Opposition conspiring | Supreme Judicial | 'Sick' CEC stays home |

consecutive elections had been held under this system, which were

all free, fair and impartial. The prime minister said people will thwart conspiracy against the country by giving their verdict in 2007 general elections.

She alleged that the opposition wants to boycott the elections perceiving that general people are with the BNP and its allies, witnessing the development activities as well as existence of religious values and harmony under the alliance rule.

Criticising the opposition politics, Khaleda said the opposition is resorting to hartal to halt the development process.

She urged people not to side with the politics of destruction being pursued by the opposition and join the roadmap of development initiated by the government.

Chaired by State Minister for Land Ukil Abdus Sattar, the meeting was addressed, among others, by Education Minister Osman Farruk Prime Minister's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury, State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Rezaul Karim and Fazlul Huq Aminee MP.

The prime minister explained the importance of continuity of government to keep up the ongoing development process, telling the rally that country's welfare, development and future of new generation depend on the right decision of people in the 2007 general elections.

Khaleda, also chairperson of the BNP, said if her party and alliance returns to power in the next election, the country within next five years will carry out its development work without any foreign aid.

Referring to conspiracy against the country by a party, she said conspiracy is also on to erase two countries.

"Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim" from the constitution.

She said the post-independence government had introduced oneparty rule this day (January 25) in the 70s to snatch the democratic rights of the people, and freedom of press and judiciary

'The people of Bangladesh mark the day as democracy killing day, she told her audience.

Turning to bomb terrorism in the name of Islam, Khaleda sought people's help in stopping the menice completely. She urged them to help catch the bombers.

Earlier, the prime minister inaugurated headquarters complex of Bangladesh Gas Fields Company at Birasar, Memorial for martyred freedom fighters of Brahmanbaria, new building of B'baria railway station and a girls hostel of B'baria Government College.

Indo-Bangla

conducted 20 nautical miles off the Sagar Island in shallow waters since the sea was quite rough.

During the exercise, the Indian coastguard demonstrated pollution control drills. Other demonstrations included rescue of a man overboard and evacuation of an injured coastguard from a ngladeshi vessel

Bangladesh Coastguard Director General Sarwar Jahan Nizam visited the coastguard station at Haldia yesterday in connection with the exercise.

According to the sources, the evaluation report of the joint exercise would be exchanged between the coastguard authorities of the

Charge sheet placed

(PP), Advocate Kafiluddin Chowdhury, and plaintiff of the case Bimal Shil were kept in dark about the submission until Tuesday.

District Superintendent of Police (SP) Aftabuddin Ahmad confirmed the submission of the charge sheet but could not confirm the names of the 19 'not charged' by the IO.

When contacted twice over cell phone vesterday, IO Gomez declined to comment on the matter and said he was not bound to divulge any information to the media.

Birnal Shil, the plaintiff, is now preparing to submit a Naraji (no confidence) petition against the charge sheet, accusing the IO of 'dropping the name of one of the prime suspects from the charge

"I didn't know anything about the submission of the charge sheet despite repeated contacts with the IO and came to know about it only on Tuesday from Officer-in-Charge of Banshkhali PS Jasimuddin Khan when I inquired about it," Bimal told The Daily Starvesterday afternoon.

He said, "Hearnt that the name of the prime suspect UP Chairman Aminur Rahman Chowdhury alias Amin Chairman also a BNP leader and cousin of a local lawmaker State Environment Jafrul Islam Chowdhury, was not at all included in the charge sheet and I think he (IO) did it deliberately to do Amin Chairman a favour.

PP Kafil said he too came to know about the submission on Tuesday.

"The IO has not contacted me since last September when I sent back his charge sheet twice because

of some loopholes in it. But I heard yesterday that the charge sheet was submitted on December 14 at a Banshkhali magistrate court," the PP told journalists yesterday.

