The Pally Star

Defiant Saddam

The ousted leader mounted the gallows inside a former torture centre in Kadhimiyah in northern Baghdad and was hanged just before 6:00 am (0300 GMT), said National Security Adviser Mowaffaq al-Rubaie, who

was among those present. Iragi state television showed a brief film of Saddam being placed in a noose by masked hangmen, cutting away just before his execution.

The 69-year-old leader appeared calm, chatting to his burly, leatherjacketed executioners as they wrapped his neck first in black cloth then a thick hemp rope and steered him forward on a metal platform.

The gallows was constructed in red-painted metal and was fixed inside a dim room with blue-grey walls. The guards wore black bala clava-style hoods.

Saddam was manoeuvred forward firmly but not aggressively by the guards, the grey-bearded prisoner looking thin inside a smart, dark overcoat over a pressed white shirt but no tie.

Members of a small group of dignitaries who formally witnessed the execution said Saddam showed no sign of remorse in the final moments before being hanged for crimes against humanity.

Rubaie said in a series of televised interviews that the former strongman did not attempt to resist his executioners.

"He did not try to resist... He was holding a Koran in his hands that he wanted to have sent to someone, so the name of the person was taken down," Rubaie said

"Saddam mounted the gallows calmly, without saying a word. He was resolute and courageous ... At one point, he turned his head toward me as if to say 'don't be afraid'," Rubaie said. "It was a very strange feeling.

Once on the gallows, Saddam "refused to allow a guard to place a hood over his head. They stared at each other briefly" before the guard stepped away, granting Saddam's wish to leave his face uncovered, said Rubaie.

Saddam had an opportunity to speak his final words.

"He said 'I hope you will be united, and I warn you not to trust the Iranian coalition, because they are dangerous'," Judge Moneer Haddad, who

crimes against humanity, told AFP.

which many Iraqi Sunnis accuse of being a front for Iranian influence. "He was asked for his last words.

his neck, his hands were tied, and he was immediately executed." Rubaie said death came rapidly.

died very, very quickly. It couldn't

ground for Saddam's execution by showing gruesome footage of his soldiers mutilating and beating prisoners, throwing a detainee from a roof and filling mass graves.

"I saw him after the execution." said Jawad Abdul-Aziz Al-Zubaidi "He was inside an ambulance. His neck was broken. He was wearing black coat and a white shirt without a

as long. Zubaidi, who testified in the case Iragi officials İt was a moment of "happiness for

Saddam, had "executed three of my brothers and my father". Saddam's Ámerican jailers had

there were no US personnel in the building as the trapdoor dropped and addam's life was ended.

at 8:15am, Lalbagh Shahi Mosque at

8:30am, Masjidul Akbar Complex at

Mirpur 1 at 8:30am, Nayapaltan Jame

Mosque at 8:00am. Sher-e-Bangla

Agriculture University at 8:15am, SOS

Children's Village International at

8:15am, Maghbazar T&T Colony

Jame Mosque at 8:00am, Tejgaon

Government High School field at

8:30am and Kalabagan Basiruddin

Road Jame Mosque at 8:30am.

Besides, there will be two congrega-

tions at the Dhaka University Central

will organise a total of 361 Eid congre-

gations with four in each of the 90 DCC

University playground. The last Eid congregation will be

held at Azimpur Chhoto Daira Sharif at

The state-run Bangladesh Betar

11:30am.

ards in the city and one at Dhaka

Like the previous years, the DCC

Mosque at 8:00am and at 9:00am

the execution.'

Eid tomorrow

FROM PAGE 1 share sacrificial meat with their rela-

tives, neighbours and poor people according to the religious dictates. On the occasion of the Eid-ul-Azha.

President and Chief Adviser lajuddin Ahmed, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Awami League (AL) Chief Sheikh Hasina and other political leaders gave separate messages yesterday greeting the people. In addition different organisations and individuals including Bangladesh Christian Association and the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) greeted the

Muslims across the country. Hundreds of thousands of people have already left Dhaka for their village homes in the last few days to celebrate the festival with their near and dear ones after going through the hurdles of managing tickets for buses, trains and launches. The rush for home will

culminate today. and BTV and private TV channels will In the capital, important public buildings will be illuminated and main streets and road islands will be decorated with miniature national flags and banners inscribed with 'Fid Mubarak' under government initiative. The main Eid congregation will be held at the Jatiya Eidgah Maidan in front of the Supreme Court at 8:00am. Five congregations will take place at Baitul Mokarram National Mosque at 7:00am, 8:00am, 9:00am, 10:00am and 11:00am

