# PM opens Daratana **Bridge today**

QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna

The second convocation of Bangladesh Institute of Technology (BIT), Khulna will be held today

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will attend the function as chief quest and Education Minister Dr M Osman Faruque as special quest.

This will be the last convocation of Khulna BIT as the government has already announced to upgrade it to a University of Engineering and Technology, said Prof Dr Md Nurul Islam, chairman of the Board of Governors, BIT, Khulna.

He said 1,466 graduates would be awarded certificates at the convocation. Of them, 29 outstanding students will receive gold med-

Established as an engineering college in 1967 and its academic activities launched in June 1974, the institution was upgraded to BIT with 10 departments and 117

At present, Khulna BIT has 1444 undergraduate and 143 postgraduate students including 15 foreign students in different

The first convocation of BIT was held in 1993, and was attended by the then prime minis-

So far, 541 graduates have registered for the convocation where 17 officers of the army signal corps will also be awarded degrees in Telecommunication Engineering, said a handout of

BSS adds: Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is expected to inaugurate the second key bridge in the country's southwestern region on the river Daratana here today.

Daratana Bridge, the second largest after Rupsha Bridge in Khulna division, will establish direct road communication between Bagerhat and Pirojpur apart from connecting Khulna with Barisal division.

Engineers of the Roads and Highways Department said the 630.5-metre bridge was constructed with 700.75-metre

They said the bridge has an 11.945-metre vertical clearance to enable vessels to ply under-

# JS stand-off

words had already been expunged. "It's not logical to boycott parliament for such a demand. We'll try to bring them (AL lawmakers) back to the

BNP Secretary General Abdul from the proceedings.

Following last Wednesday's

told reporters that of the three expunged the unparliamentary the Rules of Procedure. On the

and effective.

parties found it depressing that the Jatiya Sangsad often loses its liveliness and the atmosphere of debates on national issues remains missing, as the House runs, with the main opposition preferring to be off.

Both the BNP and the AL often blame each other for parliament not being effective and failing to live up to people's expectations.

ter Khaleda Zia as chief guest.

approach road on both sides.

House.'

Mannan Bhuiyan told BBC Radio last night that the demand for an apology from the state minister is pointless, when the Chair had already expunged his remarks

walkout from the parliament over Alamgir Kabir's alleged aspersion on the Opposition Leader, the AL decided on Thursday that the party lawmakers would not return to parliament until the state minister apologised and the speaker expunged his remarks and upheld relevant rules in running the House

The deputy speaker, however, demands put forward to him by AL in a memorandum Thursday night, two had already been taken care of. He said he had already words from the proceedings and was running the House in line with demand for apology, he said the government should deal with the

With the eighth parliament into its eighth session now, both the ruling and the opposition camps are appearing to fail time and again in making the House vibrant

Sources in the major political

Sources in the political parties said the ruling alliance showed less interest in making the parliament more functional by not appointing a deputy leader of the

House even after 20 months into

the eighth parliament and by not

forming the majority of parliamen-

tary standing committees to date. On the other hand, the sources said, the main opposition party is also missing out on many workdays of various sessions, reasoning out that their lawmakers are not allowed to speak in the

And yet another spell of parliament boycott by the AL since Thursday last and the government's apparent indifference once again put the effectiveness of parliament into question.

The renewed boycott cast a shadow on the prospect of budget passage in full House. This time around, the second budget of the Khaleda's coalition government looks set to see its passage with the seats of the main opposition party vacant. Following the last elections on

October 1, 2001, the eighth parliament began its journey on October 28 in 2001 amid the absence of the AL. After 70 workdays, the AL joined the House on June 24 in 2002 during the first budget session of this parliament. Earlier, the budget for the fisca

2002-2003 was proposed before the House on June 6, with the AL keeping off the House.

After joining the House during the first budget session or the third session of the eighth parliafive of the 24 workdays.

They boycotted the budget discussion protesting the switching-off of the party lawmaker Sheikh Fazlul Karim's microphone in parliament by the Chair. In the absence of the main opposition lawmakers, the budget was passed on June 29 last year.

sion on July 7 last year and AL lawmakers returned. On July 11 last year, AL lawmakers walked out of the House protesting that they were not provided time to speak.

