NEWS

Danger lurks

pose as transport operators offering cheaper "shared seats" in and around the capital. They would often kill their prey and dump the bodies in isolated

FROM PAGE 1

If fortunate enough, the victims would be dropped in the middle of nowhere after being injured by the muggers.

Detectives say the criminals usually dump the bodies at roadsides, along rail tracks or bury those in a bid to destroy evidence.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner AKM Shahidul Hoque said, "Over 70 muggers in guise of drivers and passengers of small vehicles like cabs, microbus, private cars and auto-rickshaws are active in and

on the outskirts of the city." He added each of the gangs of three to four muggers impersonate the driver and passengers and hunt for victims at key points like Farmgate, Jatrabari, Sayedabad, Gabtali, Mohakhali and Mirpur in late night.

The commissioner added, "Such muggers usually use their own cars and small firearms and rope or towels to use during mugging.'

The commissioner claims amid intensive drive against dope gangs, the criminals are applying their new technique using cars instead of doping victims.

The DMP chief said they arrested two members of such a gang that picked up the ATN ournalist and ASI of Navatola police outpost in their cars, mugged and killed them in the

vehicles and dumped them in Pallabi embankment and Mirzapur in Tangail on May 4 and 8 respectively.

These were disclosed at a press briefing at DB office in the capital yesterday after the detectives arrested two of the criminals -- Raju and Sujan. Rahat, ringleader of the gang, was killed in a "shootout" between the criminals and DB personnel in Pallabi embankment in the capital.

The muggers killed ASI Mizan when he spoke out his identity as a policeman and accordingly they killed ATN Bangla cameraman Shafiqul Islam Mithu.

The DB police said Rahat picked up ATN Bangla cameraman Mithu from Farmegate in the night on May 8 as a passenger for going to the airport area, and Rahat's three associates also got into the car as passen-

When they reached Kakoli, the criminals strangulated Mithu by a towel and dumped his body on Pallabi embankment after taking his valuables.

In a similar fashion, the ASI of Nayatola police outpost was picked up from Chandra in Gazipur on May 4 and was strangulated by a towel when they reached Dherua level crossing in Mirzapur, Tangail.

Rahat used to take Tk 6,000 per night for his car that he bought at Tk 2.4 lakh two months ago. The amount mugged from the victims used to be equally distributed among

Govt working

Awami League] want coun-

try's foreign policy, armed forces and market to be dominated by other countries." She claimed that govern-

ment is conspiring to bring foreign soldiers in Bangladesh. Even it wants to import adulterated fertiliser to destroy fertility of country's soil. This is why a number of fertiliser industries have been shut down, she insisted.

The rally was organised by BNP as part of the chairperson's divisional rally in a bid to wage an anti-government movement.

Thousands of party leaders, workers and supporters from different areas of the southern division attended the meeting. Processions started to meet at the venue from noon and the

Most of the places in the city were adorned with colourful banners, posters, placards and

Bangabandhu Udyan was full

of crowds by 3:00pm.

festoons to welcome Khaleda. Khaleda Zia in her over-anhour speech accused the government of creating artificial crisis of electricity to set up power plants without floating

She warned that cases will be filed and everyone will have go to jail if work orders are given avoiding tender process.

The former premier said Awami League's digital Bangladesh means crises of power, water and gas, closing industries, killing people and assaulting women. "Government did nothing for the country in last 16 months except

filing cases and killing." "The country is now totally

Director of Mediastar Ltd and

Transcom Group Latifur

Rahman, filed the first case

against the Bashundhara

case against four people

including Matiur Rahman and

Latifur Rahman, and

Both cases are now pend-

The HC in a ruling yester-

day asked the Bashundhara

Group to explain in two weeks

why the cases should not be

transferred from the trial

The HC bench of justices

courts to the HC for disposal.

Md Imman Ali and Obaidul

Hasan fixed June 8 for hearing

on the ruling, and stayed the

proceedings of the cases until

Group, seeking Tk 200 crore in

They charged the group

with publishing highly libel-

lous and insulting advertise-

ments and posters, and other

Bashundhara Group

Chairman Ahmed Akbar

Chairman's Technical Adviser

Latiful Abedin Hossain.

malicious activities.

the ruling's disposal.

damages.

ing with two joint district

judges' courts in Dhaka.

