Crime world

A moment later he corrected himself and said. He is very much alive, he abandoned us and got married again so he is dead to us."

Kafrul police arrested two juveniles about a month ago as they fled from the scene after hurling two homemade bombs towards a sweetmeat shop at Shewrapara.

The boys, aged around 12 and 14 years, said a local criminal had paid them Tk 100 each to explode the bombs in front of the shop to scare its owners into paying extortion money.

Poor children living in slums remain most vulnerable as they easily come into contact with narcotics traders and criminals who also live in slums. Many end up in a life of crime. Many top criminals of the country like Kala Jahangir, Killer Abbas, Freedom Sohel and Sweden

Aslam got started in this way. Dr Mehtab Khanam, professor of psychology department of Dhaka University, says juveniles can not apply moral values and so they work without reasoning and opportunists

exploit them. Dr Abdul Hakim Sarkar, a professor of the Institute of Social Welfare of Dhaka University, says the everincreasing poverty is one of the chief reasons leading to juveniles' involvement in offences.

Poor parents are so busy earning a livelihood that they have no time to guide children, he said.

Dr Sarkar suggests that a comprehensive child policy, parenthood training and developing parental associations could help counter this situation.

The government or other social organisations do not have any particular statistics about how many juveniles are already involved in offences in the country or how many are

exposed to potential involvement. Dhaka Metropolitan Police prepared a list of 336 professional teenage offenders from records in its 33 police stations in 2004. Experts suspect that the actual number is

much higher. At least 235 non-government organisations work on child rights in the country, but no one works specifically to protect juveniles from a potential criminal life.

The Director of the Department of Social Services Habibur Rahman said that since poverty pushes juveniles to criminal activities, the department provides loans to the poor to help upgrade their financial condition.

Some NGOs also provide micro

There are 84 government run institutions in the country, 50 Shishu Paribar, 25 Shishu Sadan, three rivals.

Kishore Unnayan Kendra (KUK) and six safe homes, with a total capacity of accommodating 10,500 children,

according to statistics of 2005. The Shishu Paribar and Shishu Sadan centres are mainly for proper care and nursing of orphan or destitute children living there. The safe homes are for girls and are based in the divisional headquarters in the country. The KUKs are the remand homes for juvenile under-trial prisoners and convicts.

However, none of these homes come into the picture to protect poor children from their exposure to a

Sarkar said juveniles from middle and upper class families usually get involved in offences due to spread of sky and cyber cultures. They try to be adventurous like the characters they watch on television.

"Children learn social norms and moral values from their guardians and peers, but nowadays they spend very little time with parents that they don't learn a lot of things," Sarkar

He cites an example that children learn to respect rules from playing games as all games have certain rules, but nowadays there are hardly any playgrounds for children.

Sarkar also blames private tuition based education for the situation This type of education makes children dependent on others and a dependent child does not learn to take his own responsibility, he says.

Children do not learn how to make sacrifices or accommodate others as they grow up amid a sense of selfish relationships, the professor

Respecting others' interests and moral values are relatively absent in the present society, Dr Sarkar points out, "So when any thing goes against their interest, children do not hesitate to commit a wrong."

Horror in Barisal

Shahjahan said he has been having disputes with one of his neighbours over a piece of land for a long time, where he built a house and let her sister's family live there so he could keep the land in his possession.

He suspects that people who are in dispute with him over the land might have killed her sister and

Tawfiq Mahbub, superintendent of police (SP) of Barisal, who visited the spot, said the land dispute might have been the motive for the grue-

He also said family members of the victims might also have been involved in the crime to frame their

central government and the local

government can ensure more effective

service delivery at local level, the study

observes. "Some of the basic services

provided by the central government,

such as primary health care, manage-

ment of primary education, and agri

culture services could be transferred or

deputed to the UPs management," the

policymakers may think of decentralis-

ing many responsibilities that can be

members spend most of their working

time in resolving local disputes and

have little time to concentrate on other

developmental functions. Against this

backdrop, the BARD suggests forming

"salish committees" at the ward level to

reduce the UPs' workload, allowing

local leaders to devote themselves to

73 of them were gang raped and 66

of acid violence while 22 were burnt

A total of 49 women were victims

The report also said 55 women

The number of women repressed

dren died in mysterious circum-

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The number of women fell victim

allocated this fiscal to ensure food

security, up from Tk Tk 5425 crore

in the revised budget of the last

procure 31.84 lakh MT food grain.

this fiscal. Of this, it will procure

16.34 lakh MT from the interna-

tional market and 15.50 lakh MT

from domestic market.