STAR REPORT witnessed Saddam's execution for

"He said he was not afraid of anvone." Haddad said. The taunt was a last stab at Maliki's Shia-led ruling coalition,

said Shia lawmaker Sami al-Askari The rope was then wrapped around

"It went like a blink of an eve. He

have been quicker. State television prepared the

A 36-year-old engineer told AFP that he was given the opportunity view the body because members of

his family had fallen victim to Saddam's brutal regime.

e. His beard was long and his hair

that saw Saddam condemned for his role in the killings of 148 Shia villagers from Dujail in 1982, said he had iewed the body along with some

all Iragis", he said, adding that

handed him over to Iraqi officials and

"This was a 100 percent Iraqi process," said Rubaie. "There were only Iraqis present, no foreigners. The Americans were not present at

Eid observed early in many villages

Narayanganj.

spondent.

upazilas

Barguna district.

vesterdav

of the Eid yesterday.

celebrated Eid-ul Azha yesterday.

The Eid was celebrated in differ-

Eid-ul Azha was observed in

many places in sadar upazila of

At Fatulla under Narayanganj

many believers celebrated Eid

JP won't take

part in polls

doesn't quit

if laiuddin

Says Ershad

Gaibandha

ernment.

afternoon.

ance

said.

coalition.

four-party alliance

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

"The chief adviser runs the country at the behest of BNP. So the

election under his caretaker govern-

ment will not be free and fair,"

Ershad told a wayside rally while

returning to Kangpur from

Dhaperhar in Gaibandha yesterday

papers were cancelled as part of conspiracy as JP did not join the

combine is still conspiring against

me, knowing that it will not win the

election if Jatiya Party participates

in the election with the grand alli-

any of the 22 seats in greater

Rangpur. So it has no alternative but

to conspire against Jatiya Party," he

grand alliance takes part in the election without Jatiya Party, the ball

will be in the court of the four-party

both sides of the highway from

Thousands of people queued on

Ershad also warned that if the

"The BNP-led alliance will not get

Ershad said his nomination

He said the BNP-led four-party

ent places in Barisal city and differ-

ent villages under sadar, Bakerganj,

As Maliki's fellow Shia Muslims, oppressed under Saddam, celebrated in the streets, the prime minister called on Saddam's Sunni More than thirty thousand people observed Eid-ul Azha yesterday in Baathist followers to end their insurgency. President Bush hailed a different areas of Chandpur, Barisal, Patuakhali, Bhola, Barguna, and "milestone" for Iraqi democracy.

Ministry facility in northern Baghdad.

FROM PAGE 1

NEWS

Naiaf and cars blared their horns in

procession through Baghdad's Shia

The main Sunni television chan-

nel in the capital gave little coverage

to the news -- though it did show old

footage of Saddam meeting former

Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld

at a time when Washington helped

Iraq against Islamist Iran in the

1980s.State broadcaster Iraqiya on

the other hand ran graphic footage of

Saddam's agents beheading and

A man from Dujail who testified in

Saddam's trial over the deaths of 148

Shia men from the town said he was

shown the body at Maliki's office and

cried. I remembered my three broth-

ers and my father whom he had killed.

I approached the body and told him:

'This is the well-deserved punish-

ment for every tyrant'," Jawad al-

Zubaidi told Reuters, "Now for the first

time my father and three brothers are

president recited the Muslim profes-

sion of faith "There is no God but Allah

and Mohammed (SM) is his prophet,"

one of a dozen or so official witnesses

umph for Maliki, whose grip on his

fragile national unity coalition has

ference in the trial. however, the

speed of the execution may fuel

further unease about the fairness of

the sudden way it has been done

may irritate people," Saleem al-

Jibouri, a spokesman for the main

"The timing of the execution and

the US-sponsored process.

The rapid execution was a tri-

After complaints of political inter-

Before his death, the former

"When I saw the body in the coffin I

wept for his dead relatives:

. Sadr City slum.

beating their victims.

happy

told Reuters.

been auestioned.

government, said

Saddam Hussein

"Saddam's execution puts an end Followers of different spiritual leaders (Pir Sahib) who go by the Saudi Arabian calendar for Islamic to all the pathetic gambles on a return to dictatorship," said Maliki, who officials said did not attend the hangfestivities were the main observers ing. State television showed him signing the order for a hanging whose In Chandpur, thousands of swiftness following the rejection of an believers in many villages under Hajiganj, Faridganj, Matlab North, appeal has delighted Shias who suffered under Saddam. Shahrasti and Kochua upazilas

"I urge ... followers of the ousted regime to reconsider their stance as the door is still open to anyone who has no innocent blood on his hands to help in rebuilding ... Iraq.'