The group filed the other

FROM PAGE 16

Transcraft Ltd.

paralysed. Government has

failed to run the country. In

fact, this government is not

capable of doing that," she

Awami League's days are numbered and there will be no scope for the ruling party to assume power in future, added

The BNP chairperson said they took part in last general election only to overthrow Fakhruddin-Moeen led government. "But unfortunately there is no difference between the present elected government and the last caretaker regime.

Khaleda.

"Awami League must take the responsibility of the last caretaker government's activities as it was the outcome of their agitation," she said adding the caretaker government came to power to destroy BNP

not to run the country. Khaleda said development projects were implemented all over the country when BNP was in power, but Awami League did nothing good for

She said the BDR has been destroyed and border has no protection and taking this opportunity India is looting everything, even they are grabbing lands in Bangladesh territory.

Meanwhile, around 8:00pm, Barisal Jamaat leaders led by city unit ameer Moajjem Hossain Helal met the BNP chairperson.

Party leaders ASM Hannan Shah, Mirza Abbas, Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, Moyeen Khan, among others, addressed the rally with Mujibur Rahman in the chair.

Bashundhara, Alo

Bashundhara Steel and

Engineering Ltd Executive

Director Maj (retd) Zahidur

Rahman, and the group's 11 companies listed with the Office of the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms were also made defendants in the case.

All of them have to reply to the HC ruling, said Ramzan Ali Sikder, one of the petitioner's counsels.

Ahmed Akbar Sobhan on March 4 this year filed a Tk 1000-crore defamation case against the editor and publisher of Prothom Alo, the chairman and managing director of Mediastar Ltd and Transcom Group, and three others for publishing, what they claimed to be defamatory news items on several occa-

The three other defendants On November 22 last year, are Prothom Alo's Associate Matiur Rahman and Latifur Editor Mizanur Rahman Khan Rahman filed a civil defamaand Cartoonist Shishir tion suit with the 4th Joint Bhattacharya, and the District Judge's Court in Transcraft Ltd. Dhaka against Bashundhara

During the hearing on the petition, Dr Kamal Hossain, counsel for the petitioner, told the court that constitutional issues and question of law are involved in both cases, which should be disposed of in the

The defendants include HC. Sobhan, its Senior Deputy Managing Director Md Belayet Hossain, and its

at the court.

Ramzan Ali Sikder, barrister Sara Hossain and barrister Najeeb Huda assisted Dr Kamal Hossain. Deputy Attorney General Motahar Hossain Saju was also present

Hit by heat

FROM PAGE 16 sufferings from an average power-cut for eight to 10 hours a

Sales of IPS have increased further in the city as it has become almost impossible to stay indoors when there is no electricity.

"There has been no rain for over a month. Moreover, the sun is now coming overhead increasing the temperature. This will continue till June 21," said weather expert Sujit Kumar Dev, who is now working with the Saarc Meteorological Research Centre.

The situation in central India and Bihar is even worse than that of Bangladesh, he added.

Residents of different areas in the capital including parts of Mohammadpur, Mirpur, Gandaria, Mohakhali Gopibagh, Jatrabari and Shantinagar are enduring water crisis or having odorous dirty water amid this blistering heat.

Meanwhile, more people affected by heat and contaminated water related diseases like diarrhoea, typhoid, jaundice, and heatstroke -- are crowding in hospitals. "The number of outdoor

patients mostly with headache, muscle pain, fever and diar rhoea are increasing everyday,' said Prof Mujibur Rahman of Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital. Children and senior citizens

are the majority of the heat wave sufferers, he added.

ICDDR'B sources said the number of outdoor diarrhoea patients is increasing since the beginning of this week. But the worst is yet to come, they added.

Doctors have suggested drinking of more fluids including water, saline, green coconut water and juices to keep the body from dehydration.

BTRC

FROM PAGE 16 yesterday at a media briefing.

'This is a new issue for us. But we are working on it as we have to follow the court verdict to appoint administrators," said the chairman.

However, some members of Association of PSTN (public switched telephony networks) operators alleged that BTRC has taken such a move as the commission has an intention to bring new operators in the

It's not a right move against the PSTN operators that have only one percent market share in the total telecom industry.

"If BTRC has courage it they should take the same move against mobile operators who were accused of the same illegal activities," said a member of the PSTN association.

Of the private landline operators, RanksTel is the market leader with more than 3 lakh subscribers followed by Peoples Tel's 1.6 lakh, and National Telecom's 1.38 lakh Dhaka Phone has 77,000 subscribers while WorldTel has 14,000.

