

# Gunmen kidnap and kill Iraqi mayor

## Bombings kill 15

AP, AFP, Baghdad

The mayor of a small Shia village south of Baghdad was kidnapped on his way to work yesterday, and his bullet-riddled body was later found dumped along a highway, police and morgue officials said.

Iraqis are increasingly pessimistic about their future, according to an opinion poll published yesterday as the nation battles to curb relentless bloodshed on the fourth year anniversary of the US-led invasion of Iraq.

Police said Khalaf Gharqan, the mayor of Dijelah, was abducted by gunmen about 300 yards from his home. Witnesses said the kidnappers ambushed Gharqan's car, dragged him out and sped away. Two bodyguards and a driver were left behind, they said.

Dijelah lies just south of Kut, 160km southeast of Baghdad. Kut is the capital of Wasit province.

Gharqan's body was later found dumped on a highway and brought to the Kut morgue, said morgue official Maamoun Ajeel al-Rubaie. Another body, handcuffed and showing signs of torture, also turned up at the morgue Monday, he said.

Witnesses said Iraqi security forces were searching the area where the abduction took place.

Three coordinated car bombs and a mortar attack killed 15 people and wounded at least 35 in Iraq's northern

# Nepal leaders vow to hold polls by June

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's premier and its Maoist leader said yesterday they would hold elections by June as planned to ensure the sidelined king does not make a political comeback.

The two -- Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala and former rebel leader Prachanda -- signed a landmark peace deal last year after King Gyanendra gave up absolute rule in the face of mass protests.

But the pair have yet to agree on a government structure since the Maoists were admitted to parliament in January, meaning delays in preparing the election, the country's election chief said.

"We urge the government to announce the constituent assembly elections date as soon as possible so that the commission can finish necessary preparations," Chief Election Commissioner Bhoj Raj Pokharel said.

The prime minister said the elections for a constituent assembly to rewrite the constitution would be held as planned, especially because the time lag could give the monarchy time to regroup.

"The government is committed to holding constituent assembly elections on time. If the elections are not conducted on time, reactionary forces will get a chance to make a comeback," Koirala said.

Politicians in Nepal often use the term "reactionary forces" to refer to supporters of the king, whose future role in the country -- if any -- will be decided by the constituent assembly.

The former rebels were also committed to hold the elections on time, Prachanda said.

"A disastrous situation will be created if the elections are not conducted within the fixed time. Our party is ready to cooperate with the government to hold the elections on time," said Prachanda, whose name means "the fierce one."

At least 13,000 people died in the decade-long Maoist rebellion.

## Kiddie park land

According to Rajuk rules, lands slated for residential use cannot be used for commercial purposes.

The land was acquired by the government in 1965. There was a slum on the government land for a long time which was vacated by police in the name of setting up a children's park. But later it was allotted to Mirza Abbas' relatives.

The local people yesterday said there is no children's park or play ground in the densely populated Khilgaon area. Local youths used to play football and cricket on the piece of land before the motor workshops started to spring up there.

## Tarique, Apu

FROM PAGE 1  
counsels about his chances in the case. In reply, the lawyers told him not to lose heart, said sources.

The defence argued that the charges against Tarique were "false, fabricated and concocted and they were brought only to harass him". They petitioned the court to clear him of the allegations.

On the other hand, the prosecution came up with statements of the witnesses and circumstantial evidence and prayed for the charge sheet to be accepted.

The investigation officer (IO) of the case said the allegations against the two have been proved primarily and they should be tried under the Speedy Trial (Law and Order Disruption) Act.

The joint forces arrested Tarique at his mother's cantonment residence in a midnight raid on March 8.

He is now in a month's detention in the Dhaka Central Jail. While remanded in the custody of Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC) for four days, he was quizzed extensively about the extortion charge and other allegations of graft, sources said.

Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court yesterday turned down a petition filed against a lower court's rejecting bail for Tarique on March 8.

Justice Momin Ullah gave the order on hearing arguments from both the sides.

## CU gazette

FROM PAGE 1  
The court order came following a writ petition filed by Justice Faizee challenging legality of the CU action against him.

In his writ petition, Faizee challenged the validity of the CU Syndicate meeting's decision that cancelled his LLB certificate for "tampering" with his examination results and subsequent gazette notification in this regard.

On March 3, the CU Syndicate in its special meeting decided to scrap a large number of certificates on inquiry committee's reports.

