Glowing tributes

bers and lawmakers were present

People from all walks of life thronged the memorial premises just after the departure of the president and prime minister.

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina also placed wreaths at the memorial in the morning, accompanied by top leaders of the party.

The other political parties, which placed wreaths, included Communist Party of Bangladesh, Jatiya Party (Ershad), Gano Forum, Workers Party of Bangladesh, both factions of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal and Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal.

Freedom fighters, educational institutions, various student bodies. socio-cultural organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) also placed wreaths. Industries Minister Matiur Rahman Nizami and Social Welfare Minister Ali Ahsan Mohammed Mujahid of Jamaat-e-Islami were among the cabinet members present at the memorial, but no leaders of their party were seen there.

Jamaat collaborated with the Pakistani occupation forces during the Liberation War.

The day was a public holiday. National flag flew atop public and private buildings. Main roads and road-islands in the capital and other cities and towns were decorated with national flag and festoons. Important government buildings were illuminated at

Newspapers published supplements and Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar aired special programmes, highlighting the significance of Victory Day.

Bangladesh missions abroad also celebrated the day.

The president held a reception at the Bangabhaban in the afternoon, attended by political leaders, diplomats and members of the civil

 $The \, prime \, minister \, in augurated \,$

19 banks accept utility bills from Jan 1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The residents in the Dhaka and Tongi areas will be able to pay all utility bills to 185 select branches of private or public sector banks from January 1

The government yesterday issued a circular after the decision of the finance ministry on Sunday that also okayed online bill payment -- through ATM and credit cards and other electronic systems accepted to the shorlisted banks. The circular named 19 banks,

branches of which in Dhaka and Tongi will accept telephone, electricity, gas, water and other bills to reduce people's inconvenience in

Two international banks --Standard Chartered Bank (SCB) and Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) -- are not on the list but will provide electronic bill payment facility to their clients.

The finance ministry will decide on introducing a similar system in Chittagong later this month.

The circular also stated bills can be paid through internet banking system of the Eastern Bank. The remaining banks will allow payments through ATM and Readycash cards.

colourful children's and juvenile's rally on the day at Bangabandhu National Stadium.

reunion.

other organisations held discussions and cultural programmes across the country to mark the day.

the day took place on Dhaka University campus and adjacent areas of Dhanmondi lake, giving the area a festive look. Thousands thronged the places and enjoyed the programmes including music street drama, film show, art exhibi-

arranged a function for children on

Some organisations including Red Crescent Society, Rotaract Club and Badhon organised blood donation programmes at the TSC.

US wants to police

Bangladesh in modernising police and other law-enforcing agencies in a bid to fight drugs smuggling and

Harry K Thomas yesterday met Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury at his office and offered to remodel the law-enforcement agencies including police, coast guards, Ansar and Village Defence Party, home ministry sources said.

Thomas also expressed US intention to assist Bangladesh in introducing machine-readable passports (MRPs), replacing the

Sources at the home ministry said a team has carried out a feasi-bility study on introduction of the MRŤs anď they needed technical support for the success of the proposed project.

passport-holder. The planned MRPs, readable in a specially designed machine, would carry all necessary information on the holder, they added.

CIA takes over Saddam quizzing

Rumsfeld refused to say whether or not a bearded Saddam. pulled from a hole in the ground by US troops in Iraq over the weekend, was cooperating with his captors.

"I have asked (CIA Director) George Tenet to be responsible for the handling of the interrogation of Saddam Hussein," the secretary told reporters, stressing that the civilian spy agency was better for

B Chy prepares

term his venture as a third force. "You can say it's an alternative stream," he told The Daily Star.

"I've already talked to some 200 people from various professions and 80 percent of them requested me to form a political platform," he went on, adding they contributed to his ideas. Badruddoza will meet different

professional bodies like the Federation of Chambers and Commerce and Industries. Bangladesh Garment

According to his plan, the framework for programme-based politics and the new platform would be launched in January.

He will then declare his programmes and urge the government to implement them.

If the government does not act accordingly, he would try to create strong public opinion against it and push the government to quit.

The 74-vear-old retired politician kicked off political activities on December 16 by setting up an office at Baridhara.

Badruddoza launched the office to exchange views with a cross

Mayor of Dhaka Sadeque Hossain Khoka organised a reunion of the freedom fighters who fought in Sector No. 2 during the Liberation War, at the Nagar Bhaban. Khoka also fought in the

The freedom fighters recalled memories of the war at the

Political parties and various

In the capital, the main events of tion and recitation of poems.

