

Greek Cypriots tear down wall dividing Nicosia

AFP, Nicosia

A concrete wall in Nicosia symbolising the decades-old Cyprus conflict was demolished by Greek Cypriots early yesterday to make way for a crossing point in the heart of the world's last divided capital.

The move was welcomed by the Turkish Cypriots and by the United Nations, whose troops have for decades patrolled a buffer zone between the two sides.

Ledra Street, a pedestrian shopping area inside the Venetian walls of the old city, was cordoned off late on Thursday and demolition teams dismantled the barrier between the Greek Cypriot south and the Turkish occupied north.

"This is a show of goodwill on our side to contribute positively to opening Ledra Street," Cypriot government spokesman Christodoulos Pashardes said.

The surprise move came four years after the opening of an initial crossing that allowed unprecedented movement across the UN-patrolled buffer zone for the first time in three decades.

Nicosia's first woman mayor, Eleni Mavrou, said "the important thing now is for Ledra to open, to have communication and the city to come to life."

But Parshardes said people could not start crossing as long as Turkish troops remain in the northern sector of Nicosia.

"This doesn't mean Ledra is open yet."

Cyprus has been divided along ethnic lines since 1974, when Turkey seized its northern third in response to an Athens-engineered Greek Cypriot coup in Nicosia aimed at uniting the island with Greece.

Turkey, which still maintains around 42,500 troops in northern Cyprus, had no immediate reaction to the wall coming down.

Pashardes said the government had invited the Turkish Cypriots to a dialogue to discuss outstanding issues. "That is if they really want Ledra Street to be opened."

Cypriot President Tassos Papadopoulos, speaking in Brussels, said "the obstacle is not the wall but the Turkish troops. If the troops pull back and allow the UN to check for landmines, as we believe there are, then the crossing can open, but troops must withdraw."

Opposing troops are at their closest distance in Ledra, and the government would like to see Turkish and Cypriot National Guard troops pull back some 100 metres (yards) from their present positions, which separate them by only about 50 metres.

House of Representatives Speaker Demetris Christofias, who is acting president while Papodopoulos is out of the country, said "the National Guard are fully prepared to move back."

"If the other side ... responds then it will happen soon; if not, it won't," he added.

Mohiuddin

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And several crore taka in secret accounts in different banks. He owned a luxurious building and allegedly financed a posh hotel in Bangkok which he visited frequently.

Moreover, investigation is on also into the reported fraud involving Tk 20 crore detected in the CCC audit report in 2005, and into the mayor's link with different corrupt syndicates at the CCC, sources said.

The mayor allegedly helped one Zafar Ahmed to misappropriate several crore taka from the CCC asphalt plant.

Crores of taka was allegedly embezzled in the name of a garbage treatment plant at Ananda Bazar in Halishahar. The plant now runs under the supervision of the mayor's wife.

Besides, there are many allegations against Mohiuddin concerning illegal grabbing of land and properties and for helping his loyalists in doing such mischief.

Sources recalled that the mayor encroached upon landed property worth around Tk 50 crore of the Hindus in the port city's Golpahar area. Leaders of the Hindu-Bouddha-Christian Oikya Parishad sued him for this and took the matter up to the High Court.

Mohiuddin played the key role in paralysing Chittagong port repeatedly for political and personal gains. The country's premier seaport remained paralysed for a total of 28 days during the period from October 28 last year to January 10 this year at the directive of the CCC mayor.

The losses incurred by the garment and shipping sectors alone due to the suspension of port activities amounted to about Tk 6,000 crore, business leaders alleged.

Earlier in 1996, the mayor forced suspension of port activities for 18 days causing the national economy to suffer losses of at least Tk 4,000 crore, they mentioned.

India will join trans-Asian rail project

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India has decided to join a trans-Asian rail project that will connect vast parts of Asia and Europe, seeking to give a boost to trade and tourism.

The Indian cabinet at its meeting on Thursday evening gave its clearance for signing and ratifying the inter-governmental agreement on Trans-Asian Railway which will link various countries from China in the east to Bulgaria in the west, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Priyaranjan Dasmunshi told reporters here.

The inter-governmental agreement, already signed by 18 countries, including Russia, China, Iran, several Central Asian countries, Turkey, Thailand, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Nepal, Laos and Mongolia, will formalise the coordinated development of the Trans-Asian Railways.

