AL, Jubo Dal leaders

"I heard around 25 gunshots soon after a power outage. Immediately I opened a window and found Aleem lying on the alley. He was bleeding profusely," said Shaheeda Begum of a nearby house.

Then she and some others rushed to Aleem but he beckoned them to go inside the house, where they found Rob's body lying on the floor, she added.

Locals said there was no power supply in the area for about five minutes. Usually road lights are on when houses remain dark for load shedding.

Relatives and locals rushed Aleem and Rob to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared Rob dead. He suffered about a dozen bullet

Aleem with two bullets in the chest died around midnight am at the DMCH

Aleem's eldest son Rahatullah Liton said his father had no enmity with anyone. "I cannot understand who have killed my father."

No case was filed until yesterday afternoon and none was arrested.

When contacted, Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) East Zone Mahbub Alam said Aleem was involved in drug trade in the locality and he might be killed due disputes with others over drug trade.

He also said police have identified those inside Aleem's house during the attack. "But they may not be linked to the double murders."

Shops and business establishments on Dayaganj Bazar Road and in South Savedabad were kept closed yesterday protesting the

Namaj-e-janaza of the AL leader was held at the party central office on Bangabandhu Avenue, AL central leaders took part in the Janaia.

In another incident, a gang of about five alleged criminals gunned down Omar Faruq alias Zahid, president of Cantonment Ward unit of BNP's youth wing Jubo Dal, at Kafrul around 9:30pm on Friday.

Relatives said Zahid, who was a 'phone-fax' trader, was shot dead soon after he came out of his residence at Kachukhet bazaar at Kafrul following a phone call.

Zahid suffered two bullet wounds. He was rushed to the DMCH (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead early yesterday.

The Jubo Dal leader's death sparked an untoward incident at the DMCH. About 100 aggrieved supporters of Zahid gathered at the hospital, alleging that lack of proper treatment and negligence of doctors left him dead

They entered the emergency wing and operation theatre. smashed valuable equipment and furniture and assaulted doctors

denied the allegations and said doctors and nurses performed their

with Ramna Police Station. Bangladesh Medical Association condemned the incident of ransack-

Rab source, Farhad Hossain. 35, was shot dead by a gang in Mirpur on Friday night.

Hossain told reporters at the DMCH, "Farhad handed over a few of criminals to Rab and police recently and thus became target of their accomplices. Farhad, who was a vegetable trader, was shot in Mirpur Section -1 at about 8:00 pm and succumbed to

His wife filed a case with Shah Ali Police Station and police already arrested two alleged criminals --Nannu and Momin-- suspecting

recovered the body of a garment worker, Zakir Hossain, 20, from the Botanical Garden vesterday morn-

Friday night. His mother filed a case.

Citizens

FROM PAGE 1

the city, also discussed how to promote competent candidates in the forthcoming election.

election activities. It decided to include M

Hafizuddin Khan, Advocate Sultana Kamal and Angela Gomes as new members into the group. Professor Rehman Sobhan,

chairman of the CPD and convenor of the citizen's committee, chaired the meeting.

Fazle Hasan Abed, Abul Ahsan, Dr Anisuzzaman. Samson H Chowdhury, Professor Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, Syed Manzur Elahi, M Mujibul Huq, Dr Mahmuda Islam, Professor Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, Mahmudul Islam, Laila Rahman Kabir, Dr Iqbal Mahmud, Latifur Rahman, Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed and ASM Shahjahan.

secretary of the citizen's committee.

The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam and Joint Editor of the daily Prothom Alo Abdul Quayum Mukul invitation

The CPD will hold a briefing on the meeting today at 11:00am at its

Russia jails 40 illegal immigrants from Bangladesh

Russia has jailed 40 immigrants from Bangladesh for illegally entering the country on their way to Europe to look for work, the Interfax news agency

AFP, Moscow

reported Friday.

The migrants were jailed for 10 to 12 months in the south Siberian region Kurgan near the border with Kazakhstan following their arrest in September. Two other people received one-year jail sentences for helping them enter Russia.