Shawkat Ali was arrested

# **Confrontational politics**

uncertain after 2004

readymade garment, he said the future of the RMG sector was

Prof Yunus said rural areas were totally credit starved. He stressed the need for formulating a legal framework so that credit facility could easily be extended to the rural areas.

"We need a microcredit regulator for monitoring purpose. The body should be independent as the central bank is not the body to do it and people involved in microcredit should be included in the body.

Prof Nurul Islam said Bangladesh went on with the

trade liberalisation half-heartedly. "We are a reluctant trade liberaliser. The rule of origin is competitive and it has made us so weak," he said, adding that the readymade garment sector did not grow due to trade

It grew under a highly discriminatory system of the importing countries, he added.

liberalisation.

Professor AR Khan said if increasing inequality were allowed problem of poverty reduction would become critical.

Citing the examples of South Korea and Taiwan, he said they grew with minimum inequality while China. India as well as other South Asian nations were growing

with rising inequality. Mahfuz Anam said there was The House resumed its ses-

As an opposition lawmaker

# no check and balance within the

political parties and the party chiefs enjoy unquestioned power.

"Our constitution gives enormous power to the executive branch, without due check and balance. Due to the repeated boycotts, parliament cannot exert the type of check on the executive as the constitution envisages," he

Sadiq Ahmed said long-term growth was the only sustainable way for reducing poverty. "Don't worry about increasing inequality. If it is possible to ensure longterm growth, that will reduce

#### Hartal today

her Sangsad Bhaban office on June 15, AL President and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina said the proposed 'anti-people budget' would not be allowed to go unchal-

She said the government imposed an additional tax of Tk 5,000 crore on the poor.

The AL and its front organisations brought out processions in Dhaka and elsewhere vesterday to drum up support for today's

The hartal came amid the indefinite boycott of the Jatiya Sangsad by AL lawmakers since Thursday in protest against a state minister's 'invective' against Hasina in parlia-

### 21 Hindus acquitted in Gujarat riot case

An Indian court yesterday acquitted all 21 Hindus accused of burning a bakery with 12 Muslims inside in the western Indian Gujarat state, in the first trial dating back to last year's

was insufficient evidence for convictions after 35 of the 60 witnesses retracted their statements in court and some even claimed that the accused had saved their lives during the violence.

The case was the most highprofile trial since sectarian violence ravaged Gujarat for months following the torching in late February of last vear of 59 Hindus in a train by a Muslim mob in Guiarat's Godhra city.

Muslim leaders said Friday the trial had been manouevred to deliber-

ately acquit the accused Hindus. "This is not a fair judgment as

Gujarat's Vadodara city. Human right activists said the case would set a bad precedent, adding that the riot victims probably changed their statement as they

government and the people are completely against a particular community, it must have made sense for them to choose long-term security over justice," said K. Stalin, a human rights activist.

### Bigwigs

FROM PAGE 12

dents of the six districts have also showed no interest in paying Tk 3 crore in their unpaid bills.

The other government offices that have outstanding bills amounting to a total of Tk 6 crore are Bangladesh Rifles, Medical College Hospital, Civil Surgeon, Roads and Highways, LGED, Customs, Narcotics Control, Social Welfare, Educational Directorate and Food Department.

The BTTB sent notices time and again to the government offices but without any avail, sources said. And it even failed to gather enough courage to disconnect their lines, sources

"Phone lines of the Power Development Board (PDB) office were cut off last year for non-payment of bills and the PDB retaliated by switching off our power supply the following day," said a BTTB official on condition of anonymity.

The BTTB launched a drive on June 21 against the defaulting semigovernment, autonomous and private subscribers and during the last six days, it had disconnected 430

The Raishahi regional accounts The Daily Star that the government offices had been served with final notices. "If they do not respond to the notices, their lines will be cut off.

#### Porcession

The city AL in a press release claimed that about 100 of its leaders and activists were injured in the police 'atrocity

Meanwhile, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil, MP, condemned the 'police violence'.

He said AL leader Haji Selim Commissioner Humavun Kabir. Krishak League leaders MA Karim, Najma Shikder Munni, Monirul Islam Shevak and Kabir Humayun suffered injuries.

