

Babar's APS, cousin

FROM PAGE 1
lodged against detained former communications minister barrister Nazmul Huda, while one was filed against detained ex-MP of Demra Salahuddin Ahmed.

Meanwhile, BNP leaders Mir Nasir Uddin, Mirza Abbas and Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu were shown arrested in different cases yesterday.

The joint forces also recovered 1,073 rifle bullets from a Sonali Bank official's house in Rangpur yesterday.

A Sylhet court rejected the bail petitions of former BNP MP Naser Rahman and Sylhet city BNP chief Ariful Haque Chowdhury in an extortion case yesterday and ordered to confine them in jail.

Police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested 1,464 people including 822 wanted criminals, 14 convicts and five accused across the country under the Arms Act in 24 hours ending at 6:00am yesterday, the home ministry said.

Members of the armed forces, meanwhile, arrested 24 people including 12 criminals during the same period.

ntv MD, BNP MP SENT TO JAIL
Tejgaon Police station yesterday produced ntv MD Enayetur Rahman, former BNP MP Harunur Rashid from Chapainawabganj 3 constituency and owner of Sky Auto Istiaq Sadiq before Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court, Dhaka at around 4:45pm.

The police submitted a prayer to put them under detention saying that the three evaded tax during the purchase of the luxurious Hummer.

Harunur Rashid as MP bought the Hummer on April 25, 2005 using his duty free facilities and sold it to Istiaq violating his bond made to the parliament that he would use it for at least three years before handing it over to anyone else, the police said in the forwarding report, adding that Istiaq later sold it to Enayet.

Advocate Sanaulah Mia moved bail petitions for the three.

Hearing both the sides, Metropolitan Magistrate Salam Mia rejected the bail prayers and ordered for sending them to Dhaka Central Jail under detention.

BABAR'S APS, COUSIN HELD
Joint forces arrested former state minister for home Lutfuzzaman Babar's APS Mirza Haider Ali, his cousin Salahuddin Chowdhury, general secretary of Netrakona Sadar upazila BNP advocate Rafiqul Islam Jewel, president of Madan municipality BNP Dewan Mudasser Hossain Shafiq and a moneylender named Jewel when they were coming out of district ACC office after submitting their wealth statements.

On March 4, Netrakona ACC issued notice on 13 persons including three former lawmakers -- MA Karim, Abu Abbas and Dr Mohammad Ali -- and Babar's APS Haider and the Netrakona municipality chairman Nazrul Islam Khan to submit their wealth statements in 72 hours.

Only six of them, including the arrestees and the municipality chairman, submitted their wealth statement yesterday.

TWO MORE CASES AGAINST HUDA
Two more criminal cases against detained former communications minister barrister Nazmul Huda were filed with Dohar PS yesterday.

Ayub Ali of Dohar paid a case against five persons including Huda and his brother Kamrul Huda for extortion.

Another case was filed by Salahuddin of the same area accusing Huda and his thugs of beating him severely and making threats on his life in October last year.

CASE AGAINST SALAHUDDIN
Saiful Islam, deputy director of Amin Mohammad Group, yesterday filed a fraud case with Dhanmondi PS against detained former BNP lawmaker from Demra Salahuddin Ahmed.

CASE AGAINST NASIR
Detained former state minister for civil aviation and tourism Mir Nasir Uddin and his son barrister Helal Uddin were shown arrested yesterday in the case filed against them for accumulating assets worth over Tk 24.39 crore through illegal means and abuse of power.

Metropolitan Magistrate Jagannath Das Khokon passed the order following a petition submitted by investigation officer (IO) of the case for showing them arrested in the case.

The court directed the authorities concerned to produce them before the court on April 8.

Deputy Director of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Sharmin Ferdousi filed the case against them with Gulshan Police Station on Tuesday.

The cases filed against former minister Aman Ullah Aman, his wife Sabera Aman and former state minister and Awami League leader Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir were also sent to the CMM's court yesterday. But no prayers for showing them arrested in the cases were submitted to the court.

