Bush girds US for war

Voting in 129 **UPs** today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On the fifth day today, voting takes place in 129 Union Parishads involving 26 Upazilas of 24 districts. Bhola Sadar: Razapur, Parschim

Elisha, Elisha and Bapta: Patharghata upazila in Barguna: Khataltali, Charduani, Kathalia Upazila in Pirojpur: Katahlia, Saolajalai and Awarabunia. Bhandaria Upazila: Telikhali. Mothbaria Upazila: Dhanimaka.

Manda Upazila in Naogaon: Manda, Ganeshpur, Mainam, Kalikapur, Bishnupur, Bhalain, Bharsho, Kusunda, Prashadpur, Nurullabad, Kasopara, Tetulia, Paranpur and Kosob.

Dhunat Upazila: Chaukibari, Elangi, Nimgachhi, Bikashi, Goshaibari, Dhunat, Gopalnagar, Mathurapur and Bhandarbari/

Dimla Upazila in Nilphamari Khalis, Chapani, Jhunagachh Chapani, Tapakharibari and Gayabari.

Gobindaganj Upazila in Gaibandha: Harirampur, Rakhalburuz, Kochashahar, Shibpur, Shalmara, Talukkhanpur, Mahimaganj, Nokai. Gangni Upazila in Meherpur:

Bomunda, Mothmora. Mohammadpur Upazila in

Magura: Babukhali, Binodpur, Dhiga, Rajapur, Balidia, Palashbari,

Chakoria Upazila in Cox's Bazar:

Harbang, Baraitala, Koyal Bil Chirilla, Fashiakhali, Manikchhari Upazila: Batnatali, manikchhari. Lohagara Upazila: Amirabad. Barahatia, Putibila, Falaujan Adhunagar, Padua and Chanti Chandanaish Upazizla: Barkol, Borma, Knachonabad, Joara, Hashimpur, Dohazari, Topazhhari and Boiltali. Ramgati Upazila: Char

Abdullah. Kulaura Upazila in Moulvibazar: Bokshimoil, Joychandi, Kadipur, Kulaura, Fultala, Sagranal, Golabari, Jaifornagar.

Narshinghdi Sadar Upazila: Meherpara, Panchdona, Nuralpur,

Rupganj Upazila in Narayanganj: Morapara, Bolta, Golakandail, Bhelabo.

Kalkini Upazila in Madaripur: Laxmipur, Bashbari, Enaetnagar, Alinagar.

Baliakandi Upazila: Islampur, Baharpur, Nawabpur and Narua. Zazira Upazila: Conderchar, Bilashpur and Palerchar.

Nakla Upazila in Sherpur: Talki, Chanrakona, Char Astodhar. Nandail Upazila: Gangail, Achargaon, Singrail, Chandipasha, Jahnagirpur, Betagoyr, Nandail, Razjgati, Kharua, Sherpur, Moazzempur and Musuri. Sharisahbari Upazila: Shatkoya, Vatara, Kamrabad, Mohadan.

she would direct the ministry con-

cerned so that the Rajdhani

Unnayan Katripakkha (RAJUK)

take measures to make a quota for

She said that development of

human resources was possible

through education. So her govern-

ment has taken various steps for

expansion and improvement of

measures taken for female educa-

tion and said that the girls, though

advanced in many sectors, are still

Stabbed Rajbari

Alocal Jubo League leader, stabbed

by miscreants here Monday night,

succumbed to his injuries at the

Dhaka Medical College Hospital

with sharp weapons stabbed Aziz

Hossain Khan, vice president of

Jubo League ward no 6 of Rajbari

Pourasava, in front of his

Hospital and later shifted to Dhaka

Medical College Hospital where he

succumbed to his injuries early

and Jubo League leaders con-

demned the killing and demanded

arrest anybody from the court area.

arrest Zaman at any cost, as he

ing, a big contingent of police also

made an attempt to arrest Zaman

from his residence at Brahmanpara

area of the city. He was not found

4000 people was brought out in the

city Sunday afternoon in support of

While there has been progress in

The five-member IMF mission,

other areas, the banking sector

led by its Assistant Director for Asia

and the Pacific Department

Chanpen Puckahtokom, arrived in

the city on a two-week review of the

country's macroeconomy. Two

other members are expected later

Marijin Verhoiven and World Bank

Country Director Frederick 7

mission at the meeting yesterday.

