

# Hunt for two Shura men on the run

Massive raid in Comilla, 33 held

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) personnel in border outposts and camps have been put on high alert so that the two JMB Majlish-e-Shura members still at large cannot flee across the border.

The law enforcers, particularly the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), yesterday continued their hunt for the two fleeing leaders of the banned Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB)-- Khaled Saifullah and Salahuddin.

As part of the ongoing drive against the militants, police and detectives carried out a massive overnight raid on the Housing Estate in Comilla town yesterday. But it failed to arrest any member of the militant outfit or recover any

explosives or firearms.

During the five-hour raid in the early hours, the law enforcers picked up 33 people for quizzing.

Meanwhile, interrogators continued quizzing the detained militant top brass including JMB supremo Abdur Rahman and his second-in-command Siddiquil Islam alias Bangla Bhai at the Taskforce for Interrogation (TFI) office.

"Our interrogation is currently focused on potential stocks of explosives and whereabouts of the Shura members who are yet to be arrested," MA Aziz Sarkar, director general of Rab, told The Daily Star yesterday.

**BDRALERT** Sources in the BDR Headquarters in Dhaka said forces along the border have been directed to stay

alert so that Khaled Saifullah and Salahuddin cannot cross the frontier.

"We have dispatched photographs, portraits and profiles of the absconding JMB leaders to all border outposts and camps," said a top BDR official. He said they have told the BDR personnel that if anyone of them could capture any of the two heavyweight JMB leaders, he will be rewarded a bounty of Tk 10 lakh.

The official said that the instructions were given following recent orders from the home ministry.

Our Sathkira correspondent adds: Second-in-Command of 41 Rifles Battalion Major Asad said on directives of the higher authorities profiles and photographs of the

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## CORRUPT OFFICIALS ACC ad asks people to lodge complaints

UNB, Dhaka

The Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) has begun informing people through the media about its 'trap-case' drive and the process of lodging complaints with the commission against dishonest officials. A competent ACC source told UNB that the commission asked a national daily on Thursday to run an advertisement providing necessary information about how to lodge complaints against bribe-takers. The advertisement containing ACC telephone numbers, e-mail addresses and other details will appear on Sunday (March 26). The advertisement titled 'The corrupt are enemies of the country and nation: Get them captured' will urge people to seek help from ACC if anyone is a victim of corruption and denied legitimate rights. The ACC advertisement assures of

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# Congress men shout slogans against BJP

Party leaders express solidarity with Sonia

UNI, New Delhi

Several senior Congress leaders and AICC office bearers called on Congress President Sonia Gandhi here today and expressed their solidarity with the stand taken by her in resigning from Lok Sabha membership and National Advisory Council (NAC) Chairpersonship.

A large number of party workers and supporters had also gathered outside her residence at 10 Janpath since morning and were shouting slogans against BJP leaders and Samajwadi Party General Secretary Amar Singh.

Some of the leaders and MLAs including Kripa Shankar Singh, MLA from Maharashtra, offered to resign from Legislative Assemblies in her support but were dissuaded by her

from doing so.

The AICC General Secretaries were told to convey to the people the reaction that prompted her to resign both from the Lok Sabha and from the National Advisory Council and the false propaganda launched against her by the Opposition, according to party sources.

The AICC General Secretaries, who had met at the AICC Headquarters here last night to take stock of the situation arising out of Sonia's resignation, are believed to have apprised her of their views regarding the further course of action the party should take in the run up to the Assembly elections in five States.

Meanwhile, according to sources, a message has gone from the Congress High Command to the

MPs, especially those who fall into the category of holding office of profit not to resign from their membership. A majority of the 44 MPs against whom petitions have been sent to the President seeking their disqualification on the ground of holding office of profit belong to the Congress.

Cong workers continue 'protests' outside 10 Janpath New Delhi. Mar 24 (UNI) Chanting pro-Sonia Gandhi slogans, hundreds of anguished Congress workers turned up at 10, Janpath today to voice their disappointment and express solidarity with party President Sonia Gandhi after she quit the Lok Sabha and the

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## RCC fails to ensure safe life for city dwellers

Survey says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Most of the dwellers in Rajshahi city think the city corporation has failed to ensure a safe and smooth life for them, says a survey of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) and TIB initiated Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC).

According to the survey, 42 percent of the respondents are unhappy with the role being played by Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu, 50 percent disapprove of the ward commissioners' performance and 55 percent are displeased with the work of reserved female ward commissioners.

