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mote Business
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NEWS BRIEFS

Khaleda opens 'Zia
Mela' Jan 17Prime Minister Begum
Khaleda Zia will open a three-
day 'Zia Mela' at Bagbari under
Gabtol thana of Bogra district
on January 17. The Bangladesh
Jatiyatabadi Samajik Sang-
skritik Sangstha organised the
mela at the birth place of
Shahed President Ziaur Ra-
hman on the occasion of his 58
birth anniversary, reports BSS.Senior AL leaders
meet todayA meeting of senior Awami
League leaders, who were
given the responsibility of
conducting campaign for the
Dhaka city corporation elec-
tion, will be held at 29 Minto
Road at 6 pm today. Awami
League Joint Secretary MA
Jalil has requested the leaders
concerned to be present in the
meeting, reports UNB.Keramat visits
Ijtema siteTONGI, Jan 14: Religious
Affairs Minister Md Keramat
Ali visited the site of the
Bishwa Ijtema on the bank of
the river Turag here today.
According to an official hand-
out, about five million musalls
from sixty countries of the
world including Bangladesh
are expected to attend the
three-day Ijtema beginning
tomorrow, reports BSS.Huda inaugurates
Khokan's exhibitionInformation Minister Naz-
mul Huda yesterday inaugu-
rated a four-day photographic
exhibition of photo-journalist
Abu Taher Khokan at the
Shilpakala Academy here. A to-
tal of 73 photographs have
been put on display at the ex-
hibition titled 'Children and
Bangladesh'. In his speech, the
Information Minister called for
combined efforts of all to en-
sure the implementation of the
rights of children and their
welfare in the society, reports
BSS.

