WB criticised for 'excessive interference'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The fifth meeting of Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB) yesterday criticised the World Bank (WB) for what it said was its 'excessive interference' in Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP)

The bank was particularly blasted for 'unilaterally' withdrawing a Tk 200 crore chunk of its loan, intended to be used for constructing a flyover from Gulistan to Jatrabari under the Tk 900 crore DUTP, as the board failed to come up with a suitable proposal for the job in time.

"We would have definitely proposed some alternative pro-posals if they had given us some time," said DTČB Executive $Director\,Quamrul\,Islam\,Siddiqui.$

"It is the government that should have the full authority in the WB-financed projects, as it has to pay back the loan. We should not entertain World Bank's role as the project controller," he added.

Secretary of the communications ministry Syed Reazul Hayat echoed the same sentiment at the meeting, held at Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) office, with Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka in the chair.

The Jatrabari-Gulistan flyover is now being constructed by a private company on a build-own-operate-

The meeting also criticised the poor selection of sites and faulty construction of nine overhead footbridges, built in the city under the DUTP. "No physical and social planning was done before starting with the construction of the over-head footbridges," Siddiqui

The meeting was informed that the construction of Mohakhali flyover that began on December 6, 1999 was lagging behind in schedule but would be complete by June

"We will be able to complete all the components of the DŪTP by June next year, when its first phase ends," Mayor Khoka hoped. He instructed the DUTP project directors to work with conceptual understanding and complete the work within the timeframe.

The mayor also announced that two more inter-district bus terminals would be constructed at Keraniganj and Tongi to further smoothen the traffic movement to

The DTCP in that meeting decided in principle to demolish the roundabouts near Hotel Sonargaon and at Shahbagh, Matsya Bhaban and Gulshan Section 1 and Section 2 to ease the traffic-snarls. The Saarc Fountain at Hotel Sonargaon roundabout will be relocated to the adjacent

Among others, representatives of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, the WB, Roads and Highways Department, Local Government and Rural Development Department, Local Government Engineering Department and Dhaka Metropolitan Police

Abandoned boy finds home at orphanage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The four-year-old physically and mentally challenged boy, found abandoned at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) on December 18, was moved to an orphanage at Uttara Sector-9 yester-

Families for Children, a private orphanage funded mostly by Canadian individuals, received the still unidentified boy at 12:30pm.

The boy, weighing 12kg and wearing T-shirt, shorts and slippers, was left at the door of gynae cology ward No. 15 of the DMCH and no-one claimed him till date.

Social welfare department's DMCH unit agreed to arrange a shelter for the boy who is unable to move his hands and legs.

Shikha Biswas, an assistant project manager of the orphanage, received the child who also lacks mental growth and does not respond to any call or sign.

"He will be kept at our special care section for disabled children,'

"His condition suggests he needs physiotherapy and we have special trainers for it," she said adding that their city home in Uttara and vacation camp in Narayanganj have been nursing 11

Grabbers doubly It also added that the government of all labels and the second states of all labels are second states of all labels and the second states of all labels are second states of all labe

Minister M Shamsul Islam's state- ment was the custodian of 21 lakh ment in the Jatiya Sangsad during the last budget session that there were over six lakh acres of government land across the country.

The chairman of the committee, Mahbubur Rahman, said the committee was now working to find out ways to recover the public land from encroachers' clutches.

The committee has already asked the land ministry and district collectors to send reports on the status of government land across the country.

According to the study of Abul Barakat, professor of economics at Dhaka University, the government held 33 lakh acres, of which more than eight lakh acres were farmland, 17 lakh acres non-farmland and over eight lakh acres water

The study said the nonfarmland and water bodies were illegally occupied and the government lost control of 88 percent of the farmland distributed among the poor over the last 20 years.

acres of vested property, 90 percent of which were grabbed by illegal "The land remained un-

recovered because of the lack of government machinery, [ahbubur said. Two-thirds upazilas are now

without assistant commissioners of land. The additional deputy commissioners (revenue) across the country are engaged in nonrevenue activities, he said.