CASE AGAINST MIRZA ABBAS
Detained former housing and public works minister Mirza Abbas was shown arrested on Tuesday in two murder cases filed with Motijheel Police Station (PS) in 2005 and last year.

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court passed the order following petitions submitted by IOs of the cases to show him arrested in the cases.

The first case was filed against Abbas after Rafiqul Islam of Shahjahanpur was killed by a group of assailants on December 19, 2005. The second case was filed against Abbas after Ejaz of the same area was killed by a group of criminals on March 28 last year.

In their forwarding reports, the IOs mentioned that Abbas' hitmen had killed the victims on different dates. Therefore, he needs to be quizzed to reveal the clues to the killings and whereabouts of other killers.

MURDER CASE AGAINST PINTU
Former BNP lawmaker Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu was shown arrested yesterday in a murder case filed with Lalbagh PS on December 29 last year.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Mizanur Rahman passed the order following a petition submitted by DB Inspector Rezaul Karim to show Pintu arrested in the case filed for killing Mohammad Ali, son of Anisur Rahman, a former Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) ward commissioner.

The IO said Pintu may have a link with the killing and further investigation into the case is necessary.

CASE AGAINST ABDUL QAYYUM
A Dhaka court yesterday fixed March 11 for hearing on a 14-day remand prayer sought by two IOs of two attempted murder cases against DCC ward commissioner Abdul Qayyum filed with Badda Police Station in February and March.

The court directed the jail authorities to produce him on the scheduled date during the hearing on the prayer.

MYMENSINGH ARRESTS
The joint forces arrested general secretary (GS) of district Jubo Dal Enamul Haque Akanda Liton, GS of district JCD Rukonuzzaman Rokon and transport association leader Jahangir Kabir when they were returning from the district ACC office after submitting their wealth statements yesterday.

Earlier, the district ACC office served notice on eight people to submit statements for their movable and immovable properties by 5:50pm yesterday.

The joint forces also held arrested former MP Delwar Hossain Khan Dulu on the ACC premises as he was returning after submitting his wealth statement at around 11:00am, but was released an hour later after quizzing.

NASER-ARIFUL'S BAIL PRAYERS REJECTED
The Sylhet Sadar Cognisance Magistrate Devjit Sinha yesterday rejected the bail petition for Naser Rahman, son of former finance minister Saifur Rahman, and ordered to send him to jail in an extortion case filed by contractor Nuruzzaman.

Naser, also the president of Moulvibazar district BNP, was produced before the magistrate court on completion of a three-day remand.

The magistrate also rejected the bail prayer of Sylhet city BNP chief Ariful Haque Chowdhury.

BULLETS SEIZED IN RANGPUR
The joint forces recovered 1,073 rifle bullets from Sonali Bank official Ali Wahed Roushan's house at Guptaara Khorompoti in the town yesterday evening.

The ammunition was seized as none present in the house could produce documents for those. The bank official was not at home at that time.

Meanwhile, the forces recovered 78 CI sheets from the house of Azizul Haque at Ekabbarpur area in Pirganj upazila in the afternoon.

Khaleda

FROM PAGE 16
at a city hotel on the occasion of International Women's Day.

Women should move ahead side by side with men for all round development of the nation. They must exploit their potentials, Khaleda stressed.

"It is our responsibility to build the country as a prosperous and peaceful one for our future generation, and I hope you all will contribute to this process from your respective positions."

The former premier said, "We implemented huge programmes for the development of women, including raising their reserve seats in parliament to 45, so that women feel encouraged to work harder for the welfare of the nation and country."

She went on, "We ensured free education for females from primary to higher secondary level. And we promised free education for them up to degree level if we return to power."

Khaleda said their efforts during the last five years (when in power) for women's welfare were acclaimed regionally and internationally. They implemented the programmes that had been taken by the then (late) president Ziaur Rahman, she added.

The function was attended by, among others, Canadian High Commissioner Barbara Richardson, US Charge d'Affaires Geeta Pasi, Brig Gen (ret'd) Dr Suriya Rahman, Razia Foyez, Taleyra Rahman, Razia Akhter Banu, Laila Kabir, Rijia Parveen, Dil Rowshan Zinnat Ara, Tahmina Akhter Tofee, Hosne Ara Begum and representatives of different women's and professional organisations.

