President urges

heart of the practice of democracy,

the president said a great responsi-

bility lies with parliament mem-

bers to ensure good governance by

setting up a model of accountabil-

He said members of both the

treasury and the opposition

benches are liable to the nation in

On democratic administration

system, the president said the

government has been carrying out

reformative activities to build up

an effective, skilled and dynamic

administration. Merit-based

appointment and promotion

process is going on to bring about

the nation, both natural and man-

made, The president said the com-

mitment to build a poverty-free

Bangladesh has been time and

again hit by adverse global situa-

tion, natural calamity and terrorist

and other commodities has stood

against the courses of develop-

ment. Recently, he said, a militant

group has been making vile

attempts to tarnish all pervasive

successes of the government by

their nefarious terrorist activities.

But the government is facing all

On poverty alleviation, he said

the government has formulated

the poverty reduction strategy on

the basis of four strategic princi-

ples--achievement of speedy

economic progress, putting prior-

ity on the development-

supporting sectors, implementa-

tion of poverty-reduction

programmes and increasing

investment in industry, health and

development strategy is to reduce

poverty rapidly and uplift the

standard of living of the people," he

nomic front, the president said

despite slow economic progress in

developing countries, Bangladesh

has been able to maintain a steady

pace of development. Estimated

GDP growth at 5.52 percent in

2003-04 has reached 6.3 percent at

the final count due to higher prog-

ress in agriculture, industry and

highlighted the sector-wise suc-

cesses starting from agriculture to

industry and education to environ-

order and external affairs.

ment and judiciary to law and

Members of the treasury bench

frequently applauded the presi-

said after assumption of office by

the present government, sensa-

tional murder cases were disposed

of in due time while social peace

macy, the president said as a result

tum has been achieved in trade,

with southeastern and far-eastern

Focusing on economic diplo-

On law and order situation, he

dent by thumping desks.

and stability was restored.

countries.

In his speech, the president

Citing statistics on the eco-

"The ultimate objective of this

nutrition sectors.

told the lawmakers.

service sectors.

these terror tactics successfully.

He said increase in price of oil

Referring to various odds facing

dynamism in civil service.

ity of all public departments.

this respect.

FROM PAGE 1
people," he said, adding: " it is
possible to resolve any national problem on the basis of consensus through mutual trust and understanding."

President Ahmed, who made his last formal address to the present parliament that completes its five-year tenure in October, urged the people to exercise their franchise in the next parliamentary elections and thus help nourish democracy.

"This is the expectation of all that in the light of democratic manners and customs and in the light of the constitution established by your cooperation, the people of Bangladesh exercising their franchise will enrich the history of nourishing democracy in Bangladesh."

As the president delivered his speech from the podium of parliament, main opposition Awami League (AL) stayed away holding a public rally at Paltan Maidan demanding fair elections under a reformed caretaker government and Election Commission as part of their street agitation.

"There may be differences in our thoughts, system of work and strategies, but in the matters of national interest and patriotism there must be profound unity amongst us," he told the House.

The president noted that the struggle for institutionalising democracy has not yet come to an end. "It is the responsibility of all to rear this democracy we earned. For this a consensus of the whole nation is needed."

In his 35-page written speech started after Maghreb prayers, the president dedicated much of his time to fighting out terrorism, consolidating democracy, accountability of public administration, easy access to justice, economic development and for-

eign relations. Terming terrorism "a great problem" for democratic and constitutional rule, he said such terrorism equally hinders stability of the state, public security and advancement of development activities while the image of the country stands questioned in the

international arena. "So, it is needed to resist unitedly any wrongful attempt of making the nation unstable through terrorism and anarchism," he said, reminding that Bangladesh is a "liberal democratic" country. "Irrespective of religion and caste, among and the band of friendship exist unimpaired here."

The president categorically said, "Any vile endeavours for creating anarchism through terrorism, violent political activities and bomb blasts cannot be tolerated."

Praising government initiatives to suppress the "designers of acts of indiscipline and bomb-terrorism, he said, " Noble intentions and earnest cooperation of all are need of the hour for maintaining of eastward diplomacy momenunhampered peace and discipline

He said: "A refined culture of democratic values is needed first for establishing overall rights of the people...it is the responsibility of all to manifest further the peaceful, welfare-oriented democratic society through united efforts, mutual understanding and partnership.