"Officials should be trained in land management.'

The committee chairman criticised some other ministries, espe cially two departments of the communications ministry -- railway and roads and highways -saying they leased out land without lawful authority.

The ministries take land allocations from the land ministry and after completion of their work, lease out the remaining land, he

Buriganga

huge RCC pipe constantly releasing chemical effluents directly into the river from nearby dyeing facto-

The locals said the pipe carries chemical wastes discharged from a number of dyeing factories.

An employee of a nearby dock-yard asked The Daily Star correspondent. "You come, ask questions and leave. What do you do to stop this from happening?

The Buriganga water has assumed a dark black colour and is terribly stinking. Though totally unfit for bathing or for any household purposes, hundreds of people bathe and wash cloths in the river every day. Many use this water in

their toilets. Alek, an owner of a dyeing factory, said his factory has no waste treatment plant and releases chemical effluents in the Buriganga. But he wants to treat the wastes and wishes others to do the same. He claimed that his factory has valid papers and clearance from the departments con-

"I am not alone, there are thousands of other dyeing or chemical factories in Shyampur, Fatullah, Sutrapur and other parts of the country that discharge chemical wastes into rivers," Aleksaid.

"You first stop thousands of others and then come to me," he

Director Administration of the Department of Environment Abdus Sobhan said any authorised factory is supposed to have its own waste treatment plant and can discharge treated wastes into the

"I am not sure whether the factories releasing chemical effluents have clearance or not," he said, adding that he would look into the matter.

A source at the DoE said on condition of anonymity, "Most of the factories, chemical or other, which are dumping wastes in the Buriganga have no approval."

The DoE has identified a number of unauthorised dyeing factories on the banks of the Buriganga and plans to take action against them. The department suffers from manpower constraints and adequate authority hindering law enforcement and monitoring, he

To save the river from pollution, the authorities concerned must be corruption free, laws must be enforced and politicians must be committed to the cause, General Secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, Abu Naser Khan said.

NCBs to collect land taxes from Jan 1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) will collect land taxes of six upazilas under as many divisions from January 1.

Under an experimental scheme, landowners in Sylhet Sadar Upazila, Hathazari in Chittagong, Shibpur in Narsingdi, Barisal Sadar upazila, Satkhira Sadar Upazila and Paba in Rajshahi will pay their land-related taxes to four NCBs -- Sonali, Janata, Agrani and Rupali -- instead of Γahshil office, official sources said.

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman will inaugurate the new tax collection system at Sylhet Sadar Upazila on January 1 while Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Land Minister M Shamsul Islam will jointly open the scheme at Shibpur upazila on January 2.

The government has taken up a massive plan to develop the land management system in a bid to simplify land laws and solve decades-old land-related problems, Shamsul told The Daily Star yester-

"The new initiative to collect land taxes through the NCBs is aimed at facilitating landowners and removing their hassles," explained the land

"This process will be gradually spread across the country by 2005,"

Shamsul, at a regular monthly meeting yesterday, directed divisional commissioners and authorities concerned to take appropriate measures for making the new scheme a success. Landowners, under the reform

programmes, would also be allowed to deposit land taxes in advance for more than one year, sources said. Under a proposed one-stop

service, three offices -- survey office circle office of revenue and subregistrar's office -- will be brought under a single unit to serve people in selling and purchasing of land. Currently, people have to three different offices, they said. The reforms are also aimed at

computerising the entire land management system and preparing a rescribed form for land registration. The proposed form would include all necessary data and be limited to a single page to ease the registration A tougher law would also be

introduced to curb forgery of docu-ments and the sale of a particular piece of land to more than one person, they added.

Peacekepers due

there, the bodies will be brought straight back to Dhaka.

