Keep faith in law men, arrest soon

Shahara on Sagar-

Runi murder STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Shahara Khatun yesterday urged all to have faith in the members of law enforcement agencies who she said would soon arrest the killers of journalist couple Sagar Sarwar and Meherun Runi.

"It's my promise to you as the home minister," she told newsmen at a meeting at Dhaka Reporters Unity in the capital.

The minister claimed that the law enforcement agencies did not fail to probe any cases during the tenure of the present government.

"They'll not fail this time too. We'll get a result soon,' she said without elaborating on the progress made in the investigation into the gruesome murder of the young couple in early February.

Besides this case, Shahara said the government had already asked the law enforcement agencies to investigate all the cases filed for killing and torturing journalists in the last two decades.

Sagar, news editor of private TV station Maasranga, and his wife Runi, a senior reporter of another TV channel ATN Bangla, were killed in the small hours on February 11 at their rented apartment in the capital's West Rajabazar.

Detective Branch of police started probing the murders. But frustrated by its failure to identify the killer, the High Court on April 18 ordered shifting of the case to the Rapid Action Battalion. Still, there is no result of the investigation.

The case has recently been included as a sensational one under the home ministry's monitoring cell.

The discussion meeting on implementation of law was organised by National Young Generation.

Additional Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Haque, General Secretary of Dhaka University Teachers' Association Prof Wahiduzzaman Chan General Secretary of Dhaka Union of Journalists Shaban Mahmud also spoke at the

BNP slates

FROM PAGE 20

Speaking to journalists in London, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Friday said her government was working to ensure free, fair and neutral polls in future and the next general election will be held following other democratic countries as models.

Rejecting the prime minister's stance, Fakhrul said the opposition parties will not participate in any election under a political government and such election will not be allowed to be

The government wants chaos in the country, complained Fakhrul, but the BNP wants to see a peaceful handover of power and the next election held under a

neutral administration. He vowed to wage a tougher movement after the Eid-ul-Fitr to compel the government to restore the

tion to ensure a free and fair

election. Otherwise, you will

have to face dire conse-

quences. Agitation will get

He also censured the

government for terming

former communications

minister Syed Abul Hossain

"a patriot." "Such remarks

[made by the premier]

would only inspire the cor-

The Padma bridge loan

agreement with the World

Bank would not have been

cancelled, had Abul resigned

nine months ago, men-

The World Bank in

September last year had

suspended its \$1.2 billion

credit for the \$2.97 billion

Padma bridge project mak-

ing allegation of corruption.

cancelled the funding last

tioned the BNP leader.

rupt persons."

month.

in the week. caretaker government sys-"You still have time. Please amend the constitu-

tougher day by day after the major cities. Eid," he warned the govern-

try spokesman Alexander Lukashevich said Moscow would not cooperate with a new round of EU sanctions against Syria.

"We will not consider requests and give consent to under the Russian flag, nor to

FROM PAGE 20

Hospital where he was added.

Khorshed's mother lodged a general diary in this connection.

The lead financier Station, aftervisiting the spot.

UN calls

FROM PAGE 1

The agency said most of those displaced are living in camps and more tents are being airlifted in to help them.

The latest violence in Rakhine state began in May when a Buddhist ethnic Rakhine woman was raped and murdered by three Muslims.

On 3 June, an unidentified mob killed 10 Muslims.

Pillay's office said that since then at least 78 people have been killed in ensuing violence but unofficial estimates are higher.

"We have been receiving a stream of reports from independent sources alleging discriminatory and arbitrary responses by security forces, and even their instigation of and involvement in clashes," Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said. "Reports indicate that the initial swift response of the authorities to the communal violence may have turned into a crackdown targeting Muslims, in particular members of the Rohingva community."

She welcomed a government decision to allow a UN envoy access to Rakhine recently Rakhine state.

state next week, but said it was "no substitute for a fully-fledged independent investigation".

The UNHCR said that about 80,000 people had been displaced in and around the towns of Sittwe

Spokesman Andrej Mahecic said that many were too scared to return home while others were being prevented from earning a living.

Muslims tell UNHCR staff

recently called for laws to protect the rights of ethnic

parliament, she said such laws were important for Myanmar to become a truly democratic nation of mutual respect. Myanmar has undergone

a series of political reforms initiated by the militarybacked government.

Syria army

all-out civil war.

intervene as quickly as posing that failure to do so

At least 29 people were Human Rights said, contributing to a figure of at least 90

The watchdog said more than 20,000 people, the majority civilians, have now died since the uprising against President Bashar al-Assad's regime erupted in March 2011.

uprising are taking place in several neighbourhoods," the Observatory's Rami Abdel Rahman said.

