

# Dipjol's house

**FROM PAGE 16**

However, none of them was at home during the four-hour raid that started around 11:00pm.

Meanwhile, another brother of them was arrested by army men and handed over to the Mirpur police at around 9:00pm yesterday on charge of possessing illegal firearms.

Police said that the six firearms seized from Dipjol's house were in lawful possession, but there was no permission for 317 rifle bullets possessed by Dipjol and 69 pistol bullets kept by Shahadat. Another 188 bullets, which were possessed legally, were also seized.

The joint forces were also conducting a raid at Parbata Cinema in Mirpur, owned by Shahadat, yesterday evening.

Comprising army and policemen from Mirpur, Pallabi, Kafrul and Shahali police stations, the team encircled the five-storey building at Court Bari in Mirpur before starting the raid Monday night.

They seized a double barrel gun, a shotgun, one .22 bore rifle and an air gun and 317 rifle bullets and 89 cartridges of .22 bore gun from the first floor flat of Dipjol. Dipjol is the licensee of those firearms. The law enforcers then seized another .22 bore rifle, a shotgun, 99 rounds .22 bore rifle bullet and 69 rounds .32 bore pistol bullet from the second floor flat of Shahadat in the same building.

The seized firearms do not fall in the categories specified by the interim government for submitting firearms to the police stations concerned by January 5, police said.

Also a Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Ward Commissioner, Dipjol was a contender for BNP tickets in the upcoming parliamentary polls from Dhaka-11 constituency and campaigned for a long time. Failing to get

# More raids

**FROM PAGE 1**

**SOURCES SAID.**

**SATHKHIRA**

The army arrested 16 people including AL-backed ward commissioners Abdus Selim of ward no 1, and Nazibullah Ailu of ward no 5, and BNP-backed union parishad chairman Rezaul Islam of Noapara union parishad under Debhata upazila.

The other arrestees are Abdul Gaffar, Tala Sadar union member, Mamun Rana Jahangir, organising secretary of district Juba Dal, and BNP leaders Karim Gazi, Moslem Fakir, Rezaul Sardar, Mofizur Rahman, Rawshan Ali, and Chhoton. The arrested AL leaders included Masud Biswas, Nuruzzaman and Krishna Pada Rishi.

The troops arrested Selim around 2:45am from his house at Katia while Rezaul, who is also the convener of Debhata upazila BNP, from his village home in Debhata at about 2:00am.

**BARISAL**

Seven people including Firoz Ahmed, a BNP leader who is also a Barisal City Corporation (BCC) ward commissioner, and a Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leader were arrested in a nightlong army-led operation. Two brothers of a BNP-backed ward commissioner and two brothers-in-law of the BCC mayor were also arrested. They were handed over to police after interrogation.

The troops recovered several sharp weapons from Firoz's house, a gun and 22 rounds of different types of ammunition from the house of his son-in-law Ziauddin Sikdar who is also a ward commissioner and a BNP leader.

The army also recovered a rifle from the house of BCC mayor's brother-in-law.

**PATUAKHALI**

The troops arrested 19 persons

# BDR, BSF trade

**FROM PAGE 1**

last night that locals have claimed that the two killed in the Hathkhola were Indian nationals.

Following the killing, the BSF started firing in the air to create panic among the Bangladeshi villagers and tried to collect the bodies lying 500 metres inside Bangladesh from the border.

They successfully recovered one of the bodies before 29 Battalion BDR men from Hatkhola outpost rushed to the spot and retaliated to BSF's intrusion into Bangladesh territory. The gunfire between BDR and BSF lasted for three hours and the sides exchanged over 600 shots.

Sources said sporadic fire continued into the afternoon until high-ranking officials of BDR and BSF talked over telephone, our Dinaipur correspondent reports.

The body of Subhas is still lying on the no-man's-land between Bangladesh and India.

Sources said a good number of villagers left their homes during the fighting and have not returned fearing further escalation of the situation.

A flag meeting of the two border guards was scheduled to be held at 5:30pm yesterday but it was cancelled as the BSF failed to show up.

BNP nomination, he was contesting the polls as an independent candidate.

Assistant Sub-Inspector Asaduzzaman of Shahali Police Station filed two separate cases against Dipjol and Shahadat accusing them of possessing bullets illegally.

**PARBATA CINEMA RAID**

A team of army encircled Parbata Cinema from around 3:30pm yesterday.