The president observed that discrimination, fanaticism, retaliation and cruel activities can never bring forth the message of healthy and pleasant life.

Pointing his finger at hostile domestic politics, he said politics should be used for wellbeing of the people by making it "free from this ugliness of differences, fighting and retaliation.

"There shall be no malice and differences, no conflicts of interest; we have the task ahead to build our country.

Foreign diplomats, representatives of international organisations, dignitaries and high civil and military officials were present at the opening session of the year to listen to the president's address to parliament

Recognising parliament as China and Japan.

FROM PAGE 1

The New Year session this time will have fewer workdays compared to the previous ones during the current parliament. The session had 22 workdays in 2005, 43 workdays in 2004, 24 workdays in 2003 and 37 workdays in 2002.

In absence of the speaker, Deputy Speaker Akthar Hamid Siddiqui yesterday presided over the session. In his welcome address of the New Year session he urged the main opposition lawmakers to join the House and play a responsible role.

Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed tabled the Bangladesh Telecommunications (amendment) Ordinance at the beginning of the session.

was made to the passing away of some eminent persons. The House held a short discussion on the death of lawmaker and former minister Shamsul Islam Khan.

delivered his last speech in parliament vesterday as its tenure will expire on October 27 this year.

FROM PAGE 16 But on December 20, 2005 Amadeus' counsels succeeded in gaining a twomonth stay on the High Court's order. As Biman did not withdraw the suspension until January 2, 2006, Amadeus sent a legal notice to the national flag carrier on January 3 asking it to lift the suspension or face contempt of court proceedings.

Eventually, Biman's response came 20 days later with travel agents feeling relieved upon resumption of bookings by Amadeus from yester-

MA Muhaimin Saleh, president of the Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (ATAB) told The Daily Star yesterday that suspension of getting ticket bookings from Amadeus had caused serious problems in air travel sector. He welcomed Biman's latest move, how-

Mustafa Kemal, country manager of the GTD, said they had wanted to fight out the legal battle in the court but the vacuum created by the temporary suspension made room for competitors to take away market

Under the global distribution systems various companies like the four in operation in Bangladesh manage air ticket bookings using sophisticated information technol ogy, and get paid from the airlines concerned \$2.0 per passenger each

made by the government.

sation of non-bank financing.

Due to socioeconomic and other causes, he noted, maintaining excellent relationship with the Muslim countries along with the countries of the Middle East is an important direction of the foreign He said Bangladesh achieved appreciation from America and

European countries for her signifi-POST-MFARMGEXPORT cant role in the regional and international arena and for democratisation, empowerment of women, micro-credit etc. He said the role of Bangladesh warehouse (CBW) both in private

defence forces in safeguarding the independence and sovereignty, alongside maintaining internal law and order and security and rendering services to calamity-stricken people, has been widely appreci-

On the hosting of the 13th Saarc Summit in Dhaka, he said Bangladesh earned a bright image for taking various important decisions in the summit that endorsed Afghanistan as new member of the forum and gave observer status to

Journalists

out for assassination by political extremists, paramilitary forces or criminals, the report said

The other 61 died when disaster struck while on assignment -- 48 of them in a military plane crash in

War-torn Iraq accounted for the death of 35 journalists out of a total of 38 killed in the Middle East, making the region "by far the most deadly beat for reporters in the field," said IFJ general secretary AidanWhite.

Most of those who died were local, many of them working for international media outlets in Iraq where the streets are too dangerous for foreigners to tread."

US troops were involved in the Asia". death of five journalists, "bringing to 18 the number of reporters and media staff killed at the hands of occupation soldiers since 2003," the

The IFJ has called for independent investigations into these deaths to eliminate suspicion that they

were deliberately targeted. A total of 36 journalists were

"2005 was a year of tragedy and

killed in the Asia-Pacific region last year, with the Philippines again accounting for most deaths, with 10

"The Philippines, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh remained the most dangerous areas, but a worrying trend of violence has also emerged in Thailand," the IFI said.

The majority of victims in the Asia-Pacific region were not killed in crossfire between warring groups Alongside the existing one-stop or by accident while they were

reporting in conflict areas. 'Most of (them) were directly targeted and killed because they were journalists."