Sources said the IO in the past tried to submit the 'faulty' charge sheet and sent the memo of evidence (ME) to PP Kafil several times, who objected to the 'errors' and sent it backeach time.

The PP in last September again opposed the attempts of the IO to submitthe charge sheet twice.

Failing to submit the charge sheet time and again, the IO then appeared before an assistant district PP and submitted the charge sheet after taking his approval, said the sources.

On the night of November 18, 2003 Tejendra Shil and ten of his family members including a fourday old baby were burnt to death in an arson attack.

The other ten victims are Tejendras wife Bakul Bala Shil, 60, his son Anil Shil, 42, daughter in-law Sriti Rani Shil, 30, three grand children Rumi Shil, 12, Sonia Shil, 07, and the newborn, three nieces Babuty Shil, 25, Prasadi Shil, 17, and Annie Shil, 07, and a close relative Debendra

Since the tragic mass murder, Tejendra's son Dr Bimal Shil, the only Shachindra Lal Shil, who lost three daughters, left their village home, and has been staying in Chittagong

A 10-member police camp led by a non-commissioned police officer was set up on the burnt courtyard the day after the carnage. The camp is still there to guard the barren court-

Hearing of govt petition

FROM PAGE 16 for auction of the property of a

bankrupt company at gunpoint and the other for injuring a number of Awami League (AL) men and police, In the bomb blast case filed with

the Lalbagh Police Station, Sub-Inspector (SI) Syed Monaemul Islam alleged that some cocktails and bombs exploded in the yard of Pintu's Moneshwar Road home in Lalbagh at about 8:20pm on October 4, 1997, leaving 'Murgichhila" Kamal, Biju,

Mishuk, Koli and four others seriously injured. The injured were making the bombs for use during a street and railway barricade programme called by the then oppo-

Soon after the incident, Pintu, the then president of Dhaka city unit of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), tool them to Islamia Pharmacy and Babli Medicine Store for treatment.

Of the injured, Kamal succumbed to his injuries while under treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), the FIR (first information report) said.

The investigation officer (IO) pressed charges against Pintu, Biju and Mishuk on September 8, 1999.

Pintu last appeared before the court in the case on October 4, 2000 and was absent from the court for 26 consecutive dates. On June 26, 2003 the court cancelled his bail and framed charges against him and two others. The court also declared him absconding and issued arrest warrantagainsthim.

The home ministry in a letter on March 18, 2004 informed the district magistrate of Dhaka that it had decided to take back the charges against Pintu and the two others as theywere "politically motivated". The ministry also asked the district magistrate to hand over the case to the district public prosecutor (PP), who will arrange withdrawal of the case court

with permission of an appropriate

January 1 last year submitted a petition to the Fifth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court,

Following the petition, the prose cution and the defence made submissions on it on several dates but the court did not pass any order and fixed today for further hearing on the

Dhaka along with a photocopy of the

home ministry's letter for withdraw-

A senior lawyer preferring anonymity told The Daily Star yesterday that he does not know how the charges could be labelled as "politi-cally motivated". "It's nothing but a bid to save the lawmaker from a judicial trial," he added.

Rocca

ing the case.

FROM PAGE 1

resident Bush for Prime Minister Khaleda Zia appreciating her gov-ernment's counter-terrorism measures, foreign ministry officials said.

The US official is coming to Dhaka straight from Washington to visit Bangladesh only, where she will meet Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, Foreign Minister Morshed Khan, State Minister for Home Affairs Luthfozzaman Babar, and senior officials of the ministries of home and foreign affairs, officials said.

Christina Rocca, who is specialised in issues relating to South Asia, Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Middle East, has a wide range of issues to discuss on critical issues like counter-terrorism and next general elections, sources said.

She will also call on opposition leader Sheikh Hasina, leaders of other political parties and members of the civil society, and talk on election, terrorism and governance

Rocca's discussion will also cover a broad range of other issues on corruption, human rights and governance, and current political impasse.

