

# The Daily Star honours meritorious students

## 610 awarded for outstanding results in 'O' and 'A' level exams

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Daily Star honoured 610 outstanding achievers in the 'O' and 'A' level examinations of July 2004--June 2005 academic year amid fanfares and jubilation at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in Dhaka yesterday.

Speakers at the gala event styled 'Saluting the Nation Builders of Tomorrow' called on the young scholars to keep their studies on to the highest level wherever available, but with the ultimate goal to serve their country as its future leaders.

Every year since 1999 The Daily Star has been awarding Certificates of Excellence and medals to the students who secure six or more A's in two consecutive sittings in the O level and a minimum of three A's in the A level exams held under Cambridge University and the University of London.

This seventh round of the prestigious award went to 610 students from 39 schools -- 469 for brilliant O level scores and 141 for A level scores.

British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury, as chief guest of the gala, presented the certificates and medals to the future 'nation builders'.

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam presided over the felicitations with David Davies, global relationship manager of Edexcel International, UK and Omer Rashid, director marketing of Banglalink, present among the guests.

Anwar Choudhury lauded the achievements by the Bangladeshi students. "Each of them has achieved better results than I did and I am, as British High Commissioner here and as a son of the land and the soil, also very proud."

"You have made your parents and teachers proud and now you have the real possibility to make your nation proud," he observed.

The UK has become the largest bilateral donor to Bangladesh and it wants to make sure that every Bangladeshi child gets the chance to go to school, Choudhury said.

Referring to the importance of English language in the globalised world, he said English language must not be treated as a mere language.

English language plays a very significant role in global integrity and global knowledge, the British High Commissioner said. "This is why we are working to expand English language activities massively."

Appreciating the large number of good grade achievers in an internationally competitive framework, Mahfuz Anam in his welcome speech said: "You have made us proud. We thank you for your achievement and we will work together to build Bangladesh."

There is no achievement unless it touches the community and the people who have actually given them the opportunity to grow, he said recalling that this year English medium schools and their teachers have done something again to make all proud.

English medium schools and The Daily Star have created a relief fund for the needy in the society, he said. "All of us have worked together to raise Tk 11 lakh which we have distributed to 1,100 families in Dinajpur, Thakurgaon, Panchagar, Gaibandha and Kurigram districts. It is an evidence of how closely you feel for the community."

Anam lauded contributions of the parents, schools, teachers and management of these institutions who have played very important roles from their respective positions in achieving the success by these students.

Addressing the awardees, David Davies said these students have achieved some of the best results in the world in their subjects. "Students of today in Bangladesh have the opportunity to [integrate] into the global world of tomorrow."

"We have seen in recent years

the problems which can arise when there are misunderstandings between groups from different cultures," he said adding, "these students here today have made an excellent foundation on which to help to build the world of the future."

Edexcel has been working with examination boards in many countries around the world to help them to develop their examination systems using the latest technology, Davies mentioned.

In his address, Omer Rashid appreciated the achievements of Bangladeshi students, noting that this type of recognition is very important which will encourage them to contribute more to build the nation.

Sarah Fouzia Chowdhury from Scholastica, who received 10 A's in one sitting and Prathama Komal Nabi from Sunnysdale School, who secured 11 A's in two consecutive sittings spoke on behalf of the O level awardees.

Yasir Bin Baqui from Sunshine Grammar School, Chittagong, who achieved 5 A's in one sitting in June 2005 session spoke on behalf of the A level awardees.

This year 56 candidates -- 38 O level and 18 A level students -- received awards for obtaining the highest marks in each subject in each session. Special awards were given to 10 candidates -- 7 students from O level and 3 from A level -- who have obtained the highest number of A's in one sitting.

Two students from O level and four students from A level were awarded for obtaining the highest number of A's altogether.

Sadya Afsheen Mallick rendered inspiring patriotic songs and Elita Karim of The Daily Star conducted the ceremony, which went on for more than three hours.

## Offer to LDCs

FROM PAGE 1

These six leaders are Minister for Foreign Affairs, External Trade and Sugar of Fiji Kalipote Lavola, three ambassadors to the WTO -- South Africa's Faizel Ismail, Chile's Mario Matus and Benin's Samuel Amehou, Member of Indian Planning Commission and former WTO Deputy Director General Dr Anwarul Hoda and Executive Director of Bangladesh's Centre for Policy Dialogue Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya. They visited Washington DC, Brussels and London during March 6-10 and talked to public representatives and their staffs, foreign ministry officials, private sector people, researchers and civil society members.