A UN chartered aircraft has been kept on standby to fly the dead and if Benin does not have adequate postmortem facility, the bodies will be taken to Sierra Leone for autopsy and then home by The ISPR is now waiting for a full

report from the nine-member team led by Colonel Fazlul Haq of Bangladesh Battalion-9. "Once we get the report, we can specify schedule for arrival," Lt Col Nazrul said. The families of the dead are

likely to get compensation from the UN in line with convention and Bangladesh army will also provide compensation packages for each family, sources said.

Funded monthly by military staff, the army has a family security scheme that works as a group life insurance policy and a family gets a compensation package in the event of a death of an officer, army sources

UN Resident Representative in Bangladesh Jorgen Lissner offered deep condolences to the bereaved and Bangladesh government.

Bangladesh's contribution to peacekeeping and peace building in Sierra Leone and Liberia were one of the best examples of inter-national cooperation, Lissner said.

Jatiya Sangsad whip Syed Wahidul Haq also expressed shock at the death of the officers.

Manufacture

FROM PAGE 12

its next meeting. "The committee will show the models to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia. If the she gives her consent, we will recommend the government manufacture auto-rickshaws, Abdul Alim, chairman of the committee, told newspersons after the meeting held at the Jatiya Sangsad

Bhaban The committee also asked Progati authorities to submit a proposal for manufacturing cars.

"Despite the company's capabilities, it could not manufacture a car in the last 30 years, as a vested quarter of the country discouraged t for its own interest," said Alim.

Currently, Atlas manufactures 1,300 motorcycles and 500 Mishuk a year.

The committee also discussed issues on Chittagong Steel Mills. Alim said the mill was shut down in 1999 because of unnecessary cost, which precipitated the mill into a losing concern. The chairman shot down the

then trade union for the shutdown. 'The persons responsible for making the companies losing concerns should be hanged.'

Presided over by Alim, the meeting was also attended by committee members and other officials.

Fears replace hopes

who had earlier declined to give a

Cemeteries in Bam were overflowing with fully clothed corpses and hundreds of bodies had been tipped into trenches hollowed out by mechanical diggers, witnesses said.

State television said 13,000 bodies

had been recovered so far while aid workers estimated more than 100,000 people may have been left United Nations Humanitarian Affairs Officer Jesper Lund, heading the U.N. coordination team, said 22 international search and rescue

teams were still scouring the ruins for

survivors but would probably soon

switch to helping those already

"There is definitely a very bad situation in the area, and there is no...clear picture," Lund, whose arrival from Tehran had been delayed by transport problems, told Reuters television.

The pre-dawn quake on Friday also injured about 30,000 people when it flattened about 70 percent of the mostly mud-brick buildings in the ancient Silk Road city. Bam airport became a sprawling makeshift hospital and rubblestrewn pavements were lined with

injured, some on intravenous drips. "The number of dead could be far more than 20,000 -- many places are untouched. We are beginning to smell the stench of death. If we haven't cleared the area by the end of the week there will be a threat of epidemics," an Iranian rescuer said.

Reuters witnesses saw some looting when vans of young men armed with pistols and Kalashnikov assault rifles drove into Bam and stole Red Crescent tents, while others on motorbikes chased aid trucks, picking up blankets thrown out by soldiers.

Rescue attempts were compli-cated by fears of aftershocks, which experts said could be as strong as the first quake and occur at any time over The Islamic republic's quick

acceptance of help from the international community contrasted with its rejection in 1990 when a quake killed 36,000 people.

It says help will be welcome from everywhere except Israel.

Human security

respect for the rule of law and justice. "If I was to think of one single thing that is missing here, I would say it's lack of accountability and the rule of law and justice that enables violators to get away with impunity.

Citing recent incidents of religious intolerance including persecution of the Ahmadiyya community and arson attacks on Hindu homes in Shadhanpur, she said the government must safeguard minority rights by resisting such attacks and ensuring an independent investigation into the arson inci-

She also denounced the torture and custodial deaths during the anti-crime Operation Clean Heart.