Mehendiganj and Babuganj upazilas, reports our Barisal corre-Police in Kufa, near the Shia holy city of Najaf, said 36 people were Our Patuakhali correspondent killed and 58 wounded by the car said Eid-ul Azha was observed in bomb at a market packed with shopdifferent areas of Kalapara, Baufal, pers ahead of the week-long Eid al-Dumki, Galachipa and sadar Adha holiday. They said a mob killed a man they accused of planting the Believers also observed Eid at bomb. different villages under Borhanuddin upazila of Bhola.

A triple car later bombing ripped through a mixed area of northern Baghdad, adding at least another 20 corpses to the grim daily toll.

In the coordinated attack, three vehicles exploded in rapid succession in a the district of Hurriyah, security and military sources said.

A military source put the death toll at 20. with dozens more wounded. while a security source said up to 25 people had been killed in the attack. Bush, who called Saddam a

threat even though alleged nuclear and other weapons were never found, said: "Bringing Saddam Hussein to justice will not end the violence in Iraq, but it is an important milestone on Iraq's course to becoming a democracy that can govern, sustain, and defend itself."

The deaths of four troops pushed the American death toll to just four short of the emotive 3.000 mark Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad Bush already faces mounting public yesterday said his party will not participate in the upcoming general election unless President lajuddin dismay at the war as Iraq slides toward all-out civil war between Ahmed resigns from the post of Saddam's fellow Sunnis and majority chief adviser to the caretaker gov-Shias.

Popular reactions were fairly muted as Iraqis woke on the holiest day of the Muslim calendar to begin a week of religious holidays for Eid-ul-Azha. Unlike at previous times of tension, no curfew was imposed on Baghdad after the execution.

Jubilant Shias, oppressed under Saddam, danced in the streets of

6 constituencies

FROM PAGE 1 voter list, leading to such an excess of

having excess voters on the list could not be identified," she said. The Brotee CEO said their survey

is correct because they visited every house in the constituencies eliminating any chance of even a marginal

"In many previous elections candidates won with a difference of only few thousand votes, which is why having more than 2 lakh excess voters only in impact on the election," said The Hunger Project Country Director Badiul Alam Majumder.

to disrupt journeys

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dense fog continued to disrupt road and river communications yesterday, causing immense sufferings to the homebound passengers of southern region ahead of the Eid-ul-Azha.

More than 50 vessels carrying thousands of passengers from Dhaka to the southern region remained stranded at different points on the Meghna and its channels.

The river craft reached different destinations under Barisal. Piroipur. Patuakhali, Barguna, Bhola, Jhalakathi, Khulna and Bagerhut districts 8 to 12 hours late, according to our Barisal correspon-

Ferry service at Maowa came to a halt at about 1:00am due to dense fog. The service resumed at about 10:30am amid huge traffic jam on both

On Daulatdia-Paturia route, the ferry service was disrupted for three hours, causing severe traffic congestion on both sides of the Padma. Eight ferries remained stranded in the mid-

Chief of BIWTC ferry sector Shahadat Ali told the UNB that though there are adequate number of ferries on Daulatdia-Paturia route, the ferry movement is being hampered due to

dense fog. The BIWTC authorities in a press release yesterday said they have been monitoring the "temporary" problem in ferry movement on Doulatdia-Paturia and Maowa-Char Janajat route

since Thursday. High officials of BIWTC were present in the ferry ghat while army, Rab and police have been deployed to provide security to public life and property, the release added. Passengers travelling by road in

Sunni party in the national unity other parts of the country also faced the same problem due to dense fog. Many Kurds are also disap-Buses with Eid passengers aboard reached their destination three to four hours late.

EC starts hearing FROM PAGE 1

nomination papers Ershad had filed for Dhaka-5, Rangpur-3, Lalmonirhat-3, Sylhet-3 and Habiganj-3 constituencies on grounds of the Supreme Court's rejection of his appeal against a High Court (HC) verdict. The HC had sentenced Ershad to two years in prison in a graft case.