These people included the Chief of Staff of the Subcommittee on Trade of the US Wage and Means Angela Paolini Ellard, US State Department Undersecretary for Economy Business and Agricultural Affairs Josette Shiner and Deputy Assistant Administrator, USAID James Smith.

During the discussions, the US officials showed a lukewarm response to initiate more steps to accommodate LDC demands in the trade deal specially in the view that the US domestic situation is not very favourable for more trade concessions compatible with WTO compulsions. This is because the Trade Promotion Authority, which is a Congressional authority to the president to directly negotiate trade agreements with other heads of state on a fast track, is on its way out, the GSP issue is coming up for renewal and the farm bill is set to be reviewed with subsidy cuts on the cards.

As such the US officials hold the view that whatever they have done for the LDCs is final and sealed.

However, the US feels that if the Doha Round concluding deal becomes a broader package with more areas for market access such as more cuts in industrial market access to developed countries, and greater EU market access in agriculture and service sector access to developing countries specially India, Brazil and China, then the US may find room to accommodate the LDC concerns.

Because of the low ambition level about striking a deal during the round, private sector initiative -- such as the one spearheaded by the pharmaceutical sector during the Uruguay Round -- to move the talks forward is also not visible. There is a chance that the agro companies backed by the giants such as Cargill and Monsanto will create pressure on countries to free up trade for a deal, but so far there has not been any visible alliance building effort in the horizon.

There has also not been any visible development in the Aid for Trade proposal for capacity building of the LDCs. The issues that still remain unclear are the yet to be proposed governance structure, mobilisation of resources and making it clear whether the resources will be newly committed or the old ones simply redirected.

About the duty free access, the US officials showed very specific set of mind to the six-member panel of speakers.

The situation right now is such that of the \$12 billion exports from the LDCs to the US, about \$7 billion is subjected to duty. Thirty-eight percent of the LDC exports to the US is textiles and garments, which are subjected to duty. The rest are petroleum products (51 percent) and others. Of this amount, Bangladesh exports items worth \$2.3 billion under \$75 product lines of which \$2.1 billion under 354 items are subjected to duty. As such, the items, withdrawal of duty on which could help the LDCs heavily charged with tariff.

Still, the US continues to argue that since Bangladesh and many other LDCs clocked double digit growth in its apparel exports in the post-MFA regime, it cannot claim duty and quota free market access in apparels.

The Hong Kong Declaration has also not given the LDCs full and immediately effective duty-free access as it has kept aside 3 percent products on an Exclusion List. The modalities of the

Exclusion List will be thrashed out in Geneva this year.

"We wanted to impress upon the US policy maker that the Hong Kong outcome is not acceptable to the LDCs and they expect a fuller market access decision under the final deal," Debapriya Bhattacharya, one of the member of the Development Group, told The daily Star.

Debapriya further observed that the US unwillingness to provide duty free access to the LDCs rests on two factors -- pressure from its textile lobby protecting and the offer it gave to low income African countries under the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). The US private sector however feels that countries like Bangladesh can opt for voluntary export restriction (VER) on products that the AGOA countries produce and then ask for duty free access on the rest of the product lines.

The European Union (EU) is also passing through an unsettling time with the French elections looming round the corner. It feels that it has done enough for the LDC market access, specially under the light of the Everything But Arms deal and cannot go any further. Rather, it feels, it is now time for the developing countries such as India, Brazil and China to open up their markets in non-agriculture and service sectors.

In Brussels, the Development Group met with Denis Redonnet from the Cabinet of Commissioner Peter Mandelson, Philippe Dupontet of the European Commission and Mercedes Garcia Pérez of the Council of the European Union.

## Dialogue

FROM PAGE 1

series of discussion aimed at enabling the civil society to come up with specific suggestions and development ideas in the build-up to the next parliamentary election.

The programme begins at 2:30pm at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel Ball Room.

Former chief adviser of caretaker government Muhammad Habibur Rahman will be the chief guest at the dialogue slated to be presided over by CPD Chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan.