She will leave Dhaka for PP Abdullah Mahmud Hassan on Washington on January 28.

yesterday that President Iajuddin Ahmed has already taken steps upon a petition filed by a Supreme

Court lawyer to this effect The source also said the president has already taken nod from the prime minister in this regard as required by the constitution.

The petitioner submitted before the president that Mohammad Ali "violated" his oath of office as election commissioner by blurting out secret information of the Election Commission to the press before the process of preparing electoral roll got off. "Election Commissioner Ali's

act is considered as misconduct," the petitioner was quoted as contending, adding that for this act he should be removed from office.

The constitution provides that an election commissioner, who remains in office for five years, shall not be removed except in like manner and on the like grounds as a judge of the Supreme Court. A Supreme Court judge can be removed for gross misconduct subject to scrutiny by the Supreme Judicial Council.

An additional judge of the High Court was removed by the presi-dent in April 2004 for misconduct in bail fixing following impeachment inquiries by the Supreme Judicial Council.

A close associate of the petitioner, requesting anonymity, said that the petition was sent to the resident following the January 4 High Court judgement upon a public interest litigation writ ordering the Election Commission to update the existing voter list with necessary additions and deletions.

The Election Commission, which had already decided to prepare a fresh voter list and started the process, got into trou-bles following the High Court

1 killed, 20 hurt

FROM PAGE 1

second day of the programme.

Locals said an argument broke out outside the local mosque earlier yesterday as some Muslim residents complained that the kirtan was disturbing the peace of the area.

Police did not make any comment on the bomb blasts.

The border-area of Meherpur has a large Hindu population while it is also infamous as a stronghold of the outlawed Islamist outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).

6pc GDP growth

FROM PAGE 1 recognising the threat from the fanatics and taking firm, actions against them, the review report said.

The performance in the second quarter of the current fiscal year (FY) was somewhat better than the first quarter, the MCCI review observed.

Significant increase was observed in the indices of industrial production indicating a higher production than that of the last FY. "All industrial sub-sectors, partic-

ularly manufacturing and electricity generation, experienced robust growth," the review said, adding, "If the industrial sector growth can be sustained and raised further, the much talked about six per cent GDP growth should not be difficult to

The industrial production (large and medium) is estimated to have recorded a growth of about 10 per

centagainst 8.2 per cent last year. Textiles, garments, knitwear, food processing, pharmaceutical, leather, cement and plastic industries have recorded substantial growth in the first six months.

The electricity sub-sector grew by 14 percent in September 2005.

"In spite of the uncertainties about the prospect of achieving the food production target of the year, it appears that the food grains production, both of Aus and Aman, will be higher than that of last year," it said.

The disconcerting aspect of the economy is increasing inflationary pressure and the government's borrowing from the banking sector, the review observed.

Both fiscal balance and balance of payments have become more vulnerable during the period, it said, adding that the central bank's tight monetary policy has failed to hold inflationary pressure in check.

The 7.95 per cent inflation in November 2005 was the highest in last eight years, it pointed out.

The implementation of Annual Development Programme (ADP) reportedly picked up at a high level in the last three months and reached 33 per cent of the budgeted amount in December 2005 Meanwhile, the export increased

by 12.47 per cent against import growth of 5.02 per cent during first four months of the fiscal. Local currency taka, however, lost about 4.43 percentofits value against dollar. The trade deficit in July-October

last year was \$919 million, some 15 per cent lower than \$1086 million deficit in the corresponding period of In the area of public finance, the

total tax collection increased by 14.3 per cent in July-November compared to the same period in previous FY. The increase in tax collection was attributed to more contribution by supplementary duties, VAT, and income taxes. Referring to the growth in remit-

tance earning, the review observed that \$2170 million came as remittance in the first six months which is 22 per cent higher than in the corresponding period of the last FY. Despite bomb blasts and law and

order uncertainties, the service sector showed a steady growth. Two major sub-sectors, communication and healthcare, registered the same growth as in the last year.