"I was told not just by the government but by many civic leaders and ordinary citizens in Dhaka that such an action was essential to reduce urban crime. A year later, crime seems as rampant as ever, "she said. During the two-hour speech,

Irene highlighted the post-September 11 global security sce-nario and its adverse impact on the human rights situation. She said the US-sponsored 'war on terrorism' has actually worsened global security. "Far from making the world a safer place, the 'global

security doctrine', promulgated by the USA, has made it more danger-"People feel more vulnerable than ever because the roots of insecurity have not been addressed," she observed.

CPD-FBCCI

FROM PAGE 12

The dialogue had an overt objective to critically examine the weaknesses and advantages of the business environment of CPD Executive Director Dr

Debapriya Bhattacharya presented the finds of a survey on business confidence in Bangladesh, conducted by the CPD on 81 companies each having a total asset of not less than Tk 10 crore. The survey found 96.3 percent

respondents most emphatic about the absence of public faith in politicians' honesty. Ninety percent respondents indicated that they had to make kickbacks to access public utilities like telephone and electricity, Debapriya reported. As many as 75.3 percent of those surveyed said organised crimes push costs of their businesses up.

Most speakers viewed that onerous administrative regulations, favouritism in policy decisions and contracts, corruption and poor infrastructure at the micro level were among the major drawbacks generating a mismatch between investors' confidence and the country's economic strength.

But, Bangladesh must boost the investors' confidence, as it needs an increased investment inflow to raise the income levels of 50 percent of its population living below

the poverty line, they added. Former president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association Anisur Rahman Sinha said though wages in the country were low, it could not compensate for the high cost of corruption, poor infrastructure and gover-

Travel agents

The possible strike will affect the overseas passengers especially non-ballotee Hajj pilgrims, who are being handled by Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (Haab). The non-ballotee Hajj flights are scheduled to start from Thursday while Biman will resume its flights from Wednesday to ferry ballotee pilgrims to Saudi Arabia. As the travel agencies will stop

booking tickets from Thursday, the pilgrims are going to face serious trouble in booking seats for their Saleh said the problem can be solved if the civil aviation ministry

takes proper initiatives. "We have already informed the civil aviation minister about our reaction to the agency commission cut and requested him to take steps," he said.

Bar, a global apex body of airlines, decided to reduce travel agencies' commission from 9 percent to 7 percent from January

Quoting the World Bank, Irene Khan said the 'war on terrorism' is shifting attention and resources away from the issues of develop-

The AI chief accused the United States of undermining the best systems of collective security in the world -- the United Nations and the International Criminal Court. She said, "We are receiving

reports that the US forces in Iraq are adopting tactics such as demolishing the houses of suspects, putting humiliating restrictions on the movement of civilians and failing to investigate killings -- the same tactics used by the Israeli army in the occupied Palestinian territo-The US seems to be actively encouraging its officials to break the

ing investigation of mass killing by its troops and allies in Afghanistan and ignoring allegations of torture by its soldiers in Iraq. "There is no doubt that the behaviour of the US has sent a message to others that international law and human rights can be ignored with impunity in the name

norms of international law by refus-

She said after the September 11 terrorist attacks, many countries in the name of national security rushed through legislation allowing detention without trial on the basis of secret evidence.

She said the AI would submit a report to the US Supreme Court next spring when it will examine the legality of detaining people in Guantanamo, where the US government is holding over 600 prisoners from Afghanistan and other countries without trial.

On Saddam Hussein's trial, the AI chief said, "We want to see him tried for the terrible atrocities committed during his regime -- but justice will only be served if Saddam s given a fair and open trial in accordance with international standards and without the death penalty."

