NEWS

All set for 78th Oscar Biman FROM PAGE 1

AFP. Hollywood

Tension reached fever pitch as Hollywood began the final countdown to today's Oscars, with a posse of "serious" films, led by "Brokeback

Mountain," set to overrun the big night. As workers frantically put the finishing touches on preparations for the 78th annual Academy Awards which start with the legendary red carpet celebrity fashion show, the anxious nominees are crossing their fingers.

In a vear laden with small-budget movies packing weighty political or social messages, Taiwan director Ang Lee's film about gay cowboys is the frontrunner for the top awards, including best picture and best director.

"We're almost there and I think 'Brokeback' is still leading the race, said veteran Hollywood Reporter online columnist Marty Grove. But the aching story of two macho

farmhands who fall in love despite themselves and pursue an unfulfilled 20-year romance faces a last-minute challenge from a dark horse, Paul Haggis's racial drama "Crash." "The buzz is that the threat to 'Brokeback' from 'Crash' is now very

real," awards expert Tom O'Neil of the website the Envelope com said of the tiny independent movie that may crash Ang Lee's party. "Brokeback' has a passionate

following, but you also have 'Capote' and 'Transamerica' this year and they may have created a gay fatigue," he told the news agency. But like other pundits, O'Neil is still

betting that the offbeat Western which has swept Hollywood's awards season and led the Oscars race from the start will still rope in five statuettes today.

It rides into the Oscars armed with a leading eight nominations, including best picture, director, best actor for Australia's Heath Ledger and best supporting role nods for Jake Gyllenhaal and Michelle Williams

The movie faces off against the sixtimes nominated "Crash," about a aroup of ethnically diverse people whose lives collide in a Los Angeles ca accident, and George Clooney's political drama Good Night, and Good Luck," which is also up for six awards.

Also competing for best picture are "Munich" -- Steven Spielberg's epic about the aftermath of the Palestinian massacre of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympics -- and "Capote," about US author Truman Capote, both of which are up for five Oscars.

Sunny, Awal

FROM PAGE 1 Rahman's," an investigator told The Daily Star yesterday, seeking ano-

on the Islamic model laid out in the Holy Quran and Hadith," Bangla Bhai RAIDS FOR BANGLA BHAI said then. Rab conducted massive search for Siddiqul Islam alias Bangla Bhai and model, he said, "Just wait and see." other members of the JMB Shura in three places of Natore vesterday, said

with Rahman's reply about JMB's sources. Rab men split in different groups started raiding Subolbagh and Lalbazar in the town and Rani get a big fund from Jakat and the sale Bhabanir Bari and adjacent places at the Fid-ul-Azha

12:30am yesterday. Major Salahuddin of Rab-5 (Rajshahi region) led the hunt for Bangla Bhai, the right-hand man of Abdur Rahman and operations commander of Jagrata Muslim Janata, country that were conducted by the Bangladesh (JMJB). The raids that JMB. Abdur Rahman told interrogacontinued simultaneously ended at tors, "I am responsible for everything around 4:30am.

clients living on the East Coast of USA and in Canada.' "Capote" star Philip Seymour Hoffman is widely favoured to win the Mahmoodur Rahman claimed best actor Oscar for his staggering title that high fuel cost at the base station role in Bennett Miller's biopic, facing of Zia International Airport and poor against the Australian star of fuel efficiency of aging DC-10s are rokeback," Heath Ledger, 26. holding Biman back from achieving

Also vying for the award is Joaquin Phoenix, who played country star Johnny Cash in the biopic "Walk the Line," nominated for five Oscars, David Strathairn, for his role as newsman Ec Murrow in "Good Night," and Terrence Howard for "Hustle and Flow."

The Oscars upsets almost always happen in the supporting actor categories, so we may see the jaw-dropper of the evening be Jake or Michelle wing for 'Brokeback,'" O'Neil said.