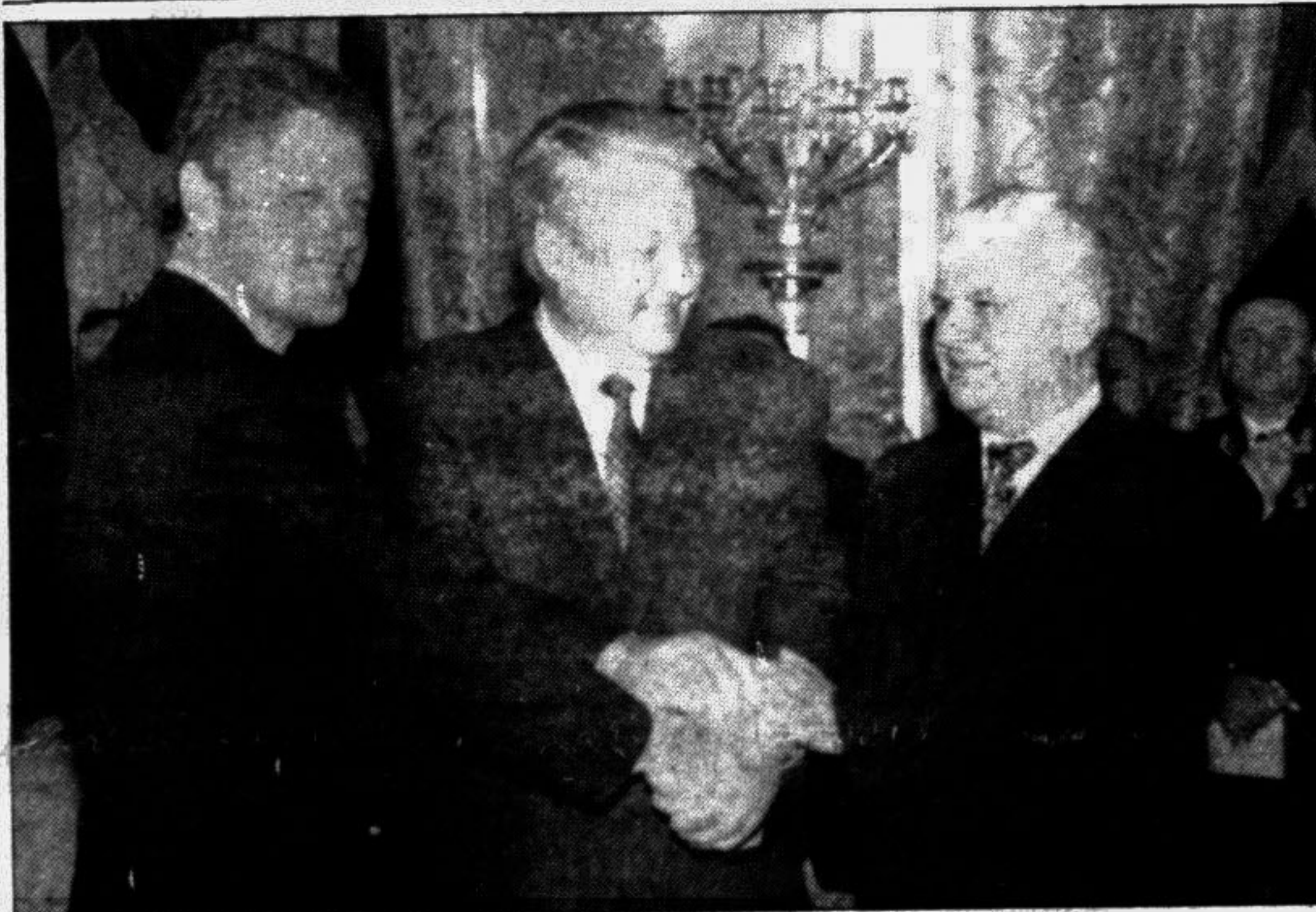
Move to speed up use of foreign aid

Govt plans changes in
project administration

By Inam Ahmed

The government is consider-
ing bringing administrative
changes in the Project Imple-
mentation Unit (PIU) for
speedy utilisation of foreign aid,
according to official sources.The changes include giving
more power to the PIU and ap-
pointing full-time project direc-
tors. The proposed changes will
soon be discussed at a Cabinet
meeting."The government has no
problem in providing counter-
part funds or local currency for
projects," a highly-placed
Finance Ministry source said.
"We have a good forex reserve.
But we need to galvanise the
project administration."At present, the PIU does not
have sufficient powers to take
decisions independently which
often leads to delays in project
implementation, sources said.They pointed out that the
shortfalls in the Annual
Development Programme (ADP)
are also the result of lack of
enough administrative power of
the PIU."The project directors now
have to take the help of the line
ministries whenever any prob-
lem arises regarding any proj-
ect," one high official said."They cannot take decisions
independently." The bureau-
crats often take a long time in
solving the problems seriously
hampering the project imple-
mentation."Besides slowing down the
projects, there is also cost
escalation and sometimes the
projects cross the terminal time.
This puts a lot of pressure on
the Economic Relations Division
(ERD) to get time extension for

the projects", the source said.

The proposed administrative
changes will eliminate the bu-
reaucratic tangles to a great ex-
tent, the sources said.In addition to increasing the
PIU's power, full-time project di-
rectors will be appointed to en-
sure smooth implementation of
the projects.At present, the project direc-
tors, appointed on ad hoc basis,
are often assigned more than
one responsibility. With full-
time directors given more
power, the implementation of
projects will be expedited, the
officials hoped."We do not have any pending
projects. We are approving the
projects as quickly as possible,"
an ERD official said. "Now, we
need to implement them quickly
for a speedy growth of the econ-
omy."