Temple also joined the visiting IMF

evaluation report, which would be

the basis for future IMF lending

under the PRGF, according to

strategy paper (PRSP), which is at

its final stage, will be a prerequisite

for any assistance from the IMF and

with the central bank governor and

officials of the National Board of

Revenue (NBR) and the finance

the World Bank.

The mission will prepare an

Moreover, a poverty reduction

The IMF team will hold meeting

IMF's resident representative

A procession of around 3000 to

Earlier, at 10.00 AM in the morn-

was wanted in a number cases

The OC said there were orders to

immediate arrest of the culprits.

lo escape

FROM PAGE 12

there, police said.

IMF loans

FROM PAGE 1

remains weak.

He was rushed to Rajbari Sadar

Rajbari District Awami League

Police said miscreants equipped

lagging behind in some areas.

Jubo League

leader dies

at DMCH

Bhabanipur residence

yesterday morning.

UNB. Raibari

yesterday.

She briefly described about the

education in the country.

residential plots for the teachers.

PM: DU teachers

provosts of residential halls, newlyelected office-bearers of DU Teachers Association (DUTA) and senior professors.

Education Minister Dr Osman Farruk, state minister for education A N M Ehsanul Haq Milon, deputy minister for education Abdus Salam Pintu and Prime Minister's political secretaries -- Haris Chowdhury and M Mosaddek Ali -- were present at

The DU teachers congratulated the Prime Minister for her steps to recover the country's shattered economy, reduce poverty, improve law and order, raise standard of education and improve environment

in Dhaka city. The government has made tremendous success in those areas,

they observed. They drew the Prime Minister's attention to the existing residential problem of teachers and students and their inadequate medicare facilities

The Prime Minister said that her government would consider accommodation problem of female students of the university and take due

steps accordingly. In addition to the DU medical medicare facilities for students and teachers would be made at the nearby Dhaka Medical College

Hospital (DMCH), she told the teachers. She assured the teachers of allout cooperation to enhance research facilities in DU. It (DU) can get the equipment of Atomic Energy Centre, which has been shifted to

Savar, after talking with the ministry concerned, she said.

Responding to the demand of the teachers, the Prime Minister said

UP election

FROM PAGE 12

Our staff correspondent from Khulna reports: Polling was suspended for an hour at Bamandanga Primary School centre when an armed-group captured it. The law enforcers arrested six of them following a clash, but were forced to set them free. On Monday, voting was post-

poned following an attack on the election officers and snatching of ballot papers at a centre in Pathakatha Union in Nakla upazila

Two polling officers Abdul Malek and Mozammel Hossain were injured when the attackers beat them up and took control of the

The injured were admitted to a local health complex. Local people said a gang of over one hundred people armed with lethal weapons entered into Islamnagar Primary School centre and snatched away ballot papers and boxes. Police later recovered the snatched ballot papers and arrested four people in this connection.

In Comilla, police arrested an army personnel from a polling centre in Kashinagar UP of Chowddagram upazila. Mominul Huq, 24, a sepoy of Chittagong cantonment, presented himself as an election observer with forged documents, sources said.

In Patuakhali. barring a few stray incidents, elections in seven union parishads of sadar upazila passed off peacefully yesterday.

Trouble started during voting in Auliapur, Chhoto Bighai, Lohadia and some other polling centres Police arrested 13 people, including

a chairman candidate. In Faridour elections in six unions were held peacefully.

