Hasina blames govt

## **US** dismisses growing opposition to Iraq war

terrorizing the terrorists will not work."

told President Bush in a telephone call

the key to future action on Iraq would

be found on Monday, when UN arms

inspectors are to present their findings

two months searching for evidence of

nuclear, chemical and biological arms

that Iraq denies having. They have

already said they need more time to

Gerhard Schroeder vowed he and

French President Jacques Chirac

would do all they could to avert war.

"War may never be considered

China said its position was "ex-

Washington accuses Iragi

resident Saddam Hussein of hiding

banned weapons since the 1991 Gulf

War and has threatened to attack if

Baghdad does not disarm in line with

12 years of UN resolutions, the last of

Couchepin spelled out what he said

was the majority view in western Europe that war should be a last resort

and would have long-term

destabilizing effects on the Middle

Fleischer dismissed France and

Germany's opposition saying it was

"their prerogative ... to be on the

might support a US-led strike on Iraq

included Britain, Italy, Spain, eastern

European nations and Australia, which

dispatched a troop ship toward the

Gulf on Thursday in case they are

Richard Armitage, on a trip to Russia,

said Washington did not believe it

needed a second Security Council

resolution before taking military action.

authority to move now without a

second resolution," he told Ekho

Moskvy radio. But he added: "It is

appropriate for me to say that

President Bush has made no decision

members said it was an open ques-

continued their troop buildup in the

Gulf, Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia,

Jordan and Syria - along with regional

heavyweight Egypt, issued a joint

declaration urging Iraq to cooperate

Baghdad that this is about the region,

not just about Iraq," Jordanian Foreign

Minister Marwan al-Muashar said

"This is not a matter of being bullied by

\$30 billion aid package for Israel,

Jordan and Turkey to cushion the

requests for military help in any attack.

The United States is looking to Turkey

for use of its air bases and frontiers in

the event of military action, especially

opposes war but may be hard pressed

helicopter to a research facility in

northern Iraq for one of nine inspec-

tions Thursday, including visits to food

stores, a fiberglass plant, a missile

complex and a university.

In Iraq, UN inspectors flew by

to deny help to its closest NATO ally.

Iraq urged Turkev to reject US

US officials discussed a possible

"We are sending a strong signal to

with the United Nations

the United States.'

shock of war.

However, other Security Council

As the United States and Britain

about the use of military force."

"We believe there is sufficient

US Deputy Secretary of State

Fleischer said other countries that

sideline" if they so chose.

White House spokesman Ari

In Davos, Swiss President Pascal

m passed in November.

In Berlin, German Chancellor

The weapons experts have spent

so far to the Security Council.

finish their work.

unavoidable," he said.

emely close" to France's.

Russian President Vladimir Putin

REUTERS, Washington/Baghdad

The White House confronted unconvinced allies in trying to promote its view that Iraq continues to hide banned weapons and should face military action, while Middle Eastern neighbors urged Baghdad to cooperate and avoid war. On Thursday, Washington shrugged off vocal opposition to what some allies see as a rush to war as China and Russia joined France, Germany and Canada in urging the United States to give UN weapons inspectors more time in Iraq.

Secretary of State Colin Powell said Washington would find other supporters if it decided to go to war.

"I don't think we'll have to worry about going it alone," Powell said in Washington after talks with Britain's supportive Foreign Secretary Jack Straw. He said Washington had made no decision on whether to seek an additional UN resolution to authorize use of force to disarm Baghdad.

Other US officials make clear they see no need for the declaration -- and given the French, Russian and Chinese veto powers on the Security Council, they are unlikely to get one. The other two veto-wielding members, the United States and its strongest ally Britain, are now a minority on the council

Amid talk of a rift in ties, Germany and France angrily rejected US criticism that they are isolated in Europe in their effort to avoid the use of force against Baghdad.

