

# New Delhi bans smoking while driving

AP, New Delhi

A court has banned smoking while driving in India's capital in what is believed to be the first of its kind in any major city worldwide, police said yesterday.

Declaring "New Delhi roads dangerous to human life," the city's High Court imposed new measures aimed at deterring habitually bad drivers, including the smoking ban and a prohibition on using mobile phones while behind the wheel.

"Anything that distracts the attention of driver is dangerous. The human mind cannot do two things simultaneously," said New Delhi traffic commissioner Qamar Ahmed, welcoming Monday's ruling, which goes into effect April 9 and only covers New Delhi.

Those caught smoking behind the wheel would pay \$32, a heavy fine by local standards. Offenders caught more than five times would have their license revoked, the court said. The same fines apply to using a cell phone and the less well-defined offense of "dangerous driving."

Under the new measures, a motorist running a red light will pay \$13, compared with the current \$2.50.

The new penalties came in an order issued by Justices Swanter Kumar and H.R. Malhotra, who

were acting on their own as the death toll on city roads rose to more than 1,900 annually. Existing traffic laws, which have not been updated since their introduction 20 years ago, are going largely ignored.

"Immense influx of light and vehicular traffic has made New Delhi roads dangerous to human life," the two judges were quoted as saying by The Times of India. "The gravity of offenses like rash driving and red-light jumping has lost their impact because of low fines."

Traffic has steadily worsened in recent years in New Delhi, where more than 14 million people and 4 million vehicles jostle for space on the roads. That's despite some 2 million people commuting daily on a metro rail introduced in parts of the capital in 2002.

"The court order will definitely make a dent. At present, motorists don't mind paying small fines and continue violating traffic rules," New Delhi police spokesman Rajan Bhagat said.

It's not the first time New Delhi's courts have played an activist role. A 1998 court order eventually forced all the city's public transport to switch from gasoline and diesel to compressed natural gas to cut pollution.

# Ex-BNP MP Munshi

**FROM PAGE 1**  
of four corruption suspects-former chief whip Abul Hasnat Abdullah, Awami League (AL) leaders Akhteruzzaman Babu, Haji Mohammad Selim and Maqbul Hossain--submitted statements of their wealth to the ACC yesterday. Shahan Ara Begum, wife of Abul Hasnat, and Sayeed Ahmed Raza, a lawyer for Babu, Selim and Maqbul, went to the commission with the High Court's letters authorising them to submit the statements.

In another development, a five-member committee has begun scrutinising the allegations that have poured in over the last few weeks. As of yesterday, some 4,500 complaints have been submitted to the commission, said sources.

A senior ACC official yesterday told journalists that an organogram for the reconstituted ACC would be finalised by the first week of April. Besides, the commission plans to raise its manpower up to 1,300 from the existing 650 to be more effective in combating graft, he added.

He said the proposal for a multi-sectoral organisation chart would be sent to the government for approval.

According to commission sources, preparations regarding appointment of a panel of lawyers are at the final stage. The panel would help the ACC prosecution unit in dealing with the graft cases.

The commission has already appointed former attorney general (AG) Hasan Arif to front the unit that would deal with cases at the HC. Sharfuddin Ahmed Khan Mukul would oversee cases at the lower courts.

Officials said high-profile lawyers would move the cases against the top corruption suspects.

Meantime, the graft-body has been gearing up for a countrywide visit by ACC Chairman Lt Gen (retired) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury. The tour might begin in the first week of April, said an official of the commission.

The ACC has already sought from the government a chopper to use in the tour. Its application for funds to provide for the proposed rewards for investigation officers and the lawyers' fees awaits approval at the finance ministry.

The ACC boss will visit different districts, seeking to develop public awareness of issues critical to the fight against corruption. He will also exchange views with the civil society members and different stakeholders on ways to curb the graft menace.

Law Adviser barrister Mainul Hosen yesterday went to the ACC to meet its chairman. Details of the meeting could not be known.

Our Gazipur correspondent reports: a former state minister and BNP Joint Secretary General Prof MA Mannan yesterday submitted his wealth statement to the district ACC office.