Bangladesh Institute of Law a International Affairs (Bilia) organised the function at its office. Bilia Director Waliur Rahman moder-

1 killed, 30 hurt in stampede at PM's rally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, from Hatia

One person died and 30 others were injured in a stampede at a public rally of the prime minister at Char Chenga of the island yester-

The victim was identified as Mostafijur Rahman, 30. Of the injured, 10 have been admitted to the local health complex in critical

Speaking at the rally as chief guest, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia said her government believes in politics of development and production and is working for continuation of the development process, which is essential for the welfare of the nation.

"The country suffered a setback since many programmes initiated by the last BNP government were not carried out by the following regime," Khaleda told the rally organised by local BNP on Hatia Dwip Gover-nment College pre-

Kalyanpur slum **HC orders** status quo

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

till Jan 4

A High Court vacation bench yesterday ordered a status quo at Kalyanpur Poura Bustee (municipal

An eviction drive carried out by the House Building Research Institute (HBRI) flattened seven of the nine sections of the slum on December 21 without any prior notice to the slum dwellers, according to the inhabitants of the slum.

The High Court order followed a public interest litigation filed by Ain O Salish Kendra, the Coalition for the Urban Poor, two non-governmental organisations, and two residents of the slum on December 24 challenging the evic-

Hasina invited to JCD's silver jubilee party

BSS, Dhaka

The Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) yesterday invited Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina to its silver jubilee celebration programme on January

A team of JCD leaders including its President Shahabuddin Laltu and General Secretary Azizul Bari Helal went to invite the opposition leader at Sudha Sadan, Hasina's residence, along with some pro-AI Bangladesh Chhatra League lead-

Having waited for one and a half hours, the JCD team failed to meet the AL chief, Laltu told the official news agency later.

Later, they handed over the invitation card to Hasina's press secretary, he added.

"It would have been a happy occasion if we could personally hand over the card to the opposition leader," the JCD president said.

Small trader stabbed dead at Sabujbagh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A small trader was stabbed to death inside his factory allegedly by his employee at North Mugdapara in Sabujbagh yesterday.

Waliullah Pradhan, 25, owner of a belt factory, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with stab injuries in his chest and abdomen at around 7:30am. He succumbed to his injuries at around 1:00pm. Police said Waliullah's employee Mokbul alias Mukul, who used to reside with the former

in the tin-shed factory at North Mugdapara, stabbed him at about On hearing him groaning, locals rushed to the spot and caught Mokbul before turning him over to

"My brother fired him a few days ago on charge of stealing money, but he reinstated him at the local traders' request," the victim's brother, Shahidul, told newspersons at the DMCH.

A murder case was filed with Sabujbagh Police Station.

Bremer takes

FROM PAGE 12

But in a pre-taped interview scheduled for transmission here yester day, Bremer retreated when he learned that it was Blair who had made the claim.

being told first of the source, Bremer said: "I don't know where words come from but that is not what (Iraq Survey Group chief) David Kayhas said."

Asked about the claim without

The US-led Iraq Survey Group is hunting for weapons of mass destruction. "I have read (Kay's) reports so I don't know who said that," Bremer said in an interview on the British

ITV1 channel with Jonathan Dimbleby. "It sounds like a bit of a red herring to me," the American con-tinued. "It sounds like someone who doesn't agree with the policy sets up a red herring then knocks it

But Bremer retreated when told the claims were made by none other than President George W. Bush's staunchest ally Blair.

"There is actually a lot of evidence that had been made public," Blair said this month the Iraq Survey Group had found "massive evidence of a huge system of clan-destine laboratories" in Iraq.

2 Iraqi children

machineguns in a coordinated assault on two bases of the US-led coalition and government offices housing local police, the head of a Polish-led force in southern Iraq

said. "This was a planned, coordinated and massed attack," the Polish PAP news agency quoted General Andrzej Tyszkiewicz as saying. "In all cases, the suicide drivers were shot dead before they could strike their targets."

