Rushing back risking life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thousands of passengers returning to the capital after Eid holidays are being ferried across the river Padma from Daulatdia launch terminal on overloaded passenger vessels

Children, women, elderly people together with their luggage are crammed into small doubledecker launches to ferry them over to Paturia, about two kilometers across.

Paturia is an alternative river terminal constructed last year to lessen the distance from Daulatdia to Aricha

Each boat was seen carrying about 100 to 150 passengers more

than its capacity. The Daulatdia launch terminal authorities made no efforts to stop the overloading. To make matters worse, buses waiting on the other side, unscrupulously left for the capital leaving behind their passengers who had

refused to risk their lives and stayed back for the next boat. As more buses arrived from different southwestern districts, they were kept waiting at Daulatdia when the boats also refused to

return empty from Paturia. There was complete chaos as

the crowd stranded in the narrow muddy, uneven passage was seen quarrelling with officials yesterday afternoon.

When passengers protested

the overloading and delay, officials sitting inside a small room on the pontoon shouted back saying, 'If you are unable to take risks, then find vour own wav

"I have requested the authorities to stop the overloading. They paid no attention," said a bus supervisor from Khulna

The Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) leases out the launch terminals to contractors every year. The contractors are responsible for managing and maintaining these for the smooth sailing and ferrying of passengers

BIWTA officials could not be contacted for comments.

UP polls violence

FROM PAGE 1

reports from Jhenidah, Kushtia, Khulna, Patuakhali and Narayangan Around 30 people were injured

as hired goons of a chairman candidate attacked supporters of his rival candidate in Dashmina, Patuakhali, Saturday night.

Saleha, 45, a pregnant woman, Laila Bibi, 20, Shamsunnahar Latif, 70, Aziz Dealer, 60, and Mohammad Ali, 35, are among them. They were admitted to the Patuakhali Sadar Hospital.

A clash between two groups of the local BNP in Amghata village in Sadar Upazila, Munshiganj, injured 11, three of them critically, on Sunday

Over 20 people were injured in attacks by supporters of a defeated UP chairman candidate in Baliati Union in Saturia, Mankiganj, on Sunday

Meanwhile, BSS reports that one person was killed in election violence at Binnati in Kishoreganj yesterday

The incident took place when supporters of a chairman candidate opened fire at Awliapara Registered Primary School centre to foil the polling at about 3.30pm.

Police said Fazlur Rahman (38) who received bullet wound in the chest died on the spot. demands

EU in crisis talks

continues

FROM PAGE 12

court." Weekend press reports said Britain and the United States were working together to draft a fresh UN Security Council resolution that could open the way for a US-led war on Iraq.

While the papers said the draft could be submitted to the Council as early as this week, Straw declined yesterday to cite a

The unruly supporters of the chairman tried to force their way into the polling booths and had heated exchanges with police and rival supporters. Later they fired

several rounds of shots. Police also fired two rounds to disperse the unruly supporters of

the chairman Later, BDR personnel rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Election Commission has suspended polling at the centre. None was arrested in this connection. The situation was tense in the area

Shaheed Minar

FROM PAGE 12 Minar on February 8. From today, its program will be held at the

Dhanmandi Lake open stage. On the occasion, the Chittagong Hill Students Council held a rally at Dhaka University yesterday and demanded hill people's right to primary education in their mother

. languages. It also demanded inclusion of the "real history and life struggle" of all tribesmen in textbooks. They also submitted a memorandum to the education ministry to press its

blocked US proposals on military

planning, arguing that they sent the

"wrong signal" while diplomacy

while adopted a non-binding reso-

lution at an emergency session in

Cairo on Sunday rejecting "any

Arab foreign ministers mean-

NAM states urged to take anti-war stand AFP, Kuala Lumpur

The Non-Aligned Movement's (NAM) summit in Kuala Lumpur next week should urge the United States and Britain to step back from a threatened attack on Iraq, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said

vesterday Mahathir, who takes over the chair of the 114-nation grouping of development countries at the meeting has already said he would refuse to back a war on Irag even if the United Nations gives Washington a mandate to attack.

He said NAM should add its collective voice to those of ordinary people who demonstrated their opposition to war in protests around the world last weekend. "We have no military or financial strength, but we can join the world movement to oppose war on moral grounds." Mahathir. who is seen as a strong moderate Muslim leader, said on state-run Radio Televisyen

Malaysia. "We do not agree that the government of a country, not suitable to big countries, be changed by military means through a pre-emptive strike. If this thing is allowed to happen, maybe other countries will also suffer the same fate in the future." he said.