Most pundits predict that Briton Rachel Weisz will win the women's award for her role as an activist fighting the pharmaceutical industry in Kenya "The Constant Gardner," with

Williams -- Heath Ledger's real-life fiancee -- trailing for her portrayal of his cuckolded wife in "Brokeback. Also competing for best supporting ress are Frances McDormand for "North Country," Amy Adams for "Junebug" and Catherine Keener, who

Minister for Civil Aviation Mirza yed writer Harper Lee in "Capote." Fakhrul Islam Alamgir the manage-Heartthrob Clooney is tipped to ment of the airline floated tender for beat out Gyllenhaal and win best leasing two aircraft in a bid to supporting actor for his role as a CIA recover from the schedule disarray spy in the oil industry thriller "Syriana." caused by grounding of its three

Clooney, who is up for three Oscars, also faces competition from Paul Giammati for "Cinderella Man, Matt Dillon for "Crash," and William Hurt for "A History of Violence." Facing off against frontrunner Ang

Lee for best director are "Capote's" Miller, Haggis for "Crash," Clooney as director of "Good Night," and Spielberg for "Munich," the only big-budget film in e major categories.

The politically outspoken Clooney is also nominated for his best original screenplay for "Good Night," the story of newsman Ed Murrow's crusade

against the repression of the US andmmunist witch hunt of the 1950s.

that the truth comes out. The day when Bangabandhu and his family members were killed. the ideals of Bangladesh were also killed, she said.

After Bangabandhu's killing, thousands of innocent people including army men, journalists, teachers and others were killed, Hasina said, adding that the killings have continued in the country even

financial viability on American and

times in the last six months in

Brussels and New York for various

mechanical faults. In late last year the

US federal aviation did not allow a

Biman craft depart John F Kennedv

Airport without fixing 17 faults they

Amidst a schedule chaos, the

Biman Bangladesh Airlines on Feb

19 decided to cut its international

flights as an immediate solution and

lease two aircraft to maintain its

DC-10s and one airbus at a time.

While the reduction of flight

frequencies on Dhaka-London and

Dhaka-Jeddah routes comes into

effect immediately, reduction on the

Dhaka-New York route will be made

effective from March 13 as passen-

gers have already booked tickets up

Following a meeting with State

European routes.

found in the plane.

dwindling fleet.

o then.

Hasına

nation," Hasina observed.

FROM PAGE 1

after the 2001 elections. "We will modernise the Bangabandhu Memorial Trust for research so that the country's new and young generation can learn the true history of the country and is not motivated by the evil forces," Hasina

Biggest arms haul Declining to elaborate on the FROM PAGE 1

M16 rifle magazines, three G3 LMG magazines and 7,000 bullets were recovered from the spot A spokesman of BDR at Bandarban said a joint team of

Bangladesh Army and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) dug up the arms and ammunition buried by gunrunners in Mirinja hill in Naikkhongchhari-Ali Kadam border.

Acting on a tip-off, the security forces started the operation on Thursday night and cordoned off half the votes cast in the poll

Inflation rate dips further

FROM PAGE 16

go up in the coming months. Meanwhile, in case of food items inflation rate dropped by 0.47 percentage point to stand at 6.67 percent in January from 7.14 percent in December.

Inflation rate dropped by 0.43 In Biman's 13-strong fleet, the percentage point in non-food items three-decade old DC-10s that usually and stood at 6.70 percent in operate on Dhaka-New York route January, while it was 7.13 percent in have been grounded at least three December

Zaid Bakht, research director of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS),said the BB's tight monetary policy has resulted in the decline of private and public sector credit. The exchange rate situation was also rather stable.

Besides, prices of goods except oil were stable in the international market. All these factors have jointly contributed to the decrease in nflation rate, Bakht said.

A planning ministry source said production of aus and aman rice was better in fiscal year (FY) 06 than in FY 05. Moreover, the cost of food items saw a downward trend in December as the market had adequate supply of winter vegetables. In the current FY, 17.45 lakh

tonne aus rice was produced as against 15 lakh tonne in FY 05. Agriculture ministry sources said

1.12 crore tonne aman rice will be produced this year compared to last vear's poor production of 98 lakh tonne due to floods. The sources also said price of

rice this year is not as high as last vear's due to a rise in aman production A BB source said the central

bank's tight monetary policy has caused a decline of 2.26 percentage points in the growth of private sector credit from September 30 to December 31 last. During the same period, net government credit growth also declined by 9.19 per-

centage point. All these factors are responsible for the decline of inflation rate of food and non-food items both in rural and urban areas In January, inflation rate in rural

areas was 6.77 percent copmpared to 7.23 percent in December. For food items, the rate was 6.40

percent in January and 6.96 percent December and for non-food items, it was 7.40 percent in January and 7.71 percent in December.