CPD Executive Director Debapriya Bhattacharya will make the introductory speech. Co-organisers Prothom Alo Editor Matjur Rahman and The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam will speak before members of the Citizen's Group start deliberating.

Earlier, CPD convened a National Policy Forum and took the initiative to prepare a number of policy briefs with a view to provide the newly elected government with an actionable agenda before 2001 national election.

In 2003, the civil society think-tank in collaboration with The Daily Star and Prothom Alo convened a National Policy Review Forum and constituted 17 Review Task Forces, revisiting the recommendations put forward in 2001.

Through a dialogue process involving a cross section of stakeholders, the CPD Citizens' Group will work out a vision paper that will articulate strategies in key areas of public action with specific goals and clearly identifiable targets for the next 15 years.

The paper will seek to help the newly elected government in guiding its policy initiatives.

It may also be used as a reference point for pre-election citizen's activism, and also contribute to the manifestos of the political parties, hope the organisers.

The CPD would also commission a number of task forces to identify modalities for implementing the strategies devised in the paper.

## Strike called

FROM PAGE 16

attack on Eden College students on March 14 and illegal seat dealings at the college hostels.

The combine comprising Bangladesh Chhatra League and seven other student bodies yesterday brought out a procession that proceeded from the DU campus towards Eden College administrative building.

But police prevented them by putting barbed wire fencing on the road in front of Sir A F Rahman Hall, where they held the rally.

Prilata Sangsad, a platform of Eden College students, yesterday reiterated their demand for resignation of college Principal Feroza Begum and Hostel Super Khadiza Khanum.

At a press conference on the DU campus, they urged the authorities to build new hostels to solve seat crisis. They stressed the need for formulation and maintenance of proper rules and regulations for allotment of seats in the hostels.

They also asked for immediate resumption of normal education activities in the college.

To press home their demands, Prilata Sangsad announced a charter of programmes that include rally on the DU campus on March 23, human chain at Muktangan on March 25 and sit-in demonstration in front of Eden College administrative building on March 27.

Eight former leaders of the Eden College Students Union, including Matia Chowdhury, Hosne Ara Islam Baby, and Hosne Ara Dilu, yesterday condemned the attack on general students of the college and demanded punishment to the attackers.

Expressing dissatisfaction over the newspaper and other media coverage on the recent incidents in the college, Eden College authorities in a press release yesterday said punitive actions will be taken against illegal residents of the hostels very soon and the hostels will reopen within the shortest possible time.

## Tarique wants

FROM PAGE 1

implemented our promises and done a lot of development work," Tarique said.

The party senior leaders will prepare the manifesto, he said, adding, "If voted to power, we will attach great importance to people's peace and economic development."

Acknowledging the existing crisis in the power sector, Tarique observed that the BNP government has not done well in this sector. "But if people vote us to power, we will develop the sector the same way we have crushed violence," he said.

Deputy Minister for Information Abdus Salam Pintu, Assistance Press Secretary to the PM Ashique Islam and executives of the Hawa Bhaban, the BNP chairperson's political office, were present at the discussion.

## Housewife dies

FROM PAGE 16

10, including Badal, of setting fire to his sister's body having failed to realise Tk 1 lakh in dowry.

Quoting from the FIR (first information report) police said Shefali's in-laws used to torture her often for the dowry. Upon her husband's return to the country three days back, her in-laws again scolded her for the dowry and at one stage set fire to her body.

However, Bhajan told the news-men that Shefali herself set fire to her body following a family quarrel.

## Manpower

FROM PAGE 16

resilience," said a recruiting agent.

"Negotiation to liberalise mode four is very important for Bangladesh. The expatriate ministry's initiative to create a high-powered committee to address mode four is a great move," the agent added.

SM Wahid-uz-Zaman, director general (DG) of Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), said formulation of the concept paper will not take more than a month to complete once the commerce ministry approves the fund.

"Through the study we will know the numbers of skilled and unskilled workers in the country and decide how to prepare them in line with the developed countries' demand for manpower," the DG said.

"Human resource migration is not well organised in our country but when we have all the statistics to formulate a strategy we would gain a lot," he said.