Former state minister Selima Rahman gave the welcome address.

Relief goods now come out of river

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

A fisherman yesterday netted 12 pieces of corrugated iron (CI) sheets meant for the destitute from the river Chuna by the Sundarbans.

Police said quoting locals, Abu Musa, a fisherman from Datnekhali village, came across the government relief goods while fishing in the river.

Police sub-inspector Wasim arrived at the scene and seized the relief materials.

Police as well as the locals suspect that influential local political leaders being panic-stricken to be arrested by law enforcers might have thrown the items in the river as they had misappropriated the relief goods for personal use.

Navsher Ali, officer-in-charge of Shyamnagar Police Station (PS), confirmed the incident.

BTRC chairman resigns

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC) Chairman Muhammad Omar Farooq resigned yesterday.

The reasons for his resignation, however, could not be known.

The government is yet to announce the name of Farooq's successor.

Farooq took over charge of BTRC chairman for three years after his retirement as home secretary in March 2005.

National Security

FROM PAGE 1
from different corners following the joint forces' crackdown on corrupt individuals and criminal godfathers.

Matin said the chief adviser will head the NSC. The chiefs of army, navy and air force will be in it while chiefs of BDR, DGF, and NSI as well as civil society members might also be in the NSC, he added.

Regarding the council's tasks, the adviser said, "It will primarily ensure security at the national level and time to time suggest ways and means."

He said other than security issues it will also deal with corruption and accountability. If the council works, sits in meetings and discusses, transparency and accountability will be ensured, he added.

Explaining the rationale behind forming the council, he said during the past years governments worked while corruption and irregularities existed side by side. If the council sits from time to time and discusses such matters, irregularities will be made public and everybody will be careful.

He also said it is not a new concept that exists only in Bangladesh. It exists in India, Pakistan and in the US. It was also in Bangladesh, but was not made effective, he commented.

Although the NSC was born during Ershad's regime, a BNP government in 1992 also formed an NSC headed by the erstwhile prime minister, but it did not have a single meeting during its tenure.

An Awami League government on May 4, 1997 formed a 24-member NSC led by the then prime minister for taking decisions on national security and defence affairs. A circular issued back then by the Cabinet Division on the formation of the NSC said the council had also been given responsibilities to deal with all internal problems related to security.

The NSC was also given the power to take decisions or direct the authorities concerned to take actions, and to make recommendations to the cabinet, if necessary.

Other members of that NSC were the ministers of finance, foreign, commerce, energy, home, law, information, and planning, principal secretary to the prime minister, the chiefs of three armed forces, cabinet secretary, secretaries to the ministries of defence, foreign, finance, home, and law, principal staff officer of the armed forces division, directors general of DGF and NSI, inspector general of police, and the director general of BDR.

The NSC formed during the AL government however also did not have a single meeting.

CJ vows

FROM PAGE 1
recent past for which he said all are responsible.

"Nothing could be achieved by keeping bitterness in mind... Let's bury the differences and work together," he said in his overtures for amity.

Chaired by SCBA President M Amir-ul Islam, the reception at the association's auditorium was also addressed by Dr Kamal Hossain, Rokonuddin Mahmud, TH Khan, Mahbubey Alam, Shafique Ahmed, Rafiqur Rahman, M Hafizullah, Habibul Islam Bhuiyan, Attorney General Fida M Kamal and ex-attorneys general Mahmudul Islam and Rafiq-ul-Huq.

Judges from both divisions of the Supreme Court were present at the reception, traditionally accorded by SCBA to a new Chief Justice.

Welcoming CJ Amin as a symbol of unity between the bar and the bench, the SCBA leaders said they could see the light after traversing through a dark era.

"Now is the time to clean the garbage that has piled up in the highest judiciary," ex-attorney general Rafiq-ul-Huq said, echoing the similar sentiment of his colleagues. "Let's forget what happened in the past; now we will extend our cooperation to salvage the image and integrity of the judiciary."