Senior officials from NAM begin talks on Thursday, and foreign ministers will meet on Saturday, while the leaders summit is scheduled to take place on February 24 and 25. Middle Fast crisis.

Promotion

FROM PAGE 1 Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told the House that the officials were promoted as per recommendations of the Superior Selection Board (SSB) and on the basis of their seniority and annual confidential report (ACR).

aggression against Iraq" and Bhuiyan mentioned that promourging the 22 nations of the Arab tion of some was held up because of League "not to provide any kind of specific allegations against them assistance or facilities that can be and that those were being probed. Industries Minister MK Anwar said the new promotion rules were duly authenticated by appropriate authorities. The opposition should have gone to the Supreme Court if it thought that the promotions were given in violation to the Constitution. Law Minister Moudud Ahmed said a careful look into the list of officials promoted would make it clear that the process was fair. The prime minister's advisor Salahuddin Qader Chowdhury refuted allegations of politicisation of promotions and asserted that had the government wished, it could have promoted 1,000 officials nstead of 493. Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar then disapproved the issue as a point of order. He pointed out that the Constitution has provisions allowing one to take recourse to law in case of any irregularities in such promotions AL lawmaker Shahjahan Khan then raised a point of order and described sufferings of the Muslims due to 'change of date' of the Eid-ul-Azha date this year. He resented that the religious affairs ministry even did not regret this. Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain however was guick enough to point out that the prime minister herself had expressed her anguish at the change of Eid date, causing much inconvenience to people. Earlier, the day's sitting which do not have much credibility as an began half an hour late witnessed 'question-answer' and tabling of a Bangladesh's press has 'develbill on imposition of travel tax on oped a reputation for its vibrancy' foreign nationals in Bangladesh. and it has become 'a partner with Besides, discussion on the president's speech in the House civil society on governance issues', took place. he said. But some century-old laws have stifling effect on people's right



Emergency Arab summit on Iraq crisis likely on Feb 28

AFP, Cairo

Arab states have reached "a consensus" on holding on February 28 an emergency summit in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh to discuss the Iraqi crisis, Egypt's foreign minister said yester-

"There is a consensus for holding the emergency summit on February 28," Ahmed Maher told reporters, adding that a final date will be announced in "the next 48 hours.

He dismissed reports that some of the 22 members of the Arab League had objected to convening a special summit on Iraq during the Arab foreign ministers' meetings here Saturday and Sunday.

"No one has objected," he said. The foreign ministers' meeting convened to discuss preparations for the summit that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak had called for, but no final date for it was announced in its final communique

Maher said no date was announced because some Arab leaders had plans to attend "international forums," such as the Franco-African summit in Paris from February 19 to 21, and the summit of the Non-aligned Movement in

communique said "The Arab countries reject aggression on any of them or the threat against the security and safety of any Arab country as a threat against the national security of all Arab countries," it said, without specifically mentioning the United

States. Some analysts say the Arab diplomatic manoeuvres have an mportant domestic component. They say Arab leaders are anxious to convince their people that they have done all they could to avert war

and thereby limit any popular back-Security Council Russia, France, China as well as Germany have lash While all Arab states have said repeatedly called for more time for they oppose a US-led war against weapons inspections. But Iraq, some are in a quandary as Washington has said time was traditional US allies which host running out for Baghdad to come American troops. The oil-rich Gulf clean on its alleged arms programmes, which Iraq denies it states are in a particularly sensitive position, since many of their citizens are vehemently opposed to the US

presence. Foreign visitors Iraq's neighbour Kuwait, which FROM PAGE 1 expressed unspecified reservations about the communique, is hosting tens South America, Europe, Africa, of thousands of soldiers and is Australia. Far Eastern countries and expected to be the main launchpad for a land invasion on its former occupier. proposes Bahrain is the headquarters of

Passengers travelling in other routes, except the SAARC ones, will pav the levv at the rate of Tk 1.800. Travellers availing air trips to other SAARC countries will pay Tk 600. The tariffs on travel by land and water routes are Tk 500 and 800 respectively.

travelling by air to North America,

who challenge their dignity."

veto-wielding members of the

UP candidate arrested in Dinajpur BSS, Dinajpur

Abdus Sattar Milon, a candidate for Union Parishad (UP) chairman in Goraghat thana of the district, was arrested for his alleged involvement in criminal activities here yesterday afternoon.

Milon, a former president of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), Goraghat thana unit, was arrested under the Special Powers Act of 1974 and was later sent to jail.