The army was seen allowing the moviegoers to come out of the cinema hall after searching their bodies at around 6:45pm. The search was going on as of 8:10pm.

**DIPJOL'S BROTHER ARRESTED**

Afzal Hossain, another brother of Dipjol, was picked up by the army at Gabtoli area on charge of possessing illegal firearms and was handed over to the Mirpur police at around 9:00pm yesterday, police sources said. No details could be learned as of 10:00pm last night.

## 5 more advisers

**FROM PAGE 1**

postponed the January 22 parliamentary election. The other advisers to the council of advisers headed by Iajuddin also resigned on that night, paving the way for full reconstitution of the council of advisers.

The interim government led by Dr Fakhruddin has primarily envisaged several agendas for holding credible elections: Correcting the voter list, introducing voter-identity cards and transparent ballot box in the polls.

The caretaker government and the Election Commission might also open dialogue with major political parties before setting the ball rolling once again for the election.

## Energy adviser

**FROM PAGE 16**

The European Union (EU) said preparation of national ID cards would take eight months, the adviser mentioned. "But I have spoken to our ambassador to China, who told me Chinese companies could prepare ID cards very quickly."

Tapan said, "The chief adviser has given me full responsibility of seeing how quickly we can do it (national ID cards) ...I have already asked the information and communication technology ministry to prepare a report within a week after discussions with the private sector."

He also said although it was rarely seen that the major political alliances came to a consensus on various issues, they hold the same views on holding of elections quickly.

But, Tapan noted, the preconditions for an election must be met if the polls are to be held. And these are national ID cards, correctly updated voter list and transparent ballot boxes.

There is no harm in taking a month or two to meet these requirement, he said.

Regarding corruption, the adviser said the caretaker government (CG) will take a comprehensive and firm stance to combat this. The corrupt must know that they are not above law and will be caught sooner or later. "If one example (action against the corrupt) is set, I believe the corrupt will get the message."

He mentioned that the CG has already taken steps to catch some identified corrupt individuals, as evident in the past few days.

The CG does not intend to remain in office for long, the adviser said. "But if we are in office for long, we will have the opportunity to combat corruption." "Corruption has played a major role in creating the current political crisis," said Tapan. "We will make all out efforts to capture the corrupt."

The CG and the Election Commission will also take steps to prevent corrupt people and black money holders from contesting the elections so that honest and competent individuals can represent the people, said Tapan.

## JP asks army

**FROM PAGE 16**

newspapers that are practising yellow journalism," Hawlader said at a press briefing at the party's Banani office.

An investigative report by Prothom Alo Editor Maitur Rahman published on January 15 said the Awami League gave Ershad Tk 3.5 crore to get him in the grand alliance.

According to the report, the BNP also gave Ershad Tk 2 crore to get him in its alliance, but Ershad had to give back the money as he did not join the four-party alliance.

"They [Prothom Alo] have different objectives behind their reports against political parties and politicians," Hawlader said, adding that the daily wants to do "something different but they should clear their objective to the nation".

"I request the armed forces to shut newspaper like this," he said.

JP leader Kazi Zafar Ahmed also described the Prothom Alo report as "false" and "baseless", saying it was an ill motivated report targeting the JP.

JP Presidium member Ziauddin Bablu said the Prothom Alo did not even publish the rejoinder they sent protesting the report.

## EC moves

**FROM PAGE 1**

The EC officials yesterday looked into the paperwork of voter ID card project and discussed its different aspects amongst themselves, EC sources said.

Acting Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice Mahfuzur Rahman on Monday said the EC had a discussion with the chief adviser about the voter list.

The CEC, however, did not reveal anything else about their discussions.

"Primary discussions were held on the voter ID card project," said an EC official wishing anonymity, adding, "The EC just looked into the previous files and paperwork of voter ID card project."

Emerging from an EC meeting, Acting CEC Mahfuzur Rahman told the reporters that they are reorganising their records as the elections have been postponed.

The acting CEC refused to talk about what was discussed in the meeting. He earlier told a number of reporters that the EC's efforts at holding talks with the major political parties are on.

In 1994, the relevant laws were amended so that no voter was allowed to vote unless he or she had a valid voter identity card. The commission launched a scheme worth approximately Tk 200 crore to introduce voter ID cards across the country on January 1, 1995. But the project failed to achieve its goal due to some irregularities.