# Anti-graft

**FROM PAGE 16**  
WB has not set any deadline. "That is up to the government to decide politically what is the right time to raise the prices," he said.

Talking to the reporters, Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam too spoke against continuing subsidy. "Our economy is becoming dependent on this matter."

The WB board might approve the fourth DSC instalment in May, he added.

personnel, was convicted of assassinating the country's founding father.

He has been sought by the Bangladesh government since the court on November 8, 1998 sentenced him and 14 other former and dismissed army men to death for the killings.

He was also sentenced to life in prison for aiding and abetting the killings of four other national leaders on November 3, 1975.

The verdict came 23 years after Bangabandhu had been brutally murdered along with 26 others including his wife, three sons, two daughters-in-law, his brother, close relatives, political associates and his security men in a pre-dawn attack.

Mohiuddin fled to the US on a visitor's visa and applied for permanent residency. But he was ordered to return to Bangladesh to face the criminal charges.

The High Court on April 30, 2001 upheld the death sentences of 12 including Maj (ret'd) Mohiuddin among the convicted 14. Only four of the condemned 12--Lt Col Syed Farooq Rehman, Lt Col Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Lt Col Mohiuddin, and Maj Bazlul Huda have been behind bars so far.

Among the rest, one died while six others are believed to be hiding in various countries including the US, Canada, and Libya.

# Ershad

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Airport on July 17, 1990 while they were trying to smuggle around 3.6 kg of gold worth around Tk 2.5 crore into Bangladesh, the prosecution said.

A smuggling case was filed with Cantonment Police Station the same day against the four -- Bernhard Rudiger of Germany, David Anthony Chalmar Chaker of England, the then manager of Zia International Airport Major (ret'd) Ashraf Uddin Sekender and Abu Taher, an airport security guard.

During the investigation, the IO found evidence of Ershad's involvement in the smuggling and his name was included in the charge sheet on August 31, 1991.

## 2 MORE CASES

Another Dhaka court yesterday recorded statement of a prosecution witness in connection with a case filed against Ershad for setting up electronic news gathering (ENG) equipment in his secretariat for broadcasting facilities.

The court recorded the PW's statement after four years whereas the complainant of the case gave his deposition on March 29, 2003.

On the other hand, the same court adjourned the proceedings of another graft case until April 29 following a time petition by the prosecution lawyers.

In the first case filed with Tejgaon Police Station, it was alleged that Ershad, while in power, directed the authorities concerned to set up electronic news gathering equipment worth about Tk 2.93 crore at his secretariat.

The former president also directed the authorities concerned to create eight new posts for this purpose, the prosecution said.

Judge Malik Abdullah Al Amin of the Special Court for Dhaka Division recorded statement of former assistant engineer of Bangladesh Television (BTV) Iqbal Ahmed Bhuiyan and set April 29 for next hearing of the case.

In the second case field with the same police station, it was alleged that the former president, defying the authorities' decision, directed to accept donation from France instead of Finland for setting up 'microwave telephone lines' in 49 upazilas.

Due to Ershad's unilateral decision, the government had to pay Tk 28 crore to France in interest, as the plan was not implemented finally, sources said.

# 55 graft suspects

**FROM PAGE 1**  
early March asked all banks to freeze the accounts of 55. They include high profile politicians like barrister Moudud Ahmed, barrister Nazmul Huda, Mohammad Nasim, Mosaddak Ali Falu, Nasser Rahman, etc.

"Now we will serve each of them with a notice to pay the due tax against these hidden deposits," NBR chairman told the reporters, "if they do not oblige, we will sue them."

"This move is a continuous process. Whenever we find a suspect, we will follow this process to determine his or her true wealth," Rahman observed.

Asked whether the NBR will try to retrieve the money deposited abroad by the graft suspects, the NBR chairman said, "if we have specific evidence or information, we will surely take appropriate action."

If inconsistencies were found in the known source of income of the government officials in their tax returns and their living standards, the NBR would also take actions against them, Rahman said.

He, however, did not specify the actions, saying that all problems could not be solved overnight.