While the rebels' small arms and rocket-propelled grenades are little match for the heavy armour of Assad's forces, Abdel Rahman said "the army has not made any progress since the morning,

An AFP correspondent in Aleppo said rebels echoed the Observatory claim that loyalists had not advanced, but put the number of tanks lost at 10.

Official news agency SANA reported fighting in the Furgan district where "a terrorist group was terrorising

moved to reassert its authority

casualties were likely to be

ernment would stand by

Meanwhile, foreign minis-

Construction

The construction site has rash driving, tendency for

and Maungdaw.

"Some displaced

they would also like to go home to resume work, but fear for their safety," he said. Myanmar Opposition Leader Aung San Suu Kyi

minority groups. In her first statement in

But some parts of the country are still hit by conflict and unrest, most

FROM PAGE 1

"The role of the countries of the Security Council is to sible," he said, specifically addressing Damascus allies Russia and China and warnwould mean "chaos and civil

killed in the assault so far, the Syrian Observatory for people nationwide.

"The fiercest clashes of the

and even lost five tanks."

An activist calling himself Amer said "there are thousands of people in the streets fleeing the bombardment. They're being terrorised by helicopter gunships flying at low altitude. There's a large number of civilians who have taken refuge in public parks."

residents."

Pro-government daily Al-Watan had warned the "mother of all battles" loomed in Aleppo as the government after recapturing rebel-held districts of Damascus earlier

Both sides acknowledged

Russia warned a "tragedy was looming but said it was unrealistic to expect the govwhen rebels were occupying

the search of ships sailing the use of other restrictive

declared dead, Habibur

no safety measures for workers, said Abu Sayeed, subinspector of Khilgaon Police

measures," he said.

Turkey, which has given refuge to defecting army officers who have formed the kernel of the FSA, warned it could "not remain an observer" as violence raged

across its southern border. "We must do what we can together in the United Nations Security Council, and also in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the Arab League, to make sure that we can make some important progress in trying to avert this appalling situation," said Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Deadly 50km

FROM PAGE 20 plying the route for 25 years.

"Buses and lorries have to follow the maximum speed limit of 80 km/h and 60 km/h respectively, but the drivers do not follow the speed limit," Humayun Kabir, officer-incharge at Baro Awlia Highway Police Camp in Sitakunda,

toldThe Daily Star. Twenty-five cases were recorded in connection with the road crashes in the last five months. About 3,000 cases were lodged against drivers bringing unfit vehicles on the

highway, he noted. Many accidents go unreported as the families of the victims and transport owners settle the issue between them-

Humayun, however, rejected complaints that Highway Police neither check speed limits of vehicles nor monitor traffic regularly. "We use modern technology to track movement of vehicles on the highway, if any of those exceed the speed limit. Our members at highway check posts also check for drinkdriving and fake driving licen-

Contacted, traffic engineering expert Subhas Barua said in a country like ours, there should be a three metre

shoulder on the side of a road. The four lane Dhaka-Chittagong highway project, he suggested, should include road divider, overpass and underpass to avoid road

crashes. According to the statistics of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, about 14 lakh vehicles ply across the country, which require at least 28 lakh skilled drivers. But only 9.60 lakh drivers have valid driving licences, while around 18.40 lakh more are unskilled drivers without any valid licence.

Du Li won at Athens 2004. Mrinal Chowdhury, presi-Bogackla dropped her dent of Bangladesh Road rank to third after the ninth Transport Workers shot, however her last shot (in which she scored 10.8) Federation (east zone) said the transport workers, espelifted her to the silver medal cially drivers, cannot evade position. She finished on responsibility for the acci-502.2 points. dents and casualties on the Yu clinched bronze with a highways.

"We have already con-

ducted a research on the issue

and identified 12 problems

with the drivers including

traffic rules, and drug addic-

tion," he mentioned.

total score of 501.5 points. She was second after the ninth shot but dropped her rank with her last shot (9.6). Five shooters finished at 397 points after the 40-shot

qualification rounds. A five-way shoot-off (five shots) decided the last four qualifiers.

overtaking, inexperience, lack of training and knowledge of

Rising noise pollution

Mixed areas

Commercial areas

FROM PAGE 1

Mobs kill

assistant sub-inspector

(ASI) of Trishal Police

Station, said the gang of 10

thieves had stolen two

transformers from Kanhar

and Bhatiapara areas of the

upazila. On their way to

Baliapara by a truck, they

were intercepted by a team

of patrol police as two more

transformers had recently

been stolen in the area and

police were cheking almost

every truck plying the area

pelted the law enforcers

with brick chips and kept

speeding away with the

truck. The patrol team then

began to chase the truck,

next check post barricaded

the road. This time the law

enforcers fired eight bullets

in the air to warn the gang,

said the ASI, adding that the

gunshots locals had come

out from all around, chased

the fleeing thieves and

managed to catch them,

said Firoz Talukder, officer-

in-charge (OC) of Trishal

police, adding that the

villagers beat the thieves up

leaving two dead on the

spot and the rest injured.