FROM PAGE 1

Power tariff

The government targets to

1,687 women

other development activities.

better managed at the local level.

It also suggests that the national

Currently, the UP chairman and

UP body system

activities of the UPs. In some cases, standing committees were formed to fulfil the official purpose but were kept non-functioning and inoperative," observes the BARD study.

It points out that in some cases, the committees acted according to the directions of the chairmen concerned and did not allow scopes for others' participation.

In order to improve the overall governance of the UPs, these standing committees should be re-activated by forming them openly to ensure broader participation of the society, the **BARD suggests**

It says the monitoring mechanisms of the LGRD and cooperatives ministry, which is legally empowered to do the job, are also "weak, inadequate and ineffective"

"The other mechanism of monitoringlies with the inspection and visits by the field level government functionar ies. But their functions are very much controlling in nature than of monitoring," says the study, also blaming the excessive degree of external regulation and control over the UPs for its institutional weakness.

Unwanted intervention of MPs on local government issues is another reason for institutional weakness of the UPs. The functions and functionaries of local government should in no way be controlled through other institutions, it observes.

were abducted and 125 women and children were trafficked during this The BRAD conducted the study titled "Governance in Union Parishad period. Out of the trafficked, 10 were of Bangladesh: Problems and sold to brothels. Prospective" in an effort to analyse the for failure to pay dowry was 148 and current state of the UPs, the lowest tier of local government structure in the

99 of them were killed for dowry. A total of 27 domestic workers rural areas of Bangladesh since 1870. were tortured by their employers and The study conducted by BARD 8 women were tortured by members deputy directors Abdul Karim and Mizanur Rahman discloses the frusof law enforcement agencies. During the same period, 135 trating findings about the UPs' current women committed suicide due to state that does not go with the spirit of repression and 47 women and chil-

local government stated in the consti-The BARD officials also point out a stances. lack of transparency in preparing the to violence in June alone is 333. A UPs' annual budget confided to the UP total of 73 incidents of rape and 15 secretary and chairman concerned. The UP secretary prepares and finalises the budget based on the previous

gang rapes were reported in the same Meanwhile, Bangladesh National year's budget and in consultation with Women Lawyers' Association the chairman and then sends it to the (BNWLA) reported 235 incidents of bureaucratic channel for approval. violence against women last month, The study notes that any discussion regarding the budget was hardly held in based on reports published in 10 the council meeting in the past. "As a national dailies. result, low-level participation in the 5.74 lakh MT rice

affairs of the lowest unit of the local government institutions such as Union Parishad of Bangladesh hinders local development and quality of governance," itsays.

But fundamental principles of the state policy written in the constitution encourage local government institutions at all administrative levels in which effective people's participation through elected representatives should be ensured, the BARD says.

The study suggests introduction of open space budgeting system to ensure participation of the local community to establish transparency and accountability of the local govern-

the taxpayers. In a close study of activities of some proved to be a more effective strategy to rates came into effect yesterday.

An eighth contract for a rental power plant in Ashuganj signed with yet another inexperienced local company Green Power in April has to launch operation in mid-August.

Rental plants

As per the contract, PDB would penalise each of the defaulting power companies with \$500 fine against each megawatt power the contractors failed to produce. Each contract is given 120 days to com-

This means Energy Prima should be paying \$85,000 a day and GBB-Kaltimax \$16,500 from May 15 for failing to meet the deadline," notes a PDB official.

If the contractor fails to launch the plant 60 days behind the schedule, the PDB will serve it with a notice to terminate the contract and a legal process will follow.