The foreign exchange reserve, however, declined -- standing at \$2.5 billion in December 2005 compared to 3.2 billion in December 2004.

NEWS

FROM PAGE 1
As the journalists wanted to know about the condition of the CEC, SM Zakaria referred to Mohammad Zakoria, additional secretary (current charge) of the EC Secretariat who told the waiting newsmen that "the condition is not good.

'We could not talk with him...He is sleeping," said Zakoria. "A medical board has been formed headed by Professor Mohammad Tahir for his treatment. About the condition of the CEC, Prof Tahir said he is suffering from

various complexities such as blood pressure and diabetes. "He took admission to the hospital on Tuesday as he felt very sick," Prof Tahir, pro-vice chancellor of BSMMU, told The Daily Star. Replying to a query, Prof Tahir "After receiving some test

reports, we will form a medical board, then we can tell how long he will have to stay in the hospi-About his leaving hospital on Tuesday evening, Prof Tahir said the CEC was "unprepared" when he took admission in the morning,

coming straight from his office.

Taking my advice he left the

hospital to take preparation for staying at the hospital. Election Commissioner AK Mohammad Ali termed the incident of leaving hospital unusual and said anyone can be hospitalised on doctor's advice after being sick. "But leaving hospital suddenly and then returning seem

to be unusual." This has been the CEC's second-time sickness in the last 17 days. He was absent from his duty from January 8 to 18 on health grounds when the preparation of a fresh voter list and High Court directives about it was a much-

debated issue. The CEC fell sick again only six days after joining office on January 19. Nine diseases including diabetic, thyroid, arthritis and kidney stone were mentioned in the documents of his admission to the BSMMU hospital.

Meanwhile, officials at the CEC's office including his personal secretary, EC Secretariat staff and security personnel of the CEC behaved in an unusual way with the journalists when they went to the CEC's office and the hospital to know about his condi-

"I don't know anything about it," CEC's Personal Secretary Mostafa Faruk told a group of journalists at his office. But later he said, "From newspaper reports, I came to know that the chief election commissioner has been hospitalised.

Saiful Kabir, a doctor of BSMMU hospital who was on duty in the afternoon, refused to give tion of the CEC. "It is out of medical ethics to disclose the names of

said. At 1:45pm yesterday, the CEC's security personnel who were on duty in front of the CEC's hospital cabin told journalists that the CEC was sleeping and no visitors were allowed, but 20 minutes later two election commissioners came out of the cabin.

diseases suffered by anyone," he

Staffs at the hospital said the CEC took admission at about 11:30am on Tuesday and he left the hospital before evening. A senior nurse said she came to the hospital at 8:00am yesterday and came to know that the CEC has returned to his cabin.

Yesterday's meeting of the CEC with the visiting EU troika, which he cancelled on health grounds was to discuss the preparation for the next parliamentary election.

Election Commissioner Mohammad Ali said they had such discussions with the EU during the tenure of former CEC MA Syed and they were informed in advance about the meetings. This is for the first time we were not informed," Ali said.

Iran accuses

FROM PAGE 16 A little-known ethnic Arab separatist group has said it was behind the blasts inside a private bank and state

environmental agency on Tuesday. "Our heroes... in the military wing of The Arab Struggle Movement for the Liberation of Ahwaz attacked and destroyed the dens of the occupying enemy," a statement posted on a websitesaid.

Speaking at a press conference in Tehran, Mottaki claimed Britain

supported such groups. 'It is clear for our officials and intelligence centres that the United Kingdom co-operated and had a hand in these bombings either in London or Basra," Mottaki told a

newsconference in Tehran. "We hope that British officials would have a clear response in that regard.

