

# Huda denied bail

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petition of former communication minister Nazmul Huda in a foreign currency case, UNB reports.

A press release from the home ministry said Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and policemen arrested 1,508 people while army personnel arrested 11 including six listed criminals. The joint forces recovered 13 firearms during their drives.

Dhanmondi police had filed the foreign currency case after foreign currencies were recovered from Nazmul Huda's Dhanmondi residence.

The army-led joint force had arrested him during the crackdown on corrupt politicians and business tycoons soon after the present caretaker government took over on January 11.

Metropolitan magistrate on February 22 rejected another bail petition of Huda.

Joint forces arrested DCC Ward-9 Commissioner Rina Nasir Madhab, who was elected from a seat reserved for women, at her Mohammadpur residence in the capital early yesterday, our staff correspondent reports.

The joint forces later handed her over to Mohammadpur police around 5:00am.

Police produced her before the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka yesterday with a home-ministry proposal for a month's detention.

Police in the forwarding report placed before the court said Rina spread propaganda and delivered provocative speeches against the

government. The police appealed to the court to issue an order to confine Rina to jail so that she could be prevented from indulging in such activities.

The court sent her to Dhaka Central Jail.

On Sunday joint forces arrested Rina's husband Nasiruddin, BNP general secretary of Ward-43, from their residence.

Meanwhile in Tangail, the joint forces arrested Sakhipur Municipality Chairman Sanwar Hossain Sajib after he surrendered to them, our Tangail correspondent reports.

Sanwar, who is also a leader of Kader Siddiqui-led Krishak Sramik Janata League (KSJL), surrendered to the joint forces at Sakhipur army camp around 2:00pm.

Sanwar, an accused in three criminal cases, had been absconding since the state of emergency was declared.

A joint forces team in Natore held two businessmen, one of them an Awami League (AL) leader, our staff correspondent in Rajshahi reports.

The joint forces detained Chhita Ranjan Saha, district AL publicity secretary and Deb Raj Saha, son of influential businessman Mohini Saha.

They were picked up from their homes.

Sources said they were captured following allegations of their involvement in hundi (illegal money transfer) trade.

# Washington

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Hailing the ongoing drive against corrupt politicians and others, Weldon expressed hope that a fair and free election would be held in Bangladesh eventually.

Bangladesh is also important to the US because it is probably the only country in the world that has democracy with a Muslim majority population, he noted.

"This is an exciting country with exciting people," Weldon said adding, "We are overwhelmed with the emotion of the people of Bangladesh."

The US congressman apologised that most of his colleagues is unaware of Bangladesh. "Out of 535 congressmen, probably 98 percent doesn't know about this beautiful country."

Replying to another question, Weldon said that democracy in US is not perfect always. "We have many imperfections, many of our people are not happy with the government policy."

Timothy D Ringgold, a US defence expert, Maj General (ret'd) Ron Bath, Asef Bari, co-chair of GAHS, among others, addressed at the press conference.

**WELDON MEETS BUSINESSMEN**  
Visiting US Congressman Curt Weldon termed the ongoing changes in Bangladesh 'healthy' for the country's democracy.

He also noted that political leadership is extremely important for guiding a nation.

Weldon was speaking at a meeting with the country's business leaders at the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) office.

# Bangabandhu Murder

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Today. With his swearing-in, the number of judges in the Appellate Division will get back to seven.

Of them, three judges—Tafazzul Islam, Joyrul Abedin and Hassan Ameen—can hear the Bangabandhu Murder Case as none of them felt embarrassed or heard the case before at the HC.

Chief Justice Md Ruhul Amin and Mohammed Fazlul Karim had heard the case while MM Ruhul Amin and Aminul Kabir Chowdhury felt embarrassed to hear it at the HC level.

The case was filed on October 2, 1996, 21 years after the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family. A trial court on November 8, 1998, handed down death sentence to 15 retired and dismissed army personnel.

The HC upheld the punishment of 12. Of them, only four are behind bars, one has died and the rest are still at large.

Later, the four convicts filed petitions for leave to appeal against the HC verdict.