Earlier on Tuesday, in response to writ petitions filed by RanksTel and National Telecom Ltd the High Court directed BTRC to decide within seven days whether it would cancel the licences of the two operators.

The court also ordered BTRC to appoint an administrator to each of the two companies for running their operations in the interest of their subscribers, if the commis-

sion cancels their licences. With the help of law enforcers, BTRC raided establishments of the five operators headquarters and found hard evidence of their VoIP related operations including equipment that are used for VoIP operation.

2 boats capsize

Of the missing, 19 were identified. They are Sharmin, 4 Abdul Barik, 70, Anwara Begum, 27, Azmat Ali, 50 Nurchan Begum, 35, Dween Islam, 7, Tanjila, 12, Sadia Khatun, 8, Takbir Mia, 80 Tanvir, 10, Suman Mia Swadhin, Sahana Sadekunnahar, Manuara Khatun, Tanvia Begum, Tania Khatun, Asmat Ali, 50, and

Upazila Nirbahi Officer

Meanwhile, one person

went missing as a boat cap-

sized in the Dhanu at Rasulpur

of Netrakona around 9:00pm

Sabana Akhter, 25, wife of

Nazrul Islam of Rasulpur

accident happened when the

over-loaded engine boat

under Khaliajuri upazila.

capsized in strong wind.

The dead was identified as

Police and locals said the

the spot.

Tuesday.

Ambia Khatun, 32. Local lawmaker Afzal Hossain, Kishoreganj Deputy Commissioner Siddikur Rahman, Superintendent of Police Mir Rejaul Alom and

lenged the group. Mukhlesur Rahman visited was killed and three others

reporters.

Two revolvers and three rounds of bullet were recovered from the scene.

However, the victims'

No lesson learnt

FROM PAGE 16

Power Company Ltd (a venture of Summit and United fired plants for five years. Power) -- have a record of some experience and reputation. Of the remaining two, Desh Energy has previously installed a 10 MW power plant while Integral Energy, an enterprise of Orion Group, has no prior experience.

Again, Desh Energy is engaged in a legal battle with the Power Development Board (PDB). The company missed its deadline to commission a power plant as was agreed, and it turned to court to bar the PDB from collecting any penalty for the delay.

"We have initially tried to secure deals with international power companies. But except for Aggreko, our negotiations with companies like Alsthom or GE or M Power did not go well," says a member of the high-powered committee, explaining why some new companies were getting deals without any record of experience in the field.

"So, the next thing we looked for was lower power Ltd, he mentioned. tariff. It is a fact that price of power from international rental companies is much higher than that offered by local companies in the past bids. In that line we entertained proposals of companies that participated in last year's open tender for rental power. This is how Integral Energy's proposal was accepted," he said.

"Besides, we want to promote local entrepreneurship," he added.

The rental power bids in 2008 and 2009 largely failed to meet the objectives as the contractors invariably delayed project implementation by many months, inflicting heavy losses on the nation, and increasing the miseries of load shedding.

This failure is mainly attributed to selection of bidders, who proposed prices lower than those offered by international companies but did not have the knowledge, experience or equipment needed to implement such fast track projects.

According to industry insiders, rental power projects attract businessmen as there is scope for securing power tariff that is higher than that of conventional power plants.

This time the rental deals have secured power tariffs ranging between Tk 7.80 per kilowatt hour for power generated by a heavy fuel oil (HFO)-fired plant and up to Tk 14 per kilowatt hour generated by a diesel-fired plant. date.

Aggreko and Desh Energy would install three dieselfired plants to be launched within four months of signing of deals. The remaining companies would generate 300 MW power using HFO. The HFO-fired plants would have to be launched within nine months of signing of contracts. The contracts for above compensation."

diesel-fired plants would be for three years and HFO-

Executive of Integral **Energy Salman Karim admits** that his company does not have any past experience or any plant equipment in his inventory to install a 100 MW fuel oil-fired plant at Gazipur for five years. "We are looking for plant

equipment from several vendors. We have a Dutch rental power company supporting us. We believe we can deliver the plant as per the contract that has been initialled," Salman said. Chief of Summit Aziz

Khan said he has plant equipment manufactured by Wartsila ready to be shipped from Italy within a month.