German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer bluntly told Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to "cool down" his rhetoric and took umbrage at Rumsfeld's dismissal of France and Germany's views as that of "old

British Prime Minister Tony Blair, under attack for backing the US campaign against Iraq, on Thursday added a second day to his meeting next week with President Bush, now arriving on Thursday

Working from the other side to halt the momentum to war, five Middle East neighbors of Iraq and Egypt, urged Baghdad to take a "more active approach" to comply with the UN weapons inspections to avoid a potentially destabilizing conflict.

The prospect of war overshadowed discussion of economics at the Davos, Switzerland, gathering of the global economic and political elite. Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad jolted the opening session, telling the United States that "out-

## Blast kills 7 at Peru military base

REUTERS, Lima

A strong explosion killed seven military personnel and injured dozens at a base where arms were stored in the city of Tumbes in northern Peru on Thursday, officials

"This regrettable accident has know. There are seven dead and around 80 wounded," President Alejandro Toledo told Redio Programas del Peru from Davos. Switzerland, where he had arrived to attend the World Economic Forum.

Carlos Roque, adviser to the city's top police official, told Reuters by telephone from Tumbes that the dead included two officers and five soldiers "The explosion was heard

throughout the city, the roofs of buildings close by blew off, windows shattered and people ran terrified from their homes." Roque said.

He said 48 military personnel and civilians were injured, and four

of them were in a serious condition. Toledo said the situation was under control and that the cause of the blast at the El Tablazo base was

police refused to launch any opera-

tion to rescue the fishermen on the

plea of their Union Parishad election

Sundarbans on Wednesday night

taking permission from the Forest

Department on Thursday morning.

No sooner had they reached

Malancha river by boats, the attack

by an organised gang of Indian

Nine of the kidnapped have so

far been identified. They are Azizz

(27), Habibur (30), Rahamat (28),

Satter (27), Rashid Morol (35) of

Munshiganj village and Zehar Ali

(40), Rustam Ali (48), Insar Ali (32)

and Abdur Rahman (36) of

Harinager village of Shyamnagar

are Ruhul Amin (25), Jamaluddin

(29), Rajab Ali (30), Sabur Morol

(34), Sattar Morol (30) and Sadiqul

Those who managed to escape

dead bodies thereafter.

pirates came.

upazila.

under investigation. Officials in Tumbes said they did not fear another explosion. Tumbes, located 16 miles (25-

km) from Peru's border with (DMCH) morgue for autopsy. A case was filed with the Gulshan Ecuador, has traditionally hosted a strong military presence due to a decades-long border dispute that ended with a peace accord between

## the two neighbors in 1998. FROM PAGE 12 30 fishermen

tolerated." Bridges said.

The Indian pirates are sending messages for payment of the ranconcerned about its image on the som within the deadline or to receive global stage and did not want to be en as among a minority. Sixty fisherman went to the

"It has probably weighed up the way in which other countries are beginning to think (about Irag) and has decided it wants to be on the side of the majority and not the minority," he said

in the Security Council are becoming more cautious and China wants to be seen with that group. A diplomat in Beijing closely

following developments saw a nilar position in Chinese policy. "China has always insisted on a

peaceful solution but it has never been strong and assertive like France and Germany." he said.

"In my opinion this seems to be a case of bandwagoning, but it was also an opportunity for China to come out of its shell and distance itself from Washington."



Students gather on the Dhaka University campus for the admission test of Honours under Gha unit yesterday.

### Push-in bid FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh through Raghunathpur, Putkhali and Daulatpur borders in

Sharsha upazila.

The sources said these people including women, children and old persons are passing days in great hardship without food and warm clothes in biting cold

Over 200 old men and women and minor children have fallen sick due to biting cold and lack of food. Appeals to save their lives from such inhuman torture have so far gone unheeded by BSF personnel. The Indian push-in attempts have

also created anger among people of border villages in Sharsha and Benapole. The villagers are "prepared to assist BDR jawans in resisting BSF push-in attempts", sources said.