EC Secretary Abdur Rashid Sarkar yesterday met President and Chief Adviser lajuddin Ahmed. Talking to The Daily Star after the him," he added. meeting with the president and three other advisers, the EC secreand Human Resource Affairs tary however said the meeting Secretary Nurul Islam Nahid, who won discussed the law and order as the the Sylhet-6 seat in 1996, and lost to Awami League-led alliance the four-party candidate in 2001 by a announced blockade on January 7 mere 4.000 votes, has also filed nomiand 8 nation paper from the same the seat.

The council of advisers already sent a message to the EC saying Bangladesh know Habibur as a radithat they want an amicable solution cal. communal and militant man who of Ershad's case as the Jatiya Party has gone to Afghanistan to fight for the has already announced that it Taliban, but I have no comment in would boycott the polls if Ershad regard to his nomination from the could not contest it, sources said.

grand alliance." said Nahid. The EC will complete the hearing within three days and announce the AL are dead against Habibur's decision whether it will accept nomination as the alliance candidate the appeals or not. If one's appeal is but they are yet to be articulate about it accepted, his or her nomination fearing disciplinary action from the paper will be declared valid.

Fog continues | AL men refuse

FROM PAGE 1

Afghanistan"

hone last night.

him "he said

once,"Ataursaid.

Ataursaid

Both Habibur and Azizul are the lead-

ers of banned Islamist militant organi-

sation Harkat-ul Jihad al-Islami (Huji) in

Bangladesh and both have links with

Habibur, locally known as Bulbuli

luzur, himself revealed the link in an

interview with a bulletin titled "Islam

Biplob" (Islamic revolution), published

on August 20, 1998 from Sylhet with

the expressed purpose to celebrate

"the total victory of Talibans and estab-

lishment of an Islamic state in

Sylhet-6 (Golapganj and Biyanibazar

upazilas) have threatened to quit en

nasse from the party if Habibur is kept

top leadership of Awami League to

remove Habibur as a nominee for the upcoming election," Biyanibazar

upazila AL General Secretary Ataur

Rahman Khan told The Daily Star over

very difficult for us to support Habibur.

He is so controversial that it is not

possible to go for the elections with

and against the Awami League. He is

against female leadership and acted

as a factor behind Awami League's

losing election in Sylhet more than

Sylhet district AL President ANM

Shafiq said, "We did not receive a copy

of the party's candidate list this time

The nominations were decided by the

top leadership of the party without

against our politics and only the top

leaders know how he crept into the

Igbal Ahmed Chowdhury said, "There

is no public acceptance of Habibur's

nomination. Habibur boasts about in

the area that he has met Mollah Omar

and he wants to establish a Taliban-

Meanwhile. AL central Education

"The people of Sylhet and

Many other leaders and activists of

grand alliance," Shafiq said.

style rule in Bangladesh.³

"Habibur Rahman was always

Golapganj upazila AL President

consultation of the district leadership.'

"We have clearly stated that it will be

"He is against the Liberation War

"We are building pressure on the

as the nominee of the grand alliance.

The AL leaders and activists of

ernational militant groups.

DHAKA SUNDAY DECEMBER 31, 2006

training on a mountainous terrain. The arms they were being trained to operate included rocket launchers.

That night Habibur Rahman shared his meal of dry cold bread with "a handsome young Arab". He said, When I inquired about his identity, I was told he was Osama bin Laden, a son of one of the richest Saudi fami-

The next day they entered Afghanistan and arrived at a Muiahideen cantonment on a mountaintop. They visited an armoury inside a tunnel. They were informed that some Russian forces were in position nearby and that every one must pre-

pare to fight. "All of us were given Kalashnikov (AK-47) rifles," he said, adding they stayed the night at the camp, while a Mujahideen team advanced towards the enemy position and engaged in a skirmish. The following day they

started their return journey. In the interview, Habibur asserted Only the establishment of a Khilafat (pan-Islamic movement)-based state ollowing the Taliban ideology can change the lot of the nation."

Habibur is also the convener of Sahaba Sainik Parishad and founding principal of Jameya Madania Islamia, a nadrasa at Kazir Bazar, Sylhet.

The government banned Huii on October 17, 2005, branding it as a 'selfproclaimed terrorist organisation

"There are allegations of his Anger forces AL involvement in several bomb blasts in Svlhet over the past years," he added. FROM PAGE 1 "He prevented the late poet

Meeting sources and party insiders Shamsur Rahman and mother of a said a number of parliamentary board martyr Jahanara Imam from entering members approached Hasina and Sylhet. In 1992-1993, I managed to informed her about the mistakes in bring Shamsur Rahman to giving nominations and told her that Biyanibazar, but could not take him to ey should be corrected. Sylhet because of Habibur Rahman,'

The AL parliamentary board member and Joint General Secretary Obaidul Quader told The Daily Star Yes, we have found some flaws. We have received complaints from a number of constituencies."