Acting on a tip-off, Goraghat police arrested Milon as he and his accomplices were preparing to carry out 'terrorist activities' at the 'Shaheed Minar Square' there at 5:00pm vesterday.

Police said Milon was accused in several cases including one involving ransacking of Goraghat Thana BNP office on August 31 last year. He had been absconding for a long time

Earlier, the army-led joint force failed to arrest Milon. After withdrawal of the army, Milon came out of hiding and submitted nomination paper as a candidate for chairman of Goraghat UP-4. He got the 'wheel' as his election symbol.

All the cases filed against Milon are under trial, police said.

Kuwait shuts 2 oilfields near Iraq

Kuwait has shut down production at

two small northern oilfields near its

tense border with Iraq as a security

precaution ahead of a possible US-

led war on Baghdad, an oil company

Badr Zwyer, spokesman for

Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), told

Reuters the Abdali and Ratga fields,

REUTERS, Kuwait

official said vesterday.

Mymensingh OUR

in court in

CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Awami League leader Saber Hossain Chowdhury, who was shown arrested in Ajanta Hall bomb blast case, appeared before a Magistrate's Court at 12.30pm

Mosharraf Hossain ordered him to reappear before the court on April 2. Saber Hossain's lawyers advo-cates Mahmud-Al-Noor Tarek

Arab and other states including

The OPEC member has limited spare production capacity.

ADAB split

FROM PAGE 1 government denied to interact with

the present ADAB leadership, accused of having political links," Muyeed Chowdhury, executive director of BRAC, told The Daily Star. He said Fazle Hasan Abed had tried a lot to keep the NGO commu-

New Zealand will pay Tk 2,500, the bill nity united Citing a recent example of successful negotiation with the government on its proposal for formulating an NGO policy, Chowdhury said, "If the NGOs were not represented, the government could have done whatever it wanted to." The forthcoming NNCC convention will work out a way of narrowing the gap between the government and the NGOsa task ADAB could not accomplish. Some 1500 organisations across the country have elections registered their names for the convention to be held at Mirpur Indoor Stadium, NNCC sources said FROM PAGE 1 On the other hand, ADAB chairperson Qazi Faruque Ahmed accused the rival group of having reached an unholy understanding with the government. He said the government had victimised ADAB. "There must be some working relation between the government and the NGOs. since we address development issues, but it never

means that NGOs have to be puppets in the hands of the government," he said denying the charges that the government had brought against him.

was trying to destroy the country's civil society that raised its voice from time to time against the govern-

ment's anti-people decisions. Sources in both the camps indicated that a lobby in the govern-

the US Navy's Fifth Fleet, which Qatar hosts the mobile US Central Command headquarters, which has responsibility for the Gulf region. Saudi Arabia is also home to thouyesterday. First Class Magistrate Md. sands of US troops. Iraq's foreign Minister Naji Sabri declined to say whether he was satisfied with the talks, but said: "We believe that Arab countries have

Wazedul Islam, M Zubed Ali, Monjuru Haq and Zahirul Haq were present. great capabilities and can use all these capabilities to deter all those

Saber Hossain Chowdhury was arrested on December 8 without any specific charge and later detained under the Special Powers Act. He was shown arrested on December 28 in the Mymensingh Cinema

oilfields in the south of the country.

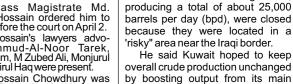
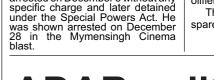


PHOTO: AF



He alleged that the government

timeframe.

The Security Council on Friday dealt a blow to US war plans, as a majority of the body's members said they wanted UN inspectors to be given more time to test Baghdad's assertion that it has no weapons of mass destruction.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, who said Saturday the Security Council might need a new resolution on Iraq but that war could still be averted, will address the EU summit, scheduled to start at 6:00pm (1700 GMT).

Chief UN weapons inspectors Hans Blix and Mohammed ElBaradei are due to submit another progress report around March 1.

The rift in the European Union -dubbed Europe's worst crisis since World War II by the Rome daily Corriere della Sera -- mirrors an unprecedented split in NATO which ended in a face-saving compromise on Sunday after weeks of wrangling over the defense of Turkey in the event of war on its neighbor Iraq.

The NATO deal was reached by bypassing France, which along with Belgium and Germany had

PM: Foreign media

to know.

commitment. But this did not change Bangladesh's secular character, she emphasised.

The media in Bangladesh is free. Khaleda said. People here can also watch international television channels which are restricted in neighbouring countries, she pointed out.

The prime minister urged the civil societies and journalists to 'inform direct and criticise' the government for attaining the common goal of people's welfare

Temple said suppression of the image it wants to project and develpress only damages a country's reputation both internally and internationally.