Mottaki said the attackers had been helped by British army commanders in southern Iraq. "We hope British officials take this

seriously, put it on their agenda and actaccountably," headded. The oil-rich province of Khuzestan, which borders Iraq and is home to about two million ethnic Arabs, was rocked by a wave of unrest last year, including bomb blasts in

June and October.

The government blamed the attacks on the UK, whose forces are just across the border, but British

officials again denied involvement In November, protests erupted in Ahwaz after ethnic Arabs accused

Launch dialogue

To achieve this, a political system based on debate and dialogue between the main parties is essential, with parliament as its natural focus," the troika observed. It expressed great concern at the current political culture and said the current state of confrontation

requires an urgent change On whether the EU would mediate in the political disputes over the electoral reforms, Scherk said, "No, this is not our role... Our role is to listen, learn, express concern and

urge to overcome the situation. Explaining the reasons for the EU's concerns about the upcoming general election, he said being the largest trade partner and a major donor of the country, the EU is watching the situation in Bangladesh with a great interest. "The world is one, and whatever happens here has

impacts all over the world," he noted. On another question, Scherk said there would be elections, but they have to be free, fair, transparent and acceptable. He also maintained that for credible elections issues in the run-up to the polls must be addressed.

The troika leader said the EU is already providing financial support to Bangladesh for the election process and is also ready to provide technical support as well as to work with other international partners to ensure proper election observation

Scherk said an independent Election Commission, independent personalities comprising the commission and independent funding are sine qua non for ensuring credible polls. The troika termed the EU-

Bangladesh relations good, longstanding and friendly, and reiterated the EU's commitment to developing all aspects including trade, development and political ones of that rela-However, it also noted that the EU has certain key concerns about the

direction of developments in areas

like democracy, free and fair election.

counter-terrorism, good governance

and human rights. On terrorism and extremism, the troika said the EU and Bangladesh both have recently been victims of the two. The bombings in Bangladesh make it clear that the country faces a formidable challenge, it observed, adding, "Countering this is a matter of national interest. It's too important to be subject to political rivalries."

Welcoming the government's

moves to combat the terrorist threat,

the EU delegation said, "It is impor-

tant that the terrorists be brought to

trial and convicted for their crimes. It

is equally important that the fight

against terrorism be conducted in full respect of the principles of human rights and democracy.

The statement also dubbed improving governance the key challenge for Bangladesh to safeguard and build on its developmental gains of the last three decades.

The EU attaches great importance to the fight against corruption and efforts to improve governance, said the delegation leader, adding the EU strongly endorses Bangladesh's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), which foresees much hard work ahead on all sides to ensure a meaningful and timely implementa-

The statement strongly suggested two specific measures -- vesting the Anti-Corruption Commission with an ability to act as a genuinely independent and effective institution, with properly screened staff, necessary powers and resources, and ensuring full implementation of the 1999 directives on the separation of the

judiciary from the executive. Turning to human rights situation, the statement said Bangladesh is a source of serious concerns for the EU particularly in case of several minority groups and at the prospect that violence against them may intensify in the pre-election period. It said the EU strongly encourages the government to establish an independent human rights commission in 2006 in line with

It also called upon the government to work for the full implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord and to ensure media freedom by protecting the journalists.

About trade and economy, the EU commended the stable economic growth and remarkable social achievements in Bangladesh over the past decades. It looks forward to further development of trade relational market and depreciation of the value of taka against US dollar have tions between the EU and Bangladesh, and asked the governalready pushed the production cost ment to address the concerns of EU investors and consumers about security and compliance with ethical

"The EU will continue to monitor closely the situation in Bangladesh and stands ready, together with others in the international community, to assist as we can," said the delegation try?" questioned the president of the inits statement. country's apex business body. Apart from the other troika mem-

bers James Moran, Pekka Metso and Michael Swann, British High Commissioner in Dhaka Anwar Choudhury, Italian Ambassador Pietro Ballero, and EU Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the European Commission Dr Stefan Frowein were present at the press

Tax bothers

FROM PAGE 16
The Interplast had never faced any such troubles in the past, Dr Shafquat said. Most countries of the world have the provision for not taking taxes from humanitarian organisations, he added.