Our Staff Correspondent in Dhaka tried to contact the Director General (DG) of BDR and its Director, Operation and Planning (DOT) over telephone. When contacted at the residence of the DG, a staff advised him to contact the DOT to know anything about the matter. But none picked up the telephone at his office and residence last night.

Meanwhile, import-export activities through Benapole is suspended again since Wednesday following murder of Indian truck driver Santosh by BSF Santosh, an inhabitant of Gandhi Palli at Bongaon in West Bengal, was allegedly beaten to death by BSF for refusing to pay tips.

More than 100 Bangladeshi trucks with export items are stranded at Benapole border due to a strike called by Indian Truck Owners' and Workers' Association. The strike continued till filing of this report yesterday evening.

## UP polls

accreditation cards to over two lakh poll observers and as many polling

Since his first statement at a lawand-order review meeting late last month, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Syed had sought army deployment and repeated his plea at least ten times, but to no avail.

The government is bound to comply with his decision as per constitutional provision, the CEC argued.

On the other hand, the government has questioned whether the CEC can decide on army deploy-

Apart from the EC, opposition political parties, election monitors field-level election officials and nongovernmental organisations demanded deployment of the army

## Sylhet polls

candidates is highly likely to split the alliance's vote bank, locals believe.

Although there are two other mayoral candidates from the AL --Mahmud Hossain Monju and Lutfur Rahman, the AL nominee Kamran is in a better position with a consolidated strength.

All the three major candidates Kamran, Hague and Kamal started mass-contacts and meetings to gear up for the election

February 23 has been fixed for

## RAI

team were sent on a weeklong vacation after completing the special training course on January 16. Members of the special security

outfit will carry an automatic gun and have been provided with highspeed vehicles. The RAT will basically carry out

operations like arresting criminals and then hand them over to police stations where further investigation will take place. The RAT will be divided into smaller teams and each will cover areas under the jurisdiction of two or three police stations.

The RAT head office and barracks have been set up in the city's Mohammadpur area.

Police sources said depending on the RAT's performance, another such team might be formed soon to assist the first team.

# Prices of essentials spiral Jubo League

wave that has affected production of vegetables, rice and other agricultural items, and chickens. Added to this, fuel price hike has increased transport costs, making essentials dearer, they said.

This is affecting the market prices, During a visit to Karwan Bazar,

New Market and Palashi kitchen markets yesterday, most of the vegetables were found selling at prices Tk 2 to 3 more per kiligram than that was one week ago. The traders said this is due to increase in transport cost following fuel price Bean was selling at Tk. 16 to 20,

brinjal at Tk 15 to 19, tomato at Tk 20 to 25, korolla at Tk 28 to 32, potato at Tk 10 to Tk 12, onion at Tk 10 to Tk 12 and lady's finger at Tk A standard size gourd was

size cauliflower at Tk 12 to 16 and

Mohiuddin, a retailer at Karwan Bazar, said seven to ten days ago, per kg bean was sold at Tk 12 to Tk 14, brinjal at Tk 12 to Tk 14, tomato at Tk 16 to Tk 20, lady's finger at Tk 30. A standard size gourd was sold at Tk 14 to Tk 20, a medium size cauliflower at Tk 10 to Tk 14 and cabbage at Tk 8 to Tk 10.

Eggs were selling at Tk 42 to Tk

Price of onion has however decreased to Tk 10-12 from last

At New Market and Palashi Market, price of Najirshail rice has increased to Tk 19 from Tk 18 per kg, Miniket to Tk 21 from Tk 20, apiboro to Tk 19 from Tk 17 and Irri to Tk15 from Tk13.

Jahangir Alam, a wholesaler at Palashi Market said he has to pay a trucker Tk 300 to Tk 500 more now to bring rice from northern districts.