BMET rough estimate says 55 percent of the migrant workers are unskilled, 40 percent are skilled and semi-skilled and three percent are professionals.

According to BMET there are 19 training centres in the country while many are to be operational soon prioritising courses like information and communications technology, textile, automobiles, nursing, household work etc for the aspirant migrant workers.

## Rupali loans

FROM PAGE 16

senior principal officer of the head office, submitted their inquiry report on March 14.

The report revealed that a small branch of Rupali Bank at Nathullahad bus terminal sanctioned Tk 21.47 core in loan to Ani Enterprise owned by Jannatun Nesa Nayan, who is also managing director of recently inaugurated Ambia Memorial Hospital and Diagnostic Limited (AMHDL).

Fifteen other BNP leaders in the city also received loans amounting to a total of Tk 3.53 core. Many of these debtors have already become loan defaulters.

Zillur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Barisal Kotwali Police Station also investigation officer of the case, said the case was filed on March 16 and the two bank officers from the inquiry committee are included on the list of six witnesses.

Warrants were issued against the accused and the names of individuals from the board of directors who had sanctioned the loans, and the names of borrowers and guarantors will also be included on the list of accused after the investigation, he added.

At a news conference held on the premises of AMHDL on Saturday, the authorities of the company claimed that AMHDL is not involved with the loan scandal and it could have been a conspiracy of a vested quarter against the privatization scheme of the bank.

However they acknowledged that Jannatun Nesa Nayan, managing director of the company, had been implicated in the loan scandal and that they had failed to produce any document refuting the implication that she had received loans in crores of taka under names of different firms.

They said the total project cost of AMHDL was Tk 13.49 core and Rupali Bank's Nathullahad branch provided Tk 8.95 core in loan at an interest of Tk 0.35 crore. Three persons including the chairman, managing director and the director of AMHDL, provided the rest of the amount as capital for the project, the company authorities said.

## Dhaka to seek

FROM PAGE 1

Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries on March 22.

Identifying the adverse trade imbalance and problems over water sharing of common rivers as the two main points on the agenda, Morshed said, "We should take bilateral measures to address the issue of trade gap seriously. India can afford to take unilateral initiative to provide greater market access for Bangladeshi goods."

On India's willingness to sign a free trade agreement (FTA) with Bangladesh, which India considers to be one way of minimising the trade gap between the two South Asian neighbours, Morshed said, "A bilateral FTA with India will be cross-cutting with FTA arrangements under Bimstec and Safta. But we will expect some early harvest as a CBM."

Asked how India could provide Bangladesh the "early harvest", the foreign minister said, "The two commerce ministers can sit together and, to begin with, discuss lifting of non-tariff and para-tariff barriers on Bangladesh's exports of medicine and drugs, ceramics and porcelains and leather and leather goods."

He recalled Bangladesh's vital role in opening up its market in the 1990s allowing greater access to Indian goods and even services like restaurants and shops to thrive and said India should reciprocate now.

"We [Bangladesh] are India-locked, while India's northeast is Bangladesh-locked. But at no point of time we should consider our geographic locations as a liability, rather it's an asset if we can transcend this to mutual economic benefits," Morshed said.

The foreign minister sees no points why Bangladesh and India should not excel and benefit from enhanced bilateral trades, as "We don't have any Kashmir between us. We don't have our fingers on buttons of any nuclear devices. India and Bangladesh are supposed to be natural allies."

Morshed described some of the confidence building measures Bangladesh has so far taken, like providing Indians with multiple entry visas facilitating travel from the northeast part to West Bengal and beyond through Bangladesh, and developing communication infra-structures.

On Bangladesh's getting transit through India to Nepal, the foreign minister said neither Bangladesh nor Nepal is able to tap the trade potential because of "the untraversable road conditions in India and security problem in transit route."

He hinted that the bilateral trade agreement between India and Bangladesh, which has been renewed on an ad hoc basis every six months since 2001, might come up for signing on a longer timetable--for two or three years.

Besides, accords on investment

protection and narcotics control are also up for signing, he said.

Morshed referred to India's proposals for tri-nation gas pipeline, Shildala-Joydevpur and Akhaura-Agartola rail links and said, "We are open to all good initiatives provided we get substantial reciprocation from India on resolving trade imbalance and water problems."