In November, a team from France also came to Bangladesh for providing treatment for eye complications. But as they were not prepared to pay any tax, they had to go back, sources said.

Deputy Commissioner of Customs Margoob Ahmed said they tried their "best" to release the equipment of the Interplast and as soon as they received a letter from the National Board of Revenue (NBR) asking them to grant the tax temporarily, they discharged those. The NBR only can grant taxes

and if the humanitarian organisations want duty-free access to their equipment, they should take permission from the NBR before their entry to the country," said Margoob.

The customs has no provision to release goods without the permission of the NBR and the group brought huge quantity of equipment with them, he said. It also needs bank guarantee certificate to release the returnable equipment and permission from the Drug Administration, he added.

An NBR high official requesting anonymity told The Daily Star if the DPRS authorities claim that the Interplast did not have to pay taxes in the last seven years, it may be that the customs authorities overlooked the matter considering the humanitarian purpose of the organisation.

The Interplast was supposed to pay taxes of Tk 25,000 for this year,

If the Interplast had applied timely--two months before their arrival, the NBR would have made arrangements with the authorities concerned and the group could release their items timely without any difficulty, he said.

Criminals burn

Police rushed to the spot and recovered the body at noon.

In another incident, police yesterday recovered the body of a 75-year-old unidentified man from a pond behind the shop of Alam at village Kathalia in Burichang upazila of the district.

BB plans

based on its assessment of the developments over the preceding

The BB intends to bring down the domestic credit growth from 21.1 percent in September 05 to 17 percent by June 06, net credit to the government from 30.4 percent to 26.5 percent and public sector credit from 50.8 percent to 29.4 percent. For doing these, the central bank said it has used interest rate hike and revi sion of the statutory ratios for sched-

uled banks previously. The statement also said the mone tary stance is subject to continuous review in the light of evolving situation, may shift to a neutral stance and may even move further to an accommodative stance as values of key macroeconomic variables change.

A BB official said the advance disclosure of the central bank's monetary policy will greatly help the businessmen and industrialists adjust their plans and programmes in line with it. While the statement hinted at another round of upward revision in

the energy prices it also mentioned

that in view of the bumper aman

harvest the food component of inflation is unlikely to register much further increase in the coming Explaining the tight monetary policy stance, the MPS said, "In view of the continuing inflationary pressure. BB remains alert as to the necessity of further monetary measures, and shall also seek such coordinated fiscal stances may be warranted by developments in the real and monetary sectors; with a view to containing inflationary expectations and facilitating smooth

credit flow for productive pursuits in support of the targeted real output BUSINESSMEN'S REACTIONS

In immediate reaction, Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI) President Mir Nasir Hossain said, "The Bangladesh Bank's loan-shrinking policy will make it difficult for the business people to get loan, which will ulti-

mately affect production."

monetary policy stance, the cost of fund will rise and consequently the export-based industries will be affected. The local products will also lose in terms of competitiveness. He regretted the further belttightening as he said a price hike of oil and raw materials on the interna-

"Besides," he said, "due to its tight

too high and the businesses are already under immense pressure. "Besides, this six-month advance policy statement won't work. The BB should go for long-term statement We have already imported the capital machinery, now if we have to face difficulties in getting working capital, how are we going to run the indus-

Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) President Latifur Rahman's reactions were almost the same. "It certainly is going to have negative impact," he said. "If credit availability shrinks, the growth we have achieved in terms of industrialisation, and trade and investment is bound to suffer adversely," he added.

Hartal observed

the road disrupting trade through Sonamasjid land port for the third consecutive day.