The IFI attributed the deaths to "a culture of violence and intimidation directed towards journalists in

Apart from the Philippines, the death toll included six killed in Pakistan, four in Sri Lanka, three in India, three in Bangladesh and two each in Afghanistan, Nepal and

the targeting of journalists in the Asia-Pacific region," said IFJ president Christopher Warren.

JS session

Law, Justice and Parliamentary

Besides, an obituary reference

President Iajuddin Ahmed

The sitting of the session was adjourned last night until the next Sunday afternoon.

Biman

everbelated.

Fuel price

FROM PAGE 16

were much higher than those in the corresponding period of the previous year, reflecting strong efforts

Besides, the quarterly fiscal deficit was higher than that of the previous year and was financed mainly from the banking system external aid inflow and slow mobili-

Concerning developments in the real economy, the report said data on crop production, manufacturing production, private sector credit, credit by economic purpose and sectoral credit flows as well as exports, imports and remittances all point to broad based strong growth in economic activities during the first quarter of FY 06.

After analysing the prospect and challenges of the country's readymade garment (RMG) in the post-MFA era, the quarterly suggests setting up of a central-bonded

and public sector. It says CBW would be an effective strategy to facilitate advance stocking of raw materials for entire textile and clothing supply chain that eventually contribute to reduce lead time. In CBW system, the exporters are also provided with full duty-free facility, which will reduce their unit.

cost of production. Besides the recommendations, the report outlines the threats, weaknesses and opportunities in the RMG sector.

First DNA lab

FROM PAGE 1

the laboratory within 24 hours. DNA is the fundamental building block of an individual's entire genetic makeup.

Denmark Ambassador to Bangladesh Niels S Munkwasspecial guest at the inaugural ceremony where Minister for Women and Children Affairs Khurshid Zahan Haque chaired.

Niels S Munk said the sophisticated DNA test laboratory will significantly contribute to reducing violence against women and children.

crisis centre (OCC), from where the repressed women are getting healthcare, police assistance, lega aid, social and mental support and shelter, involving six ministries in the setting up of DNA laboratory will add a new chapter in preventing women repression, the health minister said.

To assist the victims of violent activities throughout the country, five DNA screening laboratories will also be set up in sadar hospitals of five divisional headquarters, he said.

Prof Dr A Z M Zahid Hossain acting principal of DMCH and AKM Shamsuddin, acting secretary of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, were present, among others, at the ceremony.

Dhaka to ask Delhi | Mufti Hannan

Bangladesh-India border in last six to seven months," said an investiga-

Following blast incidents in recent months, explosives experts said in their reports that except for electric detonator and power gel, the components are available in local markets.

They earlier observed that 'India is most likely' the country of origin of that particular type of power gel, which is also used in seismic surveys by mining companies in Bangladesh. The detonators are usually used for military and commercial (oil exploration, mining etc)

After the statements of the arrested militants and intelligence reports, the experts now are convinced that their earlier assumption isright.
"The detonators, power gel,

ammonium nitrate and some other chemicals used in the bombs are not available in local market, the militants smuggled those in from India," observed an expert. One of the expert reports reads:

'Countrywide bomb blasts on August 17 and recovery of power gel from Kishoreganj, Rajshahi, Munshiganj and Goran in the capital suggest that the masterminds are in possession of a good number of electric detonators and huge power gel and it is a dangerous notice to all

According to intelligence officials, the militants smuggled the explosives mostly through the border points in Rajshahi and Sylhet region, said a source.

Although different groups traffic in explosives from the neighbouring country, only two or three groups are involved in smuggling explosives for the militants, an investigator said, quoting findings of the

investigation.
In the first week of December, law enforcers arrested Tariqui Islam of Boarmari Schoolpara under Godagari upazila of Rajshahi, a key explosives supplier to Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh in Rajshahi region. He smuggled in detonators, power gel and other materials by

JMB chief Abdur Rahman's younger brother Ataur Rahman Sunny would usually make the payment to him for the goods brought in across the Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj and Naogaon borders, said sources.

A Rab press release quoted JMB Rajshahi division commander Shafiullah alias Tariq, who was arrested at Natore Railway Station on December 17, as saying that he used to look after the smuggling of all bomb-making materials and equipment, and that he recently smuggled in some 5,000 electric bomb detonators from a neighbouring country. He also said the detonators were in possession of Tariqul.