US President Bill Clinton (L), Russian President Boris Yeltsin (C) and Ukrainian President Leonid M Kravchuk (R) join hands yesterday in Moscow after the signing of an historic accord on nuclear disarmament. — AFP photo

Accord to dismantle
Ukraine's N-armsMOSCOW, Jan 14: President
Clinton and Boris Yeltsin agreed
Friday to stop targeting nuclear
missiles against any country by
May 30 and signed an agree-
ment with Ukraine to scrap the
world's third largest nuclear
arsenal, reports AP.The accord on missile target-
ing was signed shortly after cer-
emonies sealing an agreement
with Ukrainian President Leonid
Kravchuk to dismantle all
1800 nuclear warheads in the
former Soviet republic.Yeltsin said the Ukrainian
agreement will remove the last
problems of the Cold War.
Clinton said it would reduce the
chances of nuclear terrorism
and espionage. Kravchuk said
it would make his country safer."President Yeltsin and I
agreed that as of May 30, the
nuclear missiles of Russia and
the United States will no longer
be targeted against any coun-
try," Clinton announced at a
joint news conference with
Yeltsin.At the session midway
through Clinton's three-day
visit to Moscow, the US
President and his Russian
counterpart hailed their
progress on arms control and
economic cooperation.Yeltsin said the actions on
nuclear weapons were taken to
"build up strategic safety and
security between two nations
forging a new relationship in the
post Cold war era."Clinton said Yeltsin has ac-
cepted an invitation to visit the
United States this fall.On economic issues, Yeltsin
praised Clinton for US economic
assistance to Russia as it works
to create a free market econ-
omy. He said his country could
"greatly benefit from the open-
ing of the American market-
place, whether it's raw materi-
als or equipment."Clinton said Yeltsin has been
unfairly criticised for his rela-
tionship with the United States
and said America does not want
to chart Russia's future.Govt college
teachers'
strike Jan 20The BCS General Education
Association has called for a
day-long strike on January 20
across the country to protest
the Tuesday's killing of a
teacher of the Sunamganj
Government College by a de-
gree examinee, reports UNB.Joyanta Kumar Dey, a
teacher of the physics depart-
ment of the college, was
stabbed to death by the degree
examinee whom he had earlier
not allowed to adopt un-
fair means in the examination.The decision of the day-
long strike by the government
college teachers was taken at
the emergency meeting of the
BCS General Education Asso-
ciation held yesterday with
Association president Dr Q A T
M Habibur Rahman in the
chair.The meeting strongly con-
demned the killing and de-
manded punishment to the
identified killer and adequate
compensation to the victim's
family.Khaleda, Hasina
campaign for
candidates

By Staff Correspondent

With the two top national
leaders — Prime Minister
Khaleda Zia and Opposition
leader Sheikh Hasina — joining
the hustings, electioneering
for the January 30 city polls
received new impetus over the
past couple of days.Yesterday both leaders
toured parts of the city and
talked to cross-sections of
people, seeking votes for their
respective mayoral candidates.Prime Minister and BNP
chairperson Khaleda Zia paid
a surprise visit for the second
time to BNP nominee Mirza
Abbas Shahjahanpur residence
and election camp.During her 20-minute stay
there from 7:50 pm, Begum
Zia inquired about the cam-
paign and directed the BNP
leaders and activists to work
harder to project the party
nominee."We will have to keep in
mind that the BNP govern-
ment is pledge-bound to work
for the welfare of the people,"
Expressing her gratitude to
See Page 12 Col 7Japan looking
forward to
Khaleda's visitJapanese Parliamentary Vice
Minister for International Trade
and Industry T. Endo has
assured Bangladesh's special
envoy M. Morshed Khan of
Tokyo's full support and coop-
eration saying Japan was look-
ing forward to Prime Minister
Begum Khaleda Zia's visit to
Tokyo, reports BSS.The assurance came when
the Prime Minister's special
Envoy Morshed Khan, now on
a week-long visit to Japan at
the invitation of the Japanese
government, met Endo in
Tokyo Thursday afternoon, ac-
cording to a message received
here yesterday.Khan hoped that the Japa-
nese investors would come
forward to utilise the GSP
facilities, cheap labour and
cheap energy available in
Bangladesh.The special envoy referred
to the recent trends in world
economy and requested the
government of Japan to open
the door for further Japanese
investment in textiles energy
and telecommunication sec-
tors.Khan suggested that if 30
composite textile mills of
Japan are relocated in Bang-
ladesh, these can enrich the
garments industry of Bangla-
desh with a wide scope for
export to the world market.PAMS begins
todayThe 18th Pacific Armies
Management Seminar (PAMS)
begins in the city today at the
Sonargaon Hotel, reports UNB.Over 150 delegates from 35
Asia-Pacific nations, including
Bangladesh, will take part in
the week-long seminar co-
hosted by the Bangladesh Army
and the US Army, Pacific Com-
mand (USARPAC).Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen-
eral Muhammad Noor Uddin
Khan will deliver the welcome
address at the opening cere-
mony.The Commanding General,
US Army Training and Doctrine
Command General Fred-
erick M. Franks, Jr and the
Bangladesh Foreign Secretary
Mufleh Rahman Osman will
present the keynote address
See Page 12 Col 43-day Biswa Ijtema
begins today