"I believe that instead of going for rental power projects, the government could have easily gone for **Independent Power Projects** for the same megawatt for a period of 15 years," says Aziz Khan. The power tariff under this deal is the same as that of the Khulna Power Company

A top official of the PDB said his organisation and the power ministry were shouldering tremendous load of work to ensure that the rental power deals successfully reduce load shedding within this year. "We had little preparation for this kind of deals, so there might be some glitches," he admits.

Iranscom

FROM PAGE 1

published in certain print media on May 12 and broadcast in certain electronic media on May 11 relating to an order passed by the Hon'ble High Court Division imposing a fine of Tk 2.1 crore for the regrettable death of the news editor of the daily Sangbad in

The fine has been imposed

by the Hon'ble High Court on

Bangladesh Beverages Industries Limited, which was the Franchisee Bottler of Pepsi at that time, and is a completely separate entity from Transcom Beverages Ltd. Transcom Beverages Ltd was newly incorporated in January 2000 and took over

only the assets of Bangladesh

Beverages Industries Limited

in respect of its bottling opera-

tions of Pepsi. Transcom Beverages Ltd did not acquire and does not own any share of Bangladesh Beverages Industries Limited, which continues to be owned by its original shareholders who have been pursuing the said case over the years till

We categorically state that neither Transcom Beverages Ltd nor Pepsi has any connection whatsoever with the said order of the High Court.

It may be noted that the Hon'ble High Court in its judgment has directed Bangladesh Beverages Industries Limited to pay the

Four killed

FROM PAGE 1

and Sujon, who were arrested on April 11 in connection with the killing of the ASI and a journalist.

Rahat fired the first shot triggering the clash. At one stage, he was bullet-hit and died on the spot. His accomplices escaped the scene.

Detectives picked up Sujon from Madaripur district headquarters and Raju from Mirpur in Dhaka for their alleged involvement in the killing of ASI Shah Mizanur Rahman, 35, of Nayatola Outpost under Ramna Police

Station. The ASI was found dead in langail on May 4 this year.

Sujon and Raju told the press briefing, teamed up with Rahat they killed ATN cameraman Shafiqul Islam Mithu.

RAB'S SHOOTOUT

Suman and Alauddin were killed in another incident of gunfight with Rapid Action Battalion at Daukinagar of Gendaria around 2:00am.

A band of youths, who were to return fire. holding a meeting in a field, fired at Rab-10 officials, as the elite force personnel chal-

The officers shot back. Suman and Alauddin were caught in the line of fire and died on the spot, Senior ASP Enamul Kabir of Rab-10 told

told The Daily Star that the outlawed GMF committed three murders in the area between January and March.

family members claimed, Rab had asked Suman and Alauddin to come to Rab-10 office Saturday night over phone.

Talking to The Daily Star, Suman's mother Rabeda Begum admitted that her son was earlier involved in criminal activities.

"After serving 10 years in prison, my son was released four months ago. He was trying to get a job," Rabeda

She added, "Rab personnel arrested my son at their office after calling him out."

Alauddin's wife Yasmin Begum claimed, her husband had been an employee of Al-Mobarak Bus Service for last eight years. nurses. She also said that there

KUSHTIA SHOOTOUT

Yesterday at about 2:45am, police from Kushtia district headquarters and a team from Detective Branch jointly raided a mango orchard in Shysthipur village where a group of GMF activists were holding a meeting.

correspondent.

Sensing the presence of the

and six bombs from the place.

led these killings, he said. Six

cases were filed against Jibon

and three of those were for

killing, police said.

law enforcers, the outlaws opened fire and hurled a World Nursing Day. bomb prompting the officers She said that her government has upgraded the grade of Jibon was bullet-hit during nurses from III to II.

the exchange of gunfire and died on the spot. Jibon was from Simulia village of the more health-workers within a district, reports our Kushtia Police recovered a light gun

ASP CA Halim of Kushtia community health clinics. But later the BNP-Jamaat alliance government closed down the clinics. They claimed responsibility for the murders and Jibon

The PM said the present government is committed to fulfil the basic needs of the people and engaged in providing socio-economic security to the people.

Court orders

FROM PAGE 1

picked up his son Ansar Ali from his house and killed him in the name of crossfire.

After the hearing, the court instituted a judicial enquiry under Mahmudul Hasan.