The Liberation War Museum

help rebuild

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US has shown its willingness to back

US Ambassador to Bangladesh

Existing passports, prepared manually, do not contain details of a

REUTERS, Washington

The CIA has taken control of the Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said on Tuesday. And he defended releasing film of the grubby former Iraqi dictator after

the task than the military.

FROM PAGE 12

He alleged that secret agents kept an eye on people who went to his office to meet him and some "Nobody can stop me with threats or intimidation, I'll continue to speak for the people.'

Saddam's family Manufacturers and Exporters

sectors I'll decide the next course of action," Badruddoza said on Tuesday.

hope and humiliated.' Raghad and her sister Rana are living in Amman, Jordan, where

they were given asylum in July. appoint an attorney to try to con-

tact Saddam, whose whereabouts have not been released.

family wanted her father to be tried by an international tribunal, rather than a special court set up last week by the 25-member governing council to deal with crimes against humanity allegedly committed by Saddam and other members of his

trial, not one held by the Governing Council which was appointed by the occupier," Raghad said.

7-yr-old girl slaughtered after failed rape attempt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Miscreants at Shailapara in Ishwardi allegedly slaughtered a seven-year-old girl and critically wounded her playmate on Monday, having failed to rape

A six-member gang took Nitu, daughter of Noor-e-Alam, an expatriate to Saudi Arabia, and her eight-year old playmate to a nearby jungle when they were playing close to Iswardi Railway Station at around noon and attempted to rape the girls at dagger-point, police said. As the girls screamed in fear,

the culprits slaughtered Nitu. They also tried to slash out the head of Nitu's playmate but locals rushed to her aid and held Ripon, a member of the gang, police Ripon was turned over to

police where he confessed his involvement and named the Lokon, Alauddin, Raju, and Rafiq. A case was filed with Ishwardi Government Railway Police.

ZIA to get extra lustre by next March

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Once the ongoing Tk 125 crore renovation of Zia International Airport (ZIA) ends by March 2004, the government hopes it will be one of the most attractive airports in Asia, said State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin yester-

"We are working to upgrade ZIA and hope the work will end by the next four months," said the state minister at a discussion organised by The Bangladesh Monitor, a fortnightly aviation journal. The British Airways sponsored the event to celebrate the centenary of aviation at a local hotel.

Security service provider shot dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified assailants yesterday shot dead a security service provider at Manipuripara in Tejgoan. Khandakar Masudur Rahman, 34,

owner of Splinter Security Service, was shot point blank twice in the head at his Sangsad Bhaban Avenue office at around2:15pm. Rahman's business partner Iqbal, a

retired major, informed Rahman's family about the incident over tele phoneataround2:30pm. Abdur Rashid, Rahman's driver, said he along with Rahman's mother

and sister rushed to the office and foundhimlying on the floor. He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) at 3:00pm

wherehedied at 4:00pm. "Idon't know if Rahman had a feud with anyone over anything," Rahman's uncle Aslam told The Daily

No case was filed till 7:30 last night.

7 Bangladeshis

Sunday night.

When the attention of a foreign office spokesman was drawn to the incident, he confirmed the death of seven Bangladeshis but could not give identity of the victims. He said Bangladesh embassy in

Jordan which looks after the affairs

in Lebanon is in touch with the Beirut administration as well as Bangladesh Honorary Consul, Dandan, to get their identity. The fire killed 14 labourers that

included nationals from Egypt and India, an AFP report said earlier.

The fire, the report said, broke out at the factory in Brummana that had metal shutters and door. The workers inside might have been suffocated in their sleep, it added quoting a police source.

Nepalese PM

Airport (ZIA) at 9:00pm.

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, the ministers, chiefs of the three services, dean of diplomatic corps and diplomats of the Saarc countries were present at the airport.

The two prime ministers are expected to discuss matters relating to the 12th Saarc summit, scheduled for next month, in the Pakistan capital of Islamabad Bilateral issues of mutual interest

will also be discussed at a meeting between Khaleda and Thapa today. said a foreign ministry press release. During his stay, the Nepalese prime minister will also pay a courtesy call on President Iajuddin

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina will make a courtesy call on the visiting prime minister at his Dhaka Sheraton Hotel

Thapa will leave Dhaka for the

Iraq reconstruction

allies in Iraq war -- the UK and Spain and some Asian countries like Japan, Thailand, South Korea and Singapore.

Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Morocco, Afghanistan and Egypt are also on The full list has Afghanistan,

Albania, Angola, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bulgaria, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Georgia, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Oman, Palau, Panama, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, Solomon Islands, South Korea, Spain, Thailand, Tonga, Turkey, UAE, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, the United States and Uzbekistan

sion on the list, Morshed said: "We are observing the situation. We have to look at it from the South Asian context. We have to consider the political aspects of the issue and positions maintained by other South Asian countries."

On whether Dhaka would

approach Washington for its inclu-

Responding to another question about the possibility of sending troops to Iraq, or Bangladesh's participation in peacekeeping there, the foreign minister said the issue is not in discussion now.

He said Dhaka is closely watch ing the developments in Iraq

Foreign ministry officials said Bangladesh still holds on to its position of not sending troops to rag without UN endorsement.

Police informer. another killed in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two persons including a police informer were killed in separate incidents in Raozan and Patenga Monday night.

Police said their informer Abul Kashem was abducted from near his house at north Guzra village in Raozan at around 10:00am Monday and shot dead sometimes

Police recovered his body from Laxmikanta in Kadalpur at around 11:30pm the same day. In another incident, muggers

stabbed to death auto-rickshaw driver Abdur Rahim, 25, near Patenga Police Camp at around The gang intercepted Rahim and stabbed him when he refused

to turn off the vehicle's engine. The victim, hailed from West

Dabua of Raozan upazila, died on

Death penalty

capital punishment.

He said he felt "compassion" for Saddam, despite his crimes, after seeing images of "this destroyed man" being "treated like a cow, having his teeth checked" by an American military medic.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said the world body opposes the death penalty. The European Union shares his view. "We believe there are no circumstances that can justify the death penalty," said Diego Ojeda, the EU's

spokesman on external relations. Claudia Roth, the German government's top human rights official, called for a fair trial for Saddam. "No death penalty must be imposed. That demonstrates the contrast to the dictator's system," she told the newspaper Bild.

Fogh Rasmussen, who supported the US-led war that ousted Saddam. also emphasized his country's opposition to execution. The international community and the Iraqi leadership "must show the Iraqis that an alternative to the past decades' terror regimes exists,'

Danish Prime Minister Anders

Denmark's Berlingske Tidende newspaper said. Bush has long been a proponent of capital punishment. During his six years as governor of Texas, 152 convicts were put to death. All 15 member nations of the European Union have abolished capital punishment, and they often encourage other countries most notably the

United States to eliminate it. Members of the US-appointed Iraq Governing Council have predicted a quick trial and a quick execution for Saddam. The US occupation authority suspended using the death penalty, and Iraqi officials have said they will decide whether to reinstate it when a transitional government assumes

sovereignty, scheduled on July 1. Russian Deputy Foreign

Minister Yuri Fedotov, whose country opposed the war, said only Iraqis could decide Saddam's fate. Australia's Prime Minister John Howard, who sent troops to fight in Iraq, said he would support the death penalty for Saddam. "If it were

imposed, absolutely," he said. Truck bomb

FROM PAGE 12

"I ran to the place to see if there were people injured. There were lots of human rémains on the sidewalks and we started collecting them," he said. The rescue effort was more difficult because it was still dark at the time of the blast, he said.

Suicide bombers have frequently targeted Iraqi police stations in strikes at what they view as collaborators with the US-led occupation authorities. The coalition scored a major victory over the weekend with

Saddam's capture, but violence has continued in Iraq's volatile "Sunni Triangle" region as his loyalists see the over the detention.

MASSIVE OPERATION

vehicles and attack helicopters arrested eight suspects vesterday during a massive raid against the 'thorn in their side" in the restive city of Samarra, the army said. Soldiers used plastic explosives

to blow down the front gates of houses in the middle of the night after they rolled into town with 42 Bradley fighting vehicles to conduct door-to-door searches for people on their wanted list. The raids, codenamed

Operation Ivy Blizzard, began about 2 am (2300 GMT) just three days after US forces announced they had captured deposed dictator Saddam Hussein hiding down a hole near the neighbouring town of Tikrit.