Zakaria new EC secy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Syed Mohammad Zakaria has been appointed secretary of the Election Commission (EC) Secretariat yesterday, EC sources said.

Zakaria has been serving as an acting secretary of the EC secretariat for past one year. EC employees welcomed the new secretary.

HC confirms Shikdar's death sentence in a murder case

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday confirmed the death sentence of Ershad Ali Shikdar, awarded by the lower court in Khaled Hossain murder case in Khulna.

A High Court bench comprising Justice AK Badrul Huq and Justice MA Hye delivered its verdict after hearing both sides.

The court, however, commuted the death sentence of Jamai Faruq and Liaqat Lashkar, awarding 7 years rigorous imprisonment.

It also reduced life term for Nasir Khan and Idris Jamai to 7 years RI. The court acquitted nine others

37 die in Kolkata FROM PAGE 12

severe burn injuries."

In the Orissa district of Baripada, where the bus originated, police superintendent Jogesh Bahadur Khurania said the conditions of 10 of the passengers were critical.

Kumar said firefighters and police rushed to the spot and pulled what bodies they could find out of the charred bus. "The injured were unconscious,

or dazed. They could not say anything about the accident," he said. 'An investigation has been nitiated to probe the accident." Police blocked traffic from the

area of the crash, which was on a national highway, preventing buses carrying office workers from reaching Kolkata, the main hub of eastern Thousands of trucks were stranded in a massive traffic jam

triggered by the accident between Kolkata and the neighbouring town of Howrah. Witnesses said a charred hulk of the bus lay on the ground hours after the crash. Police fought to prevent

hundreds of people, some of them

delayed motorists, from going by foot to the scene of the accident in morbid curiosity. The bus's starting point of Mayurbhanj, Baripada district's headquarters, lies near Similipal National Park, a rugged 2,750

square-kilometre nature spot known for tigers and elephants. It is about 200 kilometres off Kolkata. The ill-fated bus was "tourist class," or a private liner designed to

India has one of the world's highest traffic fatality rates. Crashes are blamed on low safety standards by motorists, poor maintenance of roads and chronic speeding.

offer more comfort than the average

Push-in

"In the pitch dark night, the push-in victims started streaming into Bangladesh," said 30-year-old Bablu, a villager of Kathalpur who witnessed the attempts, "Many of them were women, children and young girls. They looked impover-

They tried to enter Bangladesh through a gate erected alongside the barbed wire in the Indian territory. The BSF troops were beating up the victims, forcing them into Bangladesh, witnesses said.

Alerted by their noises, the BDR turned on spotlights and focussed the beams on the gates. The BDR troops and villagers armed with sticks drove the deportees back.

Witnesses said the BSF made three to four more failed attempts through the same point.

"These people have been picked up from slums in Mumbai," a BDR personnel who had talked to some

victims told The Daily Star. The Indian police and the BSF are picking up Bangla-speaking Muslim slum dwellers who do not have ration cards, some deportees

The BSF have assembled a large number of people for push-in at Dhanyakhola, Shikarpur, Shadipur, Andolia, Januli, Jaidevpur, Dowlatpur, Baroakra, Gatipara, Teroghar, Shahjatpur, and Khashipur areas

An estimated 2,000 people have heen assembled at BSF camps opposite to Kalaroa border. The BSF have been trying to

push Bangla-speaking people into Bangladesh since January 22 and succeeded to send in 74 people on the first day

The BDR sent four protest letters to the BSF and asked for a flag

Our Khulna correspondent reports: Hundreds of villagers have fled their homes following Monday night's exchange of fire between the BDR and the BSF.



Centre yesterday.

Sleepless at Pallabi

"They (the gang members) collected tolls from almost all the families in Baunia area. They raped so many girls and women and even took photographs of the incidents at times. The gang's atrocities angered the local people so much that they gouged out their eyes."