Army puts decision on hold

FROM PAGE 1

interest by meritorious youths, expansion of job market and high salary in the private sectors and growth in higher education," an army officer told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity.

Accusing the BNP-Jamaat Officer shortage has also been coalition of distorting the country's caused by appointment in other glorious history, the AL chief urged places on deputation especially in the teachers and scholars to do the Rab. Many of them are in differresearch and bring publications so ent countries participating in UN missions. However, a good number of young officers went into voluntary retirement in the last few years, he said.

> Many other young officers have also applied for retirement, said sources.

Talking on this, another army officer said that many officers do not find job satisfaction in the service as it was before.

There is a shortage of a few hundred junior-level officers in the army presently, which led the authorities to resume the short course

"The step was taken as a temporary measure to address the immediate problem and the decision was to continue for four to five years," said an army officer.

But the authorities stumbled in the very first year as no more than some 25 could qualify in the short course whereas the authorities do better later.

Thai PM vows

FROM PAGE 16

expected the number would be argued that many talented candimore than 50, said a source, adding: dates could have applied if they "Response from suitable candiknew that some conditions would be dates was not encouraging. The authorities are likely to review the relaxed. One army officer on condition of

policy." anonymity said that a candidate The revival of short-course rejected once can face the ISSB for recruitment has given rise to a the second time. But he would be controversy rejected forever if he fails in his

The two-year long course was second attempt introduced with the aim to produce quality officers. "There are quesdates was not up to the expectation tions whether similar quality officers of the army authorities, they decided will come through the 45/50-week to recall some from the disqualified short course," he said group only after reminding them that

The army authorities, meanwhile, are learnt to be pondering about new steps to attract talent and meritorious youths to the army.

According to the new policy, 350 will be recruited in the BMA in two batches a year from now on. Generally, the BMA recruit 200 on an average in two batches every

recruited through short courses. Referring to the issue of recruitinterested in joining the army ment of candidates who failed However a downtrend was noticed earlier tests, an army officer said, in last couple of years," he said. "Those who have been called again performed well in most tests. The authorities have recruited them only after being sure that the problems Galib, Rahman can be solved through training later.

For example, one showing poor FROM PAGE 16 performance in swimming or any other physical test can be trained to loose which was comprised report-

the militant actions in the country and JMB acted as Ahab's operaof peaceful civil disobedience to Thais) party did not win more than force the prime minister from office. (HuJi) as its training unit. on't believe that he will resig So it means the struggle will go on -the sort of confrontation between the people, the mob and Thaksin will continue for sometime," he told reporters.

In January, the inflation rate in urban areas was 6.13 percent against 6.66 percent in December. For food items, the rate was 7.27

percent in January and 7.58 percent in December while it was 4.91 percent in January and 5.66 percent in December.

Though inflation rate declined for two consecutive months, things may change in the coming months. In February alone, taka was depreciated against dollar by around 3 percent

Although the government has not yet increased oil prices. it will be under pressure to raise prices to get the sixth instalment of the PRGF loan from the IMF and the fourth tranche of Development Support Credit (DSC).

Sources said if the government finally hikes oil prices, inflation rate will go up once again. When oil prices were raised in September last year, inflation rate rose in October and November.

However, some military sources

"As number of qualified candi-

this would be considered as their

Talking to The Daily Star

Tuesday, an army officer seeking

anonymity said as far as he is con-

cerned, no such candidates have

been recruited through long

"The young generation is usually

second ISSB test," he added.

'Stealth sharks' to patrol the seas

> to understand which neurons are fired by scents, electrical or magnetic ields

The Pentagon is reportedly funding These signals help the fish to navigate and offer the reward of food, ultimate hope of turning sharks into "stealth spies" capable of gliding and could thus in theory be manipuated for surveillance work.

New Scientist says the DARPA work is controversial, but also points out that work with animal implants also has a potential benefit for medi-Understanding more about the

For any local private company, such

gigantic rescue and removal operation

would take more than a month and

cost around Tk 60 lakh, said Sadek

Hawladar, owner of a private construc-

can be sold to those who want to fill

their lands and the iron rods can be

He said the debris of the building

The Phoenix building was under-

going extensive modification work as

the owner started changing its 'use

pattern' from a factory into a 500-bed

hospital without any approval from the

Detectives are investigating the

case filed after the building collapse

while the seven absconding accused,

including the building owner Din

building with faulty construction col-

lapsed in Savar, causing death to 61

people and injuries to many others.