WFP executive director

Expressing satisfaction over the WFP programmes in some of the northern districts, Morris said he was impressed by the partnership among the WFP, the government and the NGOs in implementing those programmes. "But, there were still scopes to do better," he

He said the WFP had been conducting one of the largest foodaid programmes of its kind worldwide in Bangladesh. Yet, it could cover only 10 percent of around 30 million ultra poor of the country. The WFP had been providing here the largest school-feeding programme of the world, under which about 1.2 million school children of the food-insecure districts and slum areas in Dhaka receive micro-nutrient fortified

'High Energy Biscuits'. He assured that WFP's food assistance to the vulnerable groups in Bangladesh would continue.

programmes in Bangladesh, Morris said providing food aid was not enough. So, skill training for the beneficiaries of the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) programme -- the destitute women and their families -- had also been incorporated in. Yet, according to his assessment, the scope for such training facility was still too limited compared to the huge need.

Meanwhile, at a press confer-

ence at a city hotel yesterday,

Morris said Bangladesh needed to

upgrade its food distribution

system to ensure food security for

all, especially the vulnerable

women and children. Even a small

investment in this area could

change the status of a person, a

society, a nation, and even a region, the WFP executive added.

continued support for the Rohingya refugees from Myanmar until their return home. He said the agency in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR) was now feeding some 19,500 Rohingya refugees living in two camps in the south-eastern

Myanmar in 1991, and its help to repatriate them. At present, the agency spends around \$2 million in feeding the remaining refugees, who need 450 tons of food a month. WFP Representative in Bangladesh Douglas Casson

Coutts was also present at the press

briefing, organised before Morris' departure yesterday morning. According to the WFP statistics,

about 300,000 tons that cost around \$65 million, shared by bilateral and multilateral donors and the Bangladesh government. The WFP fact sheet said VGD alone benefited 2.5 million people,

ments for these programmes is

13 die in road accidents in Jhenidah, Savar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirteen people were killed and 55 others injured in separate road accidents in Jhenidah and Dhaka Tuesday night

Of them, 11 were killed in Jhenidah and the rest in Dhaka Our Jhenidah Correspondent report: Eleven people were killed and 40 others injured in a road accident at Kharakhali, 10-km off

Khulna Highway. Police and locals said the accident occurred at about 10:30pm when a Dhaka-bound night coach from Khulna hit a roadside tree, killing seven on the spot and injuring 44 others. Four of the injured died on the way to Jhenidah Śadar

Jhenidah town, on the Dhaka-

According to our Our Staff Correspondent, a road accident at Amin Bazaar under Savar upazila of Dhaka left two people killed and 15 others injured on the same

The incident took place at about 9:30pm when a Dhaka-bound bus Shvamoli Paribahan from Kolkata tried to avert a collision with a truck. The bus skidded off the road into a ditch, injuring 17

Drizzle, cloud brings chill

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Clouds amid unusual winter drizzle yesterday concealed the sun in most of the places in the country.

Sources in the Met Office put down the dismal weather to the depression in the Bay of Bengal that was heading towards the Andhra coast in India. The gloomy weather forced many to stay indoors and hampered normal activities to some extent.

will improve tomorrow but the temperature will have a fall of two to three degrees Celsius. The lowest temperature in the country was recorded at 15.5 degrees Celsius at Dinajpur and the

highest 28 degrees Celsius at Cox's

The sources said the situation

Bazar and Teknaf. The lowest temperature in the capital was recorded at 19.2 degrees Celsius. The Met Office forecast said there will be drizzle today in some places of Barisal, Dhaka, Sylhet and Chittagong divisions and the weather is likely to remain dry with partly cloudy sky in other parts of

the country. Our Chittagong office reported that the district vesterday recorded a rainfall of six millimetres, while

the sea was stormy.

Dhaka Asia's

quality management, a tool of improving performance by learning from good practices, initiated in 2002, will be complete in March Dhaka's score was pegged as 'limited" in the five-category

began yesterday. Other categories of the index are minimal, moderate, good and

excellent, with the scores of other cities are mostly "good". About 800 people including air quality and transport experts and government officials from 50

Philippines, in his presentation said the level of average particulate matter in Dhaka went down 50 percent in 2003 after two-stroke auto-rickshaws were phased out. The average particulate matter level decreased from 300 microgram/m3 in 2002 to 150 micro-

Protection Agency. Air pollution is the result of increasing migration, motorisation and uncontrolled urban growth in Asia, the speakers said adding human health, quality of life and the urban poor are mostly

ment, private sector and civil society to keep the skies of the cities clean and said constant monitoring is necessary for air pollution cuts. The participants also stressed

The speakers underscored coordination among the govern-

affected by air pollution.

Cyclone kills 50 FROM PAGE 12

state in 18 years. At least 10,000 people died in the neighbouring state of Orissa when a cyclonehitits coastal areas in 1999.