Dr Kamal Hossain said they got a person of trust as chief justice and hoped that the "darkness would soon disappear".

Indonesian plane

FROM PAGE 16
window, the plane was still swaying and shaking," said Ruth Meigi Panggabean, who works for the aid group World Vision.

"Then the plane was slammed to the ground and skidded forward and slammed once again before it came to a stop," she said.

The flight was carrying some Australian diplomats, officials and journalists who had been accompanying Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, who was not aboard, on a visit to Indonesia.

Downer said up to five Australians were unaccounted for, after officials earlier said four were missing.

Two survivors, both in the Australian air force, had told him the aircraft landed too fast, Downer said.

"... the two who are in the best health told me that the plane came hurtling in to the runway at a much greater speed than an aeroplane would normally land at," he said.

"They themselves thought the plane would never stop in the length of the runway, which it duly didn't. They just plowed across the end of the runway, across a road, hit a bank and a culvert and went into a paddy field. When it hit the bank and the culvert, it exploded."

INVESTIGATIONS
Crash survivor Din Syamsudin, the head of Indonesia's second-largest Muslim organisation, Muhammadiyah, told Elnishita of his lucky escape.

"Some passengers wanted to get their hand luggage. I cried to them, 'Get out, get out,'" he said. "The plane was full of smoke. I just jumped from two metres high and landed in a rice field."

As well as the Australians, Garuda's media office said the plane carried two Japanese, two Brunei nationals and seven other foreigners.

Indonesia President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has ordered the chief secretary minister to investigate "non-technical" matters related to the crash, a cabinet official said.

However, Downer and Australian Prime Minister John Howard said they had received no information that would suggest terrorism or sabotage was a factor in the disaster.

Transport Minister Hatta Radjasa said Australia would join an investigation into the accident.

An Australian Defense Force C130 transport aircraft meanwhile flew from Darwin to Yogyakarta on Wednesday carrying medical specialists to evacuate victims.

Yogyakarta, around 440 km (270 miles) southeast of the capital, Jakarta, is known as the cultural heart of Indonesia and is popular with tourists. Its Adi Sucipto airport is known for its relatively short runway.

Garuda spokesman Pujobroto said the plane, manufactured in 1992, had its last major inspection last month and had logged 34,960 flight hours.

Indonesia has suffered a string of transport accidents in recent months, including an Adam Air plane that disappeared in January with 102 passengers and crew on board, and a ferry sinking in late December in which hundreds died.

Tigers

FROM PAGE 16
matches against England, Kenya and Canada.

Bangladesh will face Scotland in another warm-up match here on Thursday.

They are in Group B in the first round and will face India, Sri Lanka and Bermuda in Trinidad.

A mini zoo

FROM PAGE 1
The law enforcers also arrested five servants from the house.

A case was filed against the former minister and his brother former pourasava chairman Monjur Hassan Mahmood for rearing wild animals without licence or necessary papers, said Kabir Hossain, assistant forest officer in Sirajganj.

Although the family members claimed to have licence for rearing pets, they failed to show it.

EC jt secretary

FROM PAGE 16
Zakoria, the first EC Secretariat official made OSD, became controversial because of his dubious role at the secretariat and alleged financial irregularities. Political parties had demanded his removal from the secretariat before the stalled ninth parliamentary election.

The EC has also initiated steps towards ending controversy over the appointment of over 300 upazila election officers who were recruited in 2005 during the BNP-led alliance's rule. The appointments triggered enormous controversy as many of them were activists of the student front of the BNP.

The EC at a meeting on Monday discussed the issue. Sources said it is determined to find a way out, and if necessary it will ask the government to take steps in this regard.

The reconstituted EC led by ATM Shamsul Huda has already initiated the process of reshuffling its secretariat. It started with the transfer of EC Secretary Abdur Rashid Sarkar, who was determined to go for holding the ninth parliamentary election (stalled later) amid boycott by the major political parties.

