

## Hunt for illegal arms, criminals in 6 dists

60 held on first day of special drive; border security tightened

### STAR REPORT

Police on Thursday night launched a special drive to hunt illegal arms, outlaws and other criminals in six districts in three divisions.

Moreover, security has been stepped up in the border areas to prevent terrorists and other criminals from fleeing the country during the ongoing operation launched by the joint forces.

Army personnel arrested nine people across the country while police rounded up around 60 in the

special drive in the six crime-prone districts in 24 hours till 10:00pm yesterday.

The arrestees include municipal ward commissioners, leaders and activists of political parties including Awami League (AL) and BNP and their wings.

Our Khulna correspondent reports that at least 25 leaders of the AL, BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, including 12 ward commissioners of Khulna City Corporation and some leaders of different business syndicates have gone into hiding since the

declaration of state of emergency.

According to a police press release, they arrested 2,051 people including 31 fugitive convicts and 1,144 facing arrest warrants across the country in 24 hours ending at 6:00am yesterday.

They also seized 16 firearms, 12 other weapons and 13 bullets.

**SPECIAL DRIVE**  
The special drive called 'Combined Operation' in six districts followed a meeting with the superintendents of police of the six districts,

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## Two die in police custody

### STAR REPORT

A Juba League leader and a drug peddler died in police custody in Noakhali and Kishoreganj early yesterday and on Thursday night.

The dead are Shamsuddoha alias Taleban, 35, joint convener of Juba League Noakhali town unit, and Asad, 25, son of Giasuddin of Baghpara village under Kotiadi upazila, Kishoreganj.

Our Noakhali correspondent reported that the joint forces arrested Shamsuddoha at his residence at Miajipara in the town at around 11:00pm on Thursday and handed him over to Sudharam police.

Police said Shamsuddoha fell sick at Sudharam Police Station and was admitted to Noakhali

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## BNP men told to avert arrest

Party may opt out of polls if crackdown continues for long

### RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

The BNP high command has asked the party leaders and workers to take cover to avert arrest in the countrywide anti-crime drive by the army and law enforcers.

Party insiders also said the ongoing crackdown on trouble-makers has been increasingly worrying for the immediate past ruling party as the troops and police have rounded up a huge number of its leaders and activists across the country.

Immediately after the president declared a state of emergency, the party high-ups had alerted all district- and upazila-level leaders

to the possibility of the law enforcement agencies and armed forces making a countrywide sweep.

"We have sent messages down to the upazila-level leaders. It's a pity that still they could not avoid being caught," said a BNP leader, dismayed at the news that several leaders and son of a former law-maker have been busted in Narsinghdi.

Meanwhile, the BNP standing committee at a meeting on January 14 urged the authorities concerned not to harass or oppress the innocent people.

Earlier on January 17, the four-party alliance leaders made a similar call at a meeting with BNP

Chairperson Khaleda Zia in the chair.

The meeting has called on the authorities not to harass any law-abiding citizen of the country, read a press release signed by BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan following the four-party alliance meeting at Hawa Bhaban.

However, BNP or anyone of the immediate past ruling alliance has not given any formal reaction to the arrest of its leaders and workers in the last few days. They also did not make any remarks on the newly formed interim government.

The BNP and its allies neither welcome nor reject the Fakhrudin government. They view the state of

emergency as a temporary measure and hope that power would be handed over to an elected government as soon as possible.

Some leaders hinted that the party might opt out of the next election if the military actions against its leaders and workers continue for long. They fear things would go against the party interest if the drive stretches further.

President Iajuddin Ahmed's standing down as the chief adviser on January 11 has left the BNP leaders wondering about what should be their strategies now.

A delayed election would be better for the party as the people by

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## BNP celebrates Zia's birth anniversary

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday celebrated the 71st birth anniversary of its founder late president Ziaur Rahman.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia along with leaders and workers of the party and its front organisations placed floral wreaths at the mazar of Ziaur Rahman at Zia Uddin at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the capital and offered feteiha at around 11:00am.

A milad and doa mahfil was held seeking salvation of the departed soul of Ziaur Rahman and peace, progress and prosperity of Bangladesh.

Hundreds of leaders, activists and workers of BNP gathered on the mazar premises to pay respect

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## Jalil, Mannan react sharply to remarks by Prof Yunus

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rivals, BNP and Awami League (AL), both launched broadsides yesterday in unison against Nobel Peace Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus for his comment that Bangladesh's politicians are in politics only for money.

At a news conference AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil said the comment of Muhammad Yunus on the politicians of his own country made his position controversial and questionable.

Meanwhile, in a statement

issued last night BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said the remark made by the only Nobel laureate of the country is not only unacceptable but also regrettable.

Terming Yunus' comment 'unfortunate', Abdul Jalil said, "When he makes sweeping remarks against all politicians, it worries the honest politicians and development activists, who are in favour of peace."

"His belligerent attitude toward politics as a whole makes us

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## CG needs at least 6 months to do its job: Ershad

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Jatiya Party (JP) chief HM Ershad said the new caretaker government should be given at least six months' time to prepare the voter ID cards and take other measures for holding a free, fair and acceptable election in the country.

The country's law and order situation has marked a huge improvement since the new caretaker government took over, Ershad said while talking to newsmen at Hazrat Shahjalal Shrine in Sylhet yesterday afternoon.

A peaceful and stable situation has been prevailing throughout the country, he said adding that positive changes in other fields have also been noticeable during the last few days.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



Are 'fresh' fish and fruits like these available in city markets safe for consumers?