Jalil urged all to make today's

### Transport leader

FROM PAGE 1

Some of them claimed that they received calls from the gang after the incident that threatened them to act as per their direction in the killing case or face dire consequences. Some said Salam was an extor-

tionist and paid an amount to the Kala Jahangir group every month. The gang took revenge as he stopped paying them. 'Several suspicious people

phone recently," said Rina Begum, Quoting witnesses, she said before the incident Salam went to

would call my husband by mobile

Gudaraghat and came across Shaheb Ali. Ali whispered something to the ears of Salam and they rode to the

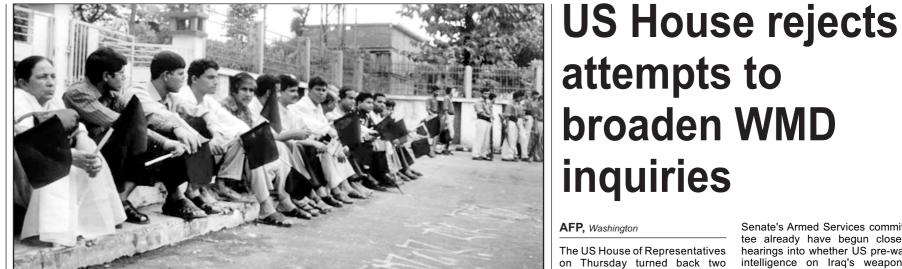
scene in front of the shops in the northwestern corner of the college. Ali left the scene along with the killers as Salam collapsed on the ground taking the hail of bullets,

witnesses said. A transport leader linked the killing to the break of the financial arrangement between Salam's union and the gang.

He said: "The general secretary of the Sramik union was hiding for fear of attack by the gang."

Some, however, held factional fighting in the union responsible for the killing.

No case was filed till 6:00pm vesterday.



A local unit of the Ekatturer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee (Committee for the Elimination of the Killers and Collaborators of 1971) stages a rally at the Central Shaheed Minar in Chittagong yesterday to protest the nomination of the prime minister's Parliamentary Affairs Adviser Salauddin Quader Chowdhury for the secretary general of the Organisation of Islamic Conference.

## Opinion poll

# Blair's Labour support sinks destruction in Iraq, according to the

Britain's opposition Conservatives have overtaken Prime Minister Tony Blair's Labour Party in the opinion poll for the first time in 11 years, according to a survey for Friday's

support now stands at 37 per cent, an increase of one point since the end of May. Labour support has fallen two points to 35 per cent. The Liberal Democrats, the

smaller opposition party, have edged up to 21 per cent. Apart from a temporary "blip" in September 2000. Labour, which came to power in 1997, has led the Conservatives in the polls since the autumn of

right-wing Telegraph. The premier has faced weeks of

accusations that his office embellished intelligence to beef up the

Blair's reputation for honesty and competence has been further undermined by a school funding crisis, a widely criticised reshuffle of his senior ministers, indecision over the single European currency and disarray over whether taxes should rise for the better off, the Telegraph

Only 25 per cent of voters think the government has proved, on balance, honest and trustworthy. while 66 per cent think it has not. Blair's own ratings have also plummeted, with 63 per cent believing he has not been honest and trustworthy, the poll found.

YouGov interviwed 2,288 voters

# City landscape

products. These slogans are not necessarily scrawled on the walls but may be printed on paper, which is then pasted on the wall or they may appear on billboards along the city streets. This trend is growing steadily and now there are many places in the city where walls are more or less covered with these advertising posters or billboards towering above them.

Another more recent trend in this line of work is putting up different kinds of structures on traffic islands advertising messages which in many cases obstruct the view for drivers making U-turns as they sometimes fail to see oncoming vehicles from the opposite direction. Thus, these structures increase the risk factor for acci-

Also, advertising signs and billboards block the view when they are installed in open spaces like parks and similar other public places. It is desirable that in the interest of maintaining the openness of these places of recreation, the municipal authorities should discourage erecting these billboards in these places or even ban them if necessary.