Zakoria was the next to be transferred but the move slowed down as his job was not transferable from the EC secretariat.

Zakoria joined the EC Secretariat in 1984 as an assistant secretary and managed promotion to the post of joint secretary. He even acted as EC secretary for about a year when the

then secretary Zakaria was made election commissioner. He (Zakoria) was given charge of both additional secretary and secretary of the EC.

CITY CORPORATIONS POLLS
The EC has decided to inform the government about its inability to hold the elections to Dhaka, Rajshahi and Khulna city corporations because of the state of emergency, lack of credible voter list and the January 29 High Court ruling suspending all elections from that date.

Tenure of the three city corporation authorities will expire in May and June this year, while elections to the local government bodies are supposed to be held within 180 days before expiry of their tenure.

The EC has to announce schedule for the elections in the first week of April but it is not possible in the prevailing situation, sources said.

The local government ministry will now decide about elections to the three city corporations, and whether their elected representatives will continue in office until the elections are held.

The last election to Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) was held on April 24, 2002 while elections to Rajshahi and Khulna city corporations were held the next day. The first meeting of the elected DCC body was held on May 15 and that of Rajshahi on June 17 and Khulna on June 27 that year.

CG accountable

FROM PAGE 16
on the head of the caretaker government at his office yesterday.

The diplomats appreciated the pre-election reforms and remarkable achievements of the caretaker government in a short time, according to an official.

As they cited news of some political parties demanding election timeframe, the chief adviser said some reforms need to be done before election and the government is doing the spadework. He mentioned the recasting of the Election Commission and the Anti-Corruption Commission.

Referring to people's sentiment, he said people want reform before election. And the government is carrying out effort "to curb the influence of money, muscle and misuse of authority in election to prevent recurrence of the past scenario".

He said the diplomats can take feedback from people as to what they want. Everybody is observing the activity of the government, as the press is free. "What we are doing, doing for the welfare of the people," he told the diplomats of the Southeast Asian countries.

The chief adviser said the main objective of the government is to create a level playing field for a free, fair and credible election and keeping the wheels of economy rolling.

He urged the Asean countries to invest in Bangladesh taking advantage of the prevailing investment-friendly climate and government incentives.

The CA noted that bilateral relations of Bangladesh with the Asean countries are excellent and that can be further improved through expanding trade and commerce and cultural ties. Bangladesh can learn as well as follow some Asean countries as model, he

CID resumes probe into Kibria killing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The criminal investigation department (CID) has started further investigation into the killing of former finance minister and Awami League leader SAMS Kibria.

Munshi Atiqur Rahman, CID's senior additional superintendent of police (ASP) and also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, brought the matter to the notice of Sylhet Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal yesterday.

Earlier on Tuesday, the IO informed the Magistrate Court of Habiganj Sadar upazila about the matter.

"We found some significant information regarding involvement of a few more people with the sensational killing," the IO told The Daily Star adding, "We will try to finish our job as soon as possible."

Kibria and four others were killed in a grenade attack at a public meeting at Baidderbazar under Habiganj Sadar upazila on January 27, 2005.

A charge sheet was filed on March 20 of the same year against 10 people including Abdul Quaiyum, vice-president of Habiganj district unit of BNP and also chief of Zia Gobeshona Parishad. Quaiyum was made the prime accused of the case.

Among the 10, eight including Quaiyum are in jail now while two others are still at large.

However, Kibria's wife and his son Reza Kibria had rejected the charge sheet and demanded fresh investigation.

Outlaw killed in 'shootout'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kusthia

A local leader of outlawed Gono Mukti Fouz (GMF) was killed in 'crossfire' during a shootout between the joint forces and GMF cadres at Chandmari under Sadar upazila of the district on Tuesday night.

The dead, Fazlu, 38, was a close accomplice of GMF regional leader Bakhtiar Hossain.

According to police, a joint forces team went to Chandmari at about 9.30pm on information that a group of GMF cadres were holding a meeting by the Chandmari Ganges-Kabadak canal.

The joint forces team encircled the area and asked the outlawed cadres to surrender.