The investigators are trying to unearth the militant outfit's foreign connections from whom Tariqul has been receiving the supplies of explosives, according to the sources.

The government is likely to ask the Indian government to conduct an investigation to verify the information in the report that Dhaka is going to send to Delhi. It will also request them to take steps to stop sales of explosives to unauthorised customers and take action against Indian members of the syndicate, said sources.

"Those who are manufacturing the explosives and detonators in India are doing so for sale to legal buyers, not to unauthorised buyers," said an official tasked with carrying out the investigations.

Veena Sikri

a partial lifting of the ban on import through the land route that was imposed by the Bangladesh government four years ago.

"It is our hope and expectation that the ban will soon be com-pletely lifted," the Indian high commissioner said addressing the inaugural function of a two-day Indian textile exhibition at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

Indian Synthetic and Rayon Textiles Export Promotion Council (SRTEPC) is organising the 'Third Indian Textile Exhibition-2006 (FTEXPO). As many as 28 enter-prises at 29 stalls are displaying their products including manmade textile items such as polyester, rayon, nylon and blended

Bangladesh is the 10th largest importer of Indian synthetic, rayon and blended fabrics and yarn worth Rs 200 crore or 2 percent of Indian export items, Sikri said.

She said a series of infrastructural deficiencies combined with cumbersome and bureaucratic handling procedures cause great delays and inefficiencies in the export-import process at Benapole and Petrapole land ports.

Sikri said, "There is a growing need for encouraging, if not insisting on, the movement of goods between our land borders through sealed containers."

Containerised movement of goods through land, riverine and railway routes between India and Bangladesh will considerably reduce the existing heavy burden on the Benapole-Petrapole land route, she observed.

"It would result in faster, safer and more secure movement of goods between our two countries and would also eliminate a lot of artificial obstacles to greater bilateral trade," she continued. The demand for fabrics and

yarn in Bangladesh is increasing, while India offers quality yarn and fabrics at competitive prices, she said. "And the exhibition will give a glimpse of India's capabilities and capacity in the sector.

Speaking at the function, Textiles and Jute Minister Shajahan Siraj urged the Indian textile entrepreneurs to set up primary textile units to meet the increasing demand for fabrics and yarn of the export-oriented apparel industry.
"Prospective investors from

India may greatly benefit from investment in the primary textile sector in Bangladesh," he said inaugurating the exhibition. The exhibition will also create a positive impact on the prospective

investors of India to invest in the

textile sector of Bangladesh. This will help strengthen the trade and economic cooperation between the two countries, he hoped.

The minister said there is a considerable shortage in supply of synthetic and rayon textiles from local sources and the demand-

production gaps are met through import from overseas market. He said the demands for fabrics and yarn would increase furthe due to implementation of Safta and

the Bimstec trade agreements. "The country needs to set up a large number of spinning, weaving, knitting and knit-dyeing, woven fabric processing units. This may be done either individually or as composite mills to minimise the demand gaps of yarn and fabrics for which huge amount of new investment would be required in

future," he added. Commerce Ministry Adviser Barkat Ullah Bulu, Minister (Economic and Commerce) at the Indian High Commission DN Srivastava and SRTEPC Deputy Director Rakesh Tewari also spoke on the occasion.

RU teachers

The academic activities of population science and human resource (PSHR) department have also come to a halt. The department has decided not to continue the activities unless the attackers of its faculty member Mahmudul Hasan are not punished.

The 'controversial' employees on January 21 carried out sporadic attacks on teachers and officials and ransacked the vicechancellor's office.

The investigation into the attacks is yet to start as the authorities did not send necessary documents to the seven-member probe committee formed in an urgent syndicate meeting the same day.

Prof Sadekul Islam, dean of social science faculty and head of the probe committee, told reporters the authorities did not officially ask him to probe the incident. Vice-chancellor Altaf Hossain said sending letters to the probe

committee was delayed due to official process. Talking to The Daily Star for the first time since the incident, the VC branded the attacks as "planned and intentional" to put pressure on

the employees' job confirmation.

"But no-one has anything to do when the employees affairs are now sub judice. A senior teacher speaking anonymously said there is no scope for cancelling the appointments at

this moment due to "certain politi-

cal pressure".