"In this case, Energy Prima faces a situation of contractual termination from mid-July for failing to launch operation," says a source.

The government signed seven rental power contracts with four companies in January and one in April. Of these seven, only one 40MW plant installed by British company Aggreko came into operation from the first week of June in Khulna. This plant was supposed to come into operation from May 28.

But Energy Prima and GBB-Kaltimax grossly failed to meet their May 15 deadline for five plants. A sixth deal signed with US power company Alsthom fell flat as the power company did not take any initiative to implement it. Energy Prima chief Moazzem

Hossain is one of the accused in the Barapukuria scam case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission. Sources say brother of former

BNP lawmaker Mosharraf Hossain of Feni, Moazzem is being backed by a strong lobby.

Khaleda's release

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Ariff -- are assigned to negotiate with the political parties at the government-sponsored dialogue on the issues of transition to democracy from the interim

The advisers said they sat in the meeting to review the latest outcomes and the remaining process of ongoing dialogues with the political parties as they are preparing for dealing with Awami League, one of the two major parties,

On the question of Khaleda's release, Hossain Zillur said the caretaker government wants to proceed taking into consideration all the humanitarian and legal Asked what happens if the BNP-

led four-party alliance does not participate in the coming elections, the adviser said: "We don't think hypothetically."

He said they are making their increase success of national effort to hold dialogue with the four-party alliance. Mutual partnership between the

Hasina's trial

hearing as the case documents are yet to arrive from the High Court (HC).

The HC asked for the records after Hasina filed a petition to quash the case on June 2.

After a brief hearing, the judge fixed July 10 for the next hearing of

witnesses' depositions. Advocate Sahara Khatun represented the AL chief, who had been exempted from attending court proceedings on health grounds. Former energy and power secretary Towfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, a co-accused in the case, was produced before the court.

Cross-examination of six witnesses has so far been completed.

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Deputy Director Sabbir Hasan filed the case with Tejgaon Police Station on September 2 last year accusing Hasina and six others of using their influence to help a foreign company and its local partners win a deal for setting up 100-megawatt barge-mount power plants in Haripur, Khulna and Shikalbaha, depriving the lowest

Hasina's co-accused are Towfige-Elahi Chowdhury, former Power Development Board (PDB) chairman Noor Uddin Mahmud Kamal, Managing Director of Summit Industries and Mercantile Corporation Private Ltd Aziz Khan, its Director Farid Khan, United Group Chairman Hasan Mahmud Raja and its Director Abul Kalam

Job seekers

FROM PAGE 16

attacking his staff. The injured staffers are Manager of Celebrity Tours and Travels Sahabuddin Majumdar, Assistant Manager Mejbahuddin, Manjerul Islam, Habibur Rahman and Zia Uddin.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Paltan Police Station Farid Ahmed told The Daily Star, "The job seekers gathered at the office around noon and demanded the officials either return their money or send them to Malaysia again with jobs."

"As the officials refused to address their demands, they attacked," the OC said, adding, "Each job seeker had paid Tk 2-3 lakh to go to Malaysia.'

Sources quoting the job seek-

Coastal lands

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Asked if the government has any plan to give incentives to farmers, he said price of crops is the main incentive. The government will try to ensure it, CS Karim noted.

Agriculture officials said a 12member team headed by Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council (BARC) Executive Chairman Dr Abdur Razzak has already conducted a study on fallow land for coastal districts of Barguna, Patuakhali, Bagerhat, Bhola, Pirozpur, Jhalakathi and Barisal and prepared a plan of action.

Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) has also prepared a paper identifying the unused land in Munshiganj, which will be reviewed by BARC for plan of action.

The BARC will gradually prepare such plans for other regions like Sylhet where a good amount of cultivable land remains unused, officials say.

The plan of action says of the 9.62 lakh hectares of cultivable land in the seven coastal districts, 5.13 lakh hectares or 53 percent land remains fallow during Kharif-1 (April-June) season, 57,290 hectares or 6 percent during Kharif-2 (July-September) season and 3.31 lakh hectares or 34 percent remain unused during Robi (December-March) season.