"We (the parliamentary board) sat to review the matter and we will choose the best candidates and give our final decision before January 3," Quader added. January 3 is the last day for withdrawing nomination papers.

Yesterday, waves of supporters of nomination-deprived AL candidates thronged Hasina's residence Sudha Sadan to draw attention of the AL leadership.

Awami League is a secular party, While many chanted the names of but Habibur Rahman is not a secular their favourite leader, several others man at all. Habibur's nomination has laid down in front of the police barrinot been finalised by the grand alliance cade until the AL chief came out and yet. But if it is finalised, it will be difficult assured them of reviewing the nomifor the local party activists to work for nations

The Special Security Force and the police, responsible for the security of Hasina, were struggling to keep the disgruntled supporters at bay.

Meanwhile, candidates who did not receive AL nominations. continued to express their dissatisfaction. They claimed the party leadership ignored their own surveys that outlined the grassroots workers' demands and the candidates' chances of winning the election.

AL activists from Sylhet-6 constituency, where AL nomination aspirant Nurul Islam Nahid was overlooked in favour of Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish nominee Maulana Habibur Rahman. threatened the AL leadership of quitting en masse, if Habibur was kept as the grand alliance nominee, a local leader said.

Nahid told The Daily Star last night,

People of Bangladesh and Sylhet

know Habibur is a fundamentalist and

a militant, that is all I wish to say right

did not get the party ticket as the AL

leadership picked Rashidul Islam for

Cox's Bazar-3 constituency, told The

Daily Star that he would not cooperate

with the party candidate. "I refuse to work for him. If I don't get the party's

nomination I will compete in the elec-

the area and detached from local

politics. Pevaro said. "We will do our

best to get rid of these outsiders."

Saying Rashidul is an outsider in

AKM Iqbal Azad Khan, who was

refused nomination from the AL-led

grand alliance as Kamal Ahmed got

tion independently," he said.

Kamaluddin Ahmed Peyaro, who

now."



the voter list. Therefore the reasons for programme in Cirdap auditorium in the

capital yesterday. Brotee conducted the survey in association with three other NGOs Peoples' Participation and Research Centre (PPRC), Unnayon

Shamannay, and The Hunger Project-- in which more than 10,000 grassroots level NGO workers collected and

pointed that Saddam will not now be convicted of genocide against them in a trial yet to finish. Saddam's half-brother Barzan al-Tikriti and former judge Awad al-Bander are to be hanged after the week-long Eid. Saddam's daughter Raghd, in exile in Jordan, wants her father

buried in Yemen, a source close to the family said. The governor from Saddam's home town of Tikrit said his tribe was negotiating with the government to have the body interred in the village of Awja, where Saddam's sons were buried in 2003. The gov-

ernment wanted to bury him in

Baghdad, the governor said

In case of inclement weather, the congregation at the Baitul Mokarram at 8:00am will be considered as the main congregation, says a PID handout.

Separate arrangements have been made at the Eidgah for women. diplomats and their wives. The schedules of some maior Eid

congregations in the capital are -Gulshan Central Mosque Eidgah field

3 die in Meghna

FROM PAGE 16 rammed MV Salahuddin II, heading

for Madaripur, in the middle part of the vessel due to poor visibility in dense fog.

In MV Salahuddin II. which was heavily damaged, three people travelling on the first floor including a woman died on impact and two others are still missing. Both the launches were packed with passengers heading home for Eid holidays.

Panicked passengers started to run confusedly, hurting themselves.

Probe on to know

FROM PAGE 1 concerned despite being a much

talked about loan defaulter. The four-member investigation

committee was formed including BB General Manager Abed Ali, Naushad Ali, and Mesbaul Haque with the central bank's Executive Director Khurshid-ul-Alam at the helm.

Meanwhile, a comment by Election Commission Secretary Abdur Rashid Sarkar sparked much resentment within the bankers' community.

Rashid Sarkar in one of his opinions said there is no scope for any appeal or objection once a candidacy is granted by a returning officer. Only in a case of a rejection one has the chance of an appeal, he added.