Continuing an offensive aimed at stifling widespread guerrilla assaults, US troops seized 10 people in overnight raids in Baquba, site of recent attacks against them.

Intelligence unit FROM PAGE 1

amounted to only Tk 21 crore. As an example of how much a

restaurant can pay if it is honest, Saifur mentioned that the newly launched fast-food joint Pizza Hut paid Tk 4 lakh in VÁT in just three days. "Therefore, we should intensify the monitoring of hotels and restaurants," he reasoned. VAT payments by other service

providers were even more frustrating. The community centres of the city paid only Tk 35 lakh and the beauty parlours only Tk 18 lakh during the period. But these estab lishments are doing a highly intense business, the minister said "You should collect VAT from them by scrutinising their sales records,' he instructed the NBR officials.

"We want to pursue selffinanced projects in gas and infrastructure sectors. That is why we want to strengthen our revenue collection," the finance minister told journalists after the meeting.

Akheri Munajat today

Hossain, Zobairul Hasan and Ahmad Lat of India and Moulana Mohammad Hossain of Bangladesh took part in the discussion yesterday.

They called upon the Muslims to be enlightened and perform their duties following the teachings of Islam.

The president will attend the congregation and offer a Munajat from a special dais erected at the northern end of the Ijtema ground.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is scheduled to join the Munajat from a separate stage set up on the roof of a nearby Bata factory building along with her senior cabinet colleagues and high civil and military officials. Leader of the Opposition and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina

senior party leaders under a canopy erected on the roof of the nearby Ashraf Textile Mills. Thousands of women will also ioin the Munajat from the roof tops of nearby mills, factories and high-

rises and from residential houses at

will offer a Munajat along with

Uttara and Tongi. The Gazipur district administration and the government's communication directorate installed several hundred loudspeakers on the Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway between Cherag Ali Market in Tongi and Azampur in Uttara and along the road leading to Tongi Railway

Station for people who will not be

able to make it to the Ijtema

The Ijtema ground itself and the surrounding areas have turned into a sea of humanity while thousands of others continue to rush towards the ground. The government arranged special buses, trains, and ferry services to drop

devotees at the Ijtema ground. People attending the Ijtema, particularly the elderly, suffered from the unusual chill due to inclement weather throughout the day vesterday. The lanes and bylanes leading to the ground turned into quagmires following the early morning light drizzle. Participants faced difficulties in performing activities like ablution, bathing and

Four more devotees died yesterday raising the toll to nine since Friday. The dead were identified as Sekandar Howlader, 55, Hemaetuddin, 56, Shukkur Ali, 60, and Rafiq Mian. All of them died from

cold and old age complications. At least 90 couples were solemnised without dowry after Asr prayers yesterday.

AL-JSD unity

preferring to keeping up an inde-pendent course, away from the AL, BNP shadow.

The AL has also been sitting on alliance formation at an early stage of anti-government movement.

The party is planning to launch a vigorous anti-government movement alone before casting for

Dhaka gets time

want to force the issue (on

Thomas emphasised views of both pro- and anti-labour union investors, as their opinions he hoped would help the government decide on the issue, meeting

The meeting that also featured

ministers of commerce and indus-

tries, state minister for labour, minister and other policymakers seemed to have found a new direc-"We have sought time (from the US) to find an alternative solution through understanding of all par-

ties. We shall sit again and reach an understanding," said Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, who chaired the meeting. On the government position on trade union (TU), Saifur said, "We are looking into different aspects of allowing trade union and the impact of withdrawal of GSP (generalised system of preference) by the US. We don't want to scare investors. We don't want to deprive the

workers of their democratic rights "Many countries had faced similar paradox. We will see how they handled the crisis," Saifur

has to amend the law to adjust, he pointed out. Finance ministry sources said the WB country representative,

The Bepza act finds trade union

government request to coordinate the issue. "We don't oppose trade union. But we are afraid of the way Bangladeshi trade union works. This will affect production in EPZs,' said leading EPZ investor Youngone Chairman Kihak Sung, who repre-

Christine I Wallich, agreed on a

sented the investors. Two months ago, the US ambassador declared that unless Bangladesh allowed trade union in the industrial zones by January, it would not get GSP facilities in garment exports.