Though the government fixed prices of Soyabean at Tk 48 per kg for retailers and Tk 39 for wholesalers, retailers are selling it at Tk 50 to Tk 55 and wholesalers at Tk 43.

private transport company said they have to spend Tk 300 more for a trip of an AC bus from Dhaka to Chittagong. For non-AC buses, the cost has increased by Tk 250. Azizul who plies a minibus on

Tk 150 a day. So he has to charge extra fare from passengers, he But operational cost of threewheelers has not increased much. Their owners are paying only Tk 25

Private car owners claim their monthly fuel cost has gone up by

Tk 300 to 500. On the other hand, the city water as WASA increased the tariff

dwellers are now paying more for by 5.5 per cent for domestic and 5 per cent for commercial consumers on January one.

FROM PAGE 12

They confirmed that unlike last year's council of Bangladesh Chhatra League where leaders were elected through direct voting. today's Jubo League congress would see no election. The new leadership would be formed through

To expedite the selection process, a meeting of its Presidium was held at the Banani residence of its outgoing chairman Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim on January 21, followed by a meeting of its central committee, held at its Bangabandhu Avenue central office on January

chairman at its fourth congress held on November 7, 1994 and continued in the post for over eight years. He relinquished the position as he

## 3 brick kilns shut down for violating environmental rules

UNB, Savar

area have been closed down at the directive of Environment and Forest Minister Shajahan Siraj, official sources said.

The minister while visiting the

## Road communication hampered in Sylhet as transport workers

UNB, Sylhet

Sources said local bus and minibus workers decided to stop plying their vehicles on the bridge protesting collection of extra toll by

## Lawyers demand

members of the joint forces by an ordinance, bypassing the constitution and without informing the Jatiya Sangsad, amounted to undermining the constitution.

Barrister Islam called upon all the members of the parliament to

human rights training for the law He said the lawyers of the coun-

try, irrespective of their party affiliations, were against the indemnity ordinance.

after an extended meeting of the Bar Council in the afternoon in which the presidents and general secretaries of all the bar councils of the country and senior lawyers of the Supreme Court took part.

They lawyers demanded repeal of all black laws including the Special Powers Act, 1974 and Sections 54 and

was behind the resolution passed recently in the European Parliament as well as discussion in the British Parliament and the US listing of Bangladesh as a "terror-risk" coun-

She said if the government considered her so powerful to have engineered all these, they should step down and let her restore the

country's good image. The AL chief alleged that the ministers were busy amassing fortune when hundreds of people are dying of cold. "People or institution is not important to them. It is the

money," she said. Earlier. Hasina placed a wreath at the plaque of Sheikh Kamal at the club premises.

Chaired by Abahani Samarthak Goshthi president Sheikh M Jahangir Alam, the function was also addressed by director-incharge of Abahani Kazi Shahed Ahmed, Jatiya Party (JP) chairman and patron of Abahani Anwar Hossain Manju, Harunur Rashid, Enam-e-Khoda Julu and Kazi Abdul

tipped for this, Jubo League sources

country are faced with destruction,"

she said. "This government lost the

West while trying to look east," she

the occasion of the 30th founding

anniversary of the leading sports

club Abahani Limited and the 25th

founding anniversary of the Abahani

Hasina is a member of Abahani,

Accusing the BNP-Jamaat

alliance government of nepotism

and politicising all the sectors,

including sports, culture, police,

navy, airforce and army, Hasina

said such "widespread nepotism

and politicisation" is the reason

behind Bangladesh's present

She called upon all concerned to

keep sports and literature above

politics and emphasised govern-

ment patronage for development in

In her speech, Hasina referred to

the government allegation that she

founded in 1973 by her younger

Samarthak Goshthi

predicament.

brother late Sheikh Kamal.

The function was organised on

selection.

Selim became Jubo League

Three brick kilns in Savar municipal

area recently directed the local administration to shut down the three brick kilns for violating envi-

# boycott use of bridge

Transport workers yesterday stopped plying of all vehicles through Sheola Bridge on Sylhet-Bianibazar road for an indefinite period.