# NBR survey

**FROM PAGE 1**  
therefore the whole task should be easy for both the tax officials and the taxpayers.

The sectors to be covered in the NBR survey are: 1. clinics and diagnostic centres, 2. community centres, residential hotels and restaurants, Chinese restaurants and fast food shops, sweetmeat, bakery and confectionery shops, 3. commercially run English/Bangla medium schools and coaching centres, 4. internet and computer centres, 5. beauty parlours, fitness centres and physiotherapy centres, 6. firms of lawyers, physicians, engineers, tax lawyers, chartered accountants, cost and management accountants, and architects, 7. book stalls, book binding shops, printing presses, travel agencies, and advertising firms, 8. machinery shops, grocery shops, general stores, retail shops, and department stores, 9. shopping malls and super markets, 10. thread producers, thread dying, finishing, coning and weaving houses, textiles manufactures, 11. real estate companies and developers, 12. saw mills, rice mills, flour mills, oil mills, and timber traders, 13. tailoring, laundry and sanitary ware shops, and 14. phone-fax and laminating centres, cassette-CD shops etc.

"The tax officials will visit these places and talk to the owners of these establishments. They will be given particular forms to fill in. If someone refuses to fill in the forms, they will not be pressurised," the NBR chairman said.

He said, "After the proclamation of the state of emergency, I told the inspector general of police that I don't want to see anybody doing any harm or torch a single garment factory."

"Have a look, because of this single instruction, nobody dared to do anything destructive even after two months," he said.

Speaking on the occasion, the first army chief of the country Lt Gen (ret'd) KM Shafiu'llah lauded the current role of the armed forces and asked for the assistance of the army in reinstating the 'correct history' by declaring Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the 'father of the nation'.

Maj Gen (ret'd) Syed Md Ibrahim

# Tax evasion

**FROM PAGE 16**  
to prepare for holding a free, fair and credible election, the creation of an enabling environment for business and the restoring of the business climate in order to ensure growth.

Mahbubur Rahman, president, Latifur Rahman and Samson H Chowdhury vicepresident of ICC-B president among others executive members were present at the meeting.

Commenting on the demolition drive by Dhaka City Corporation and Rajuk, the chamber urged the government to give a time limit for owners of unauthorized properties to obtain the correct Rajuk approval instead of demolishing structures.

Such actions are slowing down business activities of small traders who have taken possession of shops from the owners on payment. Such a situation has forced a number of small traders to close down the business, it said.

Similarly, the eviction of hawkers, slum dwellers and small traders in different kutcha bazaars will add to their miseries. These groups of petty traders have no other means of earnings, the memorandum added.

As regards, hawkers, slum dwellers and petty traders in kwacha bazaars alternative arrangements should be made so that they could continue with their livelihood and refrain from taking part in unwanted activities, it suggested.

Welcoming the government's recent drive for tackling corruption, ICC-B said it would definitely help in confidence building within the country as well as to outside world.

"We strongly believe and agree with the move of the government to punish those politicians who have utilized public offices for personal gain as this will send out a signal to the rank & file to deter recurrence of such development in the future. Similar action should also be taken for their cronies," it said.

"We urge the government to continue with the drive but at the same time ensure not to harass innocent people. We also urge that government to make public only those names against whom there are specific charges," it said.

The Government decision of waiving duties on rice and wheat import will definitely help in reducing price in the local market. In this regard, the business leaders reiterated their suggestion for duty free import of some other essential commodities for stabilising the market-price.

The ICC-B leaders also welcomed the move by Bangladesh Bank for the commercial banks to

reduce the L/C margin and to encourage small importers side by side with the large importers to import essential food.

The chamber welcomed the government recent steps for setting up an anti-hoarding policy at various supply chain.

However it said the policy of storage of goods should not be equated with hoarding and normal business and storage should not be disturbed and impeded in the name of hoarding in order to maintain the supply chain to the retail outlets.

Corporatisation of the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) may be undertaken to pave the way for investment in infrastructure development through capital market, the chamber hopes. Besides, private sector should be encouraged in the operation and management for greater efficiency.

For smooth and efficient operation of ports it is necessary to rationalize operation of trade unions and computerisation of terminal activities to reduce human interferences and increase efficiency, it said.