The driver of the truck,

however, managed to

bodies and rushed the

injured to the upazila health

complex where two of the

gang members succumbed

to their injuries, the OC

thieves -- Hasan, 24, Faruk,

38, Rana, 28, and Milon, 25 -

to police station while two

were undergoing treatment

and recovered the trans-

formers from the spot, the

death an alleged cow thief

Babu, 45, was of Raipur

village of Shahjadpur

upazila in Sirajganj, reports

our Kushtia correspondent.

plice Rustom had allegedly

stolen a cow of one Farid

Mollah of Cheuria village

some time before the sun-

rise, said police quoting

around 6:00am, after wait-

ing for a good scope, villag-

ers surrounded the two and

beat them up mercilessly,

leaving Babu dead on the

spot, said Abdur Razzak,

officer-in-charge of

Kumarkhali Police Station,

adding that Rustom had

been admitted to Kushtia

hopeful Bangladeshi contin-

gent who had hoped that

Ratna's two-month training

course in England prior to

the Olympics would have

helped her achieve some-

thing substantial. She had

been excelling at practice

scoring an average of 398,

but it seemed like the pres-

sure of the Olympics got the

better of her and she crum-

rifle shooter Yi Siling, mak-

ing her the first gold medal-

list of London 2012. Sylwia

Bogacka took silver and Yi's

compatriot Yu Dan won

Bogacka and Yi started a

fierce battle for the gold,

both scoring 10.8 out of

possible 10.9 in the first shot.

event, cemented her top

position and grabbed the

title with her last two shots

(10.3 and 10.5) finishing on a

total of 502.9 points. This is

the second gold for China in

this event at the Games after

Yi, the world No.1 in this

The top two qualifiers

Gold went to China's ace

bled at the big stage.

bronze.

General Hospital.

Shooting

As they were fleeing

locals as saying.

Babu with his accom-

and injured his accomplice.

Police seized the truck

In Kushtia, a mob beat to

Deceased Sukur Ali alias

at the health complex.

OC said.

They took four of the

Police recovered the

escape.

Meanwhile, hearing the

move made the truck stop.

Informed, police of the

Spotted, the gang had

to arrest the thieves.

said the ASI.

FROM PAGE 1

educational institutes and offices. The rules do not allow use of brick crushers within a 500-metre radius of a residential area. Taking prior permission is mandatory for using loudspeakers.

The law has provisions for punishing the first-time offender by a maximum of one month's jail or Tk 5,000 in fine or both. The punishment for a second-time rule breaker is six months in jail at most or Tk 10,000 in fine or both.

But thanks to a slack enforcement of the law, offenders are rarely brought to

According to the noise control guidelines, the permissible level in the silent zones (100 metres around hospitals, educational institutions, courts and offices) is 40 decibels at night and 50 decibels during daytime. It is 45 decibels at night and 55 decibels during the day in residential areas and 50 and 60 decibels respectively in mixed

In commercial areas, the limit is 60 decibels at night and 70 decibels during the day and 70 and 75 for industrial

The DoE survey -- done at 12 major points between 11:00am and 1:00pm -- found the maximum sound level at 90 decibels while the minimumwas at 77 decibels.

The areas covered in the survey are Mirpur-10, Farmgate, Bijoy Sarani, the road in front of the Prime Minister's Office, Mohakhali, Kuril Biswa Road, Biman Bandar Rail Station, Banani, Kanchpur Bridge, Gulistan, Sayedabad and Jatrabari.

Medical experts say noise pollution causes headache and irritation that in turn make people suffer from

PERMISSIBLE SOUND LEVEL SOUND LEVEL UNIT (DB) **AREAS** DAY NIGHT 40 Silent zones 55 45 Residential areas

70

city

75 **Industrial areas** Panthapath was 104 decibels depression and anxiety. Excessive sound also interferes with attention. Continuous exposure to sound pollution increases the pace of heartbeats and the risk

of cardiac arrest. Lelin Chowdhury, chairman of Health and Hope Hospital, says sound pollution in the long term reduces hearing ability and increases secretion of stress hormone, which leads to a rise in blood pressure.

In addition, it makes people intolerant, making them vulnerable to psychological disorders.