From Our Correspondent

GAZIPUR, Jan 14: The
three-day Biswa Ijtema, the
second largest congregation of
the world Muslims after the
Hajj begins today on the eastern
bank of the river Turag in
Tongi.The Tongi congregation
aims at promoting Islam
through practise of 'Iman'
(spiritual belief) and 'Amal'
(spiritual practice). Islam can
be restored truly when a
Muslim establishes and prac-
tices the tenets of Islam and
the ideals of Prophet
Muhammad (SM) in his daily
life.Several lakh devotees from
all parts of the country have
converged at the sprawling
site of the Ijtema.More than 2,500 from 60
countries had arrived till 7 pm
today. The countries include
India, Pakistan, Malaysia,
Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, the
Philippines, Indonesia, Turkey,
Jordan, Singapore, Thailand,
Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the UAE,
Kuwait, Sudan, USA, UK.Russia, Uganda, Australia, and
South Africa.The highest number of for-
eign participants are from
Pakistan, India and Malaysia.
They number 450, 360 and
270 respectively.The Akhri Munajat or
concluding prayer at the end
of the 3-day Ijtema will be
conducted by the Ameer of the
New Delhi-based Tablig Jamaat
Hazrat Maoulana Enamul
Hassan. The Ameer has already
arrived.More than 5000 volunteers
are working tirelessly, making
necessary arrangements to
supply water and toilet facil-
ities. Different government de-
partments, social organisations
and a unit of the Bangladesh
Army are rendering all cooper-
ation for the comfort of the
devotees.A large number of shami-
anas and tents have been
erected on the banks of the
Turag. A separate tent has
been set up exclusively for the
See Page 12 Col 1Spl JS body discusses
Zila Parishads Jan 18

By Nurul Kabir

The special parliamentary
committee on the Zila Parishads
will meet on January 18 to dis-
cuss the composition, constitu-
tion and functions of the coun-
try's district-level local govern-
ments, the committee chief
said.The 15-member house com-
mittee, headed by Local Govern-
ment and Rural Development
(LGRD) Minister Barrister
Abdus Salam Talukder, was
formed in Parliament on
December 8 last to work out the
details of the local government
structure at the district level.The Jatiya Sangsad (JS),
while approving the terms of
reference for the body — com-
prising seven members each
from the Treasury and
Opposition Benches — asked
the committee members to put
forward recommendations on
how to democratise the insti-
tution. The committee is also
scheduled to consider the pro-
posed amendments to the Local
Government (District Council)
(Amendment) Bill, 1993.Introduced during the last
budget session, the District
Council Bill came for consid-
eration in the House in an
amended form following a thor-
ough discussion on the issue in
the parliamentary wing of the
ruling BNP.The original bill, while sug-
gesting elections in the district
level local government, pro-
posed that the head of the body
be elected by an electoral col-
lege comprising two men and
one woman elected by the union
parishad chairman and mem-
bers from each thana of the re-
spective districts.In the face of opposition
from members belonging to
both benches, the minister con-
cerned did not plead for pas-
See Page 12 Col 8Docs in 5 more hospitals
stop services today