In Singapore, there are strict municipal rules restricting erection of hillhoards or other similar structures that hinder the natural beauty in particular areas. The Dhaka City Corporation may perhaps take a

No less guilty of disfiguring the city landscape are the widespread and random placing of posters on city walls and buildings for a variety of purposes, such as advertising medicines and cures of dubious nature, computer training, coaching centres, cultural and other func-

Display of various descriptions including banners fluttering above the head is similarly responsible for affecting the clean look of the city.

The city fathers should do the needful to save the city from the onslaught of graffiti by not allowing it except in certain specified areas of

#### Landslides

He said Tk 50,000 and 21 metric tons of rice had already been distributed among the affected people at the relief centres, and the ministry concerned has been requested to

some other officials went to visit the affected areas in Ramgarh vesterday. They were yet to return when this report was filed at 4:00pm.

Meanwhile, floodwater all but receded in the port city that witnessed little rainfall yesterday.

# Treatment trap

FROM PAGE 1 Most of the private clinics and labs in question are located at Mirpur Road, Babar Road, Humayun Road and Ring Road and are within two kilometres sphere of the government hospitals at Sher-e-Bangla

Ideally, private clinics should be located where government healthcare facilities are not available, but that is not the case here. Private clinics and labs have mushroomed in the area and are doing booming business. Patients from rural areas are the easy prey of brokers. The Rapid

Action Team (RAT) arrested 10 persons from Pangu hospital and the NICVD premises on May 14 on charge of alluring patients to the private clinics. "A broker gets Tk 1.500 to Tk 2,000 from private clinic owners if he/she can hook a patient," an

Pangu hospital told The Daily Star. "Like us, most of the clinics have their paid people at Pangu, NICVD and Suhrawardy hospitals to trap patients," he confided.

employee of a private clinic near

nsurance company, had a nightmarish experience when he went to Pangu hospital after being shot by some miscreants about a month "I went to Pangu hospital with a

Momin Uddin, an officer at an

forced me to get admitted to a clinic at Mirpur Road," said the 28-year-An assistant professor at Pangu hospital conducted the operation at the clinic and charged Tk 11,500. Momin said he had to pay more than Tk 77,000 as hospital, doctor and

bullet in a leg. It was around

11:30pm then. Two youths

appeared from nowhere and literally

treatment there. The clinic's service was far below ordinary. Momen said, adding, " had to pay Tk 1,500 per day as cabin rent alone." he said. The Daily Star recently found a

others bills in less than a month's

day-labourer, Fazlu, waiting at a ward of Suhrawardy hospital for hernia operation. "I got some blood and ultrasonogram tests done at a lab. just opposite to the Mirpur road.

know test facilities are available in this hospital. But a doctor and hospital staff virtually forced me to go for the tests at the clinic," said Fazlu, who came from Bhola for the treatment, when approached. "A hospital staff suggested that At present, all the sewage outlets the operation at the hospital is very

risky and that I should go to a good private clinic he happens to know for operation." he said. "I was about to take his advice but my uncle who lives in Dhaka talked me out of it.'

#### Security guard FROM PAGE 12

The arrest of Daud came after interrogation of Bashar Shaikh. arrested on Tuesday midnight at Gilatala under Khanjahan Ali Police Station with Tk 12 lakh and two kilograms of gold ornaments.

Besides, Liaqat, 47, and Bazlu, 35, of Hogladanga village -- relatives of Daud -- and Kayum, 30, of Gutudia union in Khulna, were taken into custody for interrogation.

Police recovered seals, letter pads and drills of the bank from the houses of Liagat and Bazlu, Daud stayed four days at his village home in Jabusha under Rupsha upazila before he went to the homes of Liagat and Bazlu, said sources. Dhaka police arrested Abul

Bashar, a corporal of army intelli-

gence and brother-in-law of Daud.

in Uttara Model Town and seized Tk

40,000 from him. The list of

arrestees also include Rabiul Islam.