On March 11, the controller of examinations of the university published a gazette notification canceling 50 LLB certificates, including that of Faizee, after the syndicate had approved the inquiry reports.

# ACC prepares

FROM PAGE 1

"Although they did not follow the ACC directives, we will have to receive their wealth statements from their representatives as we cannot defy a High Court order," Habibur said in a press briefing yesterday.

On February 18, ACC asked 50 corruption suspects who are high-profile politicians, businessmen and bureaucrats, to submit their wealth statements within 72 hours. Out of the 50, those who were not in jail at that time were directed to submit their statements in person.

Seventeen of them did not submit their statement within the time frame.

The ACC later received wealth statements from the representatives of Sylhet BNP leader Ariful Haq Chowdhury and former AL MP HBM Iqbal.

Ariful surrendered before a Sylhet court and was sent to jail and the HC directed the ACC to receive Iqbal's wealth statement from his representatives following a writ petition filed by his family members.

After the time for submitting wealth statements expired, ACC sent a list of 15, who did not carry out the ACC orders, to the home ministry to start the process of confiscating their movable and immovable properties as per the Emergency Power Rules.

The government, however, is

yet to move for confiscation.

Sources said as per the rules, government would seek permission from a magistrate to confiscate their properties.

Home ministry sources said that although it is not declared yet officially, ACC will be assigned to confiscate properties, but before that, the government will amend some provisions of the emergency power rules, including the authority for confiscation.

Family members Abdullah, Babu and Selim had filed separate writ petitions in the HC seeking permission to submit their wealth statements to ACC through representatives and the HC ordered in their favour on Sunday.

Replying to a question, the ACC commissioner said that they are not mulling to appeal against the HC directives yet.

ACC Commissioner Abul Hasan Manzoor Mannan told the press on March 15 that they would file six graft cases against big corruption suspects by Sunday, but did not do that.

Filing of the graft cases is still on the cards, Habibur said adding that the matter has already got the nod from Mannan, who is in charge of inquiry and investigation, and is awaiting approval of commission.

# Yunus launches IOM in Italy

UNB, Dhaka

Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus launched the International Observatory for Micro-finance (IOM) at the University of Bologna in Italy on Sunday.

The idea of the IOM, conceived as a center of research, training and practice of micro-finance, is inspired by the experience of Grameen Bank in Bangladesh.

Pro Yunus addressed a vast audience, including the president of the province of Emilio Romagna, the rector of the University of Bologna and the mayor of Bologna, in the grand Aula Magna of St Lucia.

The Bangladeshi community in Bologna later accorded a reception to the founder of Grameen Bank, whose micro-credit innovation earned him the Nobel for Peace.

In the afternoon, Prof Yunus was a guest at Santa Orsola Hospital in Bologna. The hospital is interested in collaborating with Grameen Bank on health initiatives for children.

The Nobel laureate will address a special committee on globalisation in the Italian Chamber of Deputies, according to a message received in Dhaka yesterday.

## Chamber president

FROM PAGE 16

Mukta Traders were also accused in the case filed by Customs Inspector Nuruzaman.

The accused persons in connivance with each other evaded import duties of Tk 1 crore 99 lakh 46 thousand 787 showing false documents of tax payments when they imported goods from India against six bills of entries between January 1999 and April 2003, the plaintiff said in the case.

In 2003, a Bangladesh Bank investigation detected the incident of tax dodging by Lutfar Rahman's organisation.

As the National Board of Revenue was informed of the probe, it asked Customs, Excise and Vat commissioner of Rajshahi in January 2004 to realise the due revenue money immediately and take necessary action.

But no action could be taken allegedly due to Lutfar's political influence.

A few days ago, the land port customs office filed seven similar forgery cases with Shibganj Police Station against seven other importers including Awami League leader Haji Selim and 12 other C&F agents for evading import duties.

## Criminal killed

FROM PAGE 16

mango orchard, armed thugs of Ramjan's gang opened fire on the elite force. Rab retaliated but the gang fled following a 10-minute shootout.

Ramjan was discovered critically injured after the shootout. He was taken to Natore Sadar Hospital where on-duty doctors declared him dead.

Rab personnel recovered a locally made gun, two bullets of .303 rifles and a 20-inch-long dagger from the scene.

Ramjan was accused in several criminal cases with different police stations in Raninagar and Atrai upazilas including two murder cases and two extortion cases, Rab sources said.