Bangla Bhai

FROM PAGE 16 before the Special Tribunal Court,

Chandpur today.

The court also relieved him from the 10-day remand in an arms case granted on April 9.

Earlier, he was taken to the district DB office in Mymensingh at 10:35am amid tight security.

Three cases on charges of assaulting the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel, possessing explosives and arms were filed with the Muktagachha Police Station by Rab SI Nazrul Islam following Siddiqul's arrest in Rampur village of Muktagachha on March 6. The militant leader his wife Fahima

Khatun, bodyguard Masud and host Chan Miah were accused in the arms

Dr Kamal

FROM PAGE 1

ask the government to probe into the matter and punish those responsible. Former SCBA president Mahbubey Alam demanded Tk 50 Lakh as compensation to each of the families who

lost a member in the police firings Talking to The Daily Star he said they would receive complaints from the victims' families about police excess in Kansat area.

When asked what would be the procedure of investigation he said they will probe into the justification of police and government action there and hold talks with all the parties involved in the

Advocate Z Khan Panna, chairman of Bangladesh Bar Council who filled the writ petition with the High Court for not harassing Palli Bidvut Sangram Committee (PBSC) leaders, said he would continue to give his legal support to the victims' families

Bangladesh Institute of Human Rights said they would provide the victims of Kansat treatment and legal aid support.

Kamal later visited Golam Rabbani's house to meet his mother at Pukuria. He assured her of taking legal actions in connection with the killings and attacks by law enforcers in

Turkey

FROM PAGE 1 science and technology.

President Sezer described Khaleda's visit to Turkey as not only timely but also a landmark in the bilateral relations between the countries. The visit, he said, was a manifestation of historic links between the two

Welcoming Khaleda in Turkey, Sezer hoped her three-day visit and

During the meeting, Khaleda recalled her discussions with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the positive outcomes of her talks The Bangladesh PM said her

country would welcome Turkish businessmen and investors to visit Bangladesh and set up joint ventures, and invest in various sectors, including infrastructure development. She urged Turkey to import more

quality Bangladeshi products, including pharmaceuticals, readymade garments, jute, jute goods, leather and leather products, at a competitive

Khaleda reached Istanbul from Ankara after the end of her two-day stay there. On her arrival at the Ataturk International Airport in Istanbul she was received by Governor of Istanbul

Opposition Sheikh Hasina this morn-Avenue office, before sending the letter to Mannan Bhuiyan.

Sudha Sadan residence in After the meeting, Obaidul Quader President Prof lajuddin Ahmed, told The Daily Star that they are likely Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, Leader to send the letter today but refused to disclose the names of the five chosen ones.

> the discussion, saving when the prime minister has rejected their reform demands what result would come from it. People have already expressed doubt about any positive outcome of the dialogue, he added.

Sources said in today's letter AL will clearly restate its position on militancy and fundamentalism, and also urge the BNP secretary general to maintain

"We have made the people aware about militants and fundamentalist forces, and we hope you will agree with our stance," an opposition leader quoted the draft letter as reading.

Awami League on behalf of the 14party opposition combine. Please send five names from BNP on behalf of the four-party alliance," he further quoted the letter, adding it will urge Mannan Bhuiyan to hold a meaningful discussion as early as possible for the interest of the people.

Yesterday's 14-party meeting also discussed details of the preparations for the April 19 sit-in programme in front of the Prime Ministers' Office.

Tofail Ahmed, Obaidul Quader, Motia Chowdhury, Rashed Khan Menon, Hasanul Hague Inu, Dilip Bimal Biswas, Saifuddin Manik and Abdus Samad attended the meeting, among others,

Niko-Bapex deal 'unusual'

who has portrayed Bangladeshi politicians and people as aggressive and corrupt.

Canadian newspaper Globe and Mail on April 1 ran a report on "Ban-gladesh Blowout" in which reporter Geoffrey York tried to portray Niko "innocent victim" of Bangladesh's hostile and corrupt environment. The paper projected Niko as a "success" story which has grown into a Canadian dollar 2.5 pillion company from a 220 million dollar one in the last five years.