Bangladesh is unfortunately among the countries which have some experience of harassment of journalists though such activities are also found around the world, he said.

Print media in Bangladesh is considered relatively free, Temple said. "But, government-controlled electronic media continue to be viewed as entertainment media and

used to threaten the safety and

territorial integrity of Iraq." But the resolution did not threaten any specific sanctions against member states such as Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain, which are hosting the US military buildup for a possible war on Iraq and it made no mention of the United States.

Taking a back seat for the time being to the European positioning over Irag are Russia and China. which like France wield veto power in the Security Council and also favor continued UN weapons inspections.

The Russian foreign ministry said vesterday that Moscow and the United Nations had reached a preliminary agreement on the deployment of a Russian spy plane over Iraq after Saddam's government agreed to allow overflights by reconnaissance planes. Meanwhile US war preparations

gathered momentum with the arrival Sunday of hundreds of troops in Turkey, ahead of the possible deployment of an invasion force to march on Baghdad from the north.

objective source of news".

The WB official said, "Abroad,

Bangladesh needs to recognise that

in today's global environment, a

country has to work at defining the

oping messages and channels to do

Commonwealth countries are

ing Information Minister M Tarigul

Islam, CJA Vice President Martin

Mulligan and its founding president

emeritus Derek Ingram and editors

of national dailies were present at

attending the conference

the inaugural session.

Seventy delegates from 23

Some cabinet members includ-

Bangabazar FROM PAGE 1

of abduction and extortion of Tk 3 lakh.

Earlier, Nuruzzaman gave confessional statements before the CMM's court disclosing involvement of eight policemen and three army personnel in the extortion. Based on this confession, police arrested two

of his accomplices: businessmen Dinesh Debnath at Bangabazar and Nitai Chandra Debnath at Shariatpur.

An army captain SM Atiqur Rahman and two soldiers will face court martial for their involvement.

Malavsia from February 20 to 25.

Reuters adds: Arab foreign ministers said on Sunday their countries should deny any support for military action against Irag. which they said would pose a threat to the national security of all Arab States

But the call, made in a final communique after a day of often heated debate, fell short of a binding resolution that would pose difficulties for Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar, which host tens of thousands of US troops preparing for a possible war on Iraq over its alleged weapons of mass destruction.

"(The foreign ministers) affirm the necessity for their countries to refrain from offering any kind of assistance or facilities for any military action that leads to the threat of Iraq's security, safety and territorial integrity," the final

Abu Ishaq no more

BSS, Dhaka

Abu Ishaq, noted litterateur and author of 'Surja Dighal Bari,' died Sunday night at the age of 77. Family sources said the writer

suddenly fell sick and died at about 9.15pm. The novel, Surja Dighal Bari, based on which a film was made, was acclaimed at home and abroad.

Ishaq left behind his wife, two sons and a daughter.

His body was kept in a mortuary of a hospital and it will be buried after arrival of one of his sons and the lone daughter from abroad.

Calypso test for Tigers

FROM PAGE 1

game. The extraordinary feat only provided more ammunition for Bangladesh's Test critics since it gained status in June 2000.

The setting for the match Benoni is rather familiar for Bangladesh. They played South Africa in their second one-day match only last October.

Despite the overwhelming odds of yet another defeat, the underdogs will be hoping that things don't get any worse than they already are.

The Bangladesh skipper put up a brave face while talking about his demoralised side's prospects at Willowmoore Park, the home of provincial side Eastern Union.

"We want to forget what happened in the past. It is a chance to redeem our lost pride.'

Bangladesh have played West Indies six times losing on five occasions. The Caribbeans were denied a hundred per cent success when the first one-day international of the three-match series in Chittagong in December was washed out.

Mashud also warned his teammates that repeating the earlier mistakes would not be acceptable. He was very critical with the way Sanwar Hossain, Hannan Sarkar, Al-Shahriar and even a consistent Alok Kapali got out.

innings. But it is not tolerable played against Bangladesh after seeing someone throwing his the World Cup in 1999 wicket," said the 26-year-old bowler Pedro Collins has been wicketkeeper-batsman.

As a result of Mashrafee's injury ruled out against Bangladesh because of a back injury. another emerging paceman Talha Jubair takes his place while Hannan Sarkar makes way for herniated disc in his lower back for over a year," West Indies manager Tushar Imran and veteran all-Ricky Skerritt said. rounder and hero of the 1999

campaign Khaled Mahmud makes his first appearance in the tournament at the expense of Taposh Baisva West Indies captain Carl Cape Town).