## SM Zakaria

FROM PAGE 16

commissioner on January 31 this year facing severe criticisms.

Zakaria provided a section of officials, who were close to him, with undue facilities --- like promotions and vehicles, the sources said. The officials close to him also dominated the EC Secretariat and enjoyed other financial facilities, the sources added.

Mohammad Zakaria, who had been a close aide to Zakaria and who had been promoted to the post of joint secretary to the EC Secretariat, was recently made an officer on special duty, sending chills of fear down the spines of other alleged government flunkies of Zakaria.

Before being promoted to the post of a government secretary, Zakaria was the national project director of Strengthening Election and Democracy, a project funded by UNDP. There are allegations of financial irregularities in the project's implementation. The EC also plans to look into whether Zakaria was involved in the alleged irregularities.

## Muggers shoot

FROM PAGE 16

after withdrawing the money from a bank in Khilgaon.

The thugs sprayed bullets at Nurul as he tried to resist the muggers from taking away the money. He was hit in his right leg.

As Nurul raised alarm, locals rushing to the spot captured Rafiq, 35, and Faruk, 32, two of the snatchers, and gave them a thrashing. The rest of the gang managed to flee.

Nurul was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The two muggers were handed over to the police who took them to the same hospital.

Police recovered Tk 1.47 lakh from them and seized a motorbike used in the mugging.

# National HR body

FROM PAGE 1

Information Department auditorium.

The council ordered formation of a committee to look into details of the proposed NHRC. The cabinet secretary will head the committee to be comprised of the secretaries of law, home and foreign ministries.

The foreign ministry proposed establishment of the commission that had been approved in principle by successive governments, said Fahim. Setting up a human rights commission was an electoral pledge of the BNP-led four-party alliance.

Currently, a number of fundamental rights remain suspended and indoor politics banned under a state of emergency.

Fahim said the committee will look at human rights commissions in South Asia to sketch a possible structure and guidelines for the proposed NHRC.

The immediate past BNP-led coalition government formed a similar committee on December 10, 2001. A final draft was sent to the Cabinet Division on January 23, 2003. But it has been shelved at the ministry since the cabinet sent it back on January 29 the same year.

The then law minister Moudud Ahmed cited opposition from his cabinet colleagues as the reason for failure to establish the commission during their tenure.

The council's approval for amendments to the anti-money laundering ordinance is part of its efforts to rein in financial crimes. The proposed amendment has already been sent to

the law ministry to check if it overlaps the other laws, said Fahim.

If passed, the proposed amendment would empower the Bangladesh Bank (BB) to seize assets and freeze accounts of people under reasonable suspicion of corruption and other crimes, sources say.

It would also increase the central bank's powers and include 15 financial crimes, sources add.

The advisory council has also decided to approve a draft amendment to the Anti-Terrorist Act, 2006, to stymie terror financing in the country, said the press secretary to the CA.

Asked whether the council has agreed on a definition of terrorism for the proposed amendment to the anti-terrorism act, he said they have been looking into international definitions and will soon come up with one of their own.

The amendment to the Banking Companies Act, 1991 seeks to broaden the definition of loan-defaulters and change the minimum amount of capital required for commercial banks.

"The council also discussed the number of a bank's directors," said Fahim, adding that the number at present is 13 as prescribed by the Bangladesh Bank.

# War criminals

FROM PAGE 16

criminals and recommend their punishment.

The culture of looting spread out and trend of human rights violation went up unabated and the people lost their trust in justice and truth, as the genocide, rape and other forms of repression in 1971 have not been dealt with properly, said Dr MA Hasan, convener of War Crimes Facts Finding Committee, Bangladesh.

The Pakistan occupation army in 1971 got involved in genocide, rape, arson and looting while several thousand local collaborators including the Biharis, Rajakars, al-Badars, al-Shams and Shanti Committee men abetted and provoked the genocide and war crimes, said a report of the War Crimes Facts Finding Committee.

The committee identified 287 Pakistani war criminals including 191 'high level' criminals and 30 to 40 'top criminals' among who are Pakistani generals Yahiya Khan, Tikka Khan, Rao Farman Ali. Late Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto could also be tried as the main instigator of the genocide, said the report.

During the Liberation War, many union council members and Imams of mosques directly or indirectly favoured the Pakistani forces, Dr Hasan said referring to the research findings of the War Crimes Facts Finding Committee.