The report also referred to a recent story in The Daily Star on how Niko is flouting all rules and regulations, and regretted that the paper did not even bother to take Niko's version. But the Canadian daily itself did not take The Daily Star's version in its report. Regarding such a one-sided report, The Daily Star correspondent on April 8 sent an e-mail to the Globe and Mail managing editor (news), business editor and editorial sections seeking to know the paper's position with no response until vesterday

On the quotes of the Niko CEO in Globe and Mail's report, Brian said his company is not happy with the way the quotes were placed. "They were placed a bit out of context. Mr Hornaday was talking about some of the people who are vindictive. We will respond to that to Globe and Mail ourselves," he said.

The Globe and Mail quoted Hornaday as saying that the atmosphere in Bangladesh is more vindictive than he had anticipated. "I've never experienced anything like it before. It is amazing. Anything happens and someone has to be hanged. It is like a national crisis".

Niko executives also said they failed to prepare themselves for the ferociously partisan climate of

than three months on legal complica-tions, the list is now sure to miss that

election schedule by November, with the election date no later than in early

January 2007. Once the caretake

government takes over following the

dissolution of the current parliament

on October 27, the commission will

be published soon and we will be able

to complete the task in time," Zakoria

Appellate Division of the Supreme

Court said the CEC's leave to appeal

petition against the High Court directives will remain adjourned until dis-

While the EC has to wait for the

posal of the contempt issue

told reporters last week.

a senior election officer.

The EC will have to announce the

publication deadline

Voter list becomes

The paper even claimed that Niko was being made "a scapegoat for jousting politicians and feuding officials" as the election is approaching. It said "critics" claim that the company had won the contract without a formal competition and some "factions" leaked "rumours" of corruption and incompetence, which "allowed" the government to prolong the price negotiation for gas purchase from Niko-

Bapex's Feni gas field. Hornaday was quoted as categorically saying, "We weren't pre-pared for that kind of aggressiveness, that really nasty stuff. It wasn't something we were accustomed to, even in India. Politicians are using us to discredit the government. In hindsight, we should have been better prepared to work with the

In the interview. The Daily Star pointed out that Niko had received unusual favours from both the previous Awami League government and the present four-party alliance government, that new modalities had to be framed violating rules and regulations to give Niko a joint venture deal with Bapex and access to three gas fields without any competitive bids. In this context. Brian was asked, which politician or official was being "vindictive" and in what way. He replied, "We think Bill (Hornaday) was referring to some people."

The CEO's shock at many happenings in Bangladesh should be viewed in Canadian perspective because when blowouts take place in Canada, the reactions are not like that in Bangladesh, Brian added.

The Daily Star then noted that Canada is 80 times bigger than Bandladesh with only 30 million people and that company's behavour is completely different there. Brian agreed saying, "We may have missed the sensitivity (of the local

tion of the draft list was complete and

the work of further scrutiny was going on. But the district election officers

the draft voter list is not completed yet.

The assistant registration officers are not signing the draft lists fearing it

would be a contempt of court, as the

matter is pending with the court," a district election officer told The Daily

Star last Wednesday on condition of

"It's not true... the task of preparing

perspective)."
The Daily Star also pointed out that it has been reporting and following Niko's unsolicited move for joint venture with Banex since as early as 1999 and that barring occasional interactions, the company hardly responded to any questions from it. Brian said his company was initially too inexperienced in dealing with Bangladesh and following the Tengratila blowouts, it became too focussed with its operations and did

not maintain contacts with the

press. "But now we are open to communication," he said. The Globe and Mail wrote: Corruption and bribery are commonplace in Bangladesh's media outlets, and Niko's competitors were savvy enough to cultivate the media. Local journalists say it is common to get cash or gifts from gas developers in Bangladesh, including the big multinationals. But Niko refused to distribute any envelopes of cash. "It is not the Canadian way," said Mr Sampson (president

and chairman of Niko).
On this issue, The Daily Star asked Brian if Niko had refused to distribute any envelopes of cash, then how would it explain its giving a Tk 1 crore car to the then (later ousted) state minister for energy AKM Mosharraf Hossain? Brian did not reply to this.