The country, even 36 years after independence is still undecided about the appropriate and efficient local government system.

ICC-B stressed on the need for efficient local government and urged the government to be addressed adequately before next election of the local government institutions.

The chamber appreciated the co-operation of businessmen establishments in saving electricity for domestic and industrial use by limiting their operation up to 7 pm. However, it urged the government to take immediate steps to enhance supply of power by at least 3000 megawatts to meet the growing demands.

The chamber urged upon to reconstitute and undertake necessary reforms in the Public Service Commission (PSC). It also welcome the move of the government against land grabbers and urge to continue the drive.

The political parties have been committing as election pledge to give full autonomy to government owned radio and television. But this has never happened. Therefore, we welcome the move by your Government to give full autonomy to these electronic media, it said.

# Safta benefits

**FROM PAGE 16**  
"priorities and ground realities".

But, Iftekhar reminded that the "Cardinal principle is of course mutuality of interests of the countries concerned."

He also said a common regional identity is required to move forward on more 'hardcore areas' such as trade and energy.

The adviser emphasised the need to build on commitments to cooperate on environmental issues made at the 13th Saarc Summit in Dhaka last year.

Iftekhar also said Bangladesh would go to the upcoming Delhi summit with a view to 'redouble efforts' to meet the 22 Saarc Development Goals outlined at the last summit.

Keynote speaker at the roundtable, Abul Ahsan, the first secretary-general of the Saarc secretariat, said South Asian regional trade figures are dismal and need to be addressed through more dynamic policies regarding investment and broadening markets.

He also said that currently the Saarc Secretariat serves merely as a "post office to serve as a custodian of files and documents," and it needs to be truly independent by recruiting separately from the foreign ministries and be empowered to make policy proposals.

High Commissioner of Pakistan, Alamgir Bashir Khan Babar, said sovereign equality and equal benefits are the basic principles of Saarc and these need to be readressed in the next summit.

Sri Lankan High Commissioner V Krishnamoorthy, and the Afghanistan and Nepalese Charge d'Affaires were also present at the roundtable.

Safma President Reazuddin Ahmed, Vice-president and Editor of Bangladesh Observer Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury and Safma General-Secretary Zahiduzzaman Farouque represented Safma.

Former ERD secretary Mashiur Rahman, Independent University Bangladesh Vice-Chancellor Bazlul Mobin Chowdhury, Dhaka University Teachers' Association President Sadrul Amin, The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam, Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha Chief Editor Zaglul Ahmed Chowdhury, Bhorer Kagoj Editor Shyamol Dutta and Alamgir Mahiuddin, editor of Naya Diganta also spoke on the occasion.

# Ex-MP Pintu

**FROM PAGE 16**  
any government relief material in any state activity.

Meanwhile, another case was filed against Pintu with Hajirabagh Police Station on Monday for embezzlement of government relief materials.

Tipped off, a police team raided the second floor of Baitul Mamar Jame Mosque at Bhagalpur Lane in the city's Hajirabagh area on Monday evening and recovered 73 CI sheets of government relief materials.

Sub-inspector Shahjalal of Hajirabagh Police Station lodged the case.

Pintu was sent to jail after he surrendered to a Dhaka court on February 15.

**SALAHUDDIN'S CHEATING CASE**  
The hearing on a ten-day remand prayer to interrogate detained former BNP lawmaker Salahuddin Ahmed in connection with misappropriating Tk 35 lakh from a construction firm was not held due to his absence in the court yesterday.

Metropolitan Magistrate Shamsul Alam fixed April 2 as next hearing date.

# 150 shanties

**FROM PAGE 16**  
when the incident occurred. Many were completely unaware of the fire until the afternoon when they discovered that all their belongings were destroyed.

Locals and witnesses said the fire broke out at the house of a female garment worker who accidentally forgot to douse the oven after cooking and left the house in the morning.

Shahera Begum, a grief-stricken domestic help, told reporters that her valuables worth Tk one lakh including three tolas of gold ornament, Tk 5000 in cash and a TV along with other household goods were totally destroyed.