Children suffer the most from hearing losses due to noise pollution and their mental development gets hampered. Noise pollution can also cause miscarriages and premature births.

"There is no count of the affected people, but the number is rising day by day," said Lelin, a specialist in preventive medicine. Work for Better

Bangladesh (WBB) Trust, an environmental organisation, in a survey between March and April last year found the maximum sound level in the capital's silent zones to be 104 decibels. According to the trust, the

maximum sound level in front of Square Hospital at

its forged bank statements

than the NCC Bank actually

used. Padakhep produced

falsified bank statements and

provided those to Save the

Children in order to back the

expenditures, the report says.

copies of the genuine and fake

banks account numbers. It

drew a comparison that

proved bank statements

provided by Padakhep and

those of NCC Bank were not

the same. The amounts and

dates of fund withdrawals

were also different in the

genuine and fake bank state-

versions of bank documents

provided by Padakhep to

senior NCC Bank officials who

confirmed that the state-

ments were not issued by the

bank. However, the probe

body did not find evidence of

the practice in DBB Bank

between the false bank state-

ments and supporting docu-

mentation, Padakhep cre-

ated, produced and utilised

extensive and elaborate false

documentation to support

fabricated bank statements,

and conceal the actual nature

reflected the transactions in

placed an accounting journal

page and the corresponding

genuine and fraudulence

bank statements. A transac-

tion of Tk 61,700 for a work-

shop described in the

accounting journal appeared

in both genuine and false

statements, but a withdrawal

of Tk 35,000 was only in the

amount of Tk 35,000 had

never actually been with-

The OIG team said the

Padakhep has been work-

ing in the fields of micro-

credit, education, health,

agriculture and environment

for 25 years with funds from

various international donors.

At present, it is running 32

projects all over Bangladesh.

VERSIONS OF PADAKHEP

false bank statement.

drawn.

The accounting journals

The OIG in its report

of its expenditures.

the forged statements.

To maintain consistency

The OIG team showed the

ments.

accounts.

The report used scanned

between 9:50am and 9:55am on April 21. It was 103 near New Model University College between 12:00noon and 12:05pm on the same day. So far this year, the DoE has conducted about 60 drives

50

60

70

against sound polluters and realised more than Tk 1 crore in fine, but could hardly bring about any change. Improving the situation requires more drives but the department cannot do so

owing to lack of manpower says DoE (enforcement) Director Munir Chowdhury.

It is also the duty of the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority and the traffic police to check noise pollution by drivers, he adds.

In 2005, the WBB Trust conducted a survey among 1,000 Dhaka city students, only to find 60 to 70 percent of them had difficulties concentrating and suffered from headaches because of noise pollution.

Ninety percent of them said their studies were disrupted by a blaring of horns.

Seven years have passed since. The magnitude of the pollution must have increased manifold by now as both construction work and number of vehicles have increased, medical experts

NGO pockets different account numbers on

The Global Fund, which so far has provided \$82 million to ministries and NGOs in Bangladesh to tackle the deadly diseases, said the misappropriated amount might be even more. The report recommended recovering the loss from Padakhep.

The Global Fund, an international financing institution, has so far committed \$22.6 billion in 150 countries to support large-scale prevention, treatment and care programmes. The report reads Padakhep

made significant efforts to conceal the fund diversion by fraudulently maintaining manufactured records to justify the withdrawals that never actually happened. The fabricated papers include false bank statements

and cheques, accounting journals in fictitious programmes and activities and invoices for made-up purchases. "Vendors who allegedly

provided goods and services under the programme also confirmed in several instances that the bids, invoices, and cheques bearing their companies' names were not authentic and that the vendors never provided the goods or services and they never received the funds, explains the report, prepared after a year-long investigation by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) of The Global

Fund. Exposure of some financial irregularities of Padakhep in two AIDS prevention projects financed by The Global Fund in mid-2009 led the donor into

conducting the investigation. Save the Children, a globally active NGO and also the principal recipient of The Global Fund money, had appointed Padakhep as the sub-recipient. It found irregularities while monitoring the

project implementations. Save the Children ended its contracts with Padakhep on November 24 last year. Padakhep challenged the

contract termination and is

now in a legal battle with Save

the Children. It even claimed

\$14.23m in damages. Terming the report one-sided, According to the report, Padakhep Executive Director Padakhep held its funds with Iqbal Ahammed said Save the NCC Bank between Children, being the principal November 2004 and recipient of the fund, was December 2009. Later, it equally responsible if anymoved its accounts to Dutch thing happened since it Bangla Bank. supervised, monitored and

audited the project activities. The OIG investigation team found that Padakhep "Padakhep can't do anyhad concealed the genuine thing through bypassing Save bank statements maintained the Children and its staff. If at the NCC bank and instead created and produced its own versions of statements, which were in fact fictitious. The NGO often reported

anything happened then that should have been come out at the time of the happening, but Save the Children had no objection to our activities HIV/AIDS.

then," he said, accusing the OIG of not taking and including its comments in the Asked how he could deny

the proof of forgery and fraud ulence to conceal a misappropriation of funds, Iqbal Ahammed said that while many points of the report were not correct, they needed to verify the images and the proof used in the report.