"The US will not extend this

deadline," he said, adding: "Bangladesh and the US signed a GSP treaty

back in 1991. After it ended in 2001,

Washington extended it by another

three years on the condition that

unless Bangladesh allows trade

union by then, it will no longer get

The two EPZs employ 130,000 workers in around 180 industrial units and boast South Korean and Japanese investments, apart from local investment to the tune of \$600 Bangladesh sat on the issue because GSP has a comparatively

Under GSP, Bangladeshi exports to the US fetch \$40 million a year, but exports from the EPZs earn \$1.2 billion, a fifth of the country's total export earnings. Again, the US is the largest buyer

of Bangladeshi products, account

low economic value in its total

export basket.

ing for 44 percent of its total exports mostly outside GSP. Around \$103 million was invested in EPZs last year and fresh recruitment to the industrial zones increased to 10,000 in a country

Mental hospital robbery

Probe body formed

A five-member committee was formed yesterday to investigate the

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

robbery at Pabna Mental Hospital Headed by Dr Tanmov Biswas consultant of the hospital, the committee comprises the first class magistrate of the district administration, Investigation Officer (IO) of Pabna Police Station Subinspector Abul Kasherm, Dr

Abdullah Al Baki and Dr Sajjad The committee has been asked to submit its report within three

Meanwhile, Zillur Rahman, storekeeper of the hospital, was taken to a three-day remand. The IO said they have had infor-

mation on the robbery but

declined to disclose anything.

The doctors at the hospital said a drug crisis is looming large following the robbery. "The crisis will take a serious turn in a few days. We are providing our patients with medicines taken earlier from the store that are running out," said the director of

the hospital, adding that they

informed the authorities of the

matter for necessary action.

Ansar-Shibir nexus

general of Ansar.

GSP facilities.

the specific charge of bomb-making to carry out subversive activities under the umbrella of Al-Mujahiden, an extremist outfit based in Jamalpur and Sherpur districts, will be taken to the JIC (Joint Interrogation Cell) for further questioning, sources said. Joint forces recovered 16 power-

ful handmade bombs, bomb-

making materials and brochures

from the hotel and police are look-

ing for hotel proprietors Raju and Γouhidul Islam Azad. Nazimul Islam, district adjutant of Ansar, said all ansars had been disarmed after 20 rifles were looted from the storeroom of Daulatpur Jute Mills on April 24 and they now only carry clubs.

Official sources said many of the 5,000 ansars including some 2,800 battalion ansars in the southwestern zone have connections with outlaws. Police sources said 838 extrem-

Zafar, a de facto MP in Faridpur. ists in the southwestern region surrendered to police in 1999 under general amnesty and 766 of them were inducted into the Ansar. Of them, 133 deserted the force and 60

under observation by intelligence The four ICS activists arrested on agencies. "It is difficult to tell the good from the bad as they were inducted

into the department on the basis of

charges. The remaining 573 are

verification reports," said Nurul Karim, deputy director of Ansar in Khulna division. Senior officials of Khulna Metropolitan Police and Khulna Range have expressed deep con-

cern over the involvement of a

section of ansars in criminal

Sangsad FROM PAGE 1

Sheikh Hasina's microphone off. The AL continued boycotting the

next two JS sessions. The AL demanded an apology from Prime Minister Khaleda Zia for declaring a non-MP BNP newcomer, Shah Mohammed Abu

It also demanded apology from the speaker for his comment that the House runs smoothly without

the opposition and from Alamgir Kabir, state minister for public works ministry, for hurling invecothers were sacked on various tive at Hasina in parliament.

DUTP