"Other than political ideology, personal and group interests and ill-intentions acted behind commission of the evil acts. As those looters and fanatic forces could evade the justice system, they managed to amass huge property taking the opportunity of political change later," he said.

There is an obligation on the part of Bangladesh to try the war criminals, as it signed different international conventions, he said, adding that Bangladesh itself has to initiate the trial procedure.

Dr Hasan, however, said UN General Council or Security Council could also form a special tribunal with the approval and request from Bangladesh for trying the criminals at international level.

On December 16 of 1971, the 93,000 members of the Pakistani occupation army surrendered to the joint forces of India and Bangladesh, but the anti-liberation political forces and the Bangali collaborators of the occupation army did not officially surrender, said Maj Gen (rtd) Syed Muhammad Ibrahim, chairman of Bangladesh Amar Sadhanar Desh.

Stressing the formation of a

## CU dean poll

FROM PAGE 16

monitoring authorities, sources added.

When the results were out, alliance loyalist candidate Prof Dr Mohammed Anisul Islam, presently dean of Biological Science faculty, emerged victorious in the election by only one vote over Prof Dr Nurul Anwar of Microbiology department - a candidate backed by Awami League.

Before the election day on June 23, 2005, Prof Dr Nurul Anwar wrote two letters to returning officer of the election and then acting registrar of CU Idris Mian informing of the election manipulation conspiracy and requesting necessary action.

The letters were sent to Idris Mian on June 19 and June 22 in 2005.

Idris Mian, the returning officer, then issued a notice directing not to use any other pen (ink) for voting except the pens (black ink) provided by the university authorities.

The notice was apparently ignored and seven votes marked with blue ink were detected during the counting of votes, Prof Anwar, the losing candidate, told The Daily Star yesterday afternoon.

"Our agent at the polling centre protested during the counting of votes and after the election, we lodged our protest in writing," Prof Anwar added.

probe committee to identify all the war criminals and try them, he said, "We must start the task immediately, so that all the fourteen crore people of the country can proceed to the path of prosperity."

"We should observe a 'hatred day' to show our abhorrence of the war criminals," said freedom fighter Nurul Amin.

Clean politics will not be established unless the war criminals are brought to book and the present caretaker government should have the issue of their trial on its agenda, said professor Shamsul Alam.

Bangladesh Amar Sadhanar Desh Secretary General Maj (rtd) Md Ahsan Ullah, Maj Gen (rtd) Masudur Rahman, Khandakar Nurunnabi, former MP Maj Akhtaruzzaman, Brig Gen Mamudul Haq, former additional secretary Masud Ahmed, Rabbiul Alam, Shahjahan Kabir, Anwar Hossain Pahari also spoke on the occasion.

## Travel agents

FROM PAGE 16

Airways agents in Bangladesh were present at the meeting.

The travel agents strongly protested the unilateral decision, which they said was taken without considering the role of travel agents in expanding BA's business in Bangladesh.

They also feared a disaster in travel business as other airline authorities might follow the BA.

The BA authorities have decided to reduce commission on ticket sales to one percent from seven percent as part of its cost cutting measures.

British Airways Manager in Bangladesh Chris Phipps on March 8 explained the reasons for commission cut in a letter to ATAB President Muhaimin Saleh.

## 7 Pak judges quit

FROM PAGE 16

Extra police were on duty outside the Supreme Court in Islamabad where a hearing began into media reports that police had manhandled Chaudhary last Tuesday after he refused to get into an official car to be taken to the Supreme Court for a hearing into the accusations that led to his suspension.

Newspapers published a picture of Chaudhary apparently being pushed into a car.

Judge Javed Iqbal, who was made acting chief justice after Chaudhary was suspended, told the Supreme Court the hearing into the police action was being held to safeguard the "prestige, honour and dignity" of the office of chief justice.

Chaudhary has made no public comment on his treatment. He was kept under virtual house arrest with his family for a week after his suspension, with police blocking almost all access to him.

His lawyers say he is now free to meet whoever he wants although one said he was not giving interviews as he considered it inappropriate for a chief justice to talk to the press.

A senior government official acknowledged on Sunday that Chaudhary's treatment in general had angered the public. He blamed "over-zealous" lower-level officials.

"With hindsight, things could have been done differently ... it could have been done in a better way," said the official, who declined to be identified.

But he said the president had had no choice but to refer numerous complaints against Chaudhary to the Supreme Judicial Council to look into.

"A lot of complaints had been received. This didn't happen overnight," the official said.