"For us water is a question of survival. For India it is a question of augmentation. If India builds the Tipaimukh dam, our Surma and Kishiyara will dry down. We are not saying that India should not go for any water-augmentation project, rather what we just expect from India is taking decision with consultation with co-riparian countries so that projects do not affect the neighbours adversely," he explained Bangladesh's position.

He referred to many common rivers Bangladesh and India share water from and said, "Unilateral decision should not impede the normal flows of the transboundary rivers."

Turning to the issue of militancy, the foreign minister referred to incidents of militancy, bombings and suicidal bombings as global phenomena ripping through countries in Europe and America and India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

"We were the last to be hit by this," Morshed commented, adding, "Bangladesh has done excellent in curbing the militancy menace. So far, we have captured as many as 800 militants, including two king-pins."

Referring to preaching anti-militancy messages at Juma prayers by a quarter of a million Imams across the country on a single day, Morshed said, "This is something unique in the fight against terror across the globe."

The foreign minister expressed his worry at some unverified reports of one or two Bangladeshis being involved in acts of terror in India, which he thinks, impedes confidence building measures. "Recently, a person was portrayed as a Bangladeshi after a bombing incident in Hyderabad but later the Asian Age newspaper reported it to be untrue."

Morshed said during her visit Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will meet the Indian president, vice president, prime minister, at least two former prime ministers, Congress chief Sonia Gandhi and opposition leaders.

He hoped that the tête-à-tête between Khaleda and Manmohan will set the tone for bilateral talks and the two top leaders will give specific mandates to the ministers and officials concerned for carrying out the CBM and other programmes of mutual interests.

## Illegal Jatka trade

FROM PAGE 1

But all the fishmongers do not seem to be free from the sense of guilt. They are selling these fish openly but whenever asked about the source of the *jatka*, they tend to cover their commodities and refuse to talk to journalists.

When a fisherman was asked that moments before he was chanting, "*Jatka*," he said he was selling nothing but *Chhapla fish*.

"I actually have a few kilograms of *jatka*!" admitted Badrul, one such fishmonger, saying, "These came along with the supply of regular fish."

Some market operators however told The Daily Star frankly that this market alone gets a supply of tonnes of *jatka* every day.

"A large part of this fish is coming from Bhola, Shipbur and Gazipur [of Bhola], Ramgati and Raipura [of Noakhali], Kaliganj, Nilkomol to Haimchar and Mohanpur [of Chandpur] and Mallikpur of Barisal," said Mohammad Yusuf.

Yusuf has been a market operator in this area for 40 years and is the president of Champatoli Matshya Sramik Union [Champatoli fisheries workers union] in Shoarghat.

Another union leader, Abdus Sattar Howladar, said the union does not have any authority to stop the fish-mongers from selling *jatka*.

"We just facilitate delivery of fish -- any kind of fish. It's up to the wholesale shop owners to decide what they would sell and what they would not," he said.

A wholesaler speaking anonymously said, "The Shoarghat market receives only the supply of *jatka* that arrives in the city on river routes. But in other wholesale and retail markets of Dhaka City, *jatka* is being delivered by trucks."

He said the bulk of *jatkas* is sent from Katpatti in Louhajang to Narayanganj town by road. Another land delivery is made at Shyampur in the city, from where the fish is distributed to Jatrabari and Karwan Bazar wholesale markets.

President of Champatoli Maachghat Parichalana Committee [Champatoli fish market operation committee] of Shoarghat Abul Hasnat admitted that the market sells such fish.

He however claimed, "We have verbally asked all the 71 owners of wholesale fish shops not to buy or sell *jatka*. But when the suppliers bring *jatkas* to the market, they can't throw these away. We also have to allow the sale."

"Not all of the shop owners sell *jatkas*. Those who do it argue that when traders in other city markets are selling the fish, why should they stop?" Hasnat pointed out.

"We don't have any specific records of how much *jatkas* we sell every day. In general, we sell between one tonne to 1.5 tonne at Shoarghat," he added.

He said the sale of *jatka* nearly stopped last year. "We received supplies of *jatka* three to four times last year."

"But this year the supply of *jatka* is awesome. At the same time, we don't

## Security blanket

FROM PAGE 1

Officials of the Bangladesh High Commission said the security personnel both from Bangladesh and India have already sanitised all the rooms.