Hasina again asks

present situation marked by vioence, corruption and misrule," said Hasina, also the leader of the opposition in parliament.

She was addressing a rally of party men in front of the AL central office at Bangabandhu Avenue before leading a massive Victory Day procession on Tuesday, in one of the biggest showdowns of the main opposition in recent days.

The former prime minister urged people to vow afresh to unseat the government to establish 'corruption and violence-free democratic nation as dreamt of by the martyrs of the Liberation War. "Removal of the alliance government is a must," she said.

The AL chief inaugurated the colourful procession that started from Bangabandhu Avenue at 4:10pm and paraded various streets of Purana Paltan, Bijoynagar, Kakrail, Suhrawardy Udyan, Shahbagh, Elephant Road and Mirpur Road. It ended at the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at about 6:00pm.

Boarding an open jeep, Hasina waved to people who lined up on both sides of the streets.

The processionists carried drums, banners and festoons and staged mock-shows on different aspects of the Liberation War on bullock carts and trucks. They also showed mock victims of violence under the present government.

The participants shouted anti-government slogans and carried banners reading 'Resist misrule of alliance regime' and 'Step down Khaleda'. Top leaders of the party and its front organisations also took

part in the procession. Earlier, the leaders and activists thronged Bangabandhu Avenue, coming in processions from far and wide of the capital.

Hasina warned the government of dire consequences in case of any attempt to obstruct the January 10 She castigated the government for not allowing the AL to organise victory fairs at Paltan

Maidan and Ramna Batamul. She blamed the BNP for giving state recognition' to the collabora-

tors of Pakistani occupation forces. "Being a freedom fighter, Ziaur Rahman (late president and BNP founder) allowed politics of antiliberation Jamaat-e-Islami by amending the constitution and rehabilitated it, while Prime Minister Khaleda Zia inducted amaat leaders into her cabinet.

Referring to the arms hauls in Bogra and at Kuril in Dhaka, Hasina alleged the ruling alliance men are involved in the crimes. She urged the prime minister to disclose the names of the persons who brought in the arms and their purposes.

"If the government fails, it must allow an international inquiry into the arms haul cases," she said

Huge funds spent

without a well thought out defence policy. The absence of such a policy raises the scope of fund abuse, it pointed out.

The standing committee men-

tioned the absence of a defence policy 32 years into independence and asked the Armed Forces Division, responsible for such task, to work out a policy soon for the better management of the forces. Officials of the Armed Forces Division told the committee that

The committee also discussed alleged corruption and anomalies in the Trust Bank and Sena Kalyan Sangstha, run by the army authorities, and asked the authorities to

make the organisations profitable by

incurred by the bank in dealing with foreign currency coming from

peacekeeping missions, the committee asked the authorities to take

About the loss of Tk 24 crore

removing the anomalies.

they were working on the policy.

stern action against the guilty. Responding to the committee

then managing director of the bank was sacked and a court of inquiry was "The persons responsible will be ounished," a meeting source quoted the army chief as saying.

observation, Army Chief Lt General Hasan Mashud Chowdhury said the

purchase, training, promotion and policy, having found it plagued by "If the Armed Forces Division needs more resources, it should be

It also called for reforms of the

Armed Forces Division, coordinator

of the three forces, and its operation

provided with the support. But the organisation has to be efficient," the committee chairman said. The committee asked the government to initiate steps to strengthen the armed forces under the treaties

signed with China, France and

PM urges

opment and dented the country's "It is not wise of any to speak against the country when abroad. We hope the opponents will shed the practice and help the government

ure progress, sne said

benefits of development programmes and have more in stock for them in future. the prime minister said, adding: "We went to extraordinary lengths to

Khaleda, listing achievements of

the coalition in its first two years in

office, said people were reaping the

The political changeover a few years after independence was aimed at establishing democracy and rule of law and people entrusted the late president Ziaur Rahman with rebuilding the country and putting the economy on the mend, Khaleda

The rally over, Khaleda, also BNP

chairperson, led a colourful procession, joined by thousands of leaders and workers of the party and its front

Bhutan," said Verma.

FROM PAGE 1 do with what is going on inside Bhutan. No Indian artillery support or manpower has been provided to

Bhutan shares a 380-kilometre

(236-mile) unfenced border with

West Bengal.