Indian Railways will set up a 350-km link between Jiribam (India) and Moreh (Myanmar) for the proposed link-up. The Myanmar government will share part of the project cost. The project cost for India is estimated at around Rs 1,800 crore and the total cost is expected to be about Rs 3,000 crore.

The inter-governmental agreement on Trans-Asian Railway Network was adopted at the 62nd session of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asian and the Pacific (Escap) held in Jakarta on April 12, 2006.

India initially had some security concerns over the project but later decided to join the ambitious project.

India seeks to attract several tourists from Southeast Asian countries to its Buddhist pilgrimage sites who can use the cheaper rail route. Besides, the rail link is expected to help India's burgeoning trade with Asean.

UAE grants citizenship to stateless people

AFP, Abu Dhabi

The interior ministry has granted citizenship to 1,294 stateless residents in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the first group to benefit from a promise made last October, local media reported yesterday.

The official WAM news agency said "the ministry started on Thursday to hand over registration certificates to an initial group giving rise automatically to obtaining Emirati nationality."

It gave no figures for those receiving the certificates but the daily Gulf News said "more than 30 people" were involved.

According to a ministry source, around 10,000 stateless people -- mainly originating from Iran, Asia or Zanzibar -- have registered for naturalisation.

Last October, Interior Minister Sheikh Saif bin Zayed al-Nahayan promised naturalisation to those who it had been proven "were living in the country before the proclamation of the (Emirates) Federation" on December 2, 1971. He gave no figure.

Tarique

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he, his party colleagues, and his business partners earned a huge amount of money through unbridled corruption in domestic and international tenders.

It also mentioned that he amassed a large amount of money taking commissions from those who earned illegal money by appointing people to different posts in the civil aviation and tourism ministry. Moreover, he siphoned crores of taka off the country which he had earned through manipulating tenders using his own, his family members' and his business partners' influences in purchasing CNG auto-rickshaws, setting up power plants, and manufacturing electric poles causing a huge loss to the government.

Tarique who is believed to have virtually ruled the country for the last five years from the alternative powerhouse Hawa Bhaban, was arrested in the early hours of Thursday from his mother's cantonment residence in the biggest ever manhunt by the joint forces.

Sources said joint forces men in plainclothes raided Hawa Bhaban around 4:30pm yesterday and stayed there for about 20 minutes. During the raid they called in BNP chairperson's office's computer operator SM Parvez and picked him up, the sources added.

Meanwhile, IO of the extortion case filed against Tarique visited Hawa Bhaban yesterday afternoon along with seven to eight other police officials to get a sketch of the place of occurrence of the alleged crime.

"It's a routine work. We neither raided Hawa Bhaban, nor arrested anyone from there," said IO Mahbub Morshed.

Rosy passes away

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Banani Graveyard.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday expressed her deep shock at the death of Rosy Afari.

She prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed her sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

In a separate message, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan also expressed deep shock at the death of Rosy.

Syria trains thousands of rockets on Israel *Israeli military, govt sources say*

AFP, Jerusalem

Syria has positioned on its border with Israel thousands of medium and long-range rockets capable of striking major towns across northern Israel, military and government sources told AFP.

This deployment, coupled with other recent reports of Syrian troop mobilisation, is seen in Israel as an indication that Damascus may be preparing for future "low intensity warfare," they said.

The report comes only two weeks after Israel held war games on the occupied Golan Heights, captured from Syria in 1967, in a bid to learn the lessons of last summer's conflict in neighbouring south Lebanon.

The Syrian army accelerated its deployment of medium and long-range rockets in the wake of the Lebanon war, during which the Hezbollah militia fired more than 4,000 rockets against northern Israel.

"We have noticed that in recent months Syria has deployed hundreds, possibly thousands, of medium and long-range rockets along the border (with Israel)," one military source said.

"Many of the rockets are hidden in underground chambers and in camouflaged silos, which make them very difficult to locate," the source said.

Three of the sources were from the military and two from the government, and they all spoke to AFP on condition of anonymity. They said Syria has built a system of fortified underground tunnels along its border with Israel.

Most of the rockets deployed are 220 millimetre, with a range of 70 kilometres, and 302 millimetre rockets capable of striking targets at a distance of more than 100 kilometres.

The latter would be well within range of the main population centres in northern Israel such as Tiberias and Kinyat Shmona.