Vehicles were off the streets and shops and business establishments All policemen were kept indoors

at the temporary camp at Kansat Palli Bidyut Samity (PBS) until 3:00pm when the presence of protesters became thin on roads. Police officers were seen collecting information about the protests from pedestrians. MP'SROLE, HIS DENIAL Sources alleged that Shahjahan Mia

MP pressurised the Rajshahi range deputy inspector general (DIG) who asked the police to arrest Kansat PBS subscribers' association leaders that prompted the demonstration in the Golam Rabbani, Zahir Chowdhury and Manirul Islam, the

three leaders of the association, are still in custody. They were leading a movement for uninterrupted power supply and withdrawal of meter charge and monthly minimum Local people also alleged that Shibganj police arrested Rabbani at

the authorities concerned did not take any step to mitigate the subscribers' problem due to the MP's stance against the movement. "Had the MP been sincere about resolving our problems, he could do it after January 4 incident when two people were killed in police firing. We

the diktat of Shahjahan Mia and that

headmaster of Kansat High School. "Shahjahan MP influenced the police to arrest Golam Rabbani," said a close aide of the lawmaker prefer-

don't see him playing any positive role," said Khwaza Moinuddin,

ring anonymity. The lawmaker also called Rabbani on mobile phone and asked him to withdraw the move-

Hours before his arrest, Golam Rabbani told a public meeting that he was threatened of dire conse-

quences for leading the subscribers' Talking to The Daily Star on mobile as he was in Dhaka, lawmaker Shahjahan Mia said he had never misused power and the police.
"The question of forcing the DIG
does not arise when I had talks with

himjust today after six months."

Asked if he had any enmity with Rabbani, the lawmaker replied in the negative. About his alleged 'threat' to Rabbani over telephone, Shahjahan Mia said he had just asked Rabbani to do everything peacefully. "I did not

threaten him. Asked why he left his constituency after such a tragedy, he said, "I am passing very busy days here (in Dhaka) visiting the power minister and the Prime Minister's Office to discuss people's miseries. I will go to Kansat within a day or two."

Shahjahan Mia is a member of the parliamentary standing committee

Local people said the Chapainawabgan superintendent of police (SP), instructed by the Rajshahi Range DIG, visited Kansat Bazar a day before the violence and asked Rabbani and others to shun the movement to avoid arrests.

But DIG Baharul Alam said the post of DIG is meant for supervising the police, not for ordering arrest You better ask the arresting authority," he told The Daily Star. The SP, Rezaul Karim, also denied that he was influenced by the DIG.

the election as the whole situation is

in our favour. But, if the election takes

place under the existing system and

minimum of our demands is not

ensured, how can we go for any

dialogue offer in parliament, Saber said the position of the government is not the same. "[BNP Secretary

Generall Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan

talks of dialogue while Prime Minister Khaleda Zia says the elec-

tion will be held under the existing

the prime objective of joining the

House, "We want to discuss different

ssues...but if we are not given the

floor, our mere presence will not

Asked about the government's

EU troika meets Hasina

The opposition leader told the EU delegation that apart from the EC, reforms are also necessary in the caretaker government system for credible elections and that her party would not participate in any election without these reforms. Hasina told them that her party is

ment if the government agrees in principle to meet their reform The EU delegation said some kind of cooperation between the government and the opposition should be there to ensure free, fair and peaceful elections. "We want to see all parties

are participating in the election as

the next election is very crucial for

ready for dialogues with the govern-

the country and its future," Scherk On deploying an election observation mission in Bangladesh, Scherk said it might be deployed if requested. The decision would be made in near future based on the outcome of their discussions, he

make parliament effective," he said. Earlier, a group of AL leaders met the EU delegation at the European

Commission office on Tuesday AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil Presidium member Kazi Jafar Ullah,

Briefing journalists on behalf of Syed Abul Hossain, former ambassa-dors Faruk Chowdhury and the Awami League (AL) president, her Political Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury said, "We are not against

eastern part of the capital, said

(special cell) Karnal Singh, reports our Delhi correspondent. The two went to Delhi about two nonths ago and are suspected to have been planning to disrupt the Republic Day celebrations, he