That time also the government con-

the trapped and recover dead bodies.

In April last year, a nine-storey

Mohammad, are still evading arrest.

authorities concerned.

tion firm that deals in old buildings

used or sold as valuable material.

Tk 1cr

FROM PAGE 16

brain, which are then stimulated to induce a behavioural response. brain's electrical signals could one "The Pentagon hopes to exploit sharks' natural ability to glide quietly day result in implants to control a prosthetic limb to overcome paraly through the water, sense delicate electrical gradients and follow chemical trails." says the report, carried in

research into neural implants with the

According to the British weekly

New Scientist, the research builds on

experimental work to control animals

by implanting tiny electrodes in their

undetected through the ocean.

AFP, Paris

next Saturday's New Scientist. "By remotely guiding the sharks' movements they hope to transform the animals into stealth spies, perhaps capable of following vessels without beina spotted."

The unusual project is being funded by the Pentagon's Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), which pioneered the Internet as a platform for robust communications.

Scientists involved in the scheme presented their work last week at a meeting on Ocean Sciences in Honolulu, Hawaii, according to the report.

A team at Boston University have implanted electrodes into the brain of a spiny dogfish in a shallow tank.

The implants, controlled by a small radio transmitter, stimulate either the right or left side of a brain area dedicated to smell, causing the fish to flick around in that direction in response to the signal.

The next step will be to take this device outside the laboratory. Blue sharks implanted with the gadget are to be released off the coast of Florida.

As radio signals will not penetrate the sea, communications with the fish will be made through US Navy acoustic towers capable of sending sonar signals to a shark up to 300 kilometres (187 miles) away.

Other DARPA-funded researchers are working on using implants to ducted clearing operation to rescue ecord brain activity in sharks in order

US, Pakistan

courses, but a few might have been FROM PAGE 16

calls his "buddy," the US president stopped short of criticizing Musharraf on the pace of democratic advances, only gently calling for elections scheduled for next year to be "open and honest."

Musharraf seized power in a 1999 bloodless coup. Instead of giving up his military uniform as promised in 2004, he changed the constitution so he could hold both his army post and the presidency until 2007.

"I believe democracy is Pakistan's future," Bush said as the leaders stood side-by-side at their outdoor news conference at the marble presidential palace.

Musharraf defended his record on democracy, touting steps to liberalize Pakistan's press, usher in an elected parliament and empower women.

"Beyond 2007, this is an issue that tional wing and Harkatul Jihad has to be addressed and according to ition of Pak never violate the constitution," said the Pakistani leader, repeating similar reassurances made in the past. "Democracy will prevail." The Pakistani government once supported the repressive Taliban regime in Afghanistan. But after the 2001 terrorists attacks on America, Musharraf aligned himself with Bush and the war on terrorism. Pakistan's law enforcement agencies have arrested more than 700 suspected militants in the past four years. "The intentions of Pakistan and my ntentions are absolutely clear that we have a strong partnership on the issue of fighting terrorism," Musharraf said. "If at all there are slippages, it is possible in the implementation part. ... We are moving forward toward to delivering and we will succeed." The day before the president arrived, an American diplomat was killed in a suicide car-bombing at a US consulate in the southern city of Karachi, a hotbed of Islamic militancy. Musharraf called it a vicious act timed to coincide with Bush's visit. Bush said he was unfazed. "We're not going to back down in the face of these killers," he said. On Saturday, Pakistani police detained Imran Khan, the leader of a small opposition party, ahead of a planned protest. Khan, a respected former Pakistani cricket captain, has condemned Musharraf as an "American slave.' Hoping to broadcast American compassion to the Muslim world, Bush showcased the US assistance offered after an earthquake devastated Pakistan in October, killing 86,000 people and leaving more than 2 million homeless. "It is staggering what the people of this country have been through." said Bush, who earlier saw a film on the quake and visited with victims, including orphans, widows, women in wheelchairs and children who lost limbs. "We're proud to help." Musharraf said Pakistan would have been hard-pressed to handle relief operations without US military Chinook helicopters and medical assistance. Bush was also seeking to heighten ties between the two countries by taking in cricket, a popular sport here. "Maybe I'll take the bat," he

On Friday night, Air Force One flew through into the Pakistani capital without lights to conceal the plane's profile as it delivered Bush and his wife, Laura, from India. Lavers of security, including three helicopters that circled overhead, shadowed Bush's motorcade as it ferried him from the fortified US. Embassy compound to the presidential palace.

