

# BDR, BSF trade heavy

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said the BSF opened fire at about 3:15pm when BDR personnel opposed the attempt of fencing off the border.

BDR jawans retaliated under the command of 19 Battalion Commanding Officer Lt Col Ahad, the reports said.

In the first hour of firing until 4:15pm, the two sides traded some 3,000 rounds of shots, leaving a Bangladeshi peasant injured.

"Bangladeshi villagers fled homes from around the trouble spot at pillar No. 872 and took shelter in Hatibandha upazila headquarters," according to an initial report from the far-flung area.

On Monday, a BDR-BSF flag meeting decided that India would cease from constructing the barbed-wire fence until a DIG-Section Commander level meeting set for March 17 takes a decision on the issue.

But since Tuesday, BSF men have piled up construction materials at the border and tried to start construction along the no man's land yesterday afternoon in transgression of the truce.

"BDR jawans first hoisted red flag opposing the BSF move and then green flag for flag meeting. But BSF ignored the signals and fired the first shot," says one account of the encounter.

The Indian border force has made a number of such fencing attempts at different points of the over 4000-km border between the

two countries in recent days, triggering a number of such skirmishes.

## RAMGARH

The BDR and BSF traded fresh gunfire for three hours at Ramgarh border in Khagrachhari after four days of lull since Friday last.

Sources in the BDR headquarters said the fight ensued when BSF was piling up materials to fence off the border at the noon.

Situation in Ramgarh has been tense since a meeting between BDR and BSF at Subrum in India ended inconclusively on Saturday.

However tension mounted again following the escalation of yesterday's gunfire.

## BHURANGAMARI

Another UNB report said: Forcible attempt by BSF to construct a pucca road across Bangladesh enclave Kachua heightened the tension in Bhurungamari border yesterday.

The road on Indian side from Dighaltari BSF outpost to its subdivision town Dinhatra passes one kilometre through the Kachua enclave.

Indians use to pass through the enclave without any hindrance. But BSF yesterday brought in construction materials to the enclave to make the road wide and pucca. The BSF members started the construction work ignoring BDR objection.

The intransigent attitude of BSF brought the situation to a state of confrontation. Both sides were seen massing troops and artileries, heightening tension in the area.

# AL, allies may form human wall around capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) and its left allies are considering to form a human wall around the capital on March 13 to demonstrate no-confidence in the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition.

The hour-long demonstration will also be held at all other divisional and district headquarters as part of the opposition's simultaneous movement to bring down the ruling alliance.

"We are planning to form the human chain encircling the entire Dhaka city and its 22 thanas during the 4:00pm to 5:00pm agitation," said a senior AL leader, adding that the matter will be discussed with AL's left allies today.

Meanwhile, a meeting of Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC) yesterday discussed party preparations to make the March 13 no-confidence human wall a success.

AL presidium member Abdur Razzak presided over the meeting held at party's Dhanmondi office yesterday evening. He also chaired another meeting with top leaders of the party's front organisations yesterday afternoon and directed party leaders to mobilise common people to join the human wall programme.

The AL, parties under the left 11-party alliance, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) and National Awami Party (NAP) announced the programmes from separate rallies on March 2.

## Three accused

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the court to stay the bail prayers until March 22, the possible hearing date for charge framing.

Sources said the three accused are members of a smuggling syndicate, which controls the jetty of Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Limited (CUFL).

Ten truckloads of smuggled arms were hauled from the CUFL jetty on the Kamaphuli riverbank.

Eleven of the 43 accused in the case are now behind the bar. Police arrested 22 accused but 14 of them are out on bail.

## Govt

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Muhammad Giasuddin, the prime minister also said the government is going to enact fresh law to prevent encroachment of riverbanks.

Khaleda said the government is going to formulate national dredging policy guidelines to re-excavate rivers and canals in a planned way to ensure navigability of the rivers.

On canal-digging, the premier said, "Had the project launched by late president Ziaur Rahman not been stopped, we would not face the problems of irrigation and waterlogging.

"That is why we emphasise on continuity of our government for smooth implementation of development projects," she added.

If the continuity of the BNP government was maintained, the rivers and canals would not be silted, she added.

## TWO MORE CADET COLLEGES

Khaleda yesterday also informed the House that two more cadet colleges will be set up -- one in Feni and the other in Joypurhat. "One of the two cadet colleges will be exclusively for girls," she said.