Vajpayee FROM PAGE 12

of an "eventual boundary settle-He said the border issue, which

had bedeviled ties between Asia's

giant neighbours, had never before

been discussed in such detail as in this visit and hoped the political push given to the border talks with the appointment of a Special Representative by both sides "will accelerate the search for a solution to this vexed problem". Vajpayee said he and his Chinese counterpart Wen Jiabao had agreed that work on the clarifi-

- should continue smoothly and that peace and tranquility on that frontier should be maintained. The first Indian prime minister to visit this country in 10 years, Vajpayee appeared very satisfied with his trip, during which he had a chance to exchange views with a

cation of the 4.000 km Line of Actual

Control -- the military ceasefire line -

new generation of Chinese leaders. He said there was a "compelling geographical, political and economic logic" for closer relations between the two countries and added that the Chinese leadership "fully reciprocates our desire for mutual goodwill and for a comprehensive expansion of our coopera-

tion in all areas" The goal of the visit, which was to strengthen ties and create confidence in each other, has been achieved, Vajpayee said, adding that the development of India-China relations augurs well for the future.

Vajpayee, however, ruled out military cooperation between the two countries, saying any defence cooperation in the wake of Defence Minister George Fernandes' visit here would still remain limited.

**Fishes** 

FROM PAGE 12 ing the Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara Lake, Uttara Lake and pools in D&D area from Rajuk for fish cultivation. The pools and lakes have already become poisoned due to toxic waste from adjacent industries and

Waters have got so very contam-

inated that fishes have been dying en masse during the rainy season for the last three years. The air around Gulshan Lake has been thick with stinky smell for the last three days as decomposed

bodies of countless fishes started to

sewerage discharges in them.

come up the water surface. "We are a lone body and can not purify the water of the lake. But we are trying our best to bring the pollution under control by throwing ime into the lake water," said the BFDC chairman. If the government could imple-

ment recommendations of the task

force to control contamination in the

lake, the fishes would not have died. The Department of Environment (DoE) termed Gulshan Lake ecologically critical in 2001 and recommended 19 points proposal for implementation to reduce contamination. But nothing has been done

and surface drains of the Baridhara residential area are directly connected to the Baridharapara part of the lake. The Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) is vet to build up a sewerage system in Baridhara

#### ers to broaden the scope of the inquiries into the George W. Bush administration's handling of intelligence on Iraq's weapons pro-

fiscal year.

form of amendments offered as part of a funding bill for intelligence matters for the coming

> The amendments were proposed by two liberal Democratic representatives: Dennis Kucinich of Ohio and Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas. Lee's amendment would have forced a review of intelligence shared by Washington with the United Nations about Iraqi weapons. Kucinich's amendment would have required a review of review of phone and email contacts between the Central Intelligence Agency and Vice President Dick Chenev

attempts by Democratic lawmak-

Those efforts were made in the

whelmingly. The House and Senate ntelligence committees and the

on the issue of Iraqi weapons. Both

measures were defeated over-

### College student

FROM PAGE 12

FROM PAGE 12

its readers.

crossing, a minibus hit their rickshaw from behind. Ibrahim died on the spot. The victim's mother and brother

were rushed to a local clinic immedi-

sacrifice of her "30 million people".

The figure should be three million,

Narrating the climate of

Bangladesh, it says "Throughout

January the temperature stayed

between 8-12 degrees Celsius"--a

Bangladesh for a little over 24 years

(from August 14, 1947 to December

16, 1971), the book mentions that

says that after the 1991 general

elections, the next general elections

There is no mention of the elec-

tion held on February 15, 1996 and

the incorporation of the provision for

caretaker government in the consti-

published recently, it says, "There

are 30 reserved seats for woman in

Although the book has been

tution through its 13th amendment.

There are other mistakes too. It

Though the Pakistanis ruled

gross factual error.

the period was 26 years.

were held on June 12, 1996.

**Promotional book** 

the parliament, who are elected by

Senate's Armed Services commit-

tee already have begun closed

hearings into whether US pre-war

intelligence on Iraq's weapons

program was hyped to make the

threat seem greater than it actually

Iraq's alleged weapons of

mass destruction program was

the main reason given by the

White House to justify deposing

Iragi President Saddam Hussein

Mongla Port

into the sickly industries there.

Stressing the demand for the

bridge at Maowa, they said it would

not only save the port, but also raise

They said Maowa was the most

convenient point to bridge the

south-western region with the rest of

Bangladesh. "It will also greatly

reduce the distance between the

capital and south-western districts."

structed, gas supply lines could be

taken along it and the potentials of

the backward region tapped, they

With president of the committee

Abu M Ferdous in the chair, the

discussion was attended by legisla-

tors Talukder Abdul Khaleq,

Panchanan Biswas and Nurul

Islam, former lawmaker Gazi Abdul

Haq, Editor of the Purbanchal Liakat

Ali, Engineer Shaikh Mohammad

Shahidullah, former additional

inspector general of police Abdur

Rahim Khan and Ruhin Hossair

Once the Padma bridge is con-

FROM PAGE 12

revenue income.