In his report, Mahmudul Hasan said ASI Jasim Uddin of Singra Police Station filed a murder case on July 23, 2008. Jasim stated that a gang of robbers including Ansar Ali fired on a patrol team of police at Kakian forest, prompting the law enforcers to retaliate. Ansar Ali was killed in the crossfire. The judge in the report said

Ansar was actually killed under police custody and his body was dumped in Kakian forest. Natore Additional Chief

Magistrate Mohammad

Akhteruzzaman yesterday

reviewed the report and

issued the arrest warrants. Abu Bakar, the then officerin-charge of Singra Police Station, however claimed that Ansar Ali did not die in police

Natore ASP Apel Mahmud said they were yet to receive any copy of the court order.

Tk 1.5 lakh

custody.

FROM PAGE 16 As she raised a hue and cry,

locals rushed to the spot, chased the snatchers and managed to catch Ripon, 26. They gave Ripon a mass beating, recovered three

rounds of bullet from his

possession and later handed

him over to police. Two of his accomplices Mamun and Delwar managed to flee with the money firing blank shots.

Ctg city polls preparing to intensify the drives to improve law and order further, reports our staff corre-

spondent in Chittagong.

Muniruzzaman yesterday held a meeting with officials from all twelve police stations and gave them directives to this effect. The police officials were asked to remain alert so that notorious or listed criminals

now on the run cannot show up

to manipulate the polls through

CMP Commissioner Md

muscle power or violence. They were directed to launch anti-terrorism drives and recover illegal firearms in the electoral areas, a few police officials said.

nobody would be spared if found involved in violence or "We will do everything to

ensure a free, fair and peaceful

CMP commissioner said

Talking to reporters, the

election," he said. Rab-7 Commanding Officer Lt Col Sazzad Hussain said they are preparing to accelerate drives against criminals and recoverillegal firearms.

Promotion

ments on rental basis, she

Hasina has boldly proclaimed that the country's total power generation will increase to 7,000MW within this year.

Hasina said that her govern-

ment will not only provide

doctors and infrastructure but also modern medical equipments for the people so that they could get world class In this connection she mentioned that all 30-bed hospitals

at upazila level will be upgraded to 50-bed while 100-bed hospitals at district level will be upgraded to 200-250 bed hospi-She also informed that the

had already been completed and they would be appointed The premier said that her government has undertaken a plan to set up a nursing institute for higher education of the

process to appoint 3,500 nurses

will be four nursing colleges across the country. "From this college the nurses would complete graduation and compete in the world arena," she said adding that the nurses will be provided foreign

instructors. She also conveyed her good wishes to all nurses across the country as yesterday was the

Hasina said that her government will also appoint 13,500

short time to provide better healthcare services to the peo-In this connection she said that during her previous tenure, her government introduced

Govt restores

FROM PAGE 1

The move to deploy the joint force was coupled with Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan issuing an ultimatum to the striking workers to return to work by 5:00pm

today. "If the workers don't join work by the deadline, stern legal actions will be taken against them including cancellation of their work licences," said the minister at a media briefing at his ministry secretariat yesterday.

The government sent the joint contingent of the armed forces, police, Rab, and coast guard to Narayanganj, as an emergency measure to unload the moored tanker, for replenishing the dried up Godnail depot of Padma Oil, the supplier of aviation fuel.

Due to the exhaustion of jet fuel stock at Godnail, the civil aviation authority earlier issued a "NOTAM" [notice to air men] asking all pilots not to refuel their aircraft at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (SIA) till Friday.

Two flights of Saudi Arabian Airlines, bound for Riyadh and Jeddah, were cancelled vesterday at SIA due to the fuel crisis.

Meanwhile, other airliners which have been refuelling at Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport in Kolkata expressed concerns to the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) high officials about the crisis. Talking to The Daily Star, a

Padma Oil official said with the move to unload fuel with the joint force from the tanker, and to transport more jet fuel by road from Chittagong by 50 tank lorries, will hopefully resolve the crisis today, creating an opportunity for CAAB to withdraw the NOTAM. Our Narayanganj corre-

spondent reported that Energy Adviser Toufiq-e-Ilahi, Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan, State Minister for Power Enamul Haq, and State Minister for Labour and Manpower Monnuzan Sufian rushed to Godnail yesterday morning to ensure that Padma Oil could unload jet fuel from the tanker.

Bangladesh Noujan

Sramik Federation called the operations."

strike on Friday rejecting a new wage structure announced by the government for water transport workers.