During hearing of the petition at the Appellate Division in August 2001 Justice Mohammad Gholam Rabbani felt embarrassed. Soon the proceedings stalled as judges were not available to form a bench.

The then BNP-led alliance government did not take any step to resume the hearing despite there being enough room to do so. The then law minister, Moudud Ahmed, repeatedly cited legal complexities as the reason for not seeking to start the trial over again.

Between 2001 and 2005, it would take only one judge appointed on ad hoc basis to meet the requirement of three judges for a bench. Later when Justice MA Aziz was appointed the chief election commissioner, the number rose to two.

Moudud on several occasions said the government could not appoint more than one judge on an ad hoc basis whereas legal experts all along maintained that it could appoint as many judges as it needed.

# Reinvestigation ordered for 2003 Banshkhali carnage

UNB, Ctg

A court here yesterday asked the inspector general of police (IGP) and district police administration to reinvestigate the Banshkhali carnage that left 11 members of a family dead in 2003.

Judge ANM Bashirullah of the District and Sessions Judge's Court passed the order on a written protest submitted to the court on behalf of the plaintiff for dropping the names of some of the accused, including the main one, from the charge sheet.

A gang of criminals burnt 11 members of a family to death at Sadonpur village in Banshkhali upazila on November 17, 2003. One of the family members, Dr Bimol Kanti Sushil, who escaped the carnage, later filed a case against 31 people.

Clarent Gomez, the then ASP of the district police (Satkania Circle), submitted a charge sheet against 15 on December 15, 2005 dropping the names of 19 of the accused, including the main accused.

Rana Das Gupta, on behalf of the plaintiff, submitted a written protest to the court on December 18, 2005, as the charge sheet did not contain the 19 names, including main accused Aminul Islam Chowdhury, brother of former state minister Jafurul Islam Chowdhury.

Eighteen of the accused are now in jail while 12 others absconding. Aminul Islam Chowdhury was arrested after the incident but released on bail later.

# Mohiuddin Hy denied bail

UNB, Ctg

A court here yesterday rejected the bail prayer of City Mayor and Awami League leader ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury.

Metropolitan Sessions Judge AKM Anwar Hossain rejected the bail prayer submitted on Sunday.

Advocate Ahsanul Haq Hena, who appeared for Mohiuddin, told the court that the mayor's bail prayer should be granted, as there is no specific allegation against him.

He said development activities in the port city are being hampered due to his absence. Besides, the mayor is a diabetic patient and has heart problems, he added.

The public prosecutor, however, said the mayor is accused of provoking port workers violating Section 144 during blockade programme last year. "The ongoing reforms in the port may be hampered if the mayor is released on bail," the public prosecutor told the court.

Joint forces detained ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury from his Chashma Hill residence in Sholashahar on March 7.

He was produced before the Metropolitan Magistrate's Court on March 8 that sent him to jail rejecting his bail prayer.

Mayor Mohiuddin was shifted to Bandarban district jail from Chittagong Central Jail on March 9.

# Housing sector

**FROM PAGE 1**  
He said around 2.5 crore people are directly and indirectly dependant on the housing sector in which 15 lakh skilled and semi-skilled people work.

Representing the cement industry, Holcim Bangladesh Managing Director PN Iyer said the sector has already been burdened with over-production and the problem further deepened with cement sales dropping by 10 percent due to the latest crisis in the housing sector.

Financial institution representative Yongbok Jo, deputy managing director of IDLC, said financial institutions have invested over Tk 500 crore in the housing sector but the collection from REHAB members dropped significantly.

Sk Masadul Alam, general secretary of Bangladesh Re-Rolling Mills Association, said the industry is on the verge of a collapse because of the fall in housing sector sales.

The housing industry alone consumes 30 percent of the re-rolling industry products, he added.

# Forest fire

**FROM PAGE 1**  
However, bawalis and fishermen of Chandpai range alleged that the forest officials neglected their duties and made unnecessary delays in reaching the spot, which is only 25 kilometres away from Mongla upazila.

No officials of the east wing of Sundarbans Forest Division could be contacted for their comments despite repeated attempts.