Regarding the remark "It is not the Canadian way," it was pointed out to Brian that in the past, another Canadian company-- Scimitar-- was ousted from Bangladesh and it lost an international litigation when Dhaka proved that the company had forged signatures of government high officials to sell its Bangladeshi

Brian agreed that corruption can take place in any country. Niko claimed to Globe and Mail

that it has invested Canadian dollar 100 million (US dollar 87 million) in

Bangladesh. But Brian said the company has spent US dollar 50

million so far. Regarding its strategy of "blackmailing " to force the government to fix Feni field's gas price by stopping its production, Brian says it was not a blackmail but a way of drawing the government's attention.

"Niko is producing gas (from Feni field) but it's not getting paid. There is 25 billion cubic feet (bcf) of gas in Feni, of which 13 bcf has been supplied... Niko is spending money. We can't change what happened in the past. But we have an agreement," he said. "Our action was not against

Bangladesh. We had the situation and we demanded attention. You can interpret it as a blackmail but our management wanted to draw atten-

Feni field's February shutdown ended with the energy ministry adviser's early March warning that the field would be taken over by Bapex if Niko did not resume operation there

The Daily Star reminded Brian that in the first place, the government had to frame new modalities to favour Niko's joint venture with Bapex and the company knew there were many legal loopholes, which would one day lead it to the present situation. Again, when Niko started gas supply from Feni field in November 2004 without fixing gas price, it was already offered a price of \$1.75 per thousand cubic feet (mcf) but it did not accept that. Now, after all these controversies, the company has in principle agreed on that price So, whether it is fair to blame Bangladesh for its past

"We started off with a price offer

As a result, jute goods export to

Daily Star

of more than \$2.35 per mcf. The government started with \$1.45. We have not vet initialled an agreement on a price of \$1.75 per mcf, the Niko board will take a decision on this matter this week. If the board agrees, our chairman will file a letter

of protest along with it," he said. Brian added that the company had earlier submitted 20 letters on the price issue. Now, it is agreeing on the price as things should move

Strike at CU

FROM PAGE 16

Sources said Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) CU unit under the banner of Sadharan Chhatra Chhatri Sangram Parishad had called for the strike only to spoil the celebration of Bangla new year.

The agitating students barricaded the university main gate barring all university vehicles from

On Friday night they allegedly kidnapped the locomotive operator along with his two assistants of a shuttle train from the university railway station resulting in the suspension of rail communication with the university.

The organisers of the Prothom Alo-Daily Star Baishakhi Utshab 1413 postponed their programmes yesterday due to the student strike.

A fresh date for the programme would be announced after a meeting with the administration, said leaders of Agami, the organisation which organises the festival.

They alleged the ICS in the guise of general students enforced the strike only to spoil their festival.

Delhi barriers

oil and gas concerns.

The Indian chapter will be called Grameen Trust of India. It will conduct its business through its associhas a presence in 33 countries.

eastern region of India, mostly among t h e garden workers in Assam state.

It will also monitor and evaluate 20 organisations modelled on the Grameen Bank, already in operation in India.

The Grameen Trust will provide the initial seed capital to various eligible NGOs and micro finance banks. Additional free loans will be extended to farmers owning less than half an acre of land or generate

independent funding and is awaiting the approval of the Reserve Bank of

The initiative of Grameen Bank is the first of its kind by a foreign entity in India. All other foreign participation in micro-financing sector is in the form of non-banking financial institutions, mostly arms of foreign banks in India.

According to an estimate, the preferred form of micro-finance loan in India is lending to Self Help Groups and only seven percent of this finance is to individuals.

beyond group lending, suggested an expert.

FROM PAGE 1

the town in support of the hartal in the morning Carrying black flags, the protest-

last few days. All of his family members a war criminal.

people during the Liberation War in 1971. They also urged the people to

human chain and rally.