In the announced structure, wages of the workers have been raised by 50 to 100 percent, fixing the minimum

wage at Tk 2,850. At yesterday's briefing, Shajahan Khan also urged launch owners to operate their vessels without any fear, saying the government will provide all necessary assistance to the owners, and if they refuse to operate their vessels, legal actions will be

taken against them as well. Terming the strike "illegal and politically motivated", he called upon the strikers to sit for a negotiation after withdrawing the strike.

Talking to the Daily Star, Vice-president of Noujan Sramik Federation Zinnat Ali Master said, "We will not withdraw the strike until unconditional release of our leaders and activists, withdrawal of cases against them, and announcement of a whole new wage structure."

Meanwhile, the country-

wide strike that has been observed partially so far, started to have a severe impact on the two sea ports. Our staff correspondent from Chittagong reported that 24 cargo vessels with a huge quantity of food grains,

outer anchorage of Chittagong Port yesterday. No lighter vessel moved for loading and unloading cargo ships, said Commodore (retd) Abu Zaher Nizam, executive director of Water Transport

other essential commodities,

and cement clinker

remained stranded at the

Coordination Cell. However, most of the launches scheduled to depart from Sadarghat terminal in the capital yesterday departed on time, said the terminal's Senior Deputy Director (Traffic)

Mohammad Ali Siddique. Badiuzzaman Badal, senior vice-president of Bangladesh Inland Waterways (Passenger Carriers) Association said, "We've been operating with reserved fuel. If the situation continues, and we don't get fresh supply of fuel tomorrow, the launch owners will have no choice, but to stop

Review on MPO

FROM PAGE 16 listing the institutions, "said a delayed once again. The cursource who is involved in the

He claimed that they had followed the MPO rules and directions of the prime minister to make the list. The education ministry

vesterday received over 100

letters of demand order (DO)

soon after the announcement of incorporation of new educational institutions in the MPC list, sources at the ministry said. In addition, at least 80 ruling party lawmakers yesterday gave their opinion on MPO listing to the prime

Alauddin Ahmed, highly placed sources said. Most of the lawmakers alleged that the MPO listing was not done in a 'proper way' and their recommendations were ignored in most of the cases, said some lawmakers

minister's Education Adviser

wishing not be named. Even some lawmakers alleged that the institutions, which have no government approval, were included in the new MPO list, according to the

Some others who me Alauddin said there should be "a check and balance" in giving MPO instead of giving a bulk of institutions to a particular area in a fiscal year. The whole process will take

some days and a fresh list will be submitted to the prime minister from the adviser's office at the end of this month, said sources at the Prime Minister's Office. They also said no new demand order letter of the

lawmakers were taken into a distribution date for each consideration for MPO listing rather their earlier placed DO letters are being scrutinised. "We are getting opinion from lawmakers and we are reviewing those," a top official

at the adviser's office told The Daily Star seeking anonymity. Teachers and employees of many newly MPO listed institutions expressed their concern, as they might be

excluded from the process.

In 2005, all 187 ICAO mem-

The MPO listing could be rent fiscal year will end within one and a half months. The allocation for the MPO might return if it is not started by this

time, they said.

FROM PAGE 16 MRPs on April 1, first day for submitting applications, will receive their new passports from the Department of Immigration and Passport

(DIP) at Agargaon today during office hours. "Around 50 MRPs will be handed over to the applicants today [Thursday] and the process will continue since then," said Noor A Alam Chowdhury, director of Data Edge Ltd, a Bangladeshi company introducing the MRPs in

based corporation called IRIS Berhad. About 15,000 citizens have applied for the new passport so far, of which, several hundred MRPs are ready for distribu-

joint venture with a Malaysia-

The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) has already approved standard of the MRPs, including its security features. The passports were sent to different foreign missions home and abroad following ICAO's endorsement.

tion, he added.

Minister to inaugurate the distribution, but due to the PM's busy schedule she would formally inaugurate the distribution on June 2. Abdul Mabud, director general of DIP, said, "During

enrolment, we usually provide

passport and the applicants are

The DIP wanted the Prime

required to collect their passports on that date." Applications are currently accepted in 10 offices across the country but the MRPs are produced only at the Dhaka office at Agargaon.

IRIS will work in Bangladesh for three years to implement the project worth Tk 526 crore to introduce MRP as well as machine readable visas (MRV).

Some of them said they have been facing extreme bers agreed to switch to MRPs by April 1, 2010. The handwritten passports however will remain valid until the expiry dates mentioned therein.

financial constraints due to suspension of MPO for long and it would be tough to survive if they are excluded now.