At the grand official building in the heart of Islamabad's government district, Bush was escorted down a red carpet behind raised swords gripped by Pakistani troops in dark green uniforms.

Bush's trip here followed a threeday visit to India where he sealed a civilian nuclear deal with India. Pakistan has asked for the same deal, but Bush made clear that was unlikely, using diplomatic language about the two countries' "different needs and

different histories." Just two years ago Pakistan's leading nuclear scientist, A.Q. Khan, was exposed as the chief of a lucrative black market in weapons technology that had supplied Iran, Libya and North Korea. Pakistan's government denied any knowledge of his proliferation activities. But Bush said the United States was committed to helping Pakistan meet its rising energy needs. He expressed no objections to plans by India and Pakistan to build a pipeline to bring much-needed natural gas supplies from Iran, a project that had brought US disapproval. Washington opposes investments that benefit Iran which it suspects of trying to build nuclear weapons.

nment announced a bounty of Tk 50 lakh for information leading to capture of the militant boss on September 11 last year in the face of a deadly spate of blasts by the JMB operatives.

Sources said the operation was not based on any local intelligence, rather it was conducted on information from the Rab headquarters.

A team dispatched from the headquarters of elite crime busters, meantime, raided a place in Rupganj of Narayanganj the same night. The place is believed to have been used by Abdur Rahman for hiding. Although the area falls under the

jurisdiction of Rab-3, Lieutenant Colonel Gulzar Uddin Ahmed of Rab intelligence wing, who led successfully the high-profile Sylhet operation, was in charge of the raid.

Sources said the Rab is carrying out the raids on the basis of Rahman's information about his hideouts across the country. They are trying to trace JMB network in those places

Patrol on Habiganj-Sylhet Highway has been stepped up so that Bangla Bhai or any other JMB Shura member could not flee the country, they added. Rab sources said no one was arrested and no explosives or firearms

were recovered in vesterday's raids in Natore and Narayanganj.

The Rab headquarters, however, did not say who were in fact the targets of those raids.

It was learnt that a few from the 12 arrestees were with the Rab teams to help them identify the places.

Meantime, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday told reporters that Bangla Bhai would be arrested very soon

WHERE IS BANGLA BHAI?

Expressing ignorance about whereabouts of Bangla Bhai and other Shura members, Abdur Rahman told interrogators that he used to keep contact with them over mobile phone since August 17.

He did not see Bangla Bhai since then, Rahman said, adding, "No one of us would ask the others where we were staying. That's why we don't know where he is."

Rahman gave the same reply when asked about other Shura mem-

MOTIVE AND FINANCE

Abdur Rahman reiterated what the JMB said through leaflets distributed during August 17 bombing blasts that they were working to establish the rule of Állah.

Asked whether the JMB has or had any plan to capture state power, he "I have never said anything like this. Our one and only objective is to establish the rule of Allah.

During their interview with The Daily Star in May 2004, Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai said they had no faith in the present political

about the organisation." Since he shoulders all the responsibility, we are rather concentrating on getting information about the other Shura members who are still on the an investigator told The Daily

"We want to build a society based

The interrogators are not satisfied

The JMB chief just said he used to

hides of sacrificial animals during

"I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR JMB

Admitting his responsibility for the

August 17 countrywide blasts and

following bomb attacks across the

nding

Besides Bangla Bhai, Salahuddin alias Salehin, who was JMB's incharge of Sylhet-Mymensingh region and Farug Hossain alias Khaled Saifullah, in-charge of Rangpur-Dinajpur region, are still escaping law enforcers' dragnet WHY SYLHET HOUSE As interrogators asked why he chose the East Shaplabagh house in Sylhet, Rahman said JMB's Shura member

and Sylhet region in-charge Salahuddin suggested him to stay there. Abdul Aziz alias Hanif, arrested

with Rahman on Thursday, was also a recruit of Salahuddin. Rahman's eldest son Nabil used to

live in a house adjacent to Rahman's East Shaplabagh house. The Rab arrested the JMB chief's

three other sons -- Ahmed, Fuad and Ashraf along with their mother Nurjahan Begum Rupa, sister Afifa Rahman and her son Talha, activist Hridoy Chowdhury's wife Chameli and their child from the house. Rahman told interrogators that he

always staved with his family and took his family with him, although he had to shift very often.

