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Cop killed, 2 injured in bomb blast

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A traffic police constable was killed and two others were injured when unidentified miscreants hurled a bomb at Chandna intersection in Gazipur at around 7:00pm on Tuesday.

The deceased constable, Abdur Rashid, 40, son of late Mohar Ali of Ishwarganj, Mymensingh, came to Gazipur from Kishoreganj three days ago to perform duty during Bishwa Ijtema.

A bomb disposal squad of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and another squad of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) visited the spot at midnight and collected some evidence from the spot.

Meanwhile, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday arrested a member of outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) at Chakpara of Sreepur. Rab personnel are quizzing Russell at Rab-11 office at Shimultoli, Gazipur.

Rab said the arrestee, Russell Ahmed, 27, was actively involved in the bomb attack at Gazipur on

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Acting CEC quits with commissioners

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The acting chief election commissioner (CEC) and four other commissioners finally resigned yesterday, following the footsteps of Justice MA Aziz, and clearing the way for reconstitution of the Election Commission (EC).

Former additional secretary to cabinet division, M Anisuzzaman Khan, is likely to be appointed as the new CEC while a former brigadier general and a former district judge are likely to be appointed as election commissioners, sources said.

A few of the resigning election commissioners did not agree to admit their failure as election commissioners. They also refused to comment on their resignation, saying, Bangabhaban will announce the EC overhaul in a statement.

The president's office, however, did not officially disclose the news of the resignation as of 8:00pm

yesterday.

When contacted last evening, Law Adviser Mainul Hossain told The Daily Star that he heard of the election commissioners' resignation.

The state-run news agency, BSS, also quoted a Bangabhaban official as saying the election commissioners met the president and submitted their resignation letters.

The caretaker government will now appoint a new CEC and two election commissioners to recast the EC, which will initiate steps including preparation of a voter list for holding the ninth parliamentary election.

"The interim government will immediately appoint, three election commissioners, including a CEC, to form a new Election Commission," the law adviser said, adding that the names of the new commissioners have been finalized.

"The new Election Commission will take steps to bring changes to

the electoral laws. The government wants an election free from black money and corruption," Mainul added.

Responding to an invitation for a cup of tea, Acting CEC Justice Mahfuzur Rahman, election commissioners SM Zakaria, Mahmud Hasan Mansur, Modabbir Hossain Chowdhury and Saiful Alam met President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday at about 1:00pm and tendered their resignation letters, sources said.

Earlier on January 21, Justice MA Aziz resigned from the post of CEC.

None of the resigning commissioners disclosed anything about the content of their discussion with the president at Bangabhaban.

"It was not a healthy discussion," an annoyed election commissioner told The Daily Star after tendering his resignation. "All of us are not responsible for the prevailing situation in the Election

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Yunus may join politics if 'circumstances force' him

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Nobel laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus yesterday said if circumstances force him he will join politics and government but made it clear that he would not like to be the president of Bangladesh as it is a "decorative" post.

Addressing a media conference wrapping up his four-day visit to Delhi, he said there were two different schools of opinions in Bangladesh about his joining politics. "While one school wanted me not to join politics so that I don't get into its vortex, the other school wanted me to join so that they can have someone to look up to."

"I am not a person who is comfortable in politics. But if circumstances force, I will join it," Yunus, the founder chief of Grameen Bank, said when asked why he is not joining politics and become prime minister or finance minister and undertake an economic turnaround of his country.

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Tk 1,133CR DEAL SIGNED Indian firm to set up 240MW power plant

UNB, Dhaka

The government yesterday signed a Tk 1,133 crore deal with an Indian company to build a 240MW power plant in the country.

As per the contract, Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) will install the plant within December 2008. The plant will have two units of 120MW generation capacity each.

Electricity Generation Company of Bangladesh (EGCB), a newly created corporate subsidiary of Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB), will implement the project.

Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide \$109.864 million (about Tk 769.048 crore) for the project.

The contract value of the project is \$108.477 million plus local currency expenditure of Tk 35.31 crore.

BHEL Executive Director Rabindra K. Belapukar and EGCB Secretary Kazi Nazrul Islam signed

the deal on behalf of their respective sides.

Power and Energy Adviser Tapan Chowdhury, Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty, Power Secretary AKM Zafarullah, BPDB Chairman ANM Rizwan and EGCB Managing Director Delwar Hossain and ADB Representative Stefan Ekelund were present at the signing ceremony held at PDB head office.

This is the first deal the present caretaker government has signed after assuming office.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Adviser Tapan Chowdhury said the caretaker government will sign some more contracts in power sector if those are found to be transparent.

"We'll extend all support to BHEL to speed up the implementation of the project... we need electricity at earliest possible time," he said.

This is the second power project

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Govt to seek 2 weeks for separation of judiciary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Adviser barrister Mainul Hossain yesterday said the government will seek today two weeks' time from the Supreme Court (SC) for submitting an amended Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC).

The SC on January 21 ordered the government to submit an amended Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) by February 1 to advance separation of the judiciary from the executive.

It also asked the government to correct some 'erroneous' provisions in the four rules for judicial services by the same date.

Everything is ready to promulgate an ordinance for an amended CrPC, sources said.

However, the law adviser yesterday told the press that now the matter of amending the CrPC is at the chief adviser's office.

"The matter would be reviewed further at the advisory council's meeting," he said, adding, "That is

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Hasina's APS held, freed later

Murad Siddiqui, brother of ex-state minister for power detained

STAR REPORT

Security personnel detained Dr Awlad Hossain, Assistant Personal Secretary (APS) of Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina, and two of her personal staffs in the capital last night but later released Awlad and another one.