Bangladesh deputy high commission in Kolkata and sent a letter with the 30,000 metric tons of jute goods this fiscal against 7,000 metric tons of last explanation attached to it to different year. But the new measures have stopped the flow," Shabbir Yusuf, trade bodies whose members export to India. chairman of Bangladesh Jute Spinners Association (BJSA) told The The Office of Jute Commissioner of India has made mandatory for all

> on individual bags declaring the country of origin, which must be machine stitched, the EPB letter said. It is not clear as to why such requirements are imposed only on jute bags, while other packaging materials do not have to fulfil such conditions, it

According to available statistics, more than 90 percent of jute bags imported into India are from Bangladesh.

imported jute bags to carry markings

Indian customs authorities, ir many cases, do not agree to the HS classifications declared by Bangladeshi exporters. Apparently the customs authorities attempt classify the goods under such HS codes that are subjects to higher

The Indian authorities also tend to take a long time for verification of prices, creating unnecessary delays in clearance, the letter mentioned.

According to official statistics, Bangladesh's import from India rose to \$1.18 billion during July-December 2005 while its export was \$105 million during the same period during the same period.

ICCB president

FROM PAGE 16 2005 held in the conference hall of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce

A report of the executive board for 2005 was presented by Rahman at the council, which observed that pressure on foreign exchange reserve as well as on the exchange rate might continue, as higher import cost of oil and other commodities would drive the depreciation of taka further It was of the view that despite the

contractionary monetary policy pursued by the central bank, the inflationary pressure continues to remain in the economy eroding real earnings of limited income group people.

"Continuation of the tight monetary policy including raising of the interest rate to contain inflation works [only]

little [and] rather cast [a] negative impact on business and investment," it added.
The ICCB annual council, however, appeared to be optimistic that the

steady expansion in industry and service sectors coupled with strong recovery of agriculture sector, would create a higher GDP growth in the fiscal 2005-06.

The council agreed on Asian Development Bank's latest projection that long-term consequences of the loss of quotas for the garment industry the knock-off effects of high global of prices, weak governance and political uncertainty, especially in the run-up to the January 2007 elections may slim down medium-term growth prospects for Bangladesh.

Mentioning the crisis of power and fertiliser as an ominous sign in the horizon, the ICCB report also apprehended that the power crisis would reach a record level in this summer and as a result all consumers -farmers industrial, commercial and domestic would be hit hard.

The power crisis coupled with scarcity of diesel oil has already did some damage to Boro cultivation this year and the crisis of fertiliser, allegedly created by a section of unscrupulous dealers, has also put the farmers in great distress, the report observed. If the situation continues like this, production of Boro, a major rice crop, will be less than expected. As a result common people will be seriously

affected due to increase in prices of most basic food items, mainly rice. The report mentioned that Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPČ), the sole importer of gasoline products is having difficulties in opening L/Cs due to non-payment of huge outstanding import bills to major nationalised commercial banks. Moreover, in the absence of credit Bank, the government has decided to borrow \$250 million short-term loan at

a higher interest rate from a foreign The report said, in spite of some reforms in fiscal management, revenue collection has not been satisfac tory thus compelling the government

that the budget deficit during 2005-06 would be within manageable limit of 4.5 percent of GDP due to lower level of Annual Development Programme (ADP) implementation. The council observed that against

able export growth in the first year after phasing out of the mutli-fibre arrangement (MFA), which gives the economy The report expected that growth in

decline in non-fuel commodity prices,

inflation would come down in emerging and developing economies. It was stated that due to capacity constraints and various protectionist

by economically powerful countries. The council said like Cancun the poor countries were terribly disappointed by the outcome of the Hona Kong ministerial about a fair deal of

Doha Development Round. "Even after a few months since the Ministerial Declaration. LDCs are not quite sure about their gains and losses

Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) MA Momen, former Deputy Prime Minister Jamal Uddin Ahmad Managing Director of United Insurance Syed Aziz Ahmed, Managing Director of KAFCO Peter A May, Managing Director of BOC Bangladesh Waliur Rahman Bhuiyan, former BGMEA President Annisul Huq and MCCI Secretary General CK