However, an employee of the east wing of Sundarbans Forest Division requesting anonymity said the officials of the division heard about the fire yesterday morning and rushed to the spot.

This is the third fire incident in eight months in the mangrove forest.

# Ganges among 5 most threatened Asian rivers

## Pollution, climate change blamed

AFP, Geneva

Five rivers in Asia serving over 870 million people are among the most threatened in the world, as dams, water extraction and climate change all take their toll, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) said yesterday.

The Yangtze, Salween-Nu, Indus, Ganges and Mekong-Lancang rivers make up half of the WWF's "top ten" most threatened river basins, which "either already suffer most grievously under the weight of these threats or are bracing for the heaviest impacts," the organisation said.

Also on the list are the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo and La Plata in Latin America, the Danube in central Europe, the Nile-Lake Victoria in Africa and the Murray-Darling in Australia.

"Nearly everybody in the world lives in a river basin and everybody has a contribution to make" to prevent further environmental damage, the director of WWF's Global Freshwater Programme Jamie Pittock told AFP.

The threats facing river basins are varied and interlinked, and require holistic policies rather than efforts that target just one aspect but can end up being counterproductive, he said.

For example, "as governments become concerned about climate change reducing water run-off, they build more dams to store more water, which then results in more water being extracted from the rivers and so builds up more ecological problems," Pittock said.

Many governments are also focusing on hydro-electric power plants as a "clean" source of energy, but this means more dams which stem water flows and kill off fish populations, he added.

The WWF report highlighted water extraction, dams, and climate change

as the most wide-ranging threats that will have the most impact on people, though invasive species and pollution also pose serious problems.

This is particularly the case for China's Yangtze river basin, where decades of heavy industrialisation, damming, and huge influxes of sediment from land conversion have made it one of the world's most polluted rivers, the WWF said.

Over-fishing is the main threat facing the Mekong, while dams and infrastructure projects imperil freshwater habitats in the Salween, La Plata and Danube basins, the report added.

Pittock said it is imperative that countries and corporations address these issues, but praised work already, particularly in China.

"China certainly has big challenges, they also have the resources to provide big solutions.

"The Chinese government has been very active globally consulting with a range of experts. They haven't turned the corner on the ground yet. The policies they're putting in place have the potential to do so very soon," he said.

The WWF official warned of "dire consequences" if the situation is left unchecked, with increasing risk of conflict over access to water, as well as the spread of disease and a fall in nutrition standards.

"In many places people are not familiar with the scale of the problem... it is critical that people are involved," he urged.

# Teen-powered Tigers

**FROM PAGE 1**  
veterans in hard-hitting batsman Sanath Jayasuriya, off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran and left-arm fast bowler Chaminda Vaas, but cannot afford to have an off-day, as India did.

Both Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are seeking a crucial win here as it will boost their chances of advancing to the next round.

"The win against India has put us in a good position to enter the next round," said Bangladesh skipper Habibul Bashar.

Bangladesh have already sprung one of the major surprises of the tournament when they outplayed India in a pressure game against India. Sri Lanka were hardly tested in their opening match.

**TEAMS**  
**BANGLADESH** (from): Habibul Bashar (captain), Shahriar Nafees, Tamim Iqbal, Aftab Ahmed, Saqib Hasan, Mohammad Ashraful, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mohammad Rafique, Abdur Razzak, Mashrafe Mortaza, Shahadat Hossain, Tapash Baisya, Syed Rasel, Rajin Saleh, Javed Omar.

**SRI LANKA** (from): Mahela Jayawardene (captain), Kumar Sangakkara, Sanath Jayasuriya, Upul Tharanga, Marvan Atapattu, Dilakaratne Dilshan, Russel Arnold, Chamara Silva, Chaminda Vaas, Farnavee Maharoof, Lasith Malinga, Dilhara Fernando, Nuwan Kulasekara, Muttiah Muralidaran, Kulasekara Bandara.

**Umpires:** Daryl Harper and Steve Davis.

# Indigenous people

**FROM PAGE 1**  
village Maguntinagar yesterday. His wife Sandha Simsang submitted a petition to Madhupur police station in the morning holding some local forest department officials and an officer of the joint forces responsible for the death of her husband.