With about a third of the work done, the EC announced the schedule for the June, 1996 parliamentary elections and suspended its work on the voter ID cards. The project was cancelled altogether in 2000 in the face of allegations of gross corruption and reports of fake voters receiving voter ID cards.

In June 2003, the EC held a meeting with the Electronic Corporation of India Ltd (ECIL), which offered to help introduce electronic voting machines in Bangladesh. This project was, however, not approved.

# No plan to probe

**FROM PAGE 1**

parliament in addition to creating a flawless voter list within the same period will not be possible.

The president's speech prompted the people to expect a flawless voter list from the caretaker government as well as identification and punishment of those responsible for making the current flawed list.

"If an investigation finds out that the flawed voter list was the result of someone's inefficiency, then the responsible should be made to pay from their own pockets for the wastage they had imposed on the nation," Prof Muzaffer Ahmed said.

Law Adviser Barrister Mainul Hosen on the other hand told The Daily Star, "So far we have not thought of finding and punishing the persons responsible for the flawed list. Rather we are emphasising on a flawless voter list. We have already talked to the Election Commission in this regard."

"But it was discussed at the advisory council meeting that the Election Commission had previously wasted Tk 140 crore in the name of introducing voters' ID cards. Where did this money go? The council decided to ask the ACC to investigate the matter," Hosen pointed out.

"Afterwards, I called up the ACC chairman over the phone and asked him to start an inquiry," he added.

Meanwhile, ACC Chairman Justice Sultan Hossain Khan admitted of having the phone conversation and said they will formally launch an inquiry into the matter after receiving a letter from the government in this regard.

Asked whether the anti-graft commission will launch an inquiry into the flawed voter list prepared by the EC while MA Aziz had been in the office as its chief and the process of which continued even after acting Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Mahfuzur Rahman took over the charge, the ACC chairman did not make any concrete comment but said an inquiry can be initiated even later.

The EC under the leadership of MA Aziz spent over Tk 100 crore in preparing the flawed voter list. In the process Aziz

even fought with the finance ministry for allocation and disbursement of fund while totally ignoring press reports on how the list was becoming flawed.

Aziz also ignored the demands of opposition parties. Awami League was demanding that the voter list of 2000 be updated, instead of preparing a fresh one, to keep it above controversy.

The EC produced voter list's partisan and flawed nature became crystal clear when the commission fought against the High Court (HC) on the issue of updating the list. The HC finally issued a ruling that the EC should update the voter list created in 2000. But the EC ignored the ruling for nearly two weeks on the pretext of not receiving the order and started preparing the flawed list on January 1, 2006.

But the EC did not stop there. It went to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court and filed an appeal against the HC verdict, which it lost.

Meanwhile, Aziz gave rise to a crisis within the EC as the decision of creating a fresh voter list had been taken by him unilaterally ignoring other election commissioners.

After Aziz had gone on a leave and Mahfuzur Rahman took over as the acting CEC, he also refrained from publishing the draft voter list before and even after the announcement of the now defunct election schedule making the whole thing even more suspicious.

Foreign poll observers like National Democratic Institute (NDI) found gross flaws on the list. NDI detected 13 percent error margin on the list, which is far too high to be acceptable.

The voters' ID card project that the caretaker government asked the ACC to inquire into had been actually launched on January 1, 1995 during a BNP regime that had taken office in 1991.

The project was kept suspended for a year after an AL government had come to power in 1996. It restarted in mid-1997 and ended in June 2000.

EC sources said about four crore ID cards were issued under the project.

Interestingly, they never said whether the ID cards are valid.

## CA signs

**FROM PAGE 1**

On January 10 this year, the court said these four amended rules must be published in gazette notifications by January 17.

The then caretaker government in 2001 had nearly completed the process of separating the judiciary during its tenure.

Before handing over power to the BNP-led coalition government following the October 1 election in 2001, the caretaker government took an initiative to finalise the decision to implement the separation at the last meeting of the advisory council on October 3.

But, before the meeting the then prime minister-elect Khaleda Zia asked the then caretaker chief Latifur Rahman over telephone to give her government the opportunity to implement the judiciary separation.

Justice Latifur agreed to Khaleda's request after consulting with the then law adviser Barrister Ishiaq Ahmed and others.

However, instead of implementing the separation of the judiciary the Khaleda-led four-party coalition government rather stalled the process by repeatedly seeking time-extension from the SC.

