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Terrors back in guise of poll campaigners

MUKHLESUR RAHMAN and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Terrors and extortionists who went into hiding after declaration of the state of emergency are returning to the capital and taking part in election campaigns besides criminal activities along with their accomplices in most city areas.

Locals and traders in different areas of the city said the criminals are now busy re-establishing their network of criminal activities and setting up dens in the name of party offices.

In the guise of political activists they are putting up signboards of offices of different political parties in the industrial and commercial areas, slums and wholesale markets in the city, they alleged.

In the last few days, extortionists put up at least seven such signboards of dif-

ferent political parties in the fish and kitchen market areas of Karwan Bazar.

Two signboards of the AL and BNP can be seen in front of the Janata Tower. Three more signboards of the AL have been put up at gate-1 and at north side of the market and in Christianpara. Another two signboards of Muktijoddha Jubo Command and Jatiya Party can also be seen in the market.

Traders said most signboards have been put up without any structures. But extortionists will soon set up clubhouses in the name of party offices evicting targeted traders, they said, adding that such clubhouses were used for toll collecting, torturing victims and taking drugs before the 1/11 changeover. The joint forces demolished all the clubhouses after declaration of the state of emergency.

The traders said a few notorious gang

leaders and their accomplices now often gather at different points of Karwan Bazar kitchen market in the dead of night and have even asked tolls from some businessmen.

Fish traders said "Bhagina" Liton, Monwara, Taher, Jahangir, Munna and Dulal of Sobhan-Selim gang are often seen in the area at night. Monwara who is an aunt of Sobhan-Selim is a notorious drug dealer, they said, adding that these criminals generally collect tolls but they also kill people on payment.

"Lungi" Badol and Bhuttu, accomplices of slain top terror "Pichchi" Hannan, are also seen at different points in the market as is seen their rival Saidul, they said.

Locals of Tejgaon industrial area said extortionists demolished a tea stall in

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"Alor Michhil", a procession of light, is brought out in front of Jatiya Press Club yesterday urging people not to vote for war criminals, militants and corrupt persons in the upcoming elections. Support Bangladesh organised the event, demanding trial of war criminals.

UN chief hails emergency withdrawal

UNB, Dhaka

United Nations (UN) Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has welcomed the lifting of the state of emergency in Bangladesh.

Foreign Adviser Iftakhar Ahmed Chowdhury yesterday told newsmen that the UN secretary general described the lifting of emergency as "positive step towards ensuring the rights of all Bangladeshis to a free, fair and credible parliamentary election."

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BARAPUKURIA MINE MoU signed with CMC for future development

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Barapukuria Coal Mining Company Ltd (BCMCL) yesterday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Chinese company CMC for completion of the construction of its mines as well as for its future development.

The agreement signed by BCMCL's new Managing Director Engineer Khurshidul Hasan and CMC Vice

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City dwellers crowd before hawkers in Baitul Mukarram area yesterday to buy winter clothing following a sudden mild cold weather in the last couple of days.

PHOTO: STAR

Overseas employment heads for bad days

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh is likely to experience a sharp fall in overseas employment from February due to slowdown in construction industry in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and other Middle Eastern countries following sharp price fall of oil, say officials and businesses.

The decline in overseas jobs is likely to be acute as Bangladesh's traditional major labour markets -- Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Malaysia and Kuwait -- have already significantly reduced the number of job visas. Only the UAE is still hiring almost half the total number of workers now.

Of the total about 8.31 lakh jobseekers who

found overseas jobs until November this year, the UAE employed about 3.95 lakh. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia recruited about 1.31 lakh workers, Malaysia about 1.25 lakh, Singapore 52,951 and Oman 50,221, according to the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET).

"The decline in the number of workers going abroad is not evident yet. But it will be clear from February because the construction sector that saw a boom in the wake of oil price hike in recent past is now slowing down," says a BMET official.

The official's statement is reflected in recent

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POLLS EXPENSES

Saifur, Muhith rely on help from family

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

M Saifur Rahman and Abul Mal Abdul Muhith, who are fighting in Sylhet-1 constituency for the second time from BNP and Awami League respectively, would bear election expenditures with support from family members.

However, Muhith heavily depends on financial backup from his sisters and brothers as he earns and owns less than

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UPAZILA POLLS

300 candidates identified as loan defaulters

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Bank (BB) has so far identified 300 out of the total 9,961 candidates for upazila election as loan defaulters and sent their list to the Election Commission.

"Correction to the list is going on and will continue until tomorrow," Bangladesh Bank Executive Director Khondakar Muzharul Haque told reporters at his office yesterday.

He explained that a candidate defaulted on loan would

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JS POLLS War heroes to mobilise public opinion against war criminals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Sector Commanders Forum in a bid to mobilise public opinion against anti-liberation war forces will visit constituencies where alleged war criminals are contesting the upcoming polls.