Police said they recovered 1.4kg

of RDX, two hand grenades and four letonators from a small dwelling the two were hiding in. The arrestees are undergoing questioning about their exact plans ind whether they have associates there. Police believe they have

surveyed some locations they had planned to target. Indian media reports: The Harkat-ul Jihad-e-Islami was said to be set up by Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda outfit and the Islamic International Front to train Arakan Muslims from Myanmar in jihad

It was also given responsibility of imparting knowledge of jihad to Muslims from Indonesia, Thailand,

Dump Iran

FROM PAGE 16 completed before President George W Bush's visit here in March failing which the "historic opportunity" would be "much less "If it (India) opposes Iran having

nuclear weapons, we think they should record it in the vote, "he said.

Mulford's observations come amid intensified efforts by the US and the EU-3 (Britain, France and Germany) to seek world support for the resolution to be placed at the February two of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) meet-ing for referring Iran's nuclear issue to the UN Security Council for action.

The US envoy said an "observa-

tion" had also been conveyed to India that if New Delhi decides not to vote for the resolution, "the effect on members of the US Congress with regard to (Indo-US) civil nuclear initiative will be devastating. Meanwhile, Iran's top nuclear negotiator said yesterday that Tehran views Moscow's offer to

have Iran's uranium enriched in

Russia as a positive development

out no agreement has been reached

between the countries Chief negotiator Ali Larijani also reiterated Iran's threat to renew enrichment activities if it is referred to the UN Security Council

Moscow has proposed having Iran's uranium enriched in Russia, then returned to Iran for use in the country's reactors a compromise that could provide more oversight and ease tensions with the United States and European Union over Iran's nuclear programme.

system," Saber pointed to the dis-About joining parliament, he said it is not the presence in parliament but "meaningful discussion" which is

2 'Bangladeshis' caught

eastern part of the capital, said
Joint Commissioner of Police have been behind the two failed assassination attempts on General Pervez Musharraf in December 2003, according to Indian media reports President APJ Abdul Kalam takes salute today at the main Republic Day parade in Delhi at Rajpath in presence of visiting Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz al Saud and

> Intelligence agencies had warned of terrorist activities to disrupt R-Day celebrations,

> tify the man whom West Bengal olice arrested on Sunday, reports

> Bangladesh. Kanojia said the arrestee is a young man named Obaidur Rahman.

"We sought consular access and

FROM PAGE 1 5:30pm, reports our Bogra correspondent.

Witnesses said Sadek took refuge at the house of Habib, but the BSF man chased him down and

four rounds in the air. The BSF man, reinforced with

started beating up him.

about 12 colleagues, opened fire on the BDR men, who countered the

A tense situation is prevailing in the surrounding areas and panic

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and the country's entire top brass Indian state news agency PTI

prompting Delhi police to put the national capital on a "red alert" and step up security at vital installations. Meantime, Bangladesh Deputy High Commission in Kolkata is waiting for consular access to iden-

Confusion arose after AFP and

quoted Saleh Shibly, first secretary (press) at the mission.

Sources said the BSF guard entered some 350 yards inside Bangladesh in Nandipur village, chasing Sadek Chandi, 38, who was

As the villagers attacked the Indian border guard, he fired two gunshots and fled back to India. Hearing the gunshots, members

attack from their post.
The BDR authorities admitted

gripped villagers have left their houses fearing further clash. The cross-border traffic and

Reuters on Tuesday, quoting West Bengal Inspector General of Police Raj Kanojia, reported the arrested person is Abdur Rahman, chief of outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen But talking to private television channel ATN BANGLA on Tuesday,

Hili land port

carrying a bag of 'phensidyle'.

of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) fired

the gunfight on the border, reports our Dinajpur correspondent.

trade were closed immediately

after the shooting.