These long-range rockets could also reach Israel's third largest city of Haifa and its industrial zone, which is home to several essential industries, including oil refineries and a deep-water port.

It is also believed that Syria has deployed several FROG rocket launchers, with a 550-kilogram (1,200-pound) warhead and 70-kilometre range, in areas between the border and the capital Damascus, 40 kilometres (25 miles) away.

According to the sources, such a massive deployment of well entrenched rockets poses "a real strategic threat" to Israel.

While Syria concentrates most of its long-range surface-to-surface missile arsenal in the north of the country, its decision to deploy rockets so close to the border may indicate that Syria is mulling an attack on Israel, experts say.

"Syrian President Bashar al-Assad realised after the Lebanon war that Israel was not as strong as

CNG filing stations

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Influential people related to Hawa Bhaban, which many described as the 'alternative power centre', also played a leading role in the allocation of the plots and distributing them among the partymen.

After getting the allotment, some of them sold the lands to others for handsome amounts. Other allottees kept the land under their possession but did not set up fuelling stations or make regular payment against the allotment. However, the allotments were not cancelled allegedly due to the allottees' links with the ruling party.

The present caretaker government has taken an initiative to investigate the allegation of allocating lands of Roads and Highways and Bangladesh Railway for refuelling stations and other commercial purposes without following rules and regulations, sources said.

A total of 65 plots were allocated from the properties of Roads and Highways and Bangladesh Railway in Dhaka city and its suburbs.

Although the market price of each plot was not less than Tk 5 crore, the government charged only Tk 10 lakh in advance and Tk 15,000 rent per month while some of the allottees had to spend Tk 1 to 5 crore in bribes for getting allotment of a piece of land to set up a refuelling station.

The BNP leaders who got plot allocation for the purpose include former state minister Amanullah Aman, former lawmakers Salahuddin Ahmed, Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu, Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anny, current JCD President Azizul Bari Helal, former JCD president Shahabuddin Laltu, brother of former prime minister Khaleda Zia Major (retired) Sayeed Iskander and a brother of former works minister Mirza Abbas.

Giasuddin AI Mamun, a business partner of Tarique Rahman,

it seems and that it could be threatened by simple means rather than an advanced army," the director of the Begin-Saadat Centre for Strategic Studies, Ephraim Inbar, told AFP.

Inbar, as well as the military sources, believe that "Assad could be preparing for low intensity war, a type of war of attrition with Israel, where Syria fires several rockets against Israel without provoking full-fledged war."

"Israel has absolute superiority in several fields in warfare," a senior government official said, referring mainly to Israel's advanced air force and "smart" weapons.

"So Syria is investing in fields where it can have an edge. It has invested in recent years in anti-aircraft weapons, rockets, missiles and bunkers. The war in Lebanon proved to the Syrians they were right to do so."

Israel's military intelligence chief, Major General Amod Yadin, told the government's annual intelligence assessment that while Syria was beefing up its military, war between the two neighbouring countries was unlikely in 2007.

"Syria is continuing its military build-up and preparing for war," he told the cabinet.

"The chances of a full-scale war initiated by Syria are low, but the chances of Syria reacting militarily against Israeli military moves are high."

Government sources told AFP that Syria was close to concluding a deal with Russia to procure thousands of advanced anti-tank missiles, of the sort Hezbollah used with great success against Israeli armour last year.

Tensions between Israel and Syria have peaked in recent months, with Israel rejecting peace overtures from Damascus and both sides toughening rhetoric.

Damascus has repeatedly demanded the return of the Golan Heights, a strategic plateau which Israel captured from Syria in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and annexed in 1981. It is now home to more than 15,000 settlers.

Peace talks between Israel and Syria collapsed in 2000.

JFF production

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general manager (Admin) of the factory, said yesterday: "The production remained suspended due to technical problems at ammonia plant of the factory."

But, he could not exactly say when the fertiliser production at the plant would resume.

Meanwhile, fertiliser supply to the country's 19 northern districts, including Jamalpur, Sherpur and Tangail, will be affected in the peak time of Irri-boro season as fertiliser stock in the factory is running out fast.

senior joint secretary general of BNP and son of former prime minister Khaleda Zia, also got a plot allotment.

Two cousins of Tarique Rahman -- Shahrin Islam Tuhin and Shahriar Haque Don -- also got plots to set up refuelling stations.