Awlad and the two personal staffs--Sarwar Hossain and Babul--were picked up minutes after they came out of Hasina's Sudha Sadan residence around 8:00pm upon their return from Tungipara of Gopalganj after a three-day visit with the party chief.

Party sources said members of different intelligence agencies halted a car carrying the three and took them to an unknown place.

Sarwar is also the president of the AL Canada unit and Babul is the brother of Jubo Mohila League President Nazma Akhter.

Intelligence men had kept the three under watch since the declaration of the state of emergency, said intelligence sources.

Meanwhile, the army detained Murad Siddiqui, younger brother of Krishak Samik Janata League (KSJL) President Abdul Kader Siddiqui, from Kalibari area in Tangail on Tuesday evening.

Besides, Sarishabari upazila Jubo Dal General Secretary Faezul

Kabir Talukdar, brother of former state minister for power and LDP leader Anwarul Kabir Talukdar, was also arrested.

Our Tangail correspondent reports: Murad Siddiqui's bodyguard and relative Shahidul Islam Jamal, 42, was also arrested by the army. The army handed over both Murad and Jamal to Tangail sadar police yesterday morning, said police sources.

Mohammad Abdur Rashid, officer-in-charge (OC) of Tangail Sadar Police Station, told The Daily Star that they would produce Murad and Jamal before the court yesterday requesting for remand.

Murad is accused in 23 criminal cases including three for murder with Tangail Sadar Police Station. Besides, he is involved with tender terrorism in different government departments in Tangail, police sources said.

Murad Siddiqui contested the last parliament election in 2001 from Tangail 5 (Sadar-Delduar) constituency as a KSJL candidate and ended up third.

In Chittagong, the army arrested seven people and recovered three firearms along with a few other lethal weapons, reports our Chittagong University correspondent.

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PHOTO: STAR

The Ansar and VDP department occupies this field at Khilgaon Chowdhurypara in the capital yesterday, enclosing the land and fixing tents there in defiance of a High Court injunction.

Ansar-VDP occupies land ignoring HC injunction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Ansar and VDP yesterday allegedly occupied a 0.6584-acre land at Khilgaon Chowdhurypara ignoring a High Court injunction.

Ansar personnel put up metal boundary fences around the property although the High Court issued an injunction on any type of construction on the land and changing the nature and character of the land in any manner.

Hundreds of Ansars arrived at the scene in trucks carrying tin, bamboo and other equipment at around 10:00 am and started to set up the fence. They claimed that they were acting as per instructions from their higher authority and were not bothered about the High Court injunction, locals said.

Public works ministry cancelled the first allotment of the land to

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Govt in hunt for quick funds

Move taken for early release of WB funds, selling Rupali Bank's another 26pc stakes

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government is taking initiatives for quick release of \$340 million from the World Bank under the budgetary support programme, and \$330 million from the sale of 67 percent shares of the Rupali Bank to Saudi prince.

The government has also decided to sell out 26pc shares of the bank for \$128 million against the backdrop of increased government borrowing from banks amid a fund crisis for Annual Development Programme (ADP) implementation.

Sources said the government has already taken steps for some

reforms, which are prerequisites for getting the World Bank fund, which is going to resume its mission's visit to Bangladesh soon. The visit has been suspended since November last year amid a volatile political situation, the sources added.

A high official of the finance ministry said the government is hopeful of getting \$200 million as the fourth instalment of the development support credit, \$100 million as education sector support credit and another \$40 million as railway sector policy support from the World Bank.

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1.75 lakh sacks of rotten wheat, other items seized

Top food importers found involved

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Joint forces yesterday busted a major food adulteration ring, arrested four people and seized over 1.75 lakh sacks of low-grade and adulterated basic commodities including wheat, sugar, lentil, peas and mustard seeds worth around Tk 35 crore.

The goods belonging to several influential and large importers of the country based in Khatunganj, Asadganj and Chaktai areas in the port city were stockpiled in three large warehouses. The army identified East West Trading, Ahmed

Trading, Abul Khair Edible, AK Corporation, H Brothers, Rifat Trading, Gazi & Brothers and Akhtar Impact Company to be the owners of these seized goods.

Of them, East West Trading, an enterprise of Mashud & Brothers, is one of the country's leading importers of basic commodities -- especially sugar. Mashud & Brothers is infamous for leading a powerful cartel that controls sugar market in the country. The joint forces could not arrest its owner, Abul Bashir Chowdhury, as he went into hiding before the joint

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Govt mulls power import from West Bengal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is mulling over a proposal to import electricity from the bordering Indian state of West Bengal to cut down the perennial power shortages in the country, energy ministry sources said.

The caretaker government (CG) has already formed an expert committee to review the proposal as part of its priority to overhaul the power sector for the short-term goal to reduce load-sheddings during the upcoming summer.

In Monday's council of advisers meeting, the chief adviser (CA) specifically asked the energy ministry to look into a comprehensive energy plan for 2007 that would bring together diverse energy sources, such as gas and coal, to plug up the massive energy shortfall.

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ক্ষুদ্র ক্ষুদ্র সঞ্চয়ই সমৃদ্ধ ভবিষ্যৎ গড়ে দেয়



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In our report headlined 'Canadian jobs beckon Bangladeshi workers' on January 28, it was mistakenly stated that Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited (BOESL) -- a state-owned recruiting agency -- has prepared a draft contract with a Canadian outsourcing

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