However, they opened fire on the joint forces men ignoring the call starting an hour-long battle as the law enforcers retaliated with fire.

Police found Fazlu's dead body on the spot after the battle. However, the other cadres managed to flee.

Police recovered a rifle and two bullets from the spot.

According to police, Fazlu was accused in seven cases including two for murders with Sadar and Islamic University (IU) Police Stations.

Moudud

FROM PAGE 1
"We have not frozen the accounts to harass anyone," he said, adding that Moudud will be notified of the reasons for freezing his bank accounts.

Moudud, also BNP standing committee member, had said at a press conference on Tuesday that freezing his and his family members' bank accounts was just to harass him politically.

Asked about further actions against tax evaders, Adviser Azizul Islam said, "We are not going for wholesale freezing of bank accounts, but we will freeze them if there are specific allegations."

"I think there is no doubt about the persons whose bank accounts have been frozen so far," he said.

Editors of different newspapers and satellite television channels exchanged their views on different issues, including hike in the prices of essentials and whitening of black money.

Sources said a number of editors wanted to know if the current caretaker government will go for any drive against the persons who whitened black money during the immediate past BNP-Jamaat rule.

"It will not be correct to go for action against them as they whitened black money maintaining government rules and paid a certain amount of money to the government," one editor said.

Briefing newsmen after the meeting, Financial Express Editor Moazzem Hossain said the editors drew attention to many genuine businessmen's panic caused by the ongoing joint drives.

Admitting the fact, the finance adviser said, "We have already taken measures to give honest businessmen assurance that they will not be affected [by the joint drive]."

Import duty cut

FROM PAGE 1
genuine traders.

The meeting decided to ask the law enforcers to coordinate their drives against hoarding and corrupt businesses and take assistance for the drives from government departments concerned -- National Board of Revenue (NBR), Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and BB.

Sources said as per the meeting decision, the NBR from now on will deal issues related to tax evasion while the ACC will launch drives against corruption. The BB will watch over money laundering issues.

The government also decided to intensify import of essentials through the state-run trading agency, Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB), to reduce the prices of essentials, added the sources.

Besides, the government is to cut import duties on a number of essential commodities including rice, lentils and salt, NBR sources said.

Yesterday, ending a pre-budget meeting with editors of different newspapers and private television stations, finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam told journalists that import duties on essential commodities would be reduced very soon to maintain the smooth supply of essentials on the market.

The adviser said the government is going to involve state-run agencies to increasing the supply of products on the market.

According to a TCB report, the prices of essentials have been on the rise to a great extent during the recent years.

A TCB report prepared on yesterday's market price shows prices of all types of rice went up by 2 to 13 percent in the last month while price of coarse rice, mostly consumed by poor people, rose by 18 percent.

In last one year, wheat prices went up by about 31 per cent while of soybean oil prices increased by 41.49 per cent.

The TCB data also shows that onion prices went up by 12.82 per cent in the last one month while the price increase was 91.30 per cent in the last one year.

A Bangladesh Bank (BB) official told The Daily Star that there is no scarcity in production of commodities and import is adequate in recent days. "Indiscriminate drives against hoarding and illegal structures have broken the supply chain from big cities to rural areas and resulted in the price hike."

He referred to the data compiled by agriculture ministry that shows that production of Aush paddy was 22.24 lakh MT and Aman was 1.28 crore MT this year while Aush was 20.15 lakh MT and Aman 1.22 crore in the previous year.

The BB official also differed with the apprehension that import had declined in recent time. He said BB data shows importers opened LCs (letter of credits) of \$33.93 million for rice in last month (February), which was \$13.09 million in February last year. He said

importers opened LCs of \$9.62 million for wheat in last month, which was \$5.39 million in February last year. In case of edible oil, the figure rose to \$40.42 million from \$28.69 million, he said.

Referring to harassment by the joint forces, a private bank official said his bank disbursed Tk 12 crore in loans to a trader in Bogra for importing pulses, but after the trader imported the pulses, the joint forces recently seized the pulses on allegation of hoarding. Furthermore, a lower court directed to sell the pulses on auction. The importer did not hoard pulses and he has all the rights to keep those in his possession for two months from import.