The passengers are now using the Sheola ferry-ghat route as an alternative in absence of direct road communication through the impor-

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh to torture people to death without trial" said Barrister Amir ul Islam at a press conference and also to remain vigilant that the at the Bar Council auditorium in the atmosphere at these places is not city yesterday. He said that indemnifying the

> oppose the ordinance He demanded introduction of

The press conference was held

At the press conference, Barrister Rokonuddin Mahmud, senior lawyers Ozayer Faruk, Syed Ahmed, Abdul Baset Majumder, Tobarak Hossain, Abdus Salam Talukder, Shamsul Haq Tuku and Yusuf Hossain were present among

amendment to 167 of the CrPC

The third congress of Jubo League was held in 1986 when Mostafa Mohsin Montu succeeded Amir Hossain Amu as its chairman. After Montu was expelled from the

party, Nurul Majid Humaiyun was

acting chairman till Selim took over

was made AL Presidium member in

December last year.

Mentionably, founder chairman of Jubo League Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni, nephew of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was assassinated along with Bangabandhu on August 15, 1975.

Awami Jubo League was formed on November 11, 1973 by the then ruling Awami League at a congress at Paltan Maidan in the city to organise the country's youths and engage them in nation building activities.

## UP polls campaigner critically injured by rivals

UNB, Narsingdi

Election coordinator of a UP chairman candidate was critically iniured an attack by his rivals at Hindupara in Sadar upazila last

men led by chairman candidate Saiful Islam mercilessly beat up Badruzzaman Sarker álias Bodu Member 45 with iron rods and hockey-sticks at about 8:30pm on his way home from Narsingd

The injured, election coordinator of another chairman candidate Yusuf Khan Pintu, was admitted to Sadar Hospital. Later, he was shifted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital with severe head

Saiful Islam, accused in several cases, was released from the district jail four months back, police

## Dr Kamal

"Though the government came to power after promising that it would eliminate crime and corruption, it has failed to live up to its promise."

He said the country topped the list of the corrupt nations for two consecutive years, just for a few corrupt persons, though the majority of the people were honest and hard working. "The recent anti-crime drive with

deployment of the army proved to be a failure of the government, he said expressing doubts about whether the drive is over or still going on. " It is unfortunate that an ordinance has been promulgated to place all the activities of the joint forces above the "When an elected government

savs that it was helpless in the face of the crime wave and was forced to deploy the army, it reflected the woes of the people," said Kamal Hossain. Dr. Kamal Hossain said it was

unfortunate that a defeated autocrat was addressing public rallies in the capital when he was supposed to be in

He criticised alliance of major political parties with autocrats and war criminals. "They went for alliance with such evil forces for their own interest not for the interest of people", the eminent lawyer lamented

BGMEA election

## FROM PAGE 1 issued an order rescheduling the

election to February 25. The ministerial order led the mem-

bers of the BGMEA executive committee to convene an emergency meeting that decided on filing a writ petition with the High Court. On January 18, the court staved for two weeks the government order on deferral of the BGMEA polls.

The court also issued a rule asking the government to explain why its order should not be declared unlawful.

to holding the BGMEA election accordng to the January 26 schedule. The contesting panels are the

Sammilito Parishad led by Kazi Moniruzzaman and Anisul Huq and the Oikya Jote led by Engineer Fazlul Azim.

The court order cleared the legal bar

Businessman

FROM PAGE 12 man dead on the spot Police rushed to the spot and arrested the driver of the truck Tajul Islam, along with two day-labourers. Police also seized the truck, Dhaka

Police sent the body of Aminul to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital

China joins

against its neighbour. "By shifting its actions on Iraq it could also be sending a message to the United States that this too (North Korea) must be settled through diplomacy and in no way would military action over North Korea be

He added that China was also

"It certainly looks like the majority



Our Roving Correspondent reported from Natore earlier this week that over 20,000 chickens died in poultry farms in Rajshahi and nearby areas due to the cold wave. Poultry farm owners in Gazipur and Tongi also said thousands of chickens died in the cold.

cabbage at Tk 9 to Tk 12.