Nine bureaucrats of Khaleda's administration now face contempt charges for distorting the 12-point SC directive.

The SC has also issued contempt rule against a number of senior bureaucrats during the BNP-led coalition government's rule for not implementing the SC order in due time.

## JP asks CG

**FROM PAGE 16**

"Preparations for the election will have to be completed within 120 days as the duration of the state of emergency is 120 days," Kazi Zafar Ahmed, senior presidium member of JP, said at a press briefing held at the party's Banani office.

He, however, said a delayed election is better than a faulty one and the election should be held as soon as possible.

"Everybody welcomed the decision of imposing the state of emergency and I hope the new caretaker government would take effective measures to resolve all crises," he said in response to a question and termed the state of emergency a temporary measure.

The JP leader appreciated "the recent role played by the army, foreign diplomats and donors in forming the present caretaker government."

Those who resorted to rampant corruption during the tenure of the last government should be arrested and brought to justice, Kazi Zafar also demanded.

"Fakhruddin Ahmed is a neutral and honest man and the advisory council led by him would be able to hold a free, fair, neutral and peaceful election for the nation," he said when journalists asked him to comment on the newly appointed chief adviser.

"The new government has been formed in accordance with the constitution," Zafar observed when replying to another question.

Replying to another query, Kazi Zafar said his party chairman Ershad was consulting legal experts to decide whether or not he should surrender to the court on Wednesday (today) as ordered. He may not have to surrender before the court, he added.

JP Secretary General Ruhul Amin Hawlader, presidium member Ziauddin Bablu, Tajul Islam Chowdhury, Fakir Ashraf and Abu Hossain Babla were present among others at the briefing.

## Ershad

**FROM PAGE 16**

out in the same case.

After the hearing, the trial court kept the petition in the case file and fixed the hearing date today.

Earlier on December 14 last year, Judge Mohammad Amirul Islam of the First Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court also asked the former president to surrender by today to serve out a High Court (HC) verdict.

Ershad was found guilty of misappropriating Tk 33 crore in a shady deal for purchasing 520 Japanese boats and 10 water-purifying machines for relief operation in 1989.

On July 6, 1995, Judge Jinnat Ara of the trial court sentenced Ershad three years' imprisonment. The court also fined him Tk 10,000 and in default, he will have to serve four more months in jail.

The same year, Ershad filed an appeal with the HC against the lower court verdict.

Later, justice Faisal Mahmud Faizee of the single-member HC bench handed two years' imprisonment to the former president rejecting his appeal.

Faizee in his verdict also asked Ershad to surrender before the trial court without specifying any time or date.

# Baghdad blasts

**FROM PAGE 16**

give a chance for a military strike against us," said the legislator, speaking on condition of anonymity because the information was not yet public.

The lawmaker said the group's return was conditional, including demands that the government set up a committee to establish a timetable for the withdrawal of U.S. troops and a second that would set a date by which Iraqi forces were to take control of security nationwide.

The demands would give the government one month to put such a measure before parliament.

Until the walkout, the al-Sadr faction was an integral part of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's governing coalition. Six Cabinet ministers and 30 legislators who belong to the movement called the boycott after al-Maliki met with President Bush in Jordan in late November.

Much of the violence has been blamed on Shiite militias, particularly the Mahdi Army militia loyal al-Sadr. Dozens of bodies turn up on the streets of Baghdad daily, many showing signs of torture.

Gianni Magazzeni, the chief of the U.N. Assistance Mission for Iraq in Baghdad, said 34,452 civilians were killed and 36,685 were wounded last year.

The Iraqi Health Ministry did not comment on the U.N. report, which was based on information released by the Iraqi government and hospitals. The government has disputed previous figures released by the U.N. as "inaccurate and exaggerated."

Iraqi government figures announced in early January put last year's civilian death toll at 12,357. When asked about the difference, Magazzeni said the U.N. figures were compiled from information obtained through the Iraqi Health Ministry, hospitals across the country and the Medico-Legal Institute in Baghdad.

"Without significant progress in the rule of law sectarian violence will continue indefinitely and eventually spiral out of control," he warned.

The U.N. report also said that 30,842 people were detained in the country as of Dec. 31, including 14,534 in detention facilities run by

## PCJSS activist shot dead in Khagrachhari

**OUR CORRESPONDENT,**  
*Khagrachhari*

An activist of Jubo Samity, a youth front of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS), was shot dead allegedly by the activists of United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) at Chongrachhari under Dighinala upazila of the district yesterday morning.