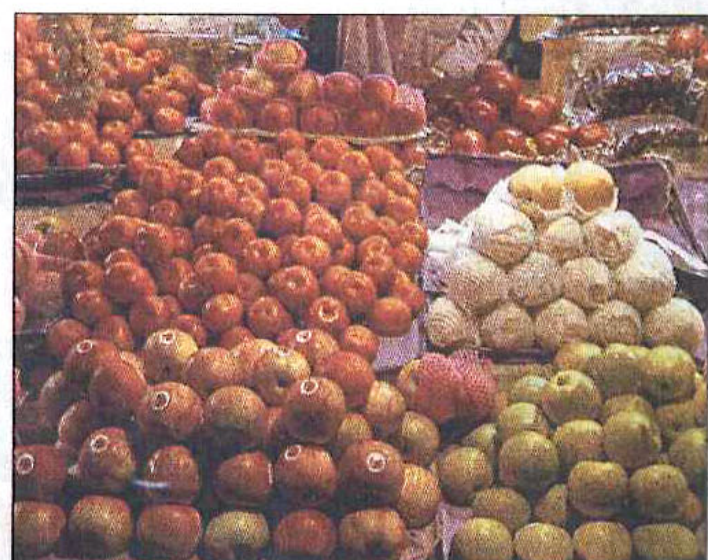


PHOTO: STAR

## Drive soon to halt use of formalin in fish, fruits

### PINAKI ROY

A specially equipped mobile court will soon start operations to stem the alarming rise in the use of the hazardous chemical formalin, used by unscrupulous traders to preserve fish and fruits sold at markets in the capital.

Traders use formalin to keep fish and fruits looking fresh, but its regular consumption by humans can cause serious diseases including cancer.

Prof ABM Faroque of the Pharmaceutical Technology department of Dhaka University, who led a group of researchers conducting a field survey, said, "I have been conducting the survey on fish in the city markets for more than one year and found formalin and artificial colours present in most of the samples."

"I guess formalin is also used on grapes, apples and tomatoes. If the peel of apples and grapes tastes

bitter, then we can assume that the traders have used formalin on it," he said.

He, however, said they are yet to conduct any lab tests on the use of formalin in fruits.

In the long term, indirect consumption of formalin causes cancer and the chemical's regular intake can also cause irritation in the digestive tract that eventually turns into a peptic ulcer, experts

said. Even the vapour of formalin can cause lung cancer and damage to the eye membrane, they added.

Following the reports published in The Daily Star last year, a mobile court collected several samples of fish from different markets in the city.

"Out of 11 samples of big ruhi (Cyprinus rohitaka) and katta, we found formalin in nine," said Faroque.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## Advisers pay homage to martyrs

### UNB, Dhaka

Advisers to the nonparty caretaker government yesterday placed wreaths at National Memorial at Savar, paying homage to the martyrs of the country's Liberation War.

After paying homage, the advisers reiterated their pledge to do whatever necessary to ensure a free and fair election in the country.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5



PHOTO: STAR

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and senior party leaders pray at the mazar of party founder late president Ziaur Rahman at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the capital on his 71st birth anniversary yesterday.

## SUPERCETE CEMENT

WE BUILD YOUR DREAM

Lafarge Surma Cement Ltd.



## Rejoinder and our reply

Bangladesh born US IT consultant Faiz Khan in a rejoinder, on The Daily Star's news headlined, "Faiz Khan not made adviser" published on Thursday, brushed aside allegations against him in connection with the Machine Readable Passport (MRP) project of the home ministry.

He said, "My professional

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## HEROIN SMUGGLING CASE

## Probe remains stalled for lack of evidence

Investigators yet to get green signal for visit to UK

### SHARIFUL ISLAM

The probe into the smuggling of 75.5kg heroin to the UK has come to a halt as the investigators have not yet been able to collect relevant evidence from that country.

The investigators have been apparently idle for more than six months, waiting for the British government's permission for visiting that country to collect the pieces of evidence for the two cases filed with the Motijheel and Sutrapur police stations.

The foreign ministry wrote a letter to the British High Commission in Dhaka last July, requesting it to take steps for the Bangladesh investigators' trip to the UK to carry out further investigation into the country's biggest ever heroin smuggling case.

The government in its letter said the investigation officers of the two cases and two members of the CID-led team that probed the smuggling would visit the UK.

But home ministry sources said although four months have passed, the British government has not yet replied to the letter.

Seeking anonymity, a home ministry official told The Daily Star yesterday that the British High Commission official concerned said the letter has been forwarded to the British government.

"The British government is sincere to extend all help to Bangladesh to bring the culprits to book. It's taking some time to reply the letter due to formalities," the home ministry source quoted the British High Commission official as saying.

"Producing evidence seized in connection with the cases is essential for proving the allegation against the accused," said a member of the probe team led by Criminal Investigation Department (CID). "If we fail to collect the evidence, there is good chance that the accused will be

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

**Congratulations**

to  
**Mr. Aziz Al Kaiser Tito,**  
Vice Chairman of ParTex Group  
on being elected the Chairman of  
The City Bank Limited.

We wish him all the best  
and  
are confident of his continued success.

**PARTEX HOLDINGS**

**CONGRATULATIONS**

To  
**Tapan Chowdhury**  
Chairman  
**SHELTECH**

The Management, Professionals and all the team members of SHELTECH take pride in congratulating you on being the Adviser of Caretaker Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh.

May Allah grant you health and strength to give leadership and direction to the country in its hour of need.

We hope that, Bangladesh will prosper under your leadership just the way SHELTECH has been benefited with your management and inspiration in satisfying our customers and clients.

Dr. Toufik M. Seraj  
Managing Director  
শেলটেক SHELTECH

Kutubuddin Ahmed  
Director, SHELTECH  
Chairman  
ENVU GROUP

Samuel S. Chowdhury  
Director, SHELTECH  
Vice Chairman

শেলটেক SHELTECH Since 1988