The committee has identified waterlogging during Aman harvesting from mid-December to mid-January, inundation of fields during April-June, lack of sweet water for irrigation and absentee landlords as reasons for vast fallow land in the

For remedies, the committee recommends production of high yielding varieties that requires short period of time, measures for irrigation, creating sweet water reservoirs, establishing dykes to check flooding for some particular period.

It also recommends a study to check feasibility of cultivation of crops and fruits that fit with the climate and soil of that region, strengthen the supply and market chain, train the farmers and entre preneurs for homestead gardening and even arrangement of agriculture loan to farmers. Besides such problems, agricul-

turists say there is a lack of awareness among farmers on homestead gardening in the rural areas that leads to their dependence on buying vegetables and fruits from markets. "Giving them incentives will

boost production of vegetables and fruits," an agriculturist at BARC said. He said more contract farming could be encouraged in cases where

landowners live abroad leaving their land fallow. Centre for Policy Dialogue Research Director Dr Uttam Kumar Deb said making available to farmers irrigation, fertilisers, seeds and

technologies suitable to weather and

AL to demand

FROM PAGE 1

permanent release before both elections (local body and parliamentary] to create a congenial atmosphere for polls," AL acting General Secretary Syed Ashraful Islam told reporters after a meeting of the AL Central Working Committee.

"We want the emergency to be lifted only for creating the atmosphere required for the polls," Ashraf

The AL held the meeting to finalise the party's stance and strategies for the dialogue with the govern-

Chaired by Presidium member Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, the meeting endorsed the AL Presidium's decision to take part in the upcoming city corporation and municipality elections under the banner of Nagorik Committee along with the components of the 14-party combine, the civil society and pro-LiberationWarforces.

The AL faces a dilemma in nominating the candidate for the mayoral post in Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) election as there are two strong candidates -- AL leader AHM Khairuzzaman Liton and its ally Workers' Party leader Fazle Hossain

Badsha. During the meeting, members of the AL Central Working Committee observed that Liton should be their candidate as the AL has over one lakh votes in RCC and Badsha should be nominated in the parliamentary polls as part of the AL-led 14-party

Local leaders and workers last night shuttered the office of city AL, demanding mayoral nomination for

As rumours spread that the AL led 14-party combine had announced Workers Party politburo member Badsha as the alliance candidate, city AL rank and file gathered in front of their office and locked its doors at around 8:15pm. "We will keep our office locked

until Liton is chosen as the mayoral candidate," said Rajshahi city AL Vice-president Rafique Uddin. A total of 120 AL leaders of Rajshahi district formally asked the

AL central to nominate Liton yester-Ashraf said the Presidium would

sit again to finalise nominations for the elections to four city corporations and nine municipalities. He said the AL Central Working Committee would finally endorse the nominations. The Presidium would also com-

plete bilateral meetings with AL's allies, he added. The AL Central Working

Committee meeting observed that the government has been urging political parties to ratify all ordinances passed during its rule if elected to power but the government is not promulgating those consulting the political parties. The meeting urged the govern-

Nasim abroad for treatment without further delay.

soil with support from the government and NGOs will have a positive impact on food production and

price. In cases of absentee landlords, contract farming can be a good option, but authorities should make sure that the rules and regulations remain viable for both contractors and farmers, he said.

Heated debate

FROM PAGE 1 Hasina's counsels including barris-

ter Shafique Ahmed told the court that the Attorney General could not make such submissions dictating the "In my long legal professional

career, I haven't heard such a submission by any lawyer dictating the High Court. This court earlier heard the petitions and fixed a date for further hearing. So, this court has the jurisdiction to hear the matters,' barrister Shafique said.

The Attorney General asked barrister Shafique Ahmed whether he (Shafique) has assumed the responsibility of the court.

"Since the High Court called for records of the two corruption cases against Sheikh Hasina, the trial proceedings of the cases have been | Bangladesh embassy. halted in trial courts. For the reconstitution of the High Court benches, this bench has no power to hear the quashment petitions. The court cannot call for the records of the cases before issuing any rule. The court has not issued any rule in the matters," he said.