Hyder took part in the discussion. The council was also attended by ICCB Vice-presidents Latifur Rahman and Samson H Chowdhury, ICCB's executive board members also FICCI President Masih Ul Karim, Insurance Association Chairman M Shamsul Alam, ASM Quasem, R Maksud Khan, Mamun Rashid, Aftab Ul Islam, and Nasir A Choudhury, and ICCB's members Barrister Rafique-ul Huq, Dr M

ance companies, multinationals and industrial houses also attended the

Pahela Baishakh Different social, political and

Batamul. Alongside Ramna Park, the Dhaka University campus, Central Shahid Minar, Dhanmondi, and Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban area too were swarming with people

throughout the day Great many varieties of handicrafts and artefacts were displayed and sold at Baishakhi Melas in different parts of the capital.

with red borders and men clad in punjabis roamed the city streets, exulting at the arrival of the new Different organisations brought out processions and organised

Women in dazzling white saris

musical programmes, fairs and cake festivals to mark the day. Students of the Institute of Fine Arts of Dhaka University took out traditional Mangal Shobhaiatra in the morning with thousands of revellers wearing chequered masks. At Ramna Botomul, artistes of

Chhayanaut sang songs, and

recited poems and essays eulogising thousand years old traditional way of Bangalee life. The much-awaited function concluded peacefully with the singing of the national anthem. To accommodate vast numbers of people, vehicles were not allowed on the roads stretching from Karwan Bazar to Shahbagh, Matshya Bhaban to Shahbagh to Doyel

around Dhaka University, Ramna and Dhanmondi Lake came to a Pahela Baishakh has its origin in the Mughal period when Emperor Akbar introduced the Bangla calendar to ease tax collection. In course of time, it evolved into a day of

Chattar. Still, the traffic systems

celebrations and an integral part of Bangalee culture and tradition. The traders and shopkeepers

open Halkhata (fresh accounts book) on this day and entertain their customers with sweets. Concern for security could not contain the wave of enthusiastic visitors as they rushed to the heart of celebration -- Ramna and Dhaka

University campus.
Around 10,000 members of law enforcement agencies in uniform and plain clothes kept a close eye on the movement of people towards Ramna Park and other places. Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) conducted a sweep of the festival venues with the dog squad. A number of closed-circuit television

Thousands queued up at the entrance points of Ramna to get inside while artists spread across the area were busy painting motifs on the cheeks of visitors.

cameras and metal detectors were

installed as part of stepped up

nurses and employees. The DMCH authorities however

duties properly. The authorities later filed a case

ing and demanded immediate action against those involved. In the other incident, a police and

The victim's brother Sohrah

his injuries at the DMCH.

their involvement in the killing. Meanwhile, Shah Ali police

Police suspect he was killed on

The group, formed on March 20, also appraised the CPD's pre-

The meeting was attended by

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, executive director of the CPD, attended the meeting as member

were present at the meeting on

fruitful and useful.

tions included Chhayanaut, Alliance Française de Dhaka, Proshika, Oitijhya, Nagar Samajik O Sangskritik Kendra. The main opposition Awami

cultural organisations took up

elaborate programmes to welcome

the Bangla New Year. The organisa-

procession in the city marking the Starting from Bahadur Shah Park in Old Dhaka, the procession ended at Ramna Park after parading through Gulistan, Bangabandhu Avenue and National Press Club

Thousands of party activists and

common people participated in the

vibrantly coloured procession,

League (AL) brought out a colourful

carrying banners and festoons. Elegantly decorated elephants, horse carts, and the party's election symbol 'boat' on trucks and rickshaw vans caught the attention of the pedestrians.

AL Presidium Member Tofail

Ahmed and Acting General Secretary Obaidul Quader led the procession Earlier in the morning, AL President Sheikh Hasina exchanged New Year greetings with party leaders and workers at her

of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina and other political leaders gave separate messages on the occa-The national dailies brought out special supplements while Bangladesh Betar, Bangladesh Television and different private

channels aired special

Dhanmondi.

him inside the Indian border After BDR officials' repeated failure to contact their Indian counterparts over telephone, BDR started firing back at around

Even after the end of gunfight at around 6:00am, BSF continued their provocative activities along Tentulia border, sources said. Later a battalion commander-

the incident from 4:30pm yesterday. hour-long gunfight between the BSF and BDR occurred on Goalgoach border in Tentulia after the BSF opened fire on Bangladeshi labour-

