister Dr M

Osman Faruk, PM's Adviser for

Primary and Mass Education Prof

Jahanara Begum, State Minister for

Education ANM Ehsanul Huq

Milon, Education Secretary Faruk

Ahmed Siddiqui, Secretary in-

charge of the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education Rafiqul Islam

and Chairman of Bangladesh

Textbook Board Prof Dilara Hafiz

Political Secretary Harris

Chowdhury and a large number of

government has taken steps to

ensure quality education for stu-

dents and create congenial aca-

for being able to reach the books to

would not have to bear the blame for not being able to provide their

children with books at the begin-

ning of the year," Khaleda said. She

asked all to maintain the success at

enlighten themselves with the light

of education to take part in build-

She thanked everyone concerned, including the printers and

binders, for ensuring timely distri-

bution of textbooks as planned by

handed textbooks over to a few students from Dhaka, Kishoreganj

and Chandpur to mark the inaugu-

The prime minister later

She also advised students to

She expressed her satisfaction

"We assured that the guardians

demic atmosphere at schools.

Ministers, lawmakers, PM's

The prime minister said her

also spoke on the occasion.

academics were present.

students in time.

ing society in future.

the government.

any cost.

Khaleda asked the teachers to

She asked the teachers to

They said Sweet died on the spot

Police sources said locals of

Raninagar upazila yesterday.

**Outlaw dies** 

in 'crossfire'

at Naogaon

UNB, Naogaon

the sources added.

Khaleda

her government.

programme a success.

FROM PAGE 1

The American military was

tourist strip near Phuket island.

aid said

AID OPERATIONS

"The commission has already

France, meanwhile, said it

Annan, speaking on the US

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT** 

The High Court yesterday adjourned for two weeks the hearing on the rule on the editors, publishers and reporters of four national dailies, issued last month for publishing reports and a feature on a judge's alleged wayside urina-

Dr Kamal Hossain, counsel for some of the 10 respondents, sought time as the HC bench comprising Justice MA Matin and Justice AFM Abdur Rahman sat yesterday after winter vacation. The bench granted them two weeks' time.

"I've spoken to other leaders On December 12, the court had around the world, including the Chinese, and they all want to fixed January 2 for hearing on the rule and exempted the responaccept the UN leadership and they dents from appearing before court want to work with us," Annan said.

The respondents are The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam and Managing Editor Syed Fahim Munaim, the Bhorer Kagoj Editor Abed Khan and Publisher Saber Hossain Chowdhury, its Chittagong Correspondent Shamaresh Baidya, New Age Editor and Publisher Enayetullah Khan, its Reporter Shahiduzzaman, Prothom Alo Editor Motiur Rahman, its Chittagong University Corres-pondent Masud Milad and Feature Writer Anisul Hag.

The court issued the suo moto rule on them on December 5 after the New Age, Bhorer Kagoj and The Daily Star carried reports on the incident on October 31 while the Prothom Alo published a feature on the same issue on November 2.

## **Islamist militant**

chief remanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Sayed Kawsar Hussain Siddiki Raja, the self-styled chief of Islamist militant group Shahadat-e Al Hiqma, was remanded for the third time yesterday.

Rajshahi Metropolitan Magistrate AMA Rahman placed him on a five-day remand. Detective Branch of Police, however, petitioned for a seven-day remand on December 4.

DB Inspector Ronobir Chakma told the court yesterday that Kawsar had been involved in seditious activities. "Police need to interrogate him further to know about his accomplices and the source of money and support."

Kawsar had been remanded for seven days twice in November last year and quizzed in the joint interrogation cell in Dhaka. He along with five others was arrested under section 54 of the CrPC for storming the Boalia Police Station on November 6.

Police arrested him for the first Sweet during interrogation time on April 23 in 2002 for alleged admitted his involvement in a anti-state activities. But he was freed on July 30, 2002. He was once information about illegal firearms, again held on September 24, 2002 but was granted bail on December Police took him to Burir Pukur

21, the same year. Following the press conference of February 8, 2003 where Kawsar announced his group's aim to turn Bangladesh into an Islamic state through an armed struggle, the government banned his party on February 9, 2003. Later on March 20, 2003, police brought sedition charge against him and eight of his associates. But he was yet again

## **Nurses demand** health secy's removal, submit memo to PM

released on bail on April 14,2003.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Bangladesh Diploma Nurses Association (BDNA) yesterday submitted a memorandum to the prime minister demanding removal of the health secretary and the two top most officials of the Nursing Directorate.