Hooper who was injured at the end comfort while bowling in the nets of the successful India tour, missed the subsequent winter visit to Bangladesh in December, said he would be discussing team strategy with his deputy Ridley Jacobs.

West Indies coach Roger Harper however was friendly enough to say a few words about

"We cannot take any team lightly in a World Cup. I know Bangladesh have some very

vintage Lara was major boost.

"A player can get out early in the

Criticising the bill, former finance minister and Awami League lawmaker SAMS Kibria said the proposed provision to determine tax rate by any rule is contradictory to the basic principle of tax imposition.

The bill kept a provision for exemption to any person or section of people, subject to government notification.

It also excluded children, cancer patients, blind and disabled people, airline crew, foreign diplomats and their family, pilgrims heading towards Saudi Arabia, transit passengers staying not more than 72 hours and any Bangladeshi national serving an airline, who visits abroad without fare or in reduced fare.

"He's been feeling some dis-

Khaled Mahmud, Monjurul Islam,

WEST INDIES (from): Carl

Brian Lara, Jermaine

Hooper (captain), Ridley Jacobs,

Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Corey

Collymore, Mervyn Dillon, Vasbert

Lawson, Nixon McLean, Ricardo

Powell, Marlon Samuels,

Hinds.

Ramnaresh Sarwan

FROM PAGE 12

Meanwhile, West Indies fast who were arrested in Cox's Bazar, he claimed.

"Pedro has had a problem with a blamed the opposition, he said.

"He came to the (World Cup proves that the national and internatraining) camp in Antigua and had tional terrorists have set up a strong no problem after the opening network in Bangladesh", he said. match (against South Africa in Suranjit said the nature of all the

> bombs blasted in the last few months is the same. This proves that a certain guarter is responsible for those, he added.

Motia Chowdhury said the armyled joint forces failed to recover firearms from Hathazari, Satkhira, Satkania, Chudanga and Magura and other strongholds of Jamaat-eslami and its student front Islami Chhatra Shibir.

Asked about army deployment again to curb crime, Jalil said, "We don't want further army deployment, but recovery of illegal arms."

The AL leaders blasted the government for not heeding to their demand of banning activities of Islamic fundamentalist organisa-Drakes, Chris Gayle, Wavell tions in the country.

The AL leaders claimed that the government ignored the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) pro-

ment had long been trying to control NGO activities, especially on issues like opposing fundamentalism and empowering women.

The present government branded several NGO executives as political activists, and said they had worked in favour of certain political parties before the last

Slum people

are among the peddlers.

The authorities fixed February 9 for the eviction drive but deferred it because of the Eid-ul-Azha.

The bulldozer also smashed ar office of the Railway Employees'

Mymensingh blasts.

Welfare Trust and some other structures raised by the BR staff. The drive will resume today.

posal for investigation into the

Udichi blasts, Tariqul Islam, has

been made a minister, accused in

Ramna and Naraynganj blasts have

been acquitted and the name of the

prime accused in Bagerhat blast

Charge-sheeted accused in

AL probe team

released 40 al-Qaeda members

Tofail said the Dinajpur incident proves AL's observation that fundamentalist forces were responsible for all bomb blast incidents. But after each incident the government

has been dropped from the case, they alleged. "It (Dinajpur incident) also

> Army FROM PAGE 1

> > paign Ăround 24,023 army and 339 Navy men along with paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles, police and Ansar personnel joined the drive.

However, each company had been kept on alert in all divisional headquarters after withdrawal of troops on January 9. This was done so that troops could be deployed on an emergency basis.

During the 87-day Operation Clean Heart drive, crimes went down, but 44 deaths in army custody drew criticism.

After withdrawal of the troops the home minister said the army would be redeployed, if necessary.

General Secretary of the Awami League Abdul Jalil told a press conference vesterday that his party does not support a renewal of the Operation Clean Heart but wants recovery of illegal firearms.

and his injury needs a few days rest. But we're hoping to have him back for the Sri Lanka game (on February 28). TEAMS BANGLADESH: Khaled Mashud (captain), Al Shahriar, Alok Kapali,

the game, which the Caribbeans Ehsanul Haque, Sanwar Hossain, would be taking seriously. Mohammad Ashraful, Mohammad Rafique, Talha Jubair, Tushar Imran.

talented players.' A member of the all-conquering West Indies team, Harper said that the present team has the ability to go all the way to win the World Cup. He also said that the return of a

The Prince of Trinidad scored a 45-ball 100 in the last match he