The HC bench said the wisdom of any person is not determined with his or her age or ranking status. "We have taken the matters in our consideration for hearing with our wisdom. .. Asking for the records of the cases by the High Court is nothing new."

Following two quashment petitions filed by Sheikh Hasina, the High Court bench of Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Mashuque Hossain Ahmed earlier in June this year called for the records and documents of the cases against Hasina.

Regional fund

FROM PAGE 1 said with global temperature increase between 1.5 and 2.5 degrees Celsius, 20-30 percent plant and animal species could become extinct

region could decrease by up to 30 percent by the middle of this century. The cities in South Asia are also likely to face severe drainage congestion due to increased precipitation,

while crop yields in South Asian

he said. Studies suggest that it is no longer possible to reverse the process of climate change in the coming decades but the region is still not prepared to face the disruptive effects of a warmer world, he added.

While presenting the report on Bangladesh situation, Dr panel will make decisions to Asaduzzaman proposed extending the regional action plan to manage climate change like the European

He proposed best sharing of water resources for optimal use and control in hydro-power projects. He also proposed cooperating each other to develop a regional food bank and new crop varieties tolerant of climate change.

Asaduzzaman underlined the need for cooperation for disease prevention and control and early warning system for short and longrange weather and flood forecast.

The Indian representative said India is willing to share its CDM experience with other Saarc countries. He proposed holding a joint workshop with project developers, CDM consultants and industry associations of Saarc countries. Sri Lanka proposed establishing a

common regional position and criterion to assess the cost in terms of monetary values of "environmental debt" owed by developed countries to the Saarc countries.

He said the Saarc countries may curtail use of carbon and exchange the carbon credit with the developed countries for financial debts.

Dhaka rain-hit

FROM PAGE 1 graveyard, Tongi Diversion Road, parts of old town and DND area were the worst affected in waterlogging, which is a common sight for the city residents even in moderate rain.

Urban experts blame it on unplanned urbanisation, absence of proper sewerage system and indiscriminate filling of the natural waterbodies. They suggest formulating a com-

prehensive drainage plan as well as a master plan for city development to rid the capital of waterlogging. As immediate measures, they recommend retrieving the canals grabbed by influential quarters and excavating those afresh. An official of Dhaka Water Supply

and Sewerage Authority (WASA) said the primary cause of waterlogging in the city is inadequate and outdated drainage system. A proper drainage system connecting drains and sewers with waterbodies such as ponds, lakes and canals is a must to spare the people of sufferings during the monsoons. An official of Dhaka City

Corporation (DCC) said the storm sewerage lines and surface drains of both Wasa and DCC do not function properly for lack of cleaning and contribute to waterlogging. Nizami, Khaleda

government is not paying heed to

FROM PAGE 16

national elections by October.

Non-payment

amounts of fines on the firms for

employing the workers without

valid residency permits. . Both the firms, belonging to the same owner, sought extension of time as well as waiver of the fines. In the meantime, the firms filed false cases against the workers, claiming that since the workers fled their workplaces, they were themselves responsible for the expiration of their residency permits, Siddiqui said.

Waiver of fines has to be approved by finance ministry of the country after the appeal is scrutinised by ministries of social affairs and labour, and interior, he added

"Therefore, the process is timeconsuming," he said adding that the companies however are doing all they can to get away without paying the fines and the unpaid wages to the workers. Meanwhile, the police already

who left their camps and the authorities are making preparations to deport them, said Siddiqui. The police need to have a court order to arrest any worker from inside their camps for staying in

the country without valid resi-

dency permits, explained the

apprehended 30 of these workers

labour councillor at the KUWAIT PROBES MPs' VISA

TRADING The National Assembly Human Rights Committee of Kuwait, which began an investigation into allegations of wide-spread visa trading, said they are suspicions about former and current Kuwaiti lawmakers' involvement in illegal

trade of visas. Visa trading means buying and selling visas to hire foreign workers and that involves huge amount of money and middlemen. Such trading increases the foreign workers' cost of migration and contributes to their low wages Bangladeshi workers are also victims of such trading in the Middle East countries.