They also demanded fresh appointment to these posts on the basis of qualifications.

BDNA in its memorandum made allegations of bribery and corruption against Health Secretary AFM Sarwar Kamal, Director of Nurse Khodeja-Tul-Kobra and Acting Deputy Director Khadija Begum. It said the three take bribe from nurses and other staff members for transfer and appointments.

"As many as 800 nurses had been transferred without any reason," said Kazi Ummay Salma, the president of BDNA.

"We had long been demanding ouster of these crooked officials but nothing happened till today,' said Shahjahan Hawladar, the secretary general of BDNA. "We will go for tougher

programmes including human chain, hunger strike and laying siege to the nursing directorate if the government does meet our demands immediately," he added. Health Secretary AFM Sarwar Kamal termed the allegations false

nurses. He said stern actions would be taken against them.

and said the persons who had

made those allegations, do not

represent the interests of the

# Car bomb kills 21

with explosives outside a US military base north of Baghdad in the Sunni heartland, where loyalty to deposed dictator Saddam Hussein still runs strong.

The blast near Balad, 60 km (36 miles) north of the capital, was the latest of many attacks on Iraq's fledgling security forces in a bloody campaign to scare voters away from

Twenty-one National Guards and one Iraqi civilian were killed and half a dozen people wounded, Iraqi police said.

US and Iraqi officials ushered in the New Year with warnings of an expected spike in pre-election assaults by insurgents trying to drive out US-led forces and topple Iraq's American-backed govern-

"Those responsible for this attack ... are trying to prevent democracy in Iraq," said Major Neal O'Brien, a military spokesman in Tikrit. "They will not be successful."

On Saturday, the al-Qaeda Organisation of Holy War in Iraq led ´Jordanian al-Qaeda ally Ābu Musab al-Zargawi released a video of five Iraqi security men being shot dead in the street.

A statement posted on an Islamist Web site along with the video vowed that the group would "slaughter" other Iraqis it brands collaborators with foreign occupi-

Yesterday's attack was the deadliest suicide bombing against Iraqi security services since mid-September, when at least 47 people were killed outside a Baghdad police station.

Guerrillas have killed hundreds of security force members since the US-led invasion in 2003. Many Iraqis wonder how police and National Guards will be able to protect voters when they can barely protect themselves. Insurgents assassinated two local government officials for Diyala

province, northeast of Baghdad, and an Iraqi police major outside his home in Baghdad on Saturday, signalling they would persist with their campaign in the new year. Zarqawi's group claimed responsibility for one of the deaths, that of Nawfal Abdul-Hussein al-

Shimari, head of Diyala's governing **GUARDS SHOT DEAD** In the al-Qaeda-linked group's video, masked militants lined up

five captive National Guardsmen, their hands bound behind their

## HC stays govt

### FROM PAGE 12

stayed Reza's appointment until eturn of the regular bench of the HC from winter vacation vesterday, following a writ petition filed Supreme Court advocate Bashir Úddin Zindigir the same day. Appearing for the petitioner vesterday, Barrister Rafiqul Islam

Miah said the government violated the independence of the commission by appointing a secretary on its own. "According to the ACC Act, it is the commission that has the power

ernment appointment is an interference," he said. Additional Attorney General Fida M Kamal appeared for the

to appoint its secretary. The gov-

After his appointment on December 22, Reza submitted his joining letter but the ACC did not

accept it.

onstration.

ACC Director General Maj Gen (Retd) MA Matin, who served as Director General of now defunct bureau of anti-corruption, is serving as acting secretary to the com-

# **Sweepers halt**

FROM PAGE 1 Noakhali-bound Upakul from Dhaka and Sylhet-bound Paharika from Chittagong could not reach the station in time due to the dem-

"We will go on a strike from tomorrow if Laxman was not released today," sweeper-leader Naresh told reporters.

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) during clash with smugglers nabbed Laxman and passenger Harun-ur-Rashid on December 26 last year. The smugglers were transporting phensidyl and liquor on a Chittagong-bound train, police and railway sources said.

## **Anti-poverty**

## FROM PAGE 1

Planning Commission, said, "As the growth in production took place mainly in the non-farm sectors, it naturally widened the social inequity. That is why the PRSP tilts towards creating safety net programmes and to ensure that the poor get the benefits of the growth.