A number of local people narrated to this correspondent their atrocities. They said that BNPbacked hoodlums including Ismail Hossain Gazi and Abdur Rahim collected tolls from them with the help of Faruk Bahini. They set up a clubhouse on the Baunia embankment and conducted all sorts of criminal activities from there.

The five whose eyes were gouged out are members of the gang.

Abdur Rashid, 70, a resident of the area said, "After the last national elections, I was forced to pay Tk 75,000 to Ismail Gazi in three phases because I am a supporter of Awami League. As I was unable to pay more, they beat me up. When the joint forces arrived, they went into hidina. Rickshawpuller Mohammad

Siraj said that the hoodlums forcibly took away TK 75,000 which was sent to him by his wife, who works in Mazida Khatun, a housewife, said

the miscreants looted her house and left her without anything. Many others who described similar crimes by the gang included

Shamsul Haqe Sarkar, Abdur Rahman, Babul Kabirai, Firoza Begum, Md. Mokhles, Abdul Matin, Nasima Begum, Md. Hashem, Milan Tara, Md. Siraj, Abdul Hamid, Hezera Begum, Sultan Mian, Md. Jainal Abedin and Mafia Khatun.

Shamsul Haque Sarkar, vice president of citizens' peace committee formed by the local people, said

2 hurt in city

FROM PAGE 1

FROM PAGE 12

consideration.

amnesty.

restrictions.

Liton, got into gunfight in front of Mitali Club in Shahjahanpur at around 3:00pm over drug trading in the area.

The miscreants tried to escape when a police team from Motijheel Police Station appeared at the spot.

Panic-stricken people ran for cover as the gang members exchanged bullets indiscriminately during the 10-minute encounter.

Steven Hadley, Deputy National

Security Advisor, said the Bangladesh

Foreign Minister's visit to Washington

was "very timely" and the

Administration would consider the

request for amnesty and special

He gave the assurance when

Khan requested the US

Administration to consider keeping in

abeyance the procedures in the

special registration for Bangladeshis

The Foreign Minister, now

engaged in intense campaign in

Washington for withdrawal of immigra-

tion restrictions against Bangladesh,

had also meeting with Paul Wolfowitz,

Deputy Defence Secretary, at the

both the meetings as "fruitful", accord-

ing to a message released by the

External Publicity Wing of the Foreign

During the parleys, the Foreign Minister told the US officials that

Bangladesh always fought against

fundamentalism and found it difficult to

accept its inclusion in the list of the

countries being subjected to special

ioined the US in its war against terror-

ism "not because of convenience but

Khan pointed out that Bangladesh

He noted that all Bangladeshis

The Foreign Minister urged them to

In response, Steven Hadley said

the US never controlled its border till

consider this against the backdrop of

Dhaka's support to the US counter-

entered the United States legally while

some of them overstayed their visas.

Ministry yesterday.

registration procedures.

out of conviction".

terrorism efforts.

Bangladesh officials described

and also pleaded for a general

Foreign Minister Khan held a meeting

with him at the National Security

Council, White House, on Monday.

the gang had started its crminal activities just after the last parliamnentary elections. Since then, they have looted several lakhs of taka from the people of Baunia

Sarkar said he had filed seven eneral diaries with the Pallabi Police Station but no step was taken so far. He also said that he had written to the prime minister, the home minister and many other top leaders seeking their help in this When the angry people saw the

five criminals handcuffed and brought to the area by police on Monday, they pounced on them and gouged out their eyes," Sarkar said.

Meanwhile, the five men underwent surgery at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday. Doctors said they have no chance of getting back their sight back. They are under police quard. Pallabi police have filed a case in

connection with Monday's incident, accusing some 10,000 unidentified

Proceedings of corruption cases against Amu stayed

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday stayed the proceedings of two corruption cases against former Food Minister Amir Hossain Amu in the lower

A bench comprising Justice Syed Amirul Islam and Justice Mirza Hossain Haider also issued rule with some observations upon the government to show cause why the cases against Amu should not be quashed.