Elaborate security arrangements have been made for her visit to Rajghat, where she will pay homage to India's Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi on March 21.

Khaleda will be accorded a ceremonial reception at the forecourt of Rashtrapati Bhavan. She will then have talks with India Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh at the Hyderabad House in the afternoon.

Dr Singh will host a state banquet in her honour.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will meet Indian President APJ Abdul Kalam also on March 21. Congress President and ruling United Progressive Alliance Chairperson Sonia Gandhi and some important cabinet members will call on Khaleda the same day.

On March 22, the Bangladesh premier will address a gathering of Indian chambers of commerce and industries leaders, entrepreneurs, investors and businessmen.

Although the visit has a substantial agenda, it will be primarily a "goodwill visit" aimed at bridging the trust deficit and creating the right atmosphere to resolve all contentious issues, said a diplomat in Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi.

He said Khaleda Zia wants strong relations with India for the benefit of the people of the two countries as well as for economic development. "Dhaka will try to explore new avenues of cooperation during her visit," he added.

The agenda for talks between the two prime ministers has not been made public, but Bangladesh officials said it would include the yawning trade gap and mutual mistrust over security matters.

Apart from the security issue, removal of non-tariff and para-tariff barriers to Bangladeshi products and sharing of water of common rivers including Teesta will come up for discussion during Khaleda-Manmohan talks in New Delhi on March 21.

Dhaka will focus on the whopping trade deficit, officially estimated to be over \$ 2 billion and unofficially around another 4 billion a year, officials said.

India should remove tariff, non-tariff and para-tariff barriers to bridge the huge gap and to have an equitable share of trade between the two neighbours, Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan said.

The issue of security is likely to dominate the discussions between Dhaka and New Delhi during the delegation level talks on March 21.

New Delhi will raise the issues of security, "harbouring" separatist insurgents in north-east of India and illegal migrants from Bangladesh,

officials at New Delhi said.

During the talks with the Bangladesh prime minister, New Delhi is likely to seek a transit land route through Bangladesh to ease the movement from West Bengal to north-eastern states and Myanmar, they said.

New Delhi may also consider opening transit routes in return, providing access for goods from Bangladesh to markets in Nepal and Bhutan, sources at the Indian commerce ministry said.

The Indian government is planning a major overhaul of the infrastructure facilities at check points to remove bottlenecks stunting border trade between the two countries, Indian commerce ministry officials said.

Bangladesh prime minister's visit will provide the much sought after opportunity to iron out differences over an entire range of issues, including the demarcation of border, militancy, illegal migration, trade, and transshipment of natural gas, a high official of the Indian government said.

He said the recent arrests of militant leaders Shaekh Abdur Rahman and Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai have boosted Bangladesh's international image.

In her talks with Manmohan Singh, Khaleda Zia will touch regional issues like boosting synergies among South Asian nations through implementation of Safta and the stability of the region, Bangladesh officials said.

Economic cooperation and step to reduce trade imbalance by removing non-tariff and para-tariff barriers to Bangladeshi products as well as sharing of water of common rivers can help to improve ties between the two countries, said a high government official.

India attaches the highest important to relations with Bangladesh, an Indian external affairs ministry official said, adding, "India-Bangladesh relations are not what they should be, and it should be our combined efforts to find pragmatic pathways to reverse the situation."

## Draft voter list

FROM PAGE 1

publication of the draft and final voter lists as it is waiting for the outcome of its appeal against a High Court directive that asked the secretariat to revise the existing voter roll instead of preparing a fresh one. The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court will hear the appeal on March 20.

"All problems will be resolved soon after we receive the result of the appeal," a senior EC Secretariat official told The Daily Star.

## 16 die

FROM PAGE 16

Albanians kidnapped and killed by Taliban fighters last week in an area between Kandahar and neighbouring Helmand province.

Initial reports had said five policemen were killed in the attack in Maiwand district but Kandahar governor Asadullah Khaled on Saturday revised the toll upwards to nine.

On Saturday, suspected Taliban rebels killed former Ghazni province governor Taj Mohammad, known as Qari Baba, and his four companions in the southeastern province, one of the hotbeds of the Taliban.

## PBCP leader

FROM PAGE 1

&lt;