The forum, a platform of the war heroes who led the country's Liberation War, is to visit other constituencies too. It will hold a rally on December 24 in Dhaka as part

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RWANDAN GENOCIDE UN tribunal jails mastermind for war crime

AFP, Arusha

A UN-backed tribunal yesterday sentenced the man accused of having masterminded the country's 1994 genocide to life in prison for his part in the massacres that killed some 800,000 people.

Theoneste Bagosora, who prosecutors had portrayed as the mastermind of the genocide was convicted "of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes," said the judge at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR).

Immediately after the verdict, Bagosora's lawyer said his client would challenge his conviction.

"Bagosora has decided to appeal. It is a disappointment,"

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14,000 villages have no schools

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although some progress has been made in increasing enrolment in primary schools, there are still 14,000 villages in the country where there are no schools at all.

Adviser to the Primary and Mass Education Ministry Rasheda K Choudhury made the revelation at a round table discussion at the daily Prothom Alo auditorium yesterday.

"According to the Primary School Registration Rules, a primary school should be established in every village which has a population of 2000 or more. But there are some 2,000 villages without a school though their population is higher than 2,000," she said.

The government is however trying to incorporate these villages in the second Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP2), she said.

At the discussion titled 'Female Education: Achievement, Discrimination and Duties' organised by Campaign for Popular Education (Campe) and the daily Prothom Alo, Rasheda also said the process for a unified education programme has already begun.

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TEST, ODI SERIES Lankan cricketers arrive

SPORTS REPORTER

The Sri Lanka cricket team arrived here yesterday to play two Tests and a tri-nation one-day series.

Mahela Jayawardene's men landed at the Zia International Airport more than two hours after their scheduled arrival was delayed due to heavy fog in the city.

This is the Lankans second trip after 2006 when the Tigers beat them in a one-day in Bogra. However they have won all ten Tests played between the two sides.

The visitors come into the series without having played a Test since August 11 when they defeated India 2-1 in the Test series, thanks to mystery spinner Ajantha Mendis, who destroyed the much-vaunted Indian batting line-up.

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Prayer Timing		
December 19		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-20	5-55
Juma	12-15	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	6-22	5-25
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

50 interior ministry officials held over Iraq coup plot

AFP, Baghdad

Iraq has arrested about 50 interior ministry officials accused of plotting a coup against the Shia-led government, a senior security official said yesterday.

"Fifty interior ministry civil servants, including senior officials, were arrested over the past three days for trying to topple the government of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki," the official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

Among those seized was General Ahmad Abul Rif, the ministry's security chief, he said.

"They were linked to the Al-Awda (The Return), a clandestine group that was working to bring the Baath Party back into power," he said, adding that the suspects were arrested by a special security unit that reports directly to Maliki's official.

Al-Awda first surfaced in June 2003 just three months after the launch of the US-led invasion that ousted Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein and his feared ruling Baath Party regime.

It groups former members of the Baath party, Saddam's old Republican Guard and his security services.

News of the arrests comes just days after a farewell visit to Iraq by US President George W. Bush, who met with Maliki during his trip.

The New York Times reported on Thursday that a top interior ministry official said those Al-Awda links paid bribes to officers to recruit them, and that substantial amounts of money were found in raids.

Maliki's critics have accused the prime minister of arresting political enemies to consolidate his power ahead of provincial elections due to be held at the end of January, the newspaper said.

Maliki himself was persecuted by Saddam's Sunni-led regime, but five years after the invasion hundreds of members of the executed dictator's former Baath party have returned to public life in Iraq.

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The Daily Star
10TH 'O' & 'A' LEVEL
AWARD PRESENTATION CEREMONY, 2007-2008

Announcement for 'O' & 'A' Level
Private Candidates and Schools

Private Candidates
Private candidates who fulfill the criteria described below are requested to register their names at The Daily Star Office for inclusion as awardees. The criteria to be fulfilled are as follows:

Criteria for 'O' Level
Minimum 6 (six) 'A' grades in two consecutive sittings within May/June 2007 to May/June 2008

Criteria for 'A' Level
Minimum 3 (three) 'A' grades within 1 academic year (May/June 2007 to May/June 2008)

Eligible candidates are requested to contact Mr. Risalat Khan at The Daily Star office with their original Results Certificates along with a photocopy and 2 (two) passport-size photographs in person on December 20, 21, 22 & 23 between 11:00 am and 2:30 pm.

Schools
Any school that has students meeting the criteria above but has not been contacted by The Daily Star (i.e. has not been informed of the first scheduled meeting through regular post, email or phone) is requested to contact Mr. Risalat Khan at The Daily Star office at the aforementioned dates and times or email him at coordinator_dailystaraward@yahoo.com by December 24 with:

- The name of the school, phone number of a responsible representative (who will attend the meetings) and a valid email address that is checked regularly

The schools are also requested to promptly prepare a list of the candidates meeting the above criteria, the number of 'A' grades achieved by each candidate, and photocopies of results certificates for each candidate.

NOTE: If you know of any private candidate(s) or school(s) that may be unaware of this, please communicate the above information to them so that we may include them in this ceremony as well.

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