Asked about such drives, finance adviser yesterday told the reporters, "I will not strongly tell that this is totally baseless and it will improve [the situation] within a short time."

"The government would like to assure all that no genuine businessman shall be harassed. And the chief adviser has already mentioned this," the adviser added.

Pvt operator

FROM PAGE 16
some important raw materials for manufacturing garments items. If I do not get the delivery today my factory would be affected," said another agent.

The agents blamed the private company for taking over the charge before getting fully prepared with skilled manpower.

Later, as a team of joint forces arrived at the scene and instructed the CPA and private company officials to cooperate with each other for accelerating the port activities, the CPA operators and the terminal traffic manager became active and operation of the terminal resumed.

"We are working round the clock and it may take only a few days for smooth functioning of the port," the leader of the joint forces team told the C & F agents.

The back-up services, previously done by the CPA operators, were handed over to Saif Powertec Limited to accelerate the container handling activities.

The company had so far operated about four quay gantry cranes (QGC) only for loading and unloading containers.

Saif Powertec officials said they are bringing skilled operators from abroad to accelerate the container operation.

Now, on an average, the company is handling 25-30 containers per hour.

The company officials, however, said the speed of the container handling activities can be increased much and 40-45 containers can be handled per hour.

There are many Bangladeshi skilled operators who worked for long in foreign ports and they can contribute a lot in improving the activities in Chittagong Port, said a high official of the company.

"I worked for 14 years at Fujairah Port in the United Arab Emirates and now I have joined said Powertec to serve my homeland," said Khorshed Alam, an operator.

Twenty skilled operators from Fujairah Port, both Bangladeshi and foreign, are working under the company and 20 more are on the way, he said, adding, "We have taken the job as a challenge and container handling activities will gear up when all the staff join."

Anti-graft, crime

FROM PAGE 1
forces, ACC Secretary Delwar Hossain said yesterday that he does not know anything about it.

Meanwhile, sources said the government has almost completed the process to form the 20 new teams to probe graft allegations against the persons to be listed by the ACC.

The authorities are looking for skilful, honest and competent officials from the ACC to include them in those teams, which will also comprise members of the army, police, Rab, DGF and other intelligence agencies.

The government earlier made 20 similar teams to investigate alleged corruption of 50 influential persons already listed by the ACC last month.

Meanwhile, the ACC prepared more enquiry reports on the big corruption suspects on its top-50 list.

Before filing the first information reports (FIR) against them, the ACC top officials are now examining if any information has been dropped or if there is any legal loopholes, sources said.

The ACC has so far filed three cases against three former state ministers on the list. According to ACC officials, more cases will be filed against others by the next week.

The government may issue a notification next week amending the Emergency Power Rules to empower the ACC to start the process for confiscating properties of 15 of the 50 corruption suspects who failed to submit their wealth statements within the ACC deadline last month.

As per the Emergency Power rules, the government requires permission from magistrates for confiscating properties of the persons failing to submit their wealth statements, and after getting the permission it will attach or freeze their properties.

To amend the ACC Act, a new ordinance may also be promulgated by the next week, ACC sources said.

BB ASKED FOR 62 PERSONS' FINANCIAL TRANSACTION
Bangladesh Bank (BB) yesterday asked banks and financial institutions to submit transaction statements of 62 persons including leaders of BNP and Awami League in Bogra within today.

In response to a request from the ACC, the central bank also directed the banks and financial institutions to submit the details of the individuals' credit and locker usage since 2001, sources said.

20 injured as train derails

UNB, Thakurgaon

Three compartments of a passenger train derailed on Thakurgaon-Parbatipur route on Tuesday night, injuring 20 passengers.

Railway sources said the three bogies of the Parbatipur-bound local train derailed soon after it left Madarganj station.

Three of the injured were admitted to Peerganj Hospital while the remaining 17 to local hospitals.

Railway sources said 60 incidents of derailment took place on the route in 2006.