Affairs, Ministry of Information and an electoral college of the elected its different wings and finally a fivemembers.' member team at the Prime But the DFP does not seem to Minister's Office approved it. know that the provision for 30 The DFP is supposed to project reserved seats for women is no the image of the country and its longer in the constitution after the

people abroad through such promodissolution of the 7th parliament. tional publications. The name Curzon has been spelt But some of the factual mistakes 'Karjon' in a photo caption on the n the book might mislead and baffle Curzon Hall of Dhaka University.

#### The book in its very first paragraph says, "Bangladesh emerged Ctg rally as an independent nation on March 26, 1971 through a nine-month long War of Liberation at the supreme

But police snatched mikes, banners and black flags and misbehaved with the agitators when they were

procession, the committee leaders They condemned the 'police excesses' and 'mishehaviour' at an instant press conference at the

Chittagong Press Club.

Gazi Saleh Uddin, professor of sociology at Chittagong University, said the rally was organised to protest the nomination of Chowdhury for the prestigious office

Committee General Secretary Dr

of the OIC The committee sought permission for the rally three days ago, he

Police said that the rally was not allowed as a meeting of the pir of Charmonai was being held at adjacent Muslim Institute where over

two thousand people had gathered. They denied the allegations of

excesses and ill-behaviour

# **US troops abducted**

FROM PAGE 12

Iraqi town of Balad for two missing soldiers admitted yesterday they could not understand how someone would be able to abduct two US

soldiers and their armoured vehicle.

"We are all baffled," Sergeant

First Class Tyrone Paige, involved in

the intensive sweep told AFP, adding:

"Everybody in this area knows what to look for. I'm looking for them." He declined to name the two missing soldiers, but said they were

from the 4th Infantry Division. Blood was found near their post in the vicinity of the flashpoint town, but there was no other trace of the two soldiers or the Humvee, a defence official in Washington said Thursday, asking not to be named.

were missing suggested they had not been out on patrol, Paige said, explaining that military convoys usually included three Humvees with five soldiers in each vehicle. At least one person who is

believed to know something about

what happened had been detained. the US defence official added. Paige did not speculate on the fate of the two soldiers, while the defence official said simply that the

military was "concerned" There were no helicopters obviously involved in the search yesterday, an AFP correspondent at the scene said.

Meanwhile, one US soldier was killed and nine others wounded late Thursday in an attack on their unit in the town of Kufah, south of Baghdad, a US military officer said yesterday.

The soldiers out on patrol with

raqi police were attacked by gun-

men, Marine Major Rick Hall told AFP

in the town, near the Iraqi Shiite holy city of Najaf, around 130 kilometres (80 miles) south of Baghdad. The attack occurred at around 8:30 pm local time, he added.

"They were conducting a motorised patrol and the exact circumstances are still under investigation,

local residents told AFP yesterday. There were no reports of any US casualties in the attack, at around 1:00 am local time, when an

unknown number of attackers fired a

single RPG at the US position, they

The US troops returned fire but apparently without hitting any of the attackers, who fled. The troops deployed throughout the town, backed by helicopters, and sealed off its main road in search of the attack

Another report says, US troops guarding the local government The fact that just two soldiers building in the flashpoint town of Fallujah came under rocket propelled grenade (RPG) attack overnight,

# AFP, Ahmedabad

Judge H.U. Mahida ruled there

Around 2,000 people died in the ensuing rioting, most of them

witnesses were not reliable and seem to have been given money to go back on the statements they gave to police," said a Muslim leader in

feared for their safety. "In a situation where the state

Daily Telegraph newspaper. A YouGov poll found Tory

The Conservatives have nudged ahead after a series of surveys have

shown the gap narrowing since Blair

became embroiled in a row over the

failure to find weapons of mass

cue from the Singapore example.

arrange for more relief. The DC of Khagrachhari and