She also detailed the government programmes to increase women literacy rate that include programmes for free education and stipend for girls at secondary level. "It has raised to 53 percent the enrolment of girl students at the secondary level," she said, adding that stipend programme for girls of higher secondary level, which started in January 2002, has upped their enrolment to 40 percent.

## Bus terminal

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operators, they pay no heed to the reminder of the DCC, the sources said adding that they plunder most of the money.

A former Ward Commissioner and BNP leader of Demra thana is controlling the Sayedabad terminal, while a sitting Ward Commissioner of Gulshan area and several transport leaders are dominating Mohakhali terminal, and two ward commissioners are controlling the Gabtoli terminal, DCC sources said.

When asked about the conditions of the three bus terminals, the DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka said he is not aware of and cannot tell about the actual facts and amount of money the private operators owe to the DCC.

Besides failing better management from the very beginning, the private operators have also failed in assuring minimum service for the passengers.

The terminals were handed over to the private operators at the prescription of the World Bank in order to acquire the funds of Tk 44 crore for terminal improvement.

About 800 buses leave from Mohakhali bus terminal, 1200 from Sayedabad and 1400 from Gabtoli terminal daily.

# Outlaw, JCD cadre

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Kumarkhail police raided the village on information that outlawed New Biplobi Communist Party was preparing to attack Jashod Gono Bahini at about 4:30am.

Police reached the village and chased Gono Bahini men, who opened fire on police, triggering an hour-long shootout.

After the gunfire police found Aiyub dead, while his accomplices fled, police said, adding that two police constables were also injured in the incident.

Police seized one revolver and 13 bullets from the spot.

UNB adds: A young man, said to be a JCD cadre, was killed in an encounter between police and his accomplices at Khatibnagar in Rangunia upazila yesterday.

Police said Jasimuddin alias Alu

Jasim, 27, who was arrested from the city's Bayejid Bostami area Tuesday evening, was taken to Khatibnagar to recover arms at about 5:00 am.

As police reached the spot, Jasim's accomplices opened fire on the law enforcers in a bid to snatch him, triggering an encounter.

Jasim, receiving bullets during the 'crossfire', died on the spot, police said.

After the shootout, police seized a homemade LG, five rifle bullets and gun-making materials from the spot.

Jasim, who hailed from Islampur of Rangunia, was wanted in seven cases, including murder and robbery, police said, adding that he was on the run for a long time.

His body was sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

# Galib put on 10-day

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Gaibandha police in a recent drive arrested 15 suspected activists of the recently banned Islamist outfit Jamaat-ul-Mujaheddin. During interrogation, the arrestees named Galib as their central leader.

Sources said Gaibandha police might place Galib under the Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC) after quizzing him in custody.

## IN RAJSHAHI

Before Rajshahi Metropolitan Magistrate Fazlul Karim Chowdhury yesterday, the court prosecutor said Galib and three of his top associates needed to be interrogated in other districts of the country over their suspected involvement in seven anti-state cases.

The defence lawyers led by Shah Newaz termed the four arrestees Islamic scholars and prayed for their bail, which the court rejected.

Shah Mokhdum police in Rajshahi arrested Galib and his associates Abdus Samad Salafi, Nurul Islam and ASM Azizullah on February 23 under Section 54 of CrPC.

Meanwhile, investigators in Natore have been hunting Natore central Ahab mosque imam and Natore Ahab General Secretary Golam Azam suspecting him to be a trainer of militants.

Sources among Natore investigators yesterday told The Daily Star that Golam Azam, who hails from Holudia village in Gaibandha district, was known as Khabad Hussain to 12 militants held in Natore last month and went into hiding since the arrest of Galib.

Azam accumulated a huge property after he had joined Ahab and built some 100 Ahab mosques in Natore, Bogra, Gaibandha, Naogaon and Pabna districts with funds from the Kuwait-based organisation Revival of Islamic Heritage Society, sources said.

Azam has been conducting militant training at the mosques posing for Khabad Hussain from Chapainawabganj. He also developed enmity with at least a dozen former Ahab members in Natore following dispute over mingling militancy with religion, sources said.

# PM, ministry differ

FROM PAGE 12

mobile phone service is being hampered due to difficulties in having power connection to different cable stations. Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) has not yet allocated required frequency to the BTBT and it cannot also start preparing SIM cards as the BTRC is yet to allocate the series number, sources said quoting the report.

Responding to a query from an opposition lawmaker during question-answer session, the prime minister yesterday assured the House of submarine cable connection by July-August.