"Now I have no other option but to live under the open sky as all my possessions are destroyed in fire," Shahera said in a choked voice.

# Bird flu

**FROM PAGE 16**  
among humans and 169 deaths worldwide, mostly in Southeast Asia.

Scientists fear the H5N1 bird flu strain could mutate into a form easily spread among humans, leading to a global pandemic with the potential to kill millions.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) and Japan would also take part in the WHO-led exercise.

Tokyo has provided Asean -- which groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam -- with half a million courses of Tamiflu, plus a large quantity of personal protective equipment, all of it stockpiled in Singapore.

During the exercise, WHO regional director Shigeru Omi would place a call to Asean to recommend the release of some of the Tamiflu supplies and protective equipment to the outbreak zone.

The exercise is expected to yield practical information for all parties about the efficiency of procedures, discover gaps in planning and identify opportunities for efficient rapid containment, the WHO said.

# 21 killed in Iraq

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Near Ramadi, in western Anbar province, a suicide bomber exploded his car outside a restaurant on a main road, killing 17 people and wounding 32, a hospital source said.

The restaurant was frequented by police in an area where local tribes have joined the tribal alliance against al Qaeda. Many police were among the casualties, the hospital source said.

In Tal Afar, a mixed town of Shi'ites, Sunni Arabs and Turkmen near the Syria border, up to 35 people were killed in two truck bombs and around 50 more wounded, officials said. It was not immediately clear who was responsible.

One of the blasts was detonated by a suicide bomber who lured victims to his truck to buy wheat that was loaded on the back, the mayor of Tal Afar said.

Earlier four people were killed in two blasts in Abu Ghraib, west of Baghdad. One of the dead was the son of tribal leader Sheikh Thahir al-Dari, said Ahmed al-Dulaimi, head of the provincial council media office in Anbar province.

Dulaimi said it was a double suicide car bombing, but a relative of the sheikh, a member of the anti-Qaeda alliance, said the son was killed when a rocket-propelled grenade hit the car he was in. Another person was wounded in the car.

Relatives blamed al Qaeda for the attack.

Dari's dead son, Harith al-Dari, is the nephew of his namesake who leads the Sunni Muslim Scholars' Association, an influential body of hardline clerics. The cleric has spoken out against the anti-Qaeda alliance that includes his own tribe.

Thahir al-Dari is the head of the al-Zobaie tribe, to which Deputy Prime Minister Salam al-Zobaie belongs. The deputy prime minister was the target of an assassination bid last week.

**ANTI-QAEDA FRONT**  
Suicide bombers have targeted a number of tribal leaders in the anti-Qaeda alliance amid a growing struggle in Anbar between the militant group and tribes who oppose its headline form of Sunni Islam and indiscriminate killings.

Khalizad, who left his post as ambassador to Iraq on Monday,

# Mamun

**FROM PAGE 1**  
(ACC) as a top graft suspect, was arrested on Monday raiding his house.

But different national dailies had earlier reported that Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel caught Mamun from a house at Naya Paltan in the capital on January 31.

# 8 killed

**FROM PAGE 16**  
inside rebel-held territory on Monday afternoon, but there were no casualties.

Tuesday's suicide bombing was in the coastal district of Batticaloa where government forces have been conducting intensive operations against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) since December.

The office of the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP), a pro-government Tamil party, which cooperates with security forces, was also destroyed.

"Two soldiers and four EPDP men were killed and about 10 wounded at the camp," a military official in Batticaloa told AFP. "There are two other bodies to be identified."

Military sources said the Tigers had tried to stage a similar suicide bombing against Chenkaladi last week, but failed when the explosives went off prematurely.

Chenkaladi was attacked last week together with three other military camps in Batticaloa district, leaving four soldiers dead and 30 wounded, according to the military.

There was no immediate word from the Tigers about the latest attack. The defence ministry separately said three rebels were shot dead in the country's north while the Tigers killed a government soldier in a clash in Batticaloa.

Relief workers have raised fresh concerns for the safety of civilians in Batticaloa as more people fled their homes and sought the safety of public buildings to avoid getting caught in the crossfire between troops and rebels.