However, the EC Secretariat in a circular on April 2 claimed the prepara-

FROM PAGE 1
Kabir, Deputy Minister for Land Asadul
Habib Dulu and Chapainawabganj-2
lawmaker Syed Manzur Hossain. Deputy Inspector General of Rajshahi Range Dr Baharul Alam and

Commissioner of Rajshahi Division

Mosleh Uddin were also present at the

from 10:45am to 2:45pm. It resumed after a break at 6:00pm and was continuing until 8:30pm. Meanwhile. Rabbani told reporters yesterday evening, "The movement and blockade will continue until all our

The 14-point demand of the locals PBUSP.

demands are implemented

leaders and the representatives from the Rural Electrification Board and the Power Division. The date of the talks is yet to be finalised. The PBUSP added the five points to their demands following killings of

the area rendering the Sonamasjid Land port nonfunctional since then The same day, two cases were filed accusing Rabbani and the PBUSP leaders. The police filed a case for obstructing government activities while local BNP leader Ashraf filed a

During the talks RCC Mayor Mizanur

Rahman Minu came out of the meeting

MINU SEEKS APOLOGY

around 1:00pm and briefed the news On April 6, Minu branded Rabbani a criminal and said he would not have any talks with Rabbani.

He said progress has been made in

a criminal and sought forgiveness.

the talks. "We'll do whatever it takes to restore peace and harmony in the locality," he added. He also said the loss of so many lives in Kansat is regretful. EFFIGIES OF MINU.

Miah yesterday evening at Kansat

The Minu's effigy was inscribed with "I am a liar, hit me with shoes" while Shahjahan's effigy was inscribed with "I am Shahjahan, I do not know anything."

continue their movement until all their demands are met. After Wednesday's police excesses, thousands of villagers irrespective of age and gender had to

wound in his left leg in the January 23 police firing suffered terribly with no one around to take care of him in the

and relatives left home in fear of police atrocities Locals meanwhile continued to express anger at Mayor Minu and local lawmaker Shahjahan Mian for 'using police to kill innocent villagers'. They demanded harsh punishment be dealt out to both the ruling party leaders. "We don't want Shahjahan to continue as our MP anymore." said one of the thousands of villagers who took part in processions across Kansat yesterday

Leaders of Raishahi Journalists Union yesterday went to Abbas Bazar and expressed solidarity with Kansat

In her reaction to the government steps to resolve the stalemate. Rabbani's mother yesterday said the supply of electricity is the prime demand. She said the farmers would starve to death if electricity supply is

Grameen Bank

Dr Muhammad Yunus, the founder of Grameen Bank, will be in India's commercial capital to kick off the organisation's operations in the country.

ate Grameen Trust, which already To begin with, the office will expand the Grameen type of microfinance on a build, operate and transfer (BOT) basis in the north-

ing equivalent amount of income from their land. Besides, it will also assess the needs of the grassroots level personnel and conduct workshops to train them. It is also considering

The competition in the field of micro-credit in India has gone up and there is a pressure to reduce interest rates. Given the fact that operational costs for the lender are expected to be lower in the case of individuals, it is time for Indian micro-finance practitioners to move

ers paraded the streets and chanted slogans against Nizami, calling him

Mustafa Lutfullah, Kazi Riaz and Enamul Haque addressed the rally among others. The speakers said Nizami was a collaborator of the Pakistani army who killed freedom loving innocent

Nirmul Committee are observing a three-day agitation from Friday that includes black flag processions,

to borrow more from the banking The report, however, mentioned

all apprehension, the readymade garment (RMG) sector posts sustaina big relief.

the volume of global trade would increase slightly and remain at the double-digit level for emerging and developing countries. It was observed that because of

avail equal opportunities of globalisation, which has been availed

since their fate will be decided in future meetings in Geneva and Washington this year." ICCB president said.