The report titled Services by RCC came out at a press conference yesterday. Convener of CCC

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# Attempts to break UN impasse on Iran stall

REUTERS, United Nations

Major powers tried to break a UN impasse on Iran's nuclear ambitions with a round of telephone calls among their foreign ministers on Thursday seeking to produce a unified message, diplomats said.

After two weeks of haggling over an initial UN Security Council reaction to Iran's suspected nuclear programme, Britain, France and the United States were unable to get support from Russia and China, the other two veto-holding Security Council nations, on a draft statement they had proposed.

US Ambassador John Bolton said talks among foreign ministers of the five permanent council members were needed before any decisions could be taken in the 15-member Council.

"We're waiting for the outcome of

the conversations at higher pay grades," Bolton told reporters.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice intends to speak to Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, who has the toughest position, said a senior State Department official, speaking on condition of anonymity in Washington.

The official said British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw had already spoken to Lavrov.

The proposed Security Council statement, drawn up by France and Britain, would tell Iran to suspend uranium enrichment efforts that could produce fuel for an atomic bomb. Tehran says it nuclear research is for peaceful purposes, while the West believes it is a cover for bomb making.

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## BGMEA fire safety drills begin April 1

UNB, Dhaka

A special awareness building campaign on how to face devastating fire will begin on April 1 to equip some 4,200 garment factories across the country with the latest fire extinguishing techniques.

Stung by the Chittagong KTS garment factory fire, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), the apex body in apparel sector, decided to chalk out the crash programme to disseminate information on extinguishing fire and ensure safe evacuation in case of any fire incident.

BGMEA will directly monitor and supervise the programme through its safety and labour cell.

Sources in BGMEA said a total of 21 additional staff were appointed on temporary basis on Thursday to assist the existing BGMEA workforce to successfully conduct the entire crash programme.

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Lit up on March 26, 1997, the Shikha Chironton in Suhrawardi Udyan, still awaits completion of its complex while the nation celebrates the Independence Day tomorrow, left, two men busy themselves in work at the under-construction gallery of the complex.



PHOTO: STAR

# Polar melting could raise sea levels 6 metres by 2100

Scientists warn in two studies

AFP, Washington

Polar ice sheets are melting faster than expected and could push sea levels up as much as six metres (20 feet) by 2100, scientists warned in two studies released Thursday.

Based on current warming trends, they said, average temperatures could jump "at least" four degrees Fahrenheit (2.5 degrees Centigrade) by the end of the century, resembling the last great global warming surge 129,000 years ago when seas rose that much.

Jonathan Overpeck of the University of Arizona and Bette Otto-Bliesner of the Boulder,

Colorado National Centre for Atmospheric Research, the co-authors of both studies, used a computer model for future climate predictions and ice sheet simulations to create a picture of the Earth's climate 129,000 years ago.

They also used climate-indicative data from sediments, fossils and ice cores.

They concluded that the melting of ice sheets in Greenland and in the Antarctic today resembles what happened back then, and that the risk of a comparable rise in the sea level is high.

"Although the focus of our

work is polar, the implications are global. These ice sheets melted before and sea levels rose. The warmth needed isn't that much above present conditions," Otto-Bliesner said.

"We need to start serious measures to reduce greenhouse gases within the next decade. If we don't do something soon, we're committed to four to six meters (13 to 20 feet) of sea level rise in the future," said Overpeck.

Their studies will be published in the March 24 issue of Science magazine.

## College damaged, 12 houses gutted in Pabna fire

UNB, Pabna

Government Shaheed Bulbul College in the town was damaged and at least 12 houses at a village in Sujanagar upazila were gutted with seven people sustaining burn injuries in separate fire incidents yesterday morning and on Thursday night.

A fire originating from the electric short circuit in the college office room soon spread to other rooms, fire brigade sources said.

Fire-fighters rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze after an hour's efforts.

Valuables and important documents, including the original certificates and mark sheets of the students, were burned down in the blaze.

The damage was estimated at about Tk 2 lakh.

In another incident, a fire originating from the kitchen of a house at Sindori Baronia village in Sujanagar upazila soon engulfed 11 other neighbouring houses on Thursday night, Sagarkandi UP Chairman Shamsul Islam said.

Seven people were injured while trying to put out the fire.

The affected people estimated the losses at about Tk 30 lakh.

## House help falls from rooftop, dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A domestic help died yesterday as she fell from the roof of a five-storey building in Bara Moghbazar in the city.