Hundreds of indigenous people including women and children crowded Chalesh's house yesterday wearing black ribbons.

Local indigenous leaders told The Daily Star that black flags will be hoisted at every house of the indigenous community in Madhupur on Tuesday and Wednesday protesting the 'unnatural death' of Chalesh.

Ajoy-a-Mre, president of Joinshahi Adivashi Nannayon Parishad, told The Daily Star yesterday that they will not hold any discussion with the administration until it takes steps against the officials of law enforcement agencies and the forest department, who are allegedly responsible for Chalesh's death.

Ugin Nokrake, president of Madhupur Tribal Welfare Association said Chalesh was one of the main organisers of the movement against alleged repression and torture by the forest department and against the Eco Park Project in Madhupur.

So the forest department filed cases against Chalesh under the Forest Act at different times in retaliation, Ugin added.

"After the declaration of the state of emergency, the forest depart-

# MOBILE COURT Drug store fined, arrest warrant against owner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court yesterday issued arrest warrant against owner of a drug store in the capital, jailed two salespersons of the store and fined them Tk 5,00,000 on various counts of offences including carrying date expired medicine, selling used disposable strips for testing blood glucose, and selling medicines without BSTI approval.

Following a complaint from a physician, the mobile court led by Metropolitan Magistrate Rokon Ud-Doula raided Swash Drug Store at Shahbagh at noon.

The complainant had purchased disposable strips for testing blood glucose -- essential for diabetes patients -- from the store yesterday morning. Later, bloodstains were detected on the strips.

The mobile court during its raid seized a huge quantity of similar blood glucose testing strips from the store and sentenced the two salespersons -- Seraj Mia and Meher -- to 6 months' imprisonment each under section 275 of Bangladesh Penal Code.

The court seized three cartons of expired medicines from the store. Also, it found free medicine samples shelved on the racks -- which are meant for doctors only and not for sale.

Furthermore, the employees of the store failed to produce its drug licence to the court. The trade licence of the store was expired as well.

The court fined the two employees Tk 1,00,000 each for carrying medicines without BSTI approval in the store while Tk 1,50,000 each under Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) ordinance for the other offences.

The court also issued arrest warrant against the owner of the store Sharif Ullah implicating him in three cases.

## Rajuk knocks

**FROM PAGE 16**  
present there during the drive, sought one week's time from the Rajuk team and committed that they will knock down the house themselves.

The Rajuk team razed a small portion of the 12-storey building's ground floor, the servants' quarters and a car garage on the building premises.

When approached, the owner of the house did not agree to talk to the press.

The owner of a neighbouring building also violated the Rajuk-approved design for his building and built shops on the ground floor instead of a car park.

The Rajuk team demolished some portions of those shops as the owner sought one week's time, promising that he will build the car park.

The eviction team also conducted raids on Globe Corner, Oriental Latimi, Suraiya's Dream, Sukanya Tower, and Priyanganu Shopping Mall as the owners of all these high-rise buildings violated the designs approved by the Rajuk, officials concerned said.

Owners of Rafin Plaza on Mirpur Road, however, managed to get a High Court order for making a car parking in the shopping mall within next three months. The Rajuk team did not demolish the illegal parts of the building.

Asked how many buildings there are in Dhaka that have been built violating their approved designs, Rajuk Magistrate ASM Emdadul Dastagir said they do not know the exact figure.

"But the number is huge and most of the building owners have violated their approved designs," he said.

Meanwhile, another Rajuk team demolished many illegal structures in the box culvert area in Segunbagicha yesterday.

## CBA leader Firoz

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Earlier, the ACC filed cases against three, who figured in the ACC list of 50 graft suspects.

They are former state ministers and BNP leaders Mr Mohammad Nasiruddin and Amanullah Aman and former state minister and Awami League leader Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir.

Top ACC officials last week told reporters that they have already completed inquiries into allegations against seven to eight listed graft suspects and cases will be lodged within this week.