Zahir, and M Haider Chowdhury. Chief executives of banks, insur-

BDR, BSF

level flag meeting was agreed on Earlier on Thursday, a three-

14-party

Bangabandhu Avenue Meeting sources said AL leaders will place the draft to Leader of the ing for approval. They will tell the AL allies about the final selection at another 14-party meeting at 12:00noon today at the Bangabandhu

Obaidul sounded sceptical about

"We are sending five names from

have no time to work on the electoral roll. So, the EC has now a little more than seven months to complete the Even if the EC can publish the draft task before announcing the election voter list today, it will have to wait for another four months to publish the final schedule.
Still, CEC Aziz and Acting EC list after going through several steps.
After the draft list publication, the Secretary Mohammad Zakoria have been asserting that the voter list will be ready in time. "The draft voter list will EC will have to receive objections and dispose those of by appointing revision authorities. The EC in its December 7 schedule of fresh voter

contradicted the claim.

But officials at the EC Secretariat phase alone. And, after publication of the final and voter registration officers say, even after publication of the draft voter list, it will have to undertake the maslist, it will need at least eight months to finalise and print the list. "It will be difficult even if the commission goes for revising the existing voter list," says a few more months. It took about five Meanwhile, after issuing a suo months to print the existing voter list. moto contempt rule against the CEC and a BNP lawmaker last Monday, the All this means the EC will need at

the entire process

observed one of them.

crossing.

outcome of its appeal before it can fix the publication date of the draft voter list, the voter-listing fieldwork has come to a halt due to fund crisis and fear of legal complications, sources

Cops called off, rally

talks.

The four-hour non-stop talks between the government body and Rabbani over telephone continued

includes smooth power supply.
Sources said the main talks will start later on successful implementation of the five-point demands of the The government body will coordinate the talks between the PBUSP

17 people--two on January 2, seven on January 23. five on April 6 and three on April 12--in police action.

On April 6, the PBUSP blockaded

OPPOSITION HARTAL He however apologised yesterday in the press briefing and said he had made a mistake by branding Rabbani

sive job of printing it. It will need at least two months to award the printing work order as per the Public Procurement Rules and the printing itself will require

st eight to 10 months as against the

seven months remaining to complete

listing allotted four months for this

Talking to The Daily Star last week a number of district election officers said they do not know how the commission will manage the task within such a short time. "We have to do the work in an unprecedented hurry,

Minu and local lawmaker Shahjahan

When the law enforcers were leaving Kansat, people gathered at the roadside were chanting -- 'Rabbani Jindabad', 'meet our demand for power'. In slogans, they vowed to

leave home and sleep in the open. Grocery owner Moshiur Rahman who along with many others had been hiding in a sugarcane field opened the shutters of his shop yesterday after-Kalu Mian who sustained a bullet

The 14-party opposition combine enforces a daylong hartal in Chapainawabgani today, protesting police atrocities at Kansat. RABBANI'S MOTHER

India and Indian government.

Hartal

Later, they held a rally at Shaheed Rimu Square in the town with Abul Khair in the chair. Engineer Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Nazrul Islam, Advocate

be united to oust the fundamentalists and communal forces The Muktijoddha Sangsad and

Nizami addressed two public meetings at Assasuni and Shyamnagar upazilas on Friday and one at Satkhira Government High School ground yesterday afternoon. India has now gone down sharply, he said adding that the exporters still continue to export but the cumbersome barriers are making it very difficult for them.

Yusuf mentioned that the Indian producers earlier put pressure on their government to impose restriction on ute goods import from Bangladesh as

against 9 470 tons during the same period of 2004-05, BJSA chairman said. Meanwhile, the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) of Bangladesh recently identified testing requirements, har-monised system (HS) code classification, customs valuation, special

labelling requirements for jute bags,

mandatory standards requirement and

the import rose sharply within a short

importers, jute products import from Bangladesh was 50,240 tons during April-November period in 2005-06

According to the statistics of Indian

technical regulations are some of the barriers the exporters are facing to continue their export to India. EPB recently received an explanaon from the commercial

and Industry (MCCI), Dhaka on April

measures by rich nations, the least developed countries (LDCs) could not

Among others, President of Dhaka