On the other hand, the authorities are also not able to confirm their jobs as the High Court has declared the appointments illegal, headded He said a move is on to reach an

understanding with the plaintiff of the case who challenged the appointments. The university authorities have so far spent about Tk 1 crore to deal with the case, he

The RU Officers and Employees Association announced a one-day token work abstention today to protest against the attacks. Meantime, the condition of

Assistant Proctor and teacher of PSHR department Mahmudul Hasan deteriorated after he was released from Rajshahi Medical College and Hospital yesterday morning. He was committed to a private clinic in the evening. He criticised the authorities'

stance after the attacks. "I was

in the attacks at a press conference.

attacked while working for the university... they [authorities] are not even cooperating with me for my treatment.' The 546 employees staged a showdown on the campus yesterday and denied their involvement

The employees' alliance convenor Rafikul Islam Sardar claimed a third party might be involved to compare Bangladesh's economic taking advantage of their 'demomodel with those of the developed cratic' movement. "It is not believable," VC Altaf

countries in Europe or America, because our problems and potential-Hossain commented on the claim. ities are completely different."

FROM PAGE 16 Hannan and Awal before the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) on completion of their 10day remand in a case filed for the blast at Mirpur Road near New Market on August 17 last year.

In the forwarding report, the investigation officer (IO) mentioned that the information obtained from Hannan and Awal is being verified and the two need to be confined to jail custody until the investigation completes.

On hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate Shamsul Alam ordered to send Hannan to jail, as there was no further petition for remand.

Seeking another 10-day remand, DB Inspector Hassan Ali, the IO of the blast case filed with Lalbagh Police Station, said Awal was directly involved with the August 17 serial blasts, including the one at Palashi Crossing in the capital.

He needs to be interrogated further to find out vital clues to the case and the whereabouts of his accomplices, he said in the forwarding report. Metropolitan Magistrate Shafique Anwar asked Awal

whether he would say anything about the charges brought against him or appoint a lawyer to defend him. He refused to say anything and the magistrate placed him on a six-day remand for interrogation. Hannan has been remanded 15

times for 106 days since his arrest on October 1 last year. Awal was remanded for the 10th time, he has been on remand for 61 days since his arrest on November 18. Mufti Hannan, who dodged arrest for several years, was shown

arrested in nine blast cases filed with Tejgaon, Ramna, Motijheel, New Market and Demra police stations. Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh's (JMB) Rajshahi regional chief Awal is a member of

the outfit's highest tier Majlish-e-

Shura and was captured from a

Dinajpur-bound bus at

Thakurgaon on November 18.

CID team

FROM PAGE 1 They went to the Bheti Siddikia Madrasa in Raninagar, Naogaon, the Hamirkutsa High School and the Bagmara house of Ramian Kaya, a well-known collaborator of the Pakistani army during the Liberation War.

JMB Chief Abdur Rahman and his brother JMB Military Commander Ataur Rahman Sunn used to stay at the Bheti camp while **IMJB** Operations Commander Siddikul Islam Bangla Bhai and Rahman's son-in-law Abdul Awal

ran the other two camps. Enayet Ullah (Jewel), arrested on charge of masterminding the Gazipur blasts in November last year, told investigators in Dhaka that the IMB used the Raishahi and Naogaon camps for combat training and manufacturing bombs, according to sources.

The team, which includes aspector Shyamol Kumar Chowdhury and Sub Inspector Shakil Ahmed, also visited houses of some JMJB victims and talked with a number of people who recounted the dreadful rule of Abdur Rahman, Bangla Bhai and their men from April 1 to June 24 in

The victims narrated how the local police following orders of the then Rajshahi SP Masud Mia helped Bangla Bhai and his men to unleash a reign of terror among the common people. The then officer-in-charge (OC)

was transferred to Chapainawabganj when he resisted JMJB men, they claimed. SP Masud Mia, working as a special SP at the CID now, also became hostile towards another former Bagmara OC Golam Kibria as he stopped the JMJB men from

of Bagmara Ruhul Amin Siddiki

holding militant gatherings at Bagmara. Local people also expressed frustration to the CID team over the government inaction against SP Masud Mia and BNP lawmakers in question for supporting militancy

in the region. Saitur

FROM PAGE 16 He cited an English daily's news item that mentioned the country may strike the highest-ever GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth of 6.86

percent this fiscal. Referring to a statistics, he said only three lakh tonne cement was used in a year 20 years ago, but now it has increased to 15 million tonnes a

"It proves the development of the country's economy," he said. Price hike of essentials does not

represent; a country's economic growth, the minister said, adding, "Price of essentials is within the purchasing capacity of all people, which indicates a strong economic growth. Hartal and economic growth

cannot go together, he said. He requested the media people to

visit the outskirts of Dhaka to see the real pictures of economy at the grass-He, however, said, "It is not logical

Abdur Rahman

He said they are trying to be sure through the foreign ministry and diplomatic channels about what in fact has happened. But they have not got any such information con-firming the reports yet.