The victim was identified as Vinku Kumar Chakma, 30, son of Sneha Kumar Chakma of Hasinsonpur village under the upazila.

Police said the UPDF activists swooped on Vinku while he was visiting his fish farm at Chongrachhari village at around 6:00am. They shot him point blank and left the scene. Vinku died instantly.

Police recovered the body and took it to Dighinala Police Station. Later, the law enforcers sent the body to Khagrachhari Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

Police could not arrest any of the killers as of 5:00pm yesterday.

# Rice receives

**FROM PAGE 16**

Rice was due to hold talks with Kuwaiti leaders and confer with other foreign ministers of the six Gulf Cooperation Council member states plus Egypt and Jordan.

She was aiming to drum up support for US President George W. Bush's "surge" strategy to tackle violence in Iraq with the deployment of an additional 21,500 troops and to seek financial aid from the oil-rich Gulf countries for the government of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, chiefly through debt forgiveness.

"We'll see tonight at the GCC+2 how these states intend to try to support the unity government of Iraq but I think there has been a very positive reaction thus far," Rice told reporters in Kuwait.

The US plan revealed last week has come under fire in many Arab capitals, even among staunch allies in the Gulf, with critics saying it provides a recipe for more sectarian violence in Iraq that could spread elsewhere in the region.

But Rice on Monday won support from Cairo after meeting with President Hosni Mubarak in the southern Egyptian city of Luxor.

"We are supportive of the plan ... We are hopeful that plan will lead to the stabilisation of, unity and cohesion of the Iraqi government," said Egypt's Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul Gheit.

While Rice began her trip stressing she had no plan for reviving the Middle East peace process, she announced a three-way summit

U.S.-led multinational forces.

It pointed to killings targeting police, who are seen by insurgents as collaborating with the U.S. effort in Iraq. The report said the Interior Ministry had reported on Dec. 24 that 12,000 police officers had been killed since the war started in 2003.

The report also painted a grim picture for other sectors of Iraqi society, saying the violence has disrupted education by forcing schools and universities to close as well as sending professionals fleeing from the country. At least 470,094 people throughout Iraq have been forced to leave their homes since the bombing in Samarra, according to the report.

In Monday's execution, a thick-set Barzan Ibrahim plunged through the trap door and was beheaded by the jerk of the thick rope at the end of his fall, in the same execution chamber where Saddam was hanged a little over two weeks earlier.

Dozens of people, mostly schoolchildren, read Quranic verses at the graves in Tikrit as mourning continued for Ibrahim, Saddam's half brother and former intelligence chief, and Awad Hamed al-Bandar, head of Iraq's Revolutionary Court under Saddam.

Some 150 youths also staged a demonstration in Saddam's hometown, 80 miles north of Baghdad, chanting "down with the pro-Iranian government" and "glory to Barzan," but it was calmer than the day before when at least 3,000 angry Sunnis assembled for the burials.

A government video of the hanging, played at a briefing for reporters, showed Ibrahim's body passing the camera in a blur. The body came to rest on its chest while the severed head lay a few yards away, still wearing the black hood pulled on moments before by one of Ibrahim's guards.

At least 13 other people were killed or injured dead in Iraq on Tuesday, according to police, including four who died from roadside bomb strikes in police patrol in a predominantly Shiite area of downtown Baghdad.

Israel's state prosecutor yesterday ordered a criminal investigation into Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's role in the 2005 privatisation of an Israeli bank, the Justice Ministry said in a statement.

"The decision to open a criminal investigation was taken by the state prosecutor," the statement said.

Israel's state comptroller is looking into whether Olmert promoted the interests of two businessmen, described in media reports as close friends of the prime minister, in the state sale of Bank Leumi two years ago.

Neither of the men purchased the bank and Olmert has denied any wrongdoing.

## Hold election

**FROM PAGE 1**

in favour of the people and thwarting the 'violence inviting' and one-sided elections on January 22.

Prior to the briefing, the grand alliance held a meeting with AL presidium member Amir Hossain Amu in the chair and reviewed the latest political developments.

Senior grand alliance leaders Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Kazi Zafar Ahmed, Motia Chowdhury, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Rashed Khan Menon, Ruhul Amin Hawlader, Nurul Islam, Syed Zafar Sazzad, Dilip Barua, Hazi Abdus Samad, among others, attended the meeting.