48 a dozen against Tk 33 to Tk 36 about ten days back. Price of mashur dal (lintel) is stable at last week's Tk 44 to Tk 46

week's Tk 14-16 per kg.



## Dr Kamal Hossain leads a procession under the banner of "Oikva Prochesta" demanding withdrawal of the US immigration restriction, repeal of the Joint Drive Indemnity Ordinance 2003 and protesting the price hike of essentials and demolition of

FROM PAGE 12 importance. These include places where we can feel the earth beneath our feet instead of the cold, hard concrete. Such places help us connect

with the mother earth

Today, some of the designated open spaces in the city include the Ramna Park, the Suhrawardy Udyan, the Osmani Udvan and the Sangsad Bhaban Plaza. If we take the case of Ramna Park, we'll see that this once truly beautiful tract of land with sylvan shadows and home to tall green trees is slowly but surely heading towards extinction to make room for the numerous projects by myopic town-planners. Hotel, tennis complex, mosque -- all has chipped spaces away from it. The authorities are reportedly thinking of taking away even more space from the park to accommodate new constructions. This trend of mindless expansion at the cost of the Ramna Park is a very sad aspect of the so-called modernisation that cuts off people from the nature.

number of spots in the Udvan even a few years ago are now conspicuous

Apart from the annoying phenomenon of unchecked movements of antisocial elements within the periphery of the Suhrawardy Udvan, some encourcivic spaces appears during national aging things are also noticed sometimes inside the Udyan. On weekends and holidays, it has been observed that groups of students, both male and female, sit in wide circles in some areas of the Udyan and practice recitation. Tutorial sessions are also held in some parts of the Udyan. But the once abundant seasonal flowers that bloomed on flowerbeds at a good

In the recent past, there was a great uproar about the reported government move to fell trees at the Osmany Udyan for constructing an International Conference Centre there. A large-scale agitation participated by people from all walks of life was underway protesting the government decision that threatened the environment and ecology of the metropolis.

A variety of events and activities in the metropolis have contributed to the evolution of some civic places. For example, the New Bailey Road is also called 'Natak Sarani' by some people as different cultural events including drama that have taken place in this area over the years has transformed this road into a notable civic space. But the recent construction of a 'Natya Mancha' by sacrificing a part of the open space in front of Bangabhaban has not been appreciated even by the cultural groups. The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) that took the initiative for construction of the centre has been facing criticism for the move. Another category of temporary

events. For example, we could mention the Shaheed Minar premises where cultural functions are held regularly, the fairground for the annual Bangla Academy Book Fair and the TSC of Dhaka University where various cultural fairs at different times of the year are held. These civic spaces add new dimensions to our urban culture and social life. In the interest of city-dwellers, it is

important to adopt appropriate mea-

When contacted, officials of a

Gulistan-Mirpur route in the city said enhanced fuel price has increased his operational cost by

to 30 more per day due to the fuel

## Running out of Open Space

sures to keep the existing civic spaces of the city free from all encroachments

vitiated at any time

In the process of rapid unplanned growth of the city, we have already lost many spots and traces of greenery. But a reversal of the situation is possible as the soil of our country is fertile and plants sprout without having to need much care. Given this natura blessing and with planned and coordinated efforts, we could create a green belt with an abundance of trees and thereby improve our environment.

The other ominous trend that besets the city-dwellers is the construction of buildings by filling up the lakes and other water bodies in and around the city. As open ground becomes more and more scarce every day, real estate developers are now eveing the marshlands and lakes around the city. Thus while multistoried apartment and shopping complexes keep mush-

rooming, the city's open spaces keep

on shrinking. If this trend is not immedi-

ately arrested, we will end up with a

veritable concrete jungle in the near

future. All this is going on in violation of the existing environmental laws which would not have been possible without complicity of the relevant authorities A process to save the city from an

impending environmental disaster needs to be initiated without delay.