But the BTBT report submitted to the parliamentary standing committee on estimate said the Tk 657 crore submarine cable project will be completed in October.

A proposal is now being pro-

cessed to set up optical link between Cox's Bazar-Chittagong and Dhaka. A cable station has already been set up, said the report.

Earlier on December 28 last, the prime minister inaugurated the much-talked-about BTBT mobile phone service but it is yet to be available to people.

"The BTBT has started setting up the hardware of the high speed internet connection via mobile phone called GPRS and it hopes to start testing it on March 25," the report however said.

Meanwhile, the BTBT has also hired top floors of 80 houses and set up machines on some of those.

On private mobile companies, members of the parliamentary body said their call charge is high and asked the authorities to initiate steps to lower the rate.

# 50 hurt as BCL, JCD

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12:00noon, triggering off a vicious clash.

Chases and counter-chases took place between Shibir and JCD and BCL activists during the two-hour skirmish.

Soon the clash spread to the surrounding lanes and alley roads, forcing the shop owners and other businesses to shut their establishments in a hurry in panic.

After the clash, JCD and BCL leaders and activists took out processions on the campus protesting the attacks on their leaders and activists by Shibir men. They also demanded arrest and punishment of the attackers.

At about 2:30pm, police took position on the college compound and moved the demonstrators out.

A number of JCD leaders told The Daily Star that they have announced Shibir persona non grata on the college campus. "If they try again to come on the college campus, we will resist them," said a JCD leader seeking anonymity.

Thirteen wounded students were admitted to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) and many more to different city hospitals and clinics, but their identities could not be available immediately.

Ten of the students admitted to the DMCH were Sheikh Mahiuddin Hamim, 25, master's final-year student of Management, Anwar Hossain, 24, second-year of Islamic Studies, Ismail Zamiullah, 25, honours final-year of Bangla, Joinal Abedin, 22, second-year of Islamic History, Fazle Rabbi Bahar, 25, master's final-year of Islamic History, Kazi Rakib Ansari, 22, second-year honours of Accounting, Shaiful Islam, 25, second-year honours of Islamic Studies, Yusuf Ali, 23, third-year honours of Bangla, Mohammad Hatab, 22, third-year honours of Physics, and Shibir JUC unit President Mohammad Sabir, 25. All of them claimed to be members of Shibir, the student front of ruling coalition partner Jamaat-ul-Islami.

## CONFLICTING VERSIONS

Itfakheruzzaman Shimul, a JCD JUC unit leader, told the reporters that Shibir had never announced any programme on the college campus before. This time they gathered their armed cadres from outside to stage a showdown and

attacked on the general students and JCD and BCL leaders and activists, he added.

BCL JUC unit General Secretary Gazi Abu Sayeed said Shibir brought their armed cadres from Rajshahi and Chittagong to make their scheduled programme a success and to stage a showdown on the college campus.

Shibir City (East) unit General Secretary Kamal Hossain said some outsider JCD cadres led by Shahin, Kajal, Halim and Khokon attacked Shibir leaders and activists while they were going through the Commerce Faculty Building.

A huge contingency of law enforcers was deployed on the college campus to avert any further clash as a tense situation was prevailing there. No case was filed until 7:30pm in this connection.

## SSC exams

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will sit for the public examinations at 1,778 centres. The number of the examinees has slightly dropped this year against last year's 9,73,958 students.

Among the examinees, 2,33,129 are from science group, 3,12,843 from humanities and 2,13,435 from business studies group, according to statistics of Education Board Computer Centre.

As many as 1,59,901 examinees will appear at the exams under Madrasa Education Board and 36,057 at SSC Vocational under Technical Education Board. State Minister for Education ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon has planned to use helicopter to rush to any centre by the courtesy of friends and well-wishers in absence of government provision to this end.

Education officials are confident the exams will be held in a congenial atmosphere after receiving huge response from different sections.

For the first time in the country, there is no vulnerable centre (copy prone) in the SSC exams.

Meantime, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Tuesday banned movement of four people within the 200 yards radius of any centre during the examinations.

# Govt is killing people in crossfire

Says Dr Kamal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent lawyer and Jatiya Oikya Mancha President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday said the government is killing people in the name of crossfire in a show of improving law and order.

He also demanded of the government to punish those, who harbour petty criminals, at a joining ceremony of about 100 professionals from the wards No. 56 and 52.

Dr Kamal, also Gono Forum president, said a section of people is diverting the young generation from their regular path through black money.