Member of the committee MP Roudhan Al-Roudhan said the committee decided to investigate the issue seriously after "hearing that some members in the current assembly and previous assemblies are suspected of being involved in visa trading", reported Kuwait Times, a leading newspaper of Kuwait, Monday.

last week asked the committee to investigate the issue based on a proposal that requires the panel to investigate records of the ministry of social affairs and labour during the last five years. The Human Rights Committee of the National Assembly Monday

held an extended meeting with

The Kuwaiti National Assembly

representatives for the ministries of social affairs and labour, interior, and commerce and industry in this regard Roudhan said the committee asked the ministries to provide certain data based on which the

reduce problems related to unskilled labourers. The panel specifically requested data on companies suspected of visa trading, especially cleaning and private security firms, which recruit a large number of foreign

workers, Roudhan said. CA to join D-8

among the member states. "The group which came into existence in 1997 has a volume of trade among themselves that stands today at US \$49 billion, up from US \$14.5 billion in 1999,

Iftekhar stated. Its summit meet is held every two years, Bangladesh having hosted the second one in 1999. The

secretariat is based in Istanbul. The summit will be preceded by a two-day meeting of foreign ministers, where Bangladesh will be represented by the foreign affairs

The senior officials called Commissioners in D-8 will meet July 3-4 for doing the groundwork.

"We will use this opportunity to strengthen our bilateral cooperation with Malaysia as well. As we all know, Malaysia is a significant destination for our manpower export. While the numbers are large, the challenges are also many We will meet our appropriate Malaysian counterparts to address

some of these issues," Iftekhar said. The chief adviser is expected to leave for the Malaysian capital on July 7 and return the next day after

attending the summit.

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About the local body elections ahead of the general election, Moriarty said it is interesting to see Awami League going to local elections.

On BNP's five-point demand, the

US envoy said the government and

BNP should talk about it, stating that

the people of Bangladesh have strong opinion on that. Asked if the local elections might hamper the general election, the ambassador said it is the people of Bangladesh to decide and hoped that there would be successful national

and local elections. About speculations on an electoral college to elect the president, Moriarty again said it is obviously something the people of this country will have to decide. He said the US is probably the only democracy that has an electoral college electing its president.

the wisdom of the people of Bangladesh," added the US envoy.

Govt hikes bus fares

FROM PAGE 1

But the government has yet to officially re-fix the fares of goods carrying

motor vehicles and launches. Meanwhile, operators of all modes of transport were in a frenzy of increasing fares immediately after the government's announcement of increasing fuel oil prices, resulting in heated debates and scuffles between passengers and transport crews.

In the capital, bus fare went up by Tk 1 to Tk 5 on different city routes while the increase was by Tk 50 to Tk 70 on inter-district routes all through the day yesterday. Passengers got into disputes with bus crews as they were charging extra since early morning yesterday at all bus and launch terminals in the city.

Different socio-political organisa tions, however, condemned the hike in fuel oil prices, saying the increase will make life more difficult for the

The communication ministry held a meeting yesterday to increase bus fares. Chaired by the communication secretary, BRTA Chairman Sunil Kanti Boss, BRTC Chairman Shafiz Uddin Ahmed and other officials concerned were present at the meeting.

"The fare has been increased after a discussion with transport owners," added the government handout.

But earlier in the day transport fares on different routes sky rocketed unabated as there was no government direction. In the city, human-haulers, buses

and minibuses including the CNGrun ones were charging 15 percent to banks would increase if we would not 30 percent more than usual all through the day. On Mirpur-Gulistan route, pas-

sengers locked in scuffles with bus crews as they asked for Tk 2 to Tk 5 more than the usual fare of Tk 12. While passengers argued for ucts out of the country. waiting for a government decision, crews said they had no alternative to

prices had already been in effect. The situation was the same on all routes throughout the day. The passengers, however, had no choice but to pay the extra amount. Yesterday pick-up van operators

were charging Tk 700 on Badamtoli to

charging extra since the hiked up fuel

Keraniganj Abdullahpur route while the rate had been Tk 600 on Sunday. "You know that the price of diesel rose to Tk 55 from Tk 40. So we have to charge extra to maintain our business," said Akhter Hossain, a pick-up van operator. Some pick-van operators were charging up to Tk 100 more

than the usual rate. At Sayedabad bus terminal, operators were charging Tk 10 to Tk 30 more than usual for inter-district local bus services. The operators said the hike would be more had there been a larger number of passengers around, which was rather low yesterday due to the inclement weather.