Rahima Begum alias Mamataz, 35, fell down from the building around 10:30 am. She was pronounced dead when caretaker of the house Abdur Razzak rushed her to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Police said Mamataz was working in the house of contractor Mahbubur Rahman for the last five months.

# UK cracks down on forced marriages

AFP, London

Troubled by the number of youngsters of South Asian origin being forced into marriage, Britain has launched an assault on a practice that is pushing many vulnerable teenagers into a living nightmare.

Marriages without consent, or their refusal, have led to suicides and honour killings in Britain, shocking a nation generally deemed to have successfully absorbed immigrant communities and practices.

"Younger British Asian women are increasingly self-harming and attempting suicide at rates two to three times above the national average," said Jasvinder Sanghera, 40, who helped found a refuge for South Asian women years after fleeing her own family rather than accepting a forced marriage.

"My family said: 'Marry him or be dead in our eyes'," she recalled.

As part of the British government's campaign, ministers this month unveiled emotional film clips, in English and Hindi, to raise awareness on the issue.

Prime Minister Tony Blair's government argues that such forced -- as distinct from an accepted arranged -- marriage is a form of domestic violence and child abuse and a transgression of human rights. It is even considering whether to criminalise forced marriage.

Most of the cases concern people of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin. But there are many others in Britain with ties around the world, notably to Arab states, the Balkans and West Africa, being forced into marriages.

"The people coming forward for help know the perpetrators are the

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# 29 more killed in Iraq attacks

AP, Baghdad

Drive-by shootings, roadside bombings and sectarian killings left 29 dead in Iraq yesterday. American and Iraqi troops swept the oil-rich region of Kirkuk for suspected insurgents and captured dozens.

A bombing outside a Sunni Muslim mosque after Friday prayers killed at least five worshippers and wounded 15 people northeast of Baghdad in the city of Khalis, the army said.

Drive-by gunmen killed three policemen in west Baghdad and three power station workers headed to their jobs in Taji, just north of the capital, police said.

In south Baghdad's Saydiyah district, gunmen killed four employees of a pastry shop, police said. Nearby, a roadside bomb killed a

policeman.

Retaliatory killings between Shia and Sunni Muslims have become increasingly common in the capital since the Feb. 22 bombing of an important Shia shrine that unleashed the continuing rash of sectarian murders. Baghdad police said they discovered 13 bodies, blindfolded and shot, on Friday in the Binok, Kazimiyah and Sadr City neighbourhoods.

Mortar rounds fell on homes in south Baghdad and the northern city of Tal Afar, wounding about 10 people, mainly children.

Meanwhile, soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division joined Iraqi troops in a sweep of five villages outside the city of Kirkuk, 180 miles north of Baghdad.

# Prices of lentil, onion, potato mark rise

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The prices of lentil, onion and potato rose in the city markets yesterday as the wholesalers hiked the selling prices of those items on grounds of poor production and higher import cost.

The prices of other essentials such as rice, sugar, edible oil, vegetables, milk powder, and meat too marked a steady rise.

"The domestic production of lentil has suffered a setback. Moreover, higher import costs due to devaluation of taka against the US dollar also led to the rise in the imported lentil price," Akkas Mia, a wholesaler of pulses at Karwan Bazar told BDNEWS.

He said the majority of lentil comes from India and Nepal. The price has been increased although there is no shortfall in lentil supply in the market, he added.

Lentil, which was selling at Tk 52 a kg in retail market last week, cost Tk 54 yesterday. Onion, both local and imported, sold at Tk 14 and Tk 13 a kg yesterday, up by Tk 2 from the price of the previous week. The price of potato rose by Tk 2 a kg. One kg potato was selling at Tk 12 against Tk 10 of last week.

Onion wholesaler Mohammad Ali said onion production in the current year is much lower than that of the previous year. He said the wholesalers at onion hub increased the price by Tk 2 a kg.

"This week I have bought a maund of onion at Tk 440 while it was Tk 380-400 last week," he said.

"Potato is being exported while the production is still lower," Mujibur Rahman, a wholesaler at the Karwan Bazar said talking about the reasons for the rise in potato price.

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A section of the ice sheet covering much of Greenland is seen in this August 17, 2005 file photo by AP. Scientists say the ice is thinning and blame global warming, predicting a 3-foot rise in ocean levels by the end of the century through a combination of thermal expansion of the water and melting of polar ice.