Mamun neither set up refuelling station on the plot nor paid the required money but his allotment is yet to be cancelled. BNP office secretary Mofiqul Hasan Tripti also got a plot allocation and former lawmaker GM Siraj got one in the name of his wife.

Shahana Siraj, wife of GM Siraj, got allotment of a plot at Mirpur. Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anny, a former president of JCD, got the allotment near Gabtoli bus stand, Shahabuddin Laltu near Amin Bazar while former lawmaker Salahuddin Ahmed got allotment of two plots at Kadamtali and Jurain.

Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu got allotment in the name of Asha Enterprise at Dholaikhal, Azizul Bari Helal on Dhaka-Aricha highway, Amanullah Aman in the name of Mahim Enterprise and Mashful Haque, son of former state minister Ziaul Haque Zia, in the name of Zia Royal Filling Station got allotment on Dhaka-Savar road.

Former lawmaker Monirul Islam and ward commissioner Monwar Hossain Dipjal got allotment near Gabtoli bus stand. A brother of Mirza Abbas got a piece of land for a refuelling station at Asad Gate.

The programme for setting up refuelling stations began in 2002 and continued till the end of the tenure of the BNP-led government.

But as many BNP leaders did not set up refuelling stations even after getting allotment for the purpose, it has led to a long drawn out crisis of fuel supply for the CNG-run vehicles. Long queues of vehicles are often seen at many refuelling stations in the city.

US forces seize 16 'al-Qaeda' men in Iraq

AFP, Baghdad

US forces in Iraq captured 16 suspected insurgents yesterday including an Al-Qaeda leader known as "The Butcher" because of his penchant for beheading captives, the military said.

This suspect was one of six insurgents captured in an early morning raid in the northern city of Mosul in which a seventh suspect was killed, according to a statement from US military headquarters.

The Butcher is "allegedly responsible for numerous kidnappings, beheadings, and suicide operations in the Ramadi and Mosul areas," it said.

In the western city of Fallujah, troops captured two men suspected of helping foreign extremist fighters to slip into the country.

Eight more suspected members of an insurgent courier network were rounded up near the nearby town of Mahmah, the statement said, including an "Al-Qaeda media emir" responsible for propaganda.

AL leaders

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the ongoing drive against corrupt elements," the AL leader said adding, "They should clarify the reasons behind the arrests of our leaders."

Many other mid-level AL leaders told the Daily Star that they have no clue why their leaders like Quader and Mohiuddin were arrested. Many of the leaders even said they are bewildered and frustrated by the arrests.

On the other hand, some of the party leaders contradicted the view and said there must be some allegations against the leaders whose names are on the list of corrupt people.

"But we want to know the reasons behind the arrests so that we can bring forward clean leadership in the party," said an organising secretary preferring not to be named. He also said they believe that a fair political environment will come soon as, in his words, the country cannot move forward without democratic politics.

Another organising secretary said, "We have nothing to say about the arrest of Obaidul Quader as there is no specific allegation against him."

"We should quit politics under the circumstances," said the AL leader in an emotion choked voice.

Voting process

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the control unit, a voter will press the button below his/her chosen symbol and the machine will display 'voting completed' if it is cast properly or vote again if there is any mistake.

The display unit will show the number of votes cast while the battery will continue the system up to 72 hours.

The machine will ensure safe and perfect vote recording as protection has been taken to check failed vote, vote rigging or any other anomalies, Prof Kabir said, adding, "The most significant feature of the EVM is its simplicity, accuracy and low cost."

A combined effort of the government, political parties, people and the media with the direct involvement of Election Commission is needed to introduce the machine in voting system at a convenient time, Prof Kabir said.

A tentative nine-month time will be required to complete the necessary steps including system design, procurement of necessary materials, manufacturing, customisation and training, he said.

He also gave a tentative break up of the costs involved in introducing the machine -- fixed cost, individual EVM cost, training cost and post-election research cost.

"For 100 million [10 crore] voters, 2 million [2 lakh] EVMs will be needed, as 65,000 votes can be cast through a machine. A fixed cost of the system development will be Tk 6.5 million [65 lakh] and each machine will cost Tk 5400 only. The approximate total development cost stands at Tk 1.09 billion [109 crore]," Prof Kabir said.