He said the general public now want to get rid of crime and live in peace.

"The vital institutions of the state are on the verge of destruction due to nasty politicisation of the successive ruling parties," he added.

Regarding the scenario of the country's educational institutions, he said students at the public universities are held hostages to a few criminals.

"The government is wasting a lot of money in the non-productive sector and the educational institutions are also suffering from financial crisis," said Dr Kamal.

He urged all political parties to be united to root out crime from the public universities.

On health sector, Dr Kamal said the poor are deprived of medical facilities from the government-run medical hospitals and clinics.

The Gono Forum president went on to say that the people are desperately waiting for a change in the process of governance.

He also urged the professional people to unite to establish a true democratic society.

Chaired by Syedur Rahman Syed, convenor of Jatiya Oikya Mancha city unit, the meeting was also addressed by Abdur Rouf, Mostofa Mohsin Montu and Mafizul Islam Kamal.

## Bigots besiege

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programmes, if the government failed to meet their demand by December 23, he added.

He however said their besiege programmed will be a peaceful and democratic show of demonstration.

The activists of the outfit yesterday brought out a procession and paraded the thoroughfares of the town.

The district office of Bangladesh Uddichi Shilpi Gosthi termed the activities of the movement militant act. It said the government has to take responsibilities if any religious group is attacked in the name of religion.

Meanwhile, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat in a press conference at their base said the Movement is running propaganda through distributing leaflets against them.

The district authorities, however, did not take any measures against the February 24 appeal of the Ahmadiyyas seeking protection until yesterday afternoon.

## Kibria's chehlum

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Abdul Jalil yesterday urged all to offer special munajat and hold milad mahfil at mosques seeking divine blessings for eternal peace of Kibria, said an AL press release.

Jalil also asked other religious communities to offer prayers for the slain leader, the news release added.

## 6-year-old

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Kalam Shamsuddin. The implication of a six-year-old boy in the rape and riot case triggered widespread indignation among the local people.

Meanwhile, following the record of the FIR without any preliminary investigation, Sub Inspector Khalilur Rahman was suspended and Assistant Sub Inspector Humayun Kabir closed to police lines for negligence of duty.

Jessore Krishak League leader Abdur Rob is among the eight FIR-listed accused that includes his minor son, other sons and daughter.

# Petrobangla asked to take action against Bapex MD

BONEWS, Dhaka

Petrobangla has been asked to take administrative action against Managing Director (MD) of Bapex MABased for Tangritalia blowout.

Officials said the Energy and Mineral Resources Division (EMRD) gave the instruction in a letter to the chairman of Petrobangla, the state-run oil, gas and mineral corporation.

The letter said an enquiry committee formed with the approval of the prime minister found operational mistake and faulty casing design responsible for the January 7 accident while Canadian Niko Resources (Bangladesh) Limited was drilling at Tangritalia gas field in Chhatala.

Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration and Production Company Limited (Bapex), a company under Petrobangla, was responsible for monitoring the drilling but it failed to do so, the letters said.

# Suicide bomb rattles Baghdad

## 41 bullet-riddled bodies found

AGENCIES, Baghdad

A suicide bomber in a garbage truck packed with explosives killed two policemen near a Baghdad hotel Wednesday and police found 41 corpses, shot or decapitated, in the heartland of Iraq's insurgency.

Al Qaeda's wing in Iraq, led by Jordanian militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, said it carried out the Baghdad attack that wounded at least 20 others -- part of its relentless campaign to bring down the government and drive out US troops.

The killings of the 41, some found in Qaim near the Syrian border and other south of Baghdad in what has become known as the "triangle of death," bore the marks of the insurgency -- some were shot in the back of the head, others beheaded.

Mainly Sunni insurgents have kept up a campaign of suicide attacks, car bombings and execution-style killings, denying Iraqi and US officials' hopes that Iraq's landmark Jan. 30 elections would help stabilize the country.

Their ranks have been boosted by frustration at the US occupation, a growing number of shootings of Iraqi civilians and by abuse of prisoners in US-manned jails.

"Our brother Karim ibn al-Karim bin al-Karim, along with a group of mujahideen, targeted ... what should be called the hotel of the Jews because it is their safe haven and a stronghold," Al Qaeda Organization for Holy War in Iraq said in a statement posted on an Islamist Web site.

"The mujahideen opened fire on the police and guards protecting the Jews and when the entrance was clear, the hero ... blew up the infidels," the group said, adding that the attack was timed to avoid harming any Muslim passers-by.