Mannan Bhuiyan

FROM PAGE 1 jealousy at the government's success.

Replying to a question he said Bangla Bhai along with other militants, who have so far succeeded in avoiding arrest, will also be caught very soon

and brought to justice. The minister also rejected the opposition's claim that the government patronising the militants saying, "How can one bring disaster upon oneself? Even an insane person will not do it."

He went on to say that bomb attacks started during the AL rule but they did not catch the bombers and bring them to justice.

Attempting to refute AL's claim that the government staged a drama to deviate people's attention from the opposition's anti-government movement and ongoing fertiliser and diesel crises, Bhuiyan said, "If that's so, isn't the government supposed to arrest opposition activists whenever they are agitating

one month after the arrest. Syed Emran Saleh Prince was also present at the briefing.

two dens of criminals on the hill, the spokesman said. After 36 hours, the team destroyed the dens in the early hours of yesterday and recovered the arms and ammunition buried near the dens.

The spokesman however could not confirm which criminal group had brought the arms and ammunition to the country.

Lt Col Azimullah Bahar. commander of 11 East Bengal Regiment of Bangladesh Army, and Lt Col Abdul Awal, commander of Naikkhongchhari BDR battalion, led the raids on Mirinja hill. Army and paramilitary BDR troops from six companies took part in the opera-

tion. On February 25, the security forces seized another huge cache of arms, explosives, military equipment, including global positioning system (GPS) and range finders, from the same area.

Outage FROM PAGE 1

240MW were distributed to power stations following a system loss, Power Development Board sources said.

> The Baghabari power units of 100MW, 70MW and 40MW West Mount unit have meanwhile remained out of order for the last few days, leaving the authorities struggling to meet the overall demand.

Once the Baghabari plants start operation within a few days, the

power shortage in northern districts will reduce significantly," said the PDB chief engineer in Raishahi.

Bangla Bhai FROM PAGE 1 (SI) Humayun Kabir of Bagerhat DB as an investigation officer (IO) of the

case on January 1, 2003. Their names have been included in the supplementary charge-sheet after further investigation.

The accused were involved in a bomb attack on the house of Awami League (AL) leader Tarapada Poddar of Gaola village under Mollahat upazila on the night of August 15, 2002. The AL leader was seriously injured in the attack.

BNP's Assistant Office Secretary

The opposition Chart Thai (Thai Nation) Party, led by former Prime Minister Banharn Silpa-archa, rejected Thaksin's offer on Saturday, saying "meaningful and concrete political reforms cannot take place under the current structure"

Thailand's main opposition Democrat Party published ads in major Thai newspapers on Saturday, saying the election could not be fair because Thaksin has taken over political institutions meant to be independent.

"This election is not a solution to the crisis faced by the country. It is an attempt to whitewash and extend a mandate that he and his cronies have exploited at the expense of the people and the country," one of the ads read.

Friday's rally, held two days before a major anti-Thaksin protest at the same venue on Sunday, was designed in part to demonstrate his support in the countryside where 70 percent of Thais live and who helped return him to power last year in a second landslide election victory.

Thaksin has seen his popularity wane since relatives sold off their \$1.9 billion stake last month in Shin Corp, the telecoms empire he founded, to a Singapore state investment firm.

The deal angered the middle class in Bangkok who demanded Thaksin's resignation over the taxfree deal which has fuelled weekend anti-government protests in the capital.

Tens of thousands of protesters are expected at Sunday's rally organised by the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) which threatened to take its followers on street marches if Thaksin did not resign.

PAD rejected Thaksin's offer on Friday to meet one-on-one with his critics and vowed to press on until the Thai leader was forced out.

"People listening to his speech felt that what he said did not clear any of the charges made against him," a PAD spokesman told reporters.

Such rallies run the risk of violence which could, in turn, provoke a coup, but army commanders deny rumours of coup plots in a country with a long and relatively recent Bangla Bhai was arrested in history of military intervention.

connection with the attack, but Thammasat University professor released on bail from Bagerhat jail Thirayuth Boonmee, one of Thaksin's leading critics, called on Saturday for a sustained campaign

Two robbers FROMPAGE 16 Saudagar at village Bangla Bazar of

the upazila at around 1:00am and looted valuables worth over Tk 2 lakh. While they were fleeing the scene after committing the crime, some villagers informed others about the incident through the loudspeaker of a mosque and cried

out for help. The villagers caught two of the robbers after a chase and beat them up mercilessly. The two died on the

spot. Later, police retrieved two guns

and 10 cartridges from the spot. Police sent the bodies to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) morgue.