The Court observed that the Bureau of Anti-corruption functioning government used to file such corruption cases against politicians when they are out of power. Investigation officers bring charges on approval of the chief executive and submit charge sheet. But the allegations are

found mostly inadequate. Such cases of corruption should not be equated with ordinary criminal cases. "We think that there is scope of political harassment in the process of such corruption cases, added the court in its observation.

idea about who entered the country

and who left. But the September 11

events suggested that they could not

Entry Exit Registration System

(NSEERS) is a system that has been

worked out to contain this situation.

"This will bring into its fold all aliens

who are illegally staying in the United

Administration would do its best and

expressed his gratitude for

Bangladesh's support to the US

Deputy Defence Secretary Paul

He appreciated that "Bangladesh

has a strong case and that they would

in Uttar Pradesh

The 23-member Congress legislature party

group in Uttar Pradesh appeared heading for

a split today with six of its members meeting

Speaker Kesri Nath Tripathi and expressing

faith and confidence in the leadership of Chief

PTI here that two more MLAs would join

their group later in the day taking their

Upadhyay, Shyam Narain Tewari, Kasim Ali,

Virender Singh Bundela, Vinod Kumar

Those who met the speaker were K

One of the Congress members told

join Mayawati

try to help as best as they could".

6 Congress

struggle against global terrorism.

be treated better.

MLAs

PTI, Lucknow

Minister Mayawati

Singh and Dinesh Singh

He, however, assured that the US

Hadley said the National Security

live like that anymore.

Dhaka still in dark

worth Tk 30 lakh seized at ZIA STAFF CORRRESPONDENT Customs officials yesterday seized electronic goods worth Tk 30 lakh from three incoming passengers at the Zia International Airport (ZIA)

Electronic

goods

The three passengers, who landed at the ZIA from Malaysia, surrendered their goods sensing detection by the law enforcers.

The seized goods include 250 mobile phone set and 25 cameras.

The three were arrested and a case was filed against them with the customs in this connection.

Road accident kills 4 in Narayangani

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Four people were killed in a road accident on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway yesterday.

The dead were identified as Hasan Imam, 35, staff reporter of the Bangladesh Barta (published from Kushtia), his wife Tandra Imam, 21, their four-year-old daughter Laiva and unidentified driver of the autorickshaw.

Police said the accident occurred when Hasan Imam along with his family were returning home at Demra from Sonargaon folklore fair in an autorickshaw. The threewheeler cab collided head-on with a Daudkandi-bound passenger bus (Dhaka Metro-Ja-11-1202) in front of Siyam Filling Station in Kamtal area at around 3:30 pm, killing the

four on the spot. On information, police rushed to the spot, recovered the bodies and sent them to Narayanganj General Hospital for autopsy.

Malibagh case Iqbal granted ad- interin bail

Dr HBM Igbal of Awami League, accused in the Malibagh murder case was granted ad interim bail yesterday.

The High Court granted the bail on an appeal against the lower court order on Monday turning down his bail

It also issued rule upon the government to show cause why Dr Iqbal should not be granted regular bail.

Former Awami League MP, Dr lqbal, the main accused in connection with the killing of four persons by gunfire on a BNP procession at Malibagh Crossing on February 13,2001, was sent to jail after the lower court rejected his bail prayer on January 22.

Disquiet in hills

FROM PAGE 1 support from locals for its motivational mission for autonomy. "The hill people support the peace treaty and are resisting attacks," he said.
The UPDF branded PCJSS

President Shantu Larma 'an opportunist who compromised the autonomy of the CHT for narrow gains'. However, Larma, also chairman

Wolfowitz told the Foreign Minister that of the CHT regional council, Bangladesh had been doing the right declined to comment when conthings and that it certainly deserved to $tacted\,by\,The\,Daily\,Star.$

Three cops FROM PAGE 1

Motijheel area on December 26 last Following the case, Motijheel

police arrested the constables. After cross-examination of all the five prosecution witnesses, first class magistrate Mohammad Nurul Islam pronounced the verdict.