When contacted over the phone yesterday, Riaz Hossain, officer-in-charge (OC) of the police station told The Daily Star that they received an unnatural death case earlier in connection with Chalesh's death.

"The petition of Chalesh's wife was received as per the rules. We will take legal steps in this matter after getting the autopsy report," the OC said.

Tuhin Hadima, Piren Simsang and Protab Jambli, who had also been allegedly detained along with Chalesh, were made witnesses in the petition.

# Saarc agri cooperation

**FROM PAGE 16**  
the Saarc countries is that whatever understanding had been reached earlier was not implemented through follow up actions.

Appreciating the recommendations of the keynote paper, Aziz said there should be a common platform for the South Asian nations at the WTO negotiations, and mobility of seeds should be allowed for research.

Former minister Fakhruul Islam Munshi emphasised on standardisation and diversification of products for strengthening cooperation. He suggested setting up testing laboratories and other facilities for maintaining standards of agricultural products.

Dr Quazi Shahabuddin Ahmed, director general of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) said agriculture was identified as one of the important areas of cooperation by Saarc but there has not been much progress in this regard.

Uttam Kumar Dev pointed out in his paper that effective cooperation for agricultural development will require establishment of working committees and networks, detailed work programmes, a series of agreements on specific issues, a regular system of monitoring and

# 6 rebels, 2 Indian soldiers killed in Kashmir battles

AFP, Srinagar

Six suspected Islamic militants and two Indian army soldiers, including an officer, were killed during two gunbattles in Indian-administered Kashmir, police said Tuesday.

In the first firefight, four rebels and two soldiers were killed.

"The fighting erupted late Monday when counter-insurgency police and army troops raided a hideout in Kupwara district," a police spokesman said.

The area borders the Pakistani zone of the disputed Himalayan state.

He said in the initial burst of firing by the militants an army captain and a soldier were hurt.

# HC issues

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Magistrate's Court the following day.

The court granted a four-day remand for Tarique Rahman in connection with an extortion case lodged against him with Gulshan Police Station.

On expiry of the remand on March 12, Tarique was produced in the court that sent him to jail. He was given a 30-day detention.

**A D V O C A T E** **K H A N D A K E R** Mahbubuddin Ahmed appeared for the petitioner, while Deputy Attorney General Abdur Rouf stood for the state.

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Talking to the news agency after the meeting, BNP spokesman Nazrul Islam Khan said the party chairperson told McKinnon that Bangladesh is a democratic country and the people want to see an elected government of their choice through an election.

The former prime minister sought cooperation from the Commonwealth countries and its secretariat in holding a free and fair election as well as overall development of the country. McKinnon assured cooperation in this respect.

Khan said McKinnon appreciated former prime minister Khaleda Zia's leadership in socioeconomic development of Bangladesh.

BNP Chairperson's advisers Reaz Rahman and Maj Gen (ret'd) Z A Khan and Office Secretary Nazrul Islam Khan were present at the meeting that lasted an hour.

# Saddam VP hanged

**FROM PAGE 16**  
President George W Bush on Monday warned sceptical Americans of the dire consequences of a swift troop withdrawal.

Bush defended his Iraq policy in the face of new polls showing Americans increasingly oppose the war and that Iraqis have little or no confidence in US forces.

"After four years I can say that the country is lost. We never expected this would happen. We were hoping to live like a European country, not to be living like this," said Salih Abu Mehdi, 43, a security guard and father of six children.

"I don't think any Iraqis think of the future, they stopped thinking of the future. We only think about how to get through the day," he said, adding that his family sometimes call him several times an hour to check on his safety.

"I was not one of Saddam's supporters but, as many Iraqis would say now, Saddam's days were better, at least things were more secure and calm. What shall we do with this democracy now?"

With his approval ratings near the low point of his presidency, Bush appealed for more time for his plan to send in nearly 30,000 additional troops, mostly to stabilise Baghdad.

"It can be tempting to look at the challenges in Iraq and conclude our best option is to pack up and go home. That may be satisfying in the short run, but I believe the consequences for American security would be devastating," he said.

Bush said in January he was sending 21,500 more troops to Iraq,