PM to open FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (Bepza) has developed the plots, aiming to turn the deserted mill premises into an industrial complex.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is also scheduled to address a public meeting at a ground near the Fatullah National Stadium the same day.

RMG units FROM PAGE 1

It says, '...Factory shall be provided with such means of escape in case of fire as may be prescribed ... In every factory the doors affording exit from any room shall not be locked or fastened so that they can be easily and immediately opened from inside while any person is

within the room ... Around 300 workers were killed and more than 11,000 injured in garment factory accidents in the country in the last 15 years.

A factory inspector blamed the BGMEA for this and said they could not take any action for violation of safety rules due to the association's interference.

But former BGMEA president Annisul Hug denied the allegation, saying they never interfered with the factory inspectors' duties nor influenced them.

Different international extremists appeared at the Ahab conference in Raishahi in the late 90s revealing Ahab's link with militants of Middle East and South Asia.

edly of Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami

Chhatra Shibir and AHJS members.

bomb attacks to retaliate the arrest

of Galib in February, 2005. They

said the Ahab chief masterminded

Investigators said JMB began

Maulana Sheikh Abdullah Nasser Al Rahmani, wanted by US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for his links with Al-Qaeda, Maulana Abdul Wahab Khiljee of Puniab India, West Bengal Ahle Hadith leader Abdullah Salafi of Murshidabad and Nepalese Ahle Hadith publication 'Noor-e Tawhid' editor Abdullah Abdur Tawat Al Madani were a few among people who attended the conference.

Galib introduced Salafi as a special guest in the gathering despite his being expelled from the country.

Indo-Pak leaders FROM PAGE 16

over Kashmir. They came dangerously close to a fourth conflict in 2002 after an attack by gunmen on the Indian parliament which New Delhi said was sponsored by Islamabad

However, a peace process started two years ago has seen the relaunch of transport links between the two nuclear rivals, including in Kashmir, and has reduced tension in the territory. They each hold part of Kashmir but claim it in full.

More than 44,000 people have died in insurgency-linked violence in Kashmir since 1989 when Islamist querrillas launched an anti-Indian rebellion in the disputed zone.

"Obviously there needs to be some confidence in order for the countries to go forward. Therefore, the confidence-building measures the government have taken are beginning to bear fruit in my judgement," Bush said.

In a joint statement after their talks, Bush and Musharraf said they "support the peace process and composite dialogue between Pakistan and India for improvement of relations and resolution of disputes and building a better future in SouthAsia."

India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said after holding historic round-table talks with Indian Kashmiri politicians that consensus was needed on the issues of autonomy and self-rule for the disputed Kashmir region.

quipped. "I don't know. We'll see. I'm kind of getting old these days." American and the green-and-white Pakistani flags were posted in honor of Bush's first visit to Pakistan. Streets

quard

were mostly empty, aside from the armed security officers standing

"Our beef with Iran is not the pipeline," Bush said. "Our beef with Iran is the fact that they want to develop a nuclear weapon.

Bush was departing for Washington late Saturday after a state dinner. A huge ballroom at the presidential palace was already decked out in the morning for the evening's formality under 11 brightly lit chandeliers, tables were adorned with orchids draped from candelabra and elaborate crystal stemware.

Ruta to observe FROM PAGE 16

highway every Saturday until their

The university unit of

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL)

staged a demonstration on the

campus yesterday demanding

immediate arrest of Shibir leader

Mahbub Alam Shalehi, a

suspect of Prof Taher murder. The

AL-backed student body has threat-

ened to enforce a strike at the uni-

Geology and Mining Department

took out a silent procession on the

campus vesterday demanding

speedy trial of the killers of Prof

Samajtrantrik Chhatra Front

(SCF) and Bangladesh Chhatra

Federation will jointly hold a rally on

the campus today protesting the

killing of Prof Taher and demanding

arrest of Shibir leader Shalehi.

Taher, a teacher of the department.

Meanwhile, students of the

versity if Shalehi is not arrested.

demands are met.