Huge plumes of thick smoke blackened the Baghdad sky as police, ambulances and fire engines rushed to the scene, their sirens piercing the early morning calm.

Hospital officials said two policemen were killed and dozens of others taken to hospital for treatment.

In Qaim, near the Syrian border and 500 km west of Baghdad, the bodies of 26 people, including one woman, were found, police said. A hospital doctor said the victims, in civilian clothes, had been shot two days ago.

Each of the bodies was riddled with bullets and found wearing civilian clothes, they said.

Fifteen other bodies -- some shot, others beheaded -- were found just south of Baghdad in the Sunni-dominated area now known as the "triangle of death," Iraqi army sources said.

The decapitated corpses were found inside an abandoned base of the former Iraqi army, Defense Ministry Capt. Sabah Yassin said. The bodies included 10 men, three

women and two children.

Yassin said the bodies had no identification on them. But some of the dead men were thought to have been part of a group of Iraqi soldiers who were kidnapped by insurgents in the area two weeks ago, Yassin said.

In the southern city of Basra, a roadside bomb in the southern city of Basra killed one policeman, police said.

Insurgents have vowed to push their campaign until US forces have left, trying to capitalize on the anger of many Iraqis who have become frustrated at what they say is daily harassment by US soldiers.

Controversy over US tactics in Iraq has been stoked by the fatal shooting of an Italian secret agent during a hostage rescue, and the accidental killing of a Bulgarian soldier.

An American general said Tuesday the US military was investigating procedures at the often tense military checkpoints as part of a probe into the intelligence officer's killing.

Italy's Foreign Minister Gianfranco Fini earlier rejected a US account of how its forces killed the agent last Friday after he rescued a journalist held hostage in Iraq.

Agent Nicola Calipari died shielding reporter Giuliana Sgrena from US gunfire as they drove to Baghdad airport.

The US military has said its soldiers fired on the Italians' car approached a checkpoint at speed and failed to heed signals to slow down. But Fini said the team had been driving slowly and received no warning.

Bulgaria, a US ally which has 430 troops in Iraq, has also accused US troops of accidentally killing a Bulgarian soldier and demanded a full investigation.

## Exports

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competitive," Mustafiz said.

Bangladesh's exports to the US market have been in a declining trend in the last few years because of stiff competition from Chinese products and that is continuing, he said. "It is difficult to say how much the quota phase out will affect our exports on the basis of one-month statistics," he added.

According to EPB statistics, exports fetched US\$730 million in January 2004 while in January 2005 that amount dropped to US\$642.59 million, recording 11.94 percent of negative growth.

"Our export growth was 21.84 percent in the first quarter of the current fiscal year. The growth is coming down alarmingly and in January growth was negative, which made us concerned with the present situation," said a highly placed source at the commerce ministry.

# BB for action against

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Company Act," the investigator pointed out.

Sources said, the investigators did not pinpoint the mastermind who has backed the MD in implementing the scam. "But we know there is a powerful person behind the MD. The central bank may file a case against the civil court and follow-up investigations will unearth this powerful person's involvement," quipped a high official of the BB.

The bank will scrutinise the investigation report after it is submitted to the governor and then go for action, he added.

On February 12, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) suspended a Tk 55 crore public floating of Premier Bank after around 25,000 fake beneficiary owners' (BO) accounts were found

in its preliminary investigation.

The Bangladesh Bank on February 14 launched an investigation into the Premier Bank public floating scam after being informed officially by the SEC.

It is mandatory to mention a bank account number, the branch name and a BO account number while applying for shares in IPO. On the other hand, it is also mandatory to mention a bank account number and the branch name while opening a BO account.

Apart from the Dhaka Stock Exchange, many small as well as big investors suspect that the Premier Bank might have tried to manipulate the initial public offering (IPO) process.

# \$7.5m WB loan

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and Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation (PKSF), an NGO, are planning the mitigation project under the WB framework. The project aims at rehabilitating the rickshaw-pullers either in Dhaka or in their villages by providing them with micro-credit and vocational training on their choices, Hossain said.

Poor diet, excessive labour, exposure to extreme heat, wind and rain -- all this goes against a sustained health of the rickshaw-pullers, Bangladesh Agricultural University Prof Dr Mazahar Ali said in his keynote paper.

He also pointed out that the school enrolment rate of rickshaw-pullers' children is very poor, only 57 percent, while the literacy rate of the pullers themselves is only 39 percent.

Ali, in his