The bankers in reply said during 2001 election 22 objections were raised even after the nominations had been granted. If it could be done then why not now, they asked.

sion and during the Eid holidays. The national dailies have brought out special supplements today highlighting the significance of the Eid-ul-Azha. Special meals will be served at

jails, orphanages, vagrant centres and dormitories on the day. The Shishu Park at Shahbagh will remain open from 2:00pm to 7:00pm

today, from 2:00pm to 7:30om on the Eid day and from 11:00am to 7:30pm for four consecutive days after the Eid. AL President Sheikh Hasina will exchange greetings with heads of

diplomatic missions, members of the diplomatic corps and representatives of development partners in Dhaka on the occasion between 11:00am to 12:00noon at her office at house No 51/A, Road no 3, Dhanmondi, says a

Explosives FROM PAGE 16

nress release

detective branch intensified their manhunt at different places in Gazipur and Narayanganj to arrest Hasan his aides. Hasan is the commander of Dhaka and Narayanganj district unit of the banned militants outfit, said the sources. Joydevpur police on December 19 arrested Hasan's

younger brother and Tangail district commander of JMB Abdullah Taslim alias Nahid, 20. Our Narayanganj correspon-

dent reports, police yesterday raided arrested JMB activist Saiful's rented house at his birthplace Mograpara during early hours. Saiful had rented two rooms of a house of Saudi Arabia expatriate Mokhter Hossain 15 days back identifving himself as a student of

Madanpur Madrasa. Saiful, son of late Kalamuddin of Farazikandi area in Bandar upazila, secured primary scholarship in 2003. His mother Shafia Begum told reporters that she noticed changes in Saiful when he was studying in class VII and he used to disappear occasionally from the house without notice. The letter police recovered from Saiful's den was written to a woman whom he addressed 'apa' (sister) and

requested her for money to be used for JMB militants on the run. Our correspondent in Gazipur said Rab and Kaliakoir police raided the house of Abdul Khaleq at Shafipur to recover bomb-making materials and arrest two suicide squad members of JMB -- Hasan Ali and Mizanur. Police said they arrested house owner Abdu Khaleg for his suspected link with JMB and detained Ibrahim Mian. Shaon, Anisur Rahman and Farid

for interrogation.

Gobindagani to Matherhat of Sadullapur to greet the JP chief. Prices of essentials

FROM PAGE 16 The prices of condensed milk and sugar have also increased. A can of condensed milk, weighing around 400 grams, is selling at Tk 45, it was

Tk 42 a few days back. However, the prices of spices seem to be normal. Fuel pumps

FROM PAGE 16

almost come to a stop five days ago because of poor storage of Padma and Jamuna oil depots in Sylhet.

He demanded that the oil company offices remain open for supplying oil for at least another day ahead of the Eid vacation.

An official of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, meanwhile, said the supply of diesel was

brought down by at least 20-50 percent in the last six months on the apprehension of smuggling.

Yunus FROM PAGE 16

Chittagong chapter, yesterday afternoon.

Nobel Winner Muhammad Yunus Reception Council organised the meeting in cooperation with IEB Chittagong chapter, Institute of Architects, Chittagong Unit and Forum for Planned Chittagong.

Bangladesh is naturally gifted with its unique geographical position and it has the great advantage of having the sea as well as a port which some neighboring countries lack, Yunus said.

"At first we have to decide what we want to do by 2050 and shortly decide our responsibility for achieving it. If we confine it to discussions, then it would be tough to achieve the goals."

He stressed the need for immediate steps to implement the development works.

Economic Association Chittagong Chapter President Professor Muhammed Sikander Khan, Editor of local daily Azadi MA Malek, architect Zarina Hossain, IEB Chittagong President Ali Ashraf, town planner Shahinul Islam Khan and Subhas Barua took part in the discussion.

Speakers put up the different problems of Chittagong port city and suggested recommendations to address the problems.

verified data. Considering the voter list published in 2001 as their basis of investigation the NGO workers visited every house in the constituencies and deleted the names of those who died, emigrated to other constituencies, had duplications of their names on the list, or are under 18 years of age.

They included the names of those who became newly eligible to be voters or immigrated to the surveyed constituencies recently for various reasons

The NGOs that conducted surveys in 30 constituencies as a citizens' initiative to identify fake and genuine voters in order to assist the EC, will reveal the results of the rest of the surveys by January 10.

Presenting the survey result Sharmin Murshid said they will submit a report to the EC and hoped that the commission will take initiatives to correct the current voter list for holding a fair election.

The survey report however did not discuss how the excess voters got on the list.