Two Bangla and an English daily yesterday reported that police picked up Abdur Rahman, supreme eader of the banned Islamist militant group responsible for country wide bomb blasts since August 17 from a hideout in Barasat on Sunday.

According to the media reports, the West Bengal police arrested Mohsin, an operative of the Islamist outfit, in the 24 Parganas a few days ago. Acting on information obtained from him, they conducted raid in Barasat Sunday and arrested Rahman.

The Indian authorities had taken him to New Delhi for interro-

gation, the reports added.
"We have picked up a man on
Sunday. We still are verifying the
whole thing and who he is," Reuters quoted Inspector General of West Bengal police Raj Kanojia as saying over phone from Kolkata

The police officer said the man was held in a southern district in West Bengal on Sunday but he did not confirm his nationality.

Private television channel ATN yesterday, however, reported that West Bengal Police do not have information of any such arrest. "Botia thana police said no one named Abdur Rahman has been arrested," ATN correspondent Samir Debnath reported from

After countrywide blasts on August 17 last year followed by suicide bombings in different districts, the government on October 28 declared a bounty of Tk 50 lakh for information leading to arrest of the JMB chief or his aide Siddiqul Islam alias Bangla Bhai. Earlier on September 11, the government had announced the bounty without mentioning the amount. Both the militant leaders

Iran trashes FROM PAGE 16 Agency (IAEA) say they have seen no

sign actual enrichment has resumed "Iran will not be intimidated by their (the West's) hollow threats, government spokesman Gholamhossein Elhamsaid. The Europeans are lobbying for

the IAEA to send Iran to the Security

Council, which could impose punitive measures, though Russia, China and other nations are urging cau-Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov met Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mehdi Safari in Moscow and told him: "Russia hopes that Iran

chooses a position which would help

defuse the nuclear problem and renew talks," local news agencies reported. US Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick said simply taking Iran to the Security Council was only one step toward halting the Islamic

riew, given the reliance of Japan,

Republic's nuclear ambitions.

Bangladesh's Press Minister to Washington Golam Arshad's con-tract was not renewed after it expired on January 20.

A meeting of the Superior Selection Service was also held

"It (Iran) poses a threat not only in terms of security terms, but in my promotion to the post of deputy secretary (DS). It was learnt about China and others on energy from the region, it poses some danger to energy security over time," he told 400 senior assistant secretaries are

FROM PAGE 1 director for Asia Pacific at the Austrian foreign ministry, represent-ing the EU Presidency. Pekka Metso, director for Asia and Oceania, representing the incoming Finnish presi-dency of the EU, and Michael Swann

Mazumdar, representatives from

Sharmeen told The Daily Star the civil society members, upon agree-ment, urged the EU to engage the government and the opposition in a dialogue focussed on securing the

7 killed

Police (SP) of the district Rezaul Karim reached the spot around 11:00am with additional police force and BDR personnel and asked the agitating people to settle the matter peacefully

batons to disperse the protesters. The law enforcers entered many houses in the area and beat up inno-

The mob threw brickbats on the cops when they were removing barricades at Chakkirti in the arternoon. Hundreds of people from Chakkirti Road, Abbas Bazar and Kansat surrounded the policemen

local hospitals.

During the police firing, the agitating people set ablaze five police vehicles including a truck and damaged many vehicles stranded on the A tense situation was prevailing in the area as agitated people are still

deployed in the area.

The government on February 23 the same year banned the JMB and agrata Muslim Janata, Bangladesh

have been spearheading a nation-wide campaign for establishing Islamic law in Bangladesh.

(JMJB), accusing them of carrying out a series of bomb attacks and killings to create anarchy.