Key jobs FROM PAGE 12

It is learnt that more officials seeking contractual appointment are on the queue and some files have already been sent for the PM's approval while some others are being processed.

Officials said the government which had earlier abolished the President's 10 per cent quota of contractual appointments, has been giving such appointments for purely political reasons.

This is legitimate," Aziz said in an interview with Canada's CBC televi-He added Iraq would not rule out

launching an attack against Kuwait, where an Iraqi invasion triggered the month-long 1991 Gulf War.

"If there will be an attack from Kuwait, I cannot say that we will not retaliate." said Aziz.

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said a key report by UN weapons inspectors to the Security Council on Monday showed Iraq was in "further material breach" of UN Resolution 1441. The resolution threatens

ments to the UN, which has been viewed by Washington and London as a possible trigger to launch strikes on Saddam's regime "It's profoundly serious," Straw said. "The chances of this being resolved by peaceful means are less than they were because of

Baghdad with "serious conse-

quences" for flouting its commit-

Iran's unbelievable refusal to properly comply with the terms of this resolution," he added after the report by chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix and IAEA chief Mohammed FIBaradei. Bush's push to persuade both sceptical voters and potential allies

of the need to tackle Iraq head-on comes after the two men told the Security Council Monday that Iraq was defying international demands to disarm.

"Iraq appears not to have come to a genuine acceptance, not even today, of the disarmament which was demanded of it and which it needs to carry out," Blix said, in the first major account of 60 days of nspections.

Blix, who is charged with overseeing the elimination of Iraq's chemical and biological arms and ballistic missiles, said UN inspectors had found no banned weapons. But while Iraq "has decided in

process, notably access" to weapons sites, it had left questions unanswered, he said. In Iraq, UN arms experts continued their work, fanning out for inspections of sites suspected of

principle to provide cooperation on

developing weapons of mass destruction Russia, along with France and China, three veto-wielding permanent members of the Security Council, have insisted that the nspections be allowed to run their

diplomatic solution to the standoff. Moscow, a traditional Soviet-era ally of Baghdad, warned Washington that unilateral military action against Iraq could tear apart

course in the hope of reaching a

the US-led international coalition against terrorism.

"We cannot support any unilateral steps. Not only Russia but an overwhelming majority of countries oppose unilateral military action," Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov told the

US network NBC "If unilateral steps are taken circumventing the Security Council, this will evidently split the anti-

terrorist coalition. Beijing's deputy envoy to the United Nations, Zhang Yishan, added the inspectors should be allowed to continue their work 'impartially, objectively and professionally".

France, which along with Germany has spearheaded European opposition to Washington's hawkish stance, urged the US to hand over to the UN ntelligence it says it has into Iraq's alleged weapons programme. "It is up to the Americans to give

this information to the inspectors so they can use it as best they can, said French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin. He was reacting to comments by US Secretary of State Colin Powell, who said the US had evidence

within a week But Muslim states were notably backing calls for Iraq to comply with the United Nations

proving its "worst fears were justi-

fied." which he hoped to release

Pakistani Prime Minister Zafarullah Jamali said after talks with the emir of Kuwait: "We hope that Iraq will unconditionally and fully comply with all UN Security Council resolutions." Egyptian President Hosni

unless Baghdad backed down and complied fully with the UN inspec-Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee urged calm, saying: "War is not the solution; it will disturb the

Mubarak added war was inevitable

world economy because oil prices will spiral.' Pressure from the US has been building recently, with Powell saving at the weekend that Washington had a "sovereign right" to attack

But Bush's speech late last night which comes a year after he identified Iraq as part of an "axis of evil," would not contain any surprise revelations about Iraq's alleged chemical, biological or nuclear

weapons programmes, aides said. The US president was expected to leave building the US case against Iraq to Powell, who warned Monday that Iraq's opportunity for choosing peaceful disarmament

BGMEA polls

each panel for an equal number of

However, just 12 hours before the election, the Oikya Jote through a press statement withdrew from the race, though there was no scope to do so with the date for withdrawal well over. The ballot papers bore names of candidates of both panels.