MCCI review

Although the domestic invest-

ment has started to increase, the

predictions of the Asian

Development Bank (ADB) and the

central bank in January 2003 that the economy was on its way to recovery from the previous year's slump have not thus fully materialised, it adds. The chamber said the industrial sector has recorded positive growth during the period but remains lower than what was realised in the corresponding period of the previous

"The adoption of the easy money policy in recent months is likely to lead to a revival of domestic demand. Local investment has already started picking up in response to tȟe lower lending rates of commercial banks. Imports of capital equipment and industrial raw materials have increased considerably, which is a sign of growing investor confidence.

The major task for the government now is to maintain a congenial business environment by removing the impediments like infrastructure bottlenecks, deteriorating law and order, bureaucratic inefficiency and corruption that bedevil the economy, rising the cost of doing business, and dampening entrepreneurial initiatives, the chamber suggests.

encouraging first step, it observes. What is now needed is to put in place an appropriate strategy which will make the banking sector responsive to the changed monetary policy

The chamber observes that the slow growth in domestic demand might be attributed, in part, to the government's budget cuts aimed at improving the fiscal deficit and to a slower inflow of wage earners' remit tances.

The MCCI says there is no defini-

tive information yet on foreign direct investment (FDI) inflow during the

period under review. However,

according to the latest Board of

Investment (BOI) survey, FDI inflow

during the January-June 2003 period

increased by 71 percent from the corresponding period of 2002. The external sector impetus to growth was modest during the period under review. Exports increased slightly faster during the period than last year's. Imports, on the other hand, jumped 29 percent from a negative growth in the preceding period, the review mentions.

On the fiscal front, the government should raise its spending on essential social and physical infrastructures to boost the efficiency of the economy, the MCCI recommends. "Visible improvements are urgently needed in governance and institutional reforms which will help improve the investors' confidence and strengthen the environment

was 4.71 percent in September 2003,

The former president refused to

Association, Supreme Court Bar Association and editors, teachers and senior citizens of society from next week. "After taking opinion from all

section of people as part of his plan to mobilise people of all shades of opinion on a single platform to find solutions to national problems. Badruddoza told journalists at

his office launch that the government pushed him towards politics immediately. "They created such

an atmosphere that I would enter

people were threatening his wellvishers ever since he came up with the platform plan.

FROM PAGE 12 caged," she said. But governing council member Muaffak al-Rubaie, one of the first Iraqi officials to meet Saddam after his capture, said Wednesday in Arabic newspaper Ashraq Al-Awsat: "Never, he was not drugged

. but he was demoralised, without

She said the family would Raghad told Al-Arabiya that the

"We demand a fair and legal

FROM PAGE 12

On the efficacy of the WFP

On a question, Morris promised

Bangladesh. He referred to WFP's support to some 250,000 refugees, who crossed into Bangladesh from

its country programme for Bangladesh benefits some four million people every year under various food-aid projects, including VGD, integrated food security, school-feeding, and rural develop-The total annual food require-

while about 1.2 million children of 450,000 primary schools get vitamin-enriched biscuits in some 'food-insecure' northern and north-western districts.

Programme) and WHO (World Health Organisation) on AQM capabilities of 20 major countries in Asia, which was carried out in As part of the project, a

index, Cornie Huizenga, one of the researchers of benchmarking AQM, told the three-day workshop on better air quality 2003 that

countries are attending the workshop, launched under the Clean Air Initiative for Asian Cities in association with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and World Bank (WB). Chris Hoban, WB portfolio and operations manager, the

the standards prescribed by the United Standard Environmental

gram/m3 in 2003 that is also above

managing high-polluting buses and trucks and controlling dust to reduce air pollution.

This was the first winter cyclone in the

140 killed benchmarking exercise of air The government shored up the economy and curbed statepatronised and party-based crimes.

reduce human-rights violations.

Moving on to post-war

Bangladesh, Khaleda accused the

then ruling party of remaining busy

advancing their own ends rather

the two Indian states of Assam and than the country in a trend leading to famine and lawlessness.

FROM PAGE 1 deceleration in the growth of inward remittances, and a slower growth of investment credit to the private sector," the review reads.

year. Except for jute and cotton textiles, apparels, leather and metal products, all manufacturing sectors nave registered negative growth.

The switch to a liberal monetary policy in the recent months is an conducive to growth. The inflation rate, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI),

compared to 3.61 percent in September 2002 and 1.83 percent in September 2001, the review cites. The accelerated inflation rate was generated by higher prices of both food and non-food items. Approximately 60 percent of the inflation, experienced in 2003, was due to the rise in the food prices, compared to 35 percent in 2002 and 39 percent in 2001, the review