Buet Vice-chancellor Prof AMM Safullah, team members of the project to develop the machine -- KM Masum Habib, lecturer of IICT, Rajib Mikail, lecturer of the Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering, and Mahmudul Hasan Sohag, founder and director of Pi Labs, a research and development company were present on the occasion.

37 more deer

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from the house of Ershadul Hoque, a businessman of Hoque Bazar under the same municipality.

The deer were seized as there was no permission to rear them, sources of the joint forces said.

The rescued deer were handed over to the Department of Forest.

Our Barisal correspondent adds: Four deer kept at the residence of Barisal City Corporation (BCC) Mayor Majibor Rahman Sarwar would be sent to the mini zoo of Planet World, the only children's park of the city, sources said.

Mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation Mizanur Rahman Minu presented the deer to the Barisal mayor in 2003, BCC authorities said, adding that as there was no zoo in Barisal at that time, the deer were looked after at the city mayor's residence.

Democrats for pullout from Iraq in 2008

AFP, Washington

US Democrats unveiled a double-pronged attack on President George W. Bush over Iraq Thursday, demanding the withdrawal of all US combat troops from the unpopular war as early as March 2008.

But the White House swiftly responded, vowing Bush would veto any bill that amounted to a precipitous departure from Iraq, and accused Congress's Democratic leaders of interfering in military strategy for political gain.

After days fusing internal divisions on Iraq, Democrats in both the Senate and House of Representatives threw down the gauntlet, after Bush left Washington on a trip to Latin America.

Senate Democrats pushed for debate next week on a joint resolution requiring Bush to ditch his current plan to surge 21,500 troops into Iraq with a goal of getting all combat soldiers out by March 31, 2008.

But Republicans resisted, saying they needed more time to study the plan, similar to recommendations of the independent Iraq Study Group last year, which has already been rejected by Bush.

In the House, Democrats took the wraps off an attempt to withdraw combat troops by September 2008 at the latest, saying the United States needed to refocus on where the "war on terror" started, in Afghanistan.

The new Democratic offensive was the latest attempt by the party, which rode public anger over the conflict to capture Congress last year, to curtail Bush's strategy in a war which has killed 3,191 US troops.

Senior Bush aide Dan Bartlett dismissed the new Democratic gambit, as the president jetted to Brazil on Air Force One.

"Obviously, the administration would vehemently oppose and ultimately veto any legislation that looks like what was described today," he said.

"What we're seeing here is an artificial, precipitous withdrawal from Iraq based on, unfortunately, politics in Washington, not conditions on the ground in Baghdad, Iraq," Bartlett said.

It was also far from clear if either initiative would eventually garner sufficient support to pass, given fierce White House and Republican opposition, and divisions in Democratic ranks over Iraq.

In the Senate, Democrats have only a 51-49 majority, and would require Republicans to desert the president to seriously shackle his foreign policy.

Previous attempts by Senate Democrats to debate a non-binding resolution opposing Bush's surge plan, announced in January, also foundered on Republican opposition.

But Democratic Senator Chuck Schumer vowed Democrats would force Republicans to choose between supporting the president and the

Rejoinder

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"Question does not arise that a 'heated debate' took place between the chairperson and the leaders on any organisational matter. Likewise, the remarks involving the secretary general and the alleged points raised by some party leaders with him are also baseless and fabricated," Mannan Bhuiyan said in the rejoinder that was signed by Mofiqul Hasan Tripti, office secretary of BNP, and sent to The Daily Star as a press release containing a statement by the party's secretary general.

Mannan Bhuiyan also claimed that it is not true that many of the party leaders have stopped frequenting the Hawa Bhaban office of BNP at Banani. "They visit the place regularly, and do attend meeting and participate in discussions," his statement read.

"BNP has already started looking into the allegations of corruption levelled against its party leaders and others and the chairperson time and again stated it publicly that disciplinary action would be taken against anybody found guilty of corruption after due process of law," the BNP secretary general said in the rejoinder.

He also said, "A delegation of senior leaders of BNP led by one of its vice-chairmen KM Anwar met the chief election commissioner and his chief election missionary and his colleagues on March 4 and had a fruitful exchange of views."

OUR REPLY:

The news item, for which the BNP secretary general issued the statement, was prepared after talking to some BNP leaders who are public figures of repute. However, they did not agree to be quoted fearing that the party high command would not take it easily due to an absence of practice of democracy within the party.