"The Election Commission provided us with just the number of voters in the constituencies; it did not give us the current voter list

Citizens' body asks

FROM PAGE 16 A group of 10 from the citizens' body handed over the letter to the AL President Sheikh Hasina at her residence during a meeting that comprised Kabir Chowdhury, Shahriar Kabir, Ajay Ray, Ferdousi Priyabhashini and Sara Zaker among others.

Talking to the reporters after the meeting, National Professor Kabir Chowdhury said, "the pro-Liberation War citizens can never accept the AL-BKM memorandum of understanding (MoU) as it recognises the use of 'fatwa' and brings religion into politics."

Due to this deal, a person like Shaikhul Hadith (BKM head) now talks about the importance of secular democracy, which is a proud moment for secularism in Bangladesh, noted writer and activist Shahriar Kabir quoting Sheikh Hasina who justified the controversial move of the AL.

"But we do not find this explanation acceptable and we will continue to protest this MoU through whichever method possible, be it our writings, our columns, our seminars and street marches," Shahriar said urging the people to vote for parties without religious fundamentalists or militants.

In the memorandum, the intellectuals observed that the fundamentalists want to transform the country into Mullah Omar's Afghanistan by estab-

"The Election Commission failed to follow the High Court order in regard to updating the voter list and it has vet to publish a draft voter list "he said

Brotee Executive Committee Member Selina Hossain, who presided over the programme, said there is a lack of proper voters' survey in the country which prompted them to take the initiative.

"We will complete the survey aradually in all the 300 constituencies for a correct voter list." she added.

Syed Ziauddin of PPRC, Shahinoor Alam of Unnayon Shamannay and Khan Sarwar Murshid of Brotee were also present at the programme.

Earlier, a survey by National Democratic Institute, a US based nonprofit organisation, also found 1.22 crore excess or duplicate names on

lishing a law based on the Quran,

Sunnah and Shariah The AL had been the vanguard of Bangalee nationalism and secularism for the past fifty years, they further

"The five-point MoU between the their lives for this country." the memo-

the 14-party will never be able create a secular Bangladesh.' The memorandum also observed that the introduction of a new law proclaiming Prophet Mohammad as the final and greatest prophet suggests as if the Muslims in Bangladesh never held this belief. "The implication of this law is that it creates the condition for declaring the Ahmadiyyas non-Muslim. Why would the non-Muslim be forced to

believe this? Then Hindus, Christians or Buddhists will also have to renounce their faith. Other eminent citizens who

signed the memorandum are --Justice KM Sobhan, Khan Sarwar Murshid, Hena Das, Asma Kibria, Sved Shamsul Haque, Rabiul Hossain, Shyamoli Nasrin Chowdhury, Nimchandra Bhoumik, Tasmima Hossain and Shirin Akhtar.

The ROs on December 27 rejected 264 nomination papers on grounds of loan default and other disqualifying factors.

Interestingly, over half of the aspirants, whose nomination papers had been rejected by the ROs on different grounds, did not file appeal in last three days while the time limit for filing appeal expired yesterday.

Major (retd) Akhtaruzzaman (Kishoreganj-2), Benzir Ahmed (Manikganj-1) and Golam Faruk Ovi (Barisal-2) filed appeals yester-

Bush hails FROM PAGE 1

Bush said in a statement released as he prepared to usher in 2007 at his Texas ranch.

"Bringing Saddam Hussein to justice will not end the violence in Iraq, but it is an important milestone on Iraq's course to becoming a democracy that can govern, sustain, and defend itself," he said.

Bush learned at 6:15 pm (0015 GMT) from US national security adviser Stephen Hadlev that Saddam would go to the gallows in a few hours, but was fast asleep when the execution occurred, said White House spokesman Scott Stanzel

The ousted dictator was hanged around 9:00 pm Texas time (0300 GMT), Iraqi officials said, as the violence-wracked country braced nervously for possible reprisals by his remaining supporters.

"The president concluded his day knowing that the final phase of bringing Saddam Hussein to justice was underway," Stanzel told reporters. Asked whether that meant Bush was asleep when it happened, Stanzel replied: "That's correct."

Taking aim at critics of the special judicial process that led to Saddam's conviction. Bush emphasized that he "was executed after receiving a fair trial -- the kind of justice he denied the victims of his brutal regime."

"Fair trials were unimaginable under Saddam Hussein's tyrannical rule. It is a testament to the Iragi people's resolve to move forward after decades of oppression that, despite his terrible crimes against his own people, Saddam Hussein received a

Saddam's death came as the US president planned to unveil a change in strategy in Iraq within about two weeks, amid heavy pressure from the US public to bring home the roughly 140.000 US soldiers there.