"We are charging extra because we had to buy fuel at a higher price," said Faruk Hossain, owner of SK Transport which operates on Dhaka-Hobiganj Many passengers at the bus termi-

nal expressed their dismay for paying

unusually high fares. "We are paying 150 taka for going to Chittagong now, which was 130 taka last week," said Ainal Hossain, an NGO worker, The rates of unofficial increase in launch fares were higher than the rates of unofficial bus fare increase yesterday. On longer routes like

Patuakhali, launch operators were seen charging Tk 20 to Tk 60 extra. On Dhaka-Barisal route, passengers had to pay Tk 140 to Tk 160 for travelling on deck last evening, which

Dhaka-Barisal and Dhaka-

was Tk 100 to Tk 120 before. Badiuzzaman Badal, acting chairman of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport (passengers) Owners Association, told The Daily Star that the fare increase was not announced officially because the authorities had yet to approve their proposal for a 50

percent fare increase. About charging extra without a government decision, he said, "The price hike of fuel oil is compelling us At Gulistan bus terminal in the

city, passengers and bus crews were

seen brawling around 11:00am. A

passenger pulled a ticket counter staff by the collar on Gulistan-Chittagong Highway route, resulting in a chaos for about half an hour. Passengers alleged that bus operators were not only charging extra but also turned all local buses into non-

stop direct ones to legitimise unusually high fares. CNG-run human-hauler service, Rajdhani Paribahan, was also seen charging Tk 1 more than usual on a short route between Babubazar and Jurain, taking the opportunity of the

chaos in the city. They were charging

Tk7instead of the usual fare of Tk6.

yesterday. The owners said they will hold a meeting today and might raise the fare by Tk 70. Bus operators charged extra in all

In Lalmonirhat, all Dhaka-bound

districts yesterday. Talking to reporters in Bangladesh Secretariat yesterday

plans to go to Syria later on Tuesday,

expressed serious concern about the

conditions of Palestinians in the

Israel bars

FROM PAGE 16 which has already visited Egypt and

occupied areas. It warned against "the deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, the grave situation in the Gaza strip, the impact of the separation wall on the human rights of Palestinian people, and the continu-

ing settlements policy," according to

Kariyawasam. The United Nations and other international organisations say Israeli-imposed sanctions on Gaza, which has been ruled by the Islamist Hamas movement since last year, have increased poverty and destroyed the economy in the densely populated area.

halted immediately," Kariyawasam

Communication Adviser Maj Gen (retd) Ghulam Quader said transport fare hike should be logical, so that no injustice is done to passengers.

action against operators who will charge irrational fares. Communication Secretary Mahbubur Rahman said the government will monitor the situation to check any sort of anarchy in the transport sector following the fuel oil

He assured the people of taking

price hike. Inspector General of Police (IGP) Nur Mohammad, after a law and order meeting in the home ministry yesterday, said his forces are on alert to tackle any chaos that might develop in the transport sector centring the price hike of fuel oil.