"Padakhep is going to challenge the report. We have serious comments on the report, but will not give that since the matter is now before a tribunal," he told The Daily Star.

REACTION OF SAVE THE CHILDREN

The OIG report clearly establishes that Padakhep has misappropriated not less than \$1.89 million of donor funds intended to fight the scourge of HIV and AIDS in Bangladesh, said its Country Director Michael McGrath

through an email. He said the report was the result of more than a year of intensive investigation involving discussions not only with Padakhep and its bank, but also with health ministry officials and principal and sub-recipients of The Global Fund grants.

"The evidence is overwhelming. Padakhep has been provided with an opportunity to comment on the draft report. If the OIG did not incorporate the changes requested by Padakhep, I can only assume that it was because they were not convinced as to the accuracy or truthfulness of the information provided by Padakhep,

said McGrath. He termed Padakhep's claim that the principal recipient shared equal culpability for the fraud as absolutely

"outrageous". "If a criminal is caught by the police and charged with serious crimes, would we say that the police were equally responsible for the crimes committed, because it took them some time to identify the culprit and assemble the evidence?"

The only reason why Padakhep is seeking to prevent public discussion of the OIG report is that they do not want the people, the government and the donors to know the details of the donor fund misappropriation which they have been responsible for over an extended period of

Instead of taking action against the NGO, the health ministry has recommended that Padakhep undertake a Tk 24 crore project fighting

Restaurant vandalised in city over iftar bill

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students of Teachers' Training College Dhaka clashed with the staff of Malancha Restaurant at the city's Elephant Road last night over payment of iftar bill, leaving at least five injured.

A traffic sergeant who was present at that time told The Daily Star that some seven to eight students got into a fight with the restaurant staff over iftar bill. They tried to evade paying the entire amount.

"At one stage of the altercation, two to three students got injured and left the scene with their college mates," the traffic man added wishing anonymity.

After half an hour, some 50 students attacked the restaurant. They hurled several cocktails. They also vandalised the restaurant, leaving some staff injured.

Saudi govt FROM PAGE 20 Saudi diplomat.

Ali was killed in the capital's Gulshan four months According to a statement

released by the Saudi embassy

in Dhaka, Prince Saud said that KSA had full confidence in the ability of the concerned authorities of Bangladesh to track down the criminals. The Saudi government hopes that the criminals will

receive apt punishment, the

minister said in the state-

ment. Adviser Moshiur's

FROM PAGE 20 in the project. Then he became the integrity adviser in the project, but now he is not saying anything about the bank's loan cancellation or the project's future," said

He suggested that the

government form a national

Anu Muhammad

inquiry commission to look into the donor-funded projects and find out if they really aid the country's development. Economist MM Akash said the government could

manage the required funds from part of the remittance and issuing sovereign bonds on the international market. He said 60 percent (or \$1.8 billion) of the estimated cost of the bridge -- \$2.97 billion -- will have to be

spent in foreign currency.

The amount can be taken

from the \$12 billion a year

remittance from expatriate

Bangladeshi workers, he added. Kazi Mohammad Shish, former chief engineer of WASA, presided over the seminar, also addressed by AMM Shafiqullah, former vice-chancellor of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, and Engineer

Sheikh Md Shahidullah. Meanwhile, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon at a roundtable in the city yesterday said, "The World Bank has bluffed people by cancelling its loan, and we should construct the bridge on our own to uphold our self-respect."

The roundtable titled "Padma bridge, World Bank and Bangladesh: Form a Massive Uprising", organised by his party was held its office.

Menon urged the government to disclose WB graft issues in parliament, and hold talks with all political parties to reach a consensus on building the bridge with local funds.

Criticising media reports

on Abul Hossain's resignation as information and communication technology minister, Menon said it seemed to have sided with the WB. Columnist Syed Abul

Maksud said construction of Padma bridge is now a prestige issue for the nation and, the opposition should make constructive observations in this regard. He demanded a full and fair investigation into the corruption charges made by the WB.

Manzurul Ahsan Khan, president of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, also spoke at the roundtable.