The law enforcers in Bangladesh went into a massive operation in

Kushtia last week on an intelligence that JMB top brass including Rahman and Bangla Bhai had been holed up there. But the operation regarded as the biggest ever failed to nab any of them.

BNP leader

FROM PAGE 1 Hospital where doctors declared

him dead at 9:00pm.

The reason behind the attack could not be known immediately. However, the criminals left other leaders and activists inside the BNP

office untouched.

Meanwhile, police recovered the slain body of a housewife at Gudaraghat under Shah Ali Police Station last night.

Her husband Ershadul Huq Mamun said he found the door locked from outside on return home at 9:30pm. He said he broke in the house and found the slaughtered body of his wife. Meanwhile, police recovered a decomposed body of a 30-year-old

man inside a carton at a house which is owned by a former army fficer at Kazi Nazrul Islam Road in Mohammadpur around 4:00pm yesterday. Smelling the stink, the landlord informed the police who later broke into the house and discovered the body. The tenants, who rented the house on January 1 this

Principal secy

year, left the house during Eid vacation but did not return.

FROM PAGE 16 Local Government Institute. ASM Rashidul Hey was made chairman of Bangladesh Fisheries

Development Corporation. Managing Director (MD) of Jatiya Pratibandhi Unnayan Foundation Didarul Anowar was made chairman of Bangladesh Forest Industries Development Corporation. Director General of Food, Planning and Monitoring Unit Sheikh AK Motahar was made AS to Economic Relations

Department. Joint Secretary (OSD) Hedayetullah Al Mamun was made deputy managing director of Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa). JS of Finance Khandakar Rashidul Haq was made DG of Department of Environment.

yesterday with the Cabinet Secretary ASM Abdul Halim in the chair. The meeting reviewed a list of senior assistant secretaries for

going to get promotion as DS in this

urged the EU that it is vital for a free

and fair election that the EC is pulled

out of the Prime Minister's Office's

control, and to have its own staff and

the EC will affect the electoral envi-

the representatives what should be

their role during elections, the civil

society members stressed that it is

impossible to judge the legibility of

an election only by monitoring it on

They proposed that the EU, along with the international community,

must closely monitor the whole

election process from the beginning.

This, the civil society members

argued, will flesh out controversial

issues, such as the electoral roll and

appointment of election commis-

sioners that significantly influence

that if the government continues to

frequently amend the constitution or

bypass the constitution altogether,

the result, like the February 1996

elections, will be disastrous. He

urged the EU to bring up this issue in

their discussion with the govern-

nication between Bangladeshis and

the outside world were also raised at

the meeting, to ensure that the peo-

ple gain a wider perspective on different issues and to strengthen

Kuwait cabinet

of ministers that His Highness Emir

Sheikh Saad al-Abdullah al-Sabah

has lost his health capability to

exercise his constitutional prerog-

Alternative channels of commu-

While Dr Kamal Hossain warned

ronment negatively

the election day.

the election.

governance.

FROM PAGE 16

They fear the recent events within

When the EU delegation asked

reporters in Tokyo EU worried

They agreed that this is crucial to mitigate the impasse that is currently evident in the country, she added. The civil society representatives

representing the High Represen-tative for Common Foreign and Security Policy are accompanying This delegation met civil society members including Dr Kamal Hossain of Gono Forum, Prashika chief Quazi Faruque Ahmed, Executive Director of Democracywatch Taleya Rahman, Hunger Project's country chief Badiul Alam

minority groups and former ambas-

autonomy of the Election

FROM PAGE 1 hundred wooden poles on the road. First Class Magistrate Sarwar Morshed and Superintendent of

The law enforcers then removed the barricade from in front of the headquarters of Palli Bidyut office near Kansat Bazar and charged

cent people including women, witnesses alleged, which fuelled their

and locked in a clash with them. At one point police opened fire to disperse the protesters, killing six people on the spot and injuring many others who were rushed to

atives," said a government letter sent to parliament seeking to remove him from power, the state special parliament session to be held at 0700 GMT on Tuesday to launch the constitutional proce-

dures to remove 75-year-old

Sheikh Saad, who underwent colon

Powerful Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, who has been leading the country's day-to-day affairs for years, has the backing of most members of the ruling family to replace Sheikh Saad.

news agency KUNA reported. The cabinet has asked for a

continuing their blockade programme. Additional contingents of police and BDR have been

surgery in 1997.