Many difficult choices and further sacrifices lie ahead. Yet the safety and security of the American people require that we not relent in ensuring that Iraq's young democracy continues to progress," said Bush.

party. Still they expect the party high command to change the decision and opt for a party veteran as there is still scope for it until January 3, the last date

for nomination paper withdrawal. "If the party still sticks to the decision of Habibur's nomination, we will at best remain inactive." said many local AL leaders and activists seeking anonym-

WHO IS HABIBUR?

from Kishoreganj-3.

bin Laden.

three others."

The Huji Bangladesh top brass includes Shaikhul Hadith Allama Azizul Haq, also chief of a faction of Islami Oikyo Jote (IOJ) and a former partner of the BNP-led alliance. Bandladesh Khelafat Majlish second-in-command Muhammad Habibur Rahman of Sylhet, Ataur Rahman Khan of Kishoreganj, Sultan Jaok of Chittagong, Abdul Mannan of Faridpur and Habibullah of Noakhali. All of them are involved with different Islamic organisations and madrasas, and one of them Ataur Rahman Khan was

Afghanistan via Pakistan in 1988,

visited some Taliban militant camps

and also met al-Qaeda leader Osama

interview of Habibur Rahman, in which

he gave a detailed account of his visit to

Afghanistan in 1988. He said. "An

invitation from Harkat-ul Jihad Al Islami

made it possible for me to make the

fortunate trip to Afghanistan... Those of

us who visited the Afghan war-fields

during that trip are Shaikhul Hadith, Ataur Rahman Khan, Sultan Jaok,

Abdul Mannan, Habibullah, myself and

chapter of Huji greeted the nine mem-

bers of the Bangladeshi team and took

them to the Huji's Karachi office.

Habibur said Huji Pakistan chief

Saifullah Akhtar and a Bangladeshi

Mujahideen Abdur Rahman Shahid

drove them to an Afghan Mohaji

(literally, refugee) camp on the Pak-

Afghan border. They stayed at the

camp and visited some injured

Mujahideens and an Islamic cadet

college, where the cadets received

the residence of top Mujahideen leader

Abde Rabbir Rasul Saiaf, the narration

goes on. The house was defended like

a fort with anti-aircraft guns and armed

While still in Pakistan and on their

way to Afghanistan, the next day the

Bangladeshi team visited a special

Muiahideen training camp and met

about a dozen Bangladeshi young

Mujahideens led by one Abdu

Quddus. They watched youths from

different countries taking military

Abdur Rahman then drove them to

them with a guard of honour.

guards.

In Pakistan, leaders of the local

The bulletin in its front page ran an

the party ticket in Brahmanbaria-2 constituency, told The Daily Star, "If the Awami League survey doesn't have elected an MP with BNP ticket in 1991 my name in it then the survey was not In an interview a few years back, done properly. Because everyone in Habibur Rahman disclosed those my area knows that I am the most likely names, with whom he had travelled to candidate to win."

"Kamal Ahmed does not stay in the area, he lives in Dhaka and has been staying there for the last five years. He has not participated in a single party activity in the constituency." Iabal alleged. His supporters demonstrated throughout the day and late into the evening in front of Sudha Sadan.

Iqbal, however, said, "We will accept whatever the leaders decide on January 3, we will support whoever receives the nomination," adding, "I have filed nomination papers as an independent candidate.

Afzal Hossain, who was not given the nomination for Kishoregani-6 constituency where Alaul Haque was given the party ticket, said, "Another survey must be done, because this survey is not right. I believe I am a more competent candidate than Alaul and my name should be on the corrected nominations list."

AL leader nomination-seeker HM Zaglul Haider, who did not get the AL nomination for Satkhira-5 constituency as the grand alliance chose a Jatiya Party candidate, said, "The alliance will lose the seat because JP does not have strong grassroots support here but the Awami League

has. The supporters of Gazi Kamrul Huda Selim also protested throughout the day in front Sudha Sadan against Mafizul Islam Khan Kamal's receiving the nomination from AL for Manikganj-3 constituency.

Supporters of the nomination aspirants Major (retd) Liaquat Ali of Pabna-2 constituency, Sajjadul Jumma of Jhenidah-3, and Khan Tipu Sultan of Jessore-5 also protested in front of Sudha Sadan last night.

noted AL and the Khelafat Majlish betrays the 30 lakh martyrs who sacrificed

randum read adding "By ascending to power through a deal with a section of fundamentalist militants, the AL or