Many BNP leaders, who had been almost regulars at Hawa Bhaban before the state of emergency was declared, are trying to avoid visiting the particular real estate now, some of the leaders told The Daily Star. Even Tarique Rahman, joint secretary general of the party, who had always played a key role at Hawa Bhaban, was not seen there since the state of emergency had been declared.

The meeting between a BNP delegation and the Election Commission, which the BNP secretary general mentioned in his statement, was held a day after the report had been published.

hopes of American voters.

"The rubber stamp days are over," he said.

Anti-war Democrat Russ Feingold admitted the bill did not go as far as he would have liked, but said it was a "strong step" towards ending a "misguided war."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi must meanwhile placate more liberal members agitating for an immediate withdrawal from Iraq. She said the House measure would "hold the Iraqi government accountable" for progress.

"It calls for the strategic redeployment of US combat troops some time in 2008, only then can we refocus our military efforts on Afghanistan," Pelosi said, ferring that conflict an "unfinished and nearly forgotten war."

But the White House vowed to fight back against the Democratic legislation, to be added to Bush's 100-billion-dollar request for funds for the Iraq and Afghan wars.

The House bill requires Bush to certify Iraq has made meaningful and substantial progress in meeting political, economic and diplomatic benchmarks he laid down in his new Iraq strategy by July 1, and October 1, this year.

Even if those benchmarks are met, troops must begin immediate redeployment on March 1 next year and withdrawal must be complete within 180 days. That timetable would see troops out of Iraq by September.

If Bush certified no progress was being made in Iraq on July 1, or October 1, the redeployment would have to begin immediately.

Republican House minority leader John Boehner accused the Democrats of risking defeat in the "war on terror."

"Arbitrary timelines are little more than a road map for the terrorists, a tool they will use to plot their maneuvers against American men and women in uniform," he said.

Obaidul Quader

FROM PAGE 1

forces cordoned off city AL leader Ali Newaz Khan's Khilgaon house at 4:00am and arrested Quader who figures in the aforementioned list of 50 corruption suspects.

They also arrested Ali Newaz and seized a licensed pistol from the house.

EX-JAMAAT LAWMAKER SURRENDERED

Our Sathkira correspondent reports: Former Jamaat lawmaker Gazi Nazrul Islam went to an army camp in Sathkira town in the afternoon and turned himself in to the troops. A number of local leaders and activists were accompanying him.

Nazrul was elected from Sathkira-5 (Shyamnagar) as a four-party alliance candidate in 2001 election.

He was widely accused of corruption, nepotism and misuse of power, sources said.

CASES AGAINST MILON

Our correspondent reports: Kamal Hossain, senior vice-president of Kochua Jubo League, filed a case against Milon for assault on him.

Fuad Hassan, president of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) Kachua unit, filed another case on March 7. Nobir Hossain, a shopkeeper in Kachua, filed a case on March 6 alleging that a gang of 25 people beat him up and looted his shop on orders from Milon on December 30 last year.

Our correspondent from Meherpur adds: Police arrested local Jamaat leader Moshir Rahman Shaban at his house at Gangni upazila on Thursday.

Locals alleged that Moshir, also the chairman of Dhankhala union parishad (UP), used to maintain strong connection with several outlawed extremists groups.

He stands accused in a double murder case.

UNB adds: Army personnel arrested a UP chairman at Kumarkhali upazila in Kushtia yesterday morning.

Army sources said Abdul Aziz, Betbaria UP chairman and general secretary of local BNP, is accused of murder and other crimes.

Another UNB report said the joint forces yesterday held Nurullah Raihan, general secretary of Laksam upazila BNP, at a medical centre at Laksam in Comilla yesterday.

BSS from Rangpur reports: Members of Rab arrested Gopal Chandra Biswas, accused in a number of criminal cases, on Wednesday night.

The elite crime busters also recovered three rounds of ammunition from his possession.

Our staff correspondent from Khulna reports: the joint forces arrested Jubo League Central Vice-Chairman Shahid Iqbal Bithar on Thursday at a city market.

The Jubo League leader was wanted in several cases filed for extortion and tender manipulation.

Besides, Khulna police arrested an operative of outlawed New Biplobi Communist Party in the early hours yesterday at Hogledanga village under Batligahata upazila. A revolver was recovered from the arrestee, Ajit Biswas, 28.