"We are keeping our eyes on the

situation as we fear that an uproar

might arise. Measures are there to face any unpleasant incident," the police chief told journalists after the meeting. He, however, said he had no information about any anarchic

situation in the country since the government had hiked the prices of fuel oil on Monday night. Finance and Planning Adviser AB Mirza Azizul Islam said everywhere in the world anarchy usually sparks when oil prices are adjusted, and

When his attention was drawn to the anarchy that had already gripped the nation, he said the communication ministry is looking into the "Government borrowing from

Bangladesh is no exception.

adjust the oil prices," he told reporters after a meeting on food planning in the food ministry. Defending the price hike of fuel oil, Mirza Aziz said the move will also curb smuggling of petroleum prod-

Covered Van Malik Samity proposed to the government, reductions in bridge tolls, motor vehicle taxes, and fees by 50 percent, so they could cope with the price hike of fuel. They also urged the government

to cut duties on tires, tubes and other

Chairman of Bangladesh Bus-

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Truck-

Truck Owners Association GM Siraj told The Daily Star yesterday that the government has no control over the transport sector. About increasing fares, he said, "Since prices of oil went up, transport

fares will automatically go up."

spare parts by 50 percent.

decision regarding the matter, he fears 40 percent of transports will not operate today just to avoid chaos and to minimise operation cost. "Anarchy had already sparked due to price hike of fuel oil without re-fixing bus fares," said Executive

If the government fails to reach a

Paribahan Sramik Federation Shahjahan Khan yesterday. Nato, US troops

President of Bangladesh Sarak

FROM PAGE 16 than a month after US forces allegedly killed 11 Pakistani troops in an

airstrike.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai last month threatened to launch military action on Pakistani soil to tackle the rebels, whom he blamed for a wave of violence including a mass rebel jailbreak in the southern city of Kandahar.

In other violence four police

officers died on Tuesday when their

vehicle struck a roadside bomb as

they went to reinforce a checkpost, which came under attack in troubled southern Uruzgan province, police Gunmen dragged three pro-Karzai tribal elders from their car and shot them dead in Paktika province, which borders Khost, on Monday,

officials said, while a policeman was

killed in a separate but similar inci-

Five other Taliban militants died

dent in the same area.

in a clash in southern Zabul province on Tuesday, the district chief said, while the coalition said another rebel was killed in southwestern Nimroz province. The worsening violence, particularly on the Pakistani border, has

made Afghanistan deadlier than ever

for nearly 70,000 Nato and US-led

coalition troops battling the Taliban. VoIP equipment

Converters, two Ethernet Cards, two UPSs, two Ethernet switches and 20 vouchers of different banks. Rab-1 sources said they conducted three separate drives and

recovered the equipment at Niketon,

Gulshan-1 and Salimullah Road in Mohammadpur. buses increased their fares by Tk 50 Mai Saiful Islam of Rab-1 told The Daily Star, "The arrested people had been illegally running the VoIP busi-

ness for several years. He said they estimated the seized equipment are worth about Tk 20

In reply to a query, Saiful said, "Many of the seized 1,070 SIMs are disconnected due to nonregistration. But most are activated and those SIMs were collected in cooperation with dealers of

cellphone service operators." He said they would investigate how the culprits collected the large number of SIMs illegally.

DCs asked

FROM PAGE 16 stocks of GR food grains, GR cash

and other relief materials so that they can use those to meet any emergency situation. The ministry has opened a relief control room to keep in touch with

all districts. The telephone num-

bers of the control room are

7162116, 7160454, 7164115, while

the fax numbers are 7169623, 7169567 and 7174148. The control room will remain open from 8:00am to 8:00pm every 60 points of the country.

day and it monitor river situation at

saying that Bangladesh has no way public opinion regarding the release of detained political leaders. ers said most of the job seekers ment not to promulgate or enact any ment. The system may also motivate to make itself immune from the "We think it works well. We have ordinance or law without consulting suffered imprisonment in Handing over the memorandum, world market phenomena. been playing for over 200 years now. "Such policies and practices them. the Jamaat leader also demanded Malaysia for not having proper "So, we have to adjust our prices affecting Palestinian people are a But there are lots of other ways to It also demanded that the governselected UPs, the BARD reveals that to cope up with the world market," he lifting of the emergency power rules, serious threat to self-determination of employment papers and none of ment send AL leader Mohammad elect a president. Again we leave it to withdrawal of the Gatco and other motivation through local leaders has told reporters as the new fuel price the Palestinian people and must be them managed to get any job "false" cases, and holding the