At least 150,000 people have been internally displaced within the district, where troops and Tamil Tiger rebels have been trading long-range attacks for weeks.

Security forces have vowed to flush out the Tigers from the restive eastern region after the military captured the key Tiger bastion of Vakarai in January after several weeks of intense battles.

Troops have also tried to capture a jungle base known as Thoppigala from the Tigers, who are fighting for an independent homeland for the island's ethnic Tamil minority.

More than 60,000 people have been killed in Sri Lanka's Tamil separatist campaign since 1972. The two sides agreed to a truce in February 2002, but subsequent peace talks have broken down.

said U.S. and Iraqi officials had held contacts with Sunni Arab insurgent-linked groups and were continuing to engage them to bring them into the political process.

In a move to address Sunni Arab concerns, Iraq's president and prime minister on Monday approved amendments to ease rules under which former members of Saddam Hussein's Baath party were banned from jobs in government and the security forces.

Khalizad has been pushing Iraqi leaders to agree amendments to the law to help reconciliation with disaffected Sunni Arabs.

Under the proposal, which has to go to parliament for approval, only senior members of the former Baath party will be banned from public life, and they will still be given pensions.

Others banned in the aftermath of the US invasion of 2003 will be allowed to return to their jobs in public service. The plan also sets a time limit of three months for people to file lawsuits against former Baath party members.

Sunni Arabs have complained that many thousands of middle- and low-ranking party members were caught up in the sweep of the law even though they joined the Baath party only to get jobs.

In Baghdad, US forces said they had captured two leaders of a major car bomb cell responsible for attacks that killed around 900 Iraqis, mostly in the Shia district of Sadr City.

# Aussies

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Corey Collymore's extra pace seeing him come in for Ian Bradshaw.

Australia were unchanged from the side that defeated South Africa by 83 runs in St Kitts on Saturday.

Hayden was all muscle, Ponting all clinical batsmanship, one carried on while the other made an error of judgment that cost him dear, as Australia got into a strong position at 130 for two from 25 overs. The intensity on the field was sufficiently heightened, as befitting this Super Eights clash between two serious title contenders.

Gilchrist, however, was not quite as efficient as his more belligerent partner. A ball banged in short from Powell had Gilchrist defending without total control and the edge was snapped up by Ramdin.

Ponting began as he so often does when a big hundred is on his mind. Although he came forward in a predetermined manner early on, he played very straight, in the V, and only looked to pick up ones and twos. When the bowlers had enough of waiting for Ponting to take the initiative they went for the short ball, and it disappeared in haste, pulled magnificently for six over deep backward square-leg. From then on the strokes were authoritative and compact.

But, what looked to be developing into a Ponting innings that would control the 50 overs Australia were allotted, was cut short. Ponting hit one with hard hands, quite firmly, towards cover and set off for a single. Sarwan picked the ball up and in one motion lined-up and threw down the single stump he could see.

Michael Clarke replaced Ponting and scored 41 in the third wicket stand of 98 with Hayden before being trapped leg before off Dwayne Bravo. Andrew Symonds, playing only his second match, also did not last long. He scored 13.

# Judge Faizee

**FROM PAGE 1**  
On March 19, Faizee informed the chief justice that the HC stayed the cancellation order of his certificate, but the chief justice did not allocate any bench to him.

**JUDGE FAIZEE'S CASE**  
On October 30, 2004, two major dailies Prothom Alo and Bhorer Kagoj reported that Faizee, one of the 19 additional judges appointed on August 23, 2004, had tampered with his mark sheet of Muslim law examinations he sat for Chittagong Law College in 1989.

A CU enquiry committee formed on April 25, 1996 revealed the fraud. Former SCBA president Mahbubey Alam earlier said the then chief justice Syed JR Mudassir Husain did not recommend Faizee's confirmation as an HC judge.

On the demand for Faizee's resignation, SCBA President Barrister Amir-Ul Islam yesterday told the press that the trust of the whole nation is related to the legitimacy of the holders of constitutional posts. If the trust is damaged, everybody expects the person to resign.

"We have to understand that a lack of such mentality is itself a disqualification for holding such posts," he said.