The Jote at a press conference yesterday put down the withdrawal to what it claimed partisan role by the BGMEA election board. "The election commission at 9:20pm on Monday informed us that the polls would be held today. How could they hold meeting in such short notice?" Oikya Jote panel leader Fazlul Azim asked

He said the election board did not arrange a joint projection meeting which was mandatory as per the

BGMEA constitution. Asked, Chairman of the election commission M Anisuzzaman said they had referred the matter of a joint projection meeting to the director of Trade Organisation after the Sammilito Parishad Forum declined. "We then sought opinion of the director of Trade Organisation who said such meeting is not mandatory, he clarified.

The chairman also said they have decided to go ahead with the polls as per recommendations of the BGMEA board at the earliest possible time.

"The High Court directed us to

hold the election on January 26 or forthwith. Any further delay in holding the election would have been tantamount to contempt of court," Anisuzzaman said. He said since preparations were complete there was no reason to stagger the polls. "Besides, the voters were informed much later

about the election date, but they came up in large numbers to cast votes. So, I really don't understand what is the problem with the Oikya Jote Panel?" The BGMEA election board

expressed its satisfaction over the security measures the government provided for a free and fair voting Journalists were allowed to

observe the election along with

observers from the Federation of

Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry and other trade bodies Fearing trouble, police blocked two roads leading to the office since early morning

A number of voters told The Daily Star that they were apprehensive about their safety and came to vote only after being assured. "I am a member of this trade

BenazirAhmed Wahida Parveen Happy of Shamrat Group said she came to vote for sake of their own survival. "We need to elect our office bearers who will help us prepare for chal lenges of the post-MFA (Multi-fibre

Agreement).' The polls this year came under public scrutiny following government interference apparently to help Oikya Jote panel to sail through. The government directed the BGMEA to put off the polls for a month, which, in turn, had the order staved by the High Court Division and the Appellate

Division of the Supreme Court. On January 26 the voters in the capital and Chittagong found their secretariat sealed off by police on injunctions from the lower courts. Police pulled out a day later following

a strong directive by the High Court. The BGMEA election board on Monday announced holding of election Tuesday, but the Jote opted to stay out of race.

5 'Mozam Bahini' cadres jailed for 43 yrs each

The Special Tribunal, Khulna, on Monday sentenced five cadres of 'Mozam Bahini' of the Sundarbans to 43 years rigorous imprisonment

each in an arms case. The convicts are Abdus Salam Sana alias Josheph, of Tentultala, Fazar Ali Ghazi of Jhileghata and Rafiqul Ghazi of the same village of Koyra upazila, Mira Fakir of Gaikurh and Golam Rasul of Maddhyadanga

metropolitan city. According to prosecution, a patrol police team of Koyra police station came under attack by the

police station on February 23. Charge sheet of the case was

officer of the case. Fourteen prosecution witnesses were cross-examined during the trial. Judge Mohammad Sajjadul

organisation So I have come to The IO in his charge sheet stated that the accused were involved in abduction of fishermen and Bawalis

in Khulna STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

under Daulatpur thana of Khulna

cadres of 'Mozam Bahini' on February 22, 2000. Police opened fire and captured five of the gang with arms and ammunition. A case was filed with Koyra

submitted to court on June 8, 2000 by Zahidul Islam,

Karim, after examining the witnesses pronounced the verdict.

exercise my rights today," said former president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) for ransom in the Sundarbans