"We intend to improve their skills and provide them with capital," Ahmed added.

Kamal Siddiqui defined the PRSP as "a three-year policy matrix for implementing poverty alleviation strategies in various sectors. He said the paper gives specific target for every sector and outlines the national priorities.

According to the paper, the GDP growth will involve higher private investment in all sectors and increased inflow of foreign direct investments, increased efficiency and technological progress across the economy, expanded growth of industry, diversification in crop production and expansion of the export sector, among others.

backs, and shot them from behind. Some passers-by were seen

stopping to watch. "To the families of civil defense forces, the National Guard and the police we tell you to say your final goodbyes to your sons before you send them to us. Our reward to your sons is slaughter," a masked militant said in a statement.

Five men in civilian clothes were found shot dead in Ramadi, capital of restive Anbar province, earlier this week. A note said they were security men killed by guerrilla On the video, one of the captured

men who identified himself as Lieutenant Bashar Latif Jasem said his duty was to fight "terrorists entering Iraq.'

When the shooting begins, the men fall to the ground but gunmen keep pumping bullets into them.

Zarqawi's group has claimed most of the bloodiest suicide attacks in Iraq since the fall of Saddam and has beheaded several foreign hostages and led a campaign of assassinations, bombings and ambushes against Iraq's new security forces.

Iraqi interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi told Iraqis in a New Year's eve broadcast on state television his government would do all it could to ensure voters' safety, backed up by US-led troops and the new Iraqi security services.

Osama bin Laden and Islamist groups have pledged to wreck the vote as part of a holywar in Iraq.

## **Workers' families**

### FROM PAGE 12

The families of five expatriate Bangladeshis killed last year by a member of the Saudi royal family were also compensated yesterday, each receiving Tk 22.43 lakh.

The minister noted during the

ceremony that since taking power three years ago the four party alliance government has distributed a total of Tk 39 crore among the relatives of workers killed He said the government also makes every effort to return home

expatriate Bangladeshis who

become stranded anywhere in the

world due to visa problems. He also

informed the family members of the victims in the Saudi tragedy that the individual responsible for the criminal act was taken into custody by the Saudi authorities and put on trial. Secretary in charge of the expatriate welfare ministry Dalil Uddin Mondal, secretary general of Bangladesh Association of International recruiting agencies

(BAIRA) Ali Haider Chowdhury and director general of BMET, S M Wahiduzzman also spoke on the

## Killings in 'crossfire'

FROM PAGE 12

He termed the authorities "deaf and blind" for their inaction in the face of pervasive lawlessness.

bringing about a change through

"The entire nation must unite in

democratic process when the people in power have gone deaf and blind," he observed. Mentioning the violent death of Rajshahi University teacher Mohammad Yunus, journalists Humayun Kahir Balu, Manik Saha and August 21 grenade attack, the

noted jurist described 2004 as a year of darkness. He also expressed frustration at the 'lack of progress' in the investi-gation into those incidents and

trial of the persons responsible.

The former foreign minister urged all political parties to shun narrow party interests and converge on a common platform for movement against violence, cor-ruption and religious extremism. Dr Kamal also suggested increasing allocation for the

ering its officials to act independ-Referring to the demand of reforms in the caretaker govern-ment system, he proposed that a consensus among the political

Election Commission and empow-

umpire is not impartial," he said adding, "Won't we be able to find one person from a population of 14 crore?' Oikya Mancha leaders Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, Abdur

Rouf and Abul Kasem among

others attended the press confer-

"A game could never be fair, if the

# Cold wave

parties should be reached.

FROM PAGE 12 weather elsewhere in the country, with temperatures likely to be between six and ten degrees Celsius, experts at the met department said in a recent met office bulletin.

The first cold wave that swept

over the country claimed nearly 60 Experts concluded that the

density of fog might increase from the second week of January after they reviewed weather conditions in December and analyzed satellite and radar data. "A drop in temperatures in

January is a normal phenomenon in our country," said Arjumand Haibib, the deputy director of the met office. "The present weather situation will not continue longer than the next three to four days and the temperature will start falling, she added. The forecast also noted that rain

in January is likely to be less than normal, based on 88 percent less than normal rainfall in December. Cold temperatures during December have also been less than expected because western jet air has stayed above 18 thousand feet