By Staff Correspondent

The indefinite strike of the
Bangladesh Medical Associa-
tion is likely to intensify today
with doctors working in the
semi-government and non-
government hospitals report-
edly set to join the agitation
for realisation of a 21-point
charter of demands.BMA Secretary General Dr
Gai Abdul Haq last night in-
formed The Daily Star that
many more of the country's
20,000 doctors would join the
strike today.Besides the Bangladesh
Medical Shikkhak Samity Fe-
deration president Dr Anwarul
Azim has expressed his orga-
nisation's solidarity with the
strike, which began January
11. Doctors affiliated with the
Bangladesh Private Medical
Practitioners' Association will
also join forces.From today, doctors in the
Shishu Hospital, the Holy
Family Hospital, the Ibrahim
Memorial Hospital (BIRDEM),
the National Hospital and the
Islamia Eye Hospital will offer
no services just as in other
government hospitals and
health complexes across the
country.The doctors of the semi
and non-government hospitals
expressing solidarity with the
BMA, said the demands were
justified. They urged the gov-
ernment to accept the de-
mands immediately in order to
end the strike," Dr Haq said.The demands include in-
creased budgetary allocation
for the health sector, building
up an infrastructure for pri-
mary health care, setting up
new hospitals and recruitment
of more manpower in the
health sector.Our DMCH correspondent
says, at least 37 patients left
the Dhaka Medical College
Hospital yesterday. While all
scheduled operations were
postponed, four emergency
operations were carried out by
voluntary doctors.The 800-bed hospital, which
is always crowded with at
least 1400 patients everyday,
had 1175 patients yesterday.Sarbaharamen
kill four
in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Jan 14: Activists
of the Purbha Bangla Sarbahara
Party allegedly killed four per-
sons at Magurguna village un-
der Dumuria thana of the dis-
trict yesterday, police said.Three of the victims were
shot and another was slaugh-
tered.Earlier on Thursday, an
armed group, in a microbus,
raided the house of Mahtab
Morol at Magurguna village in
Dumuria and abducted four
people at gunpoint at about 2
pm, police said.The victims were dragged
to the nearby Tapiabad fish en-
closure where three of them
were shot by the miscreants
while another was hacked to
death.Police could not say any-
thing about the motive of the
killings but local people said
the outlawed Sarbahara men
were still active in the area.Senior police officials from
Khulna rushed to the remote
village in Dumuria.Hossain Ali's
contribution
recalled

By Staff Correspondent

The defection of 65 Beng-
alee diplomats from Pakistan
to the Bangladesh side, led by
M Hossain Ali in Calcutta on
April 18, 1971 gave the
Liberation War a new thrust
and was a turning point in the
freedom struggle.Speakers at a discussion
meeting on the 13th death an-
niversary of M Hossain Ali, one
of the first diplomats to defect
from Pakistan, recalling his
contribution, said his defection
as the Pakistani Deputy High
Commissioner in Calcutta gave
the newly formed Bangladesh
government a secretariat and a
communication centre.It was of much importance
during the war, but sadly, the
new generation knows nothing
See Page 12 Col 7

Interview with KCC mayor candidate

No fresh tax burden, says Rob

From Munir U Ahmed

KHULNA, Jan 13: The Jatiya
Party nominee for the mayoral
election in Khulna S M A Rob
has promised no new taxes
will be imposed on the city
dwellers if he is elected mayor.
S M A Rob, who is also the
president of the Khulna Cham-
ber of Commerce and Indus-
tries, has gone into hiding
following a warrant of arrest
issued against him recently
under the Anti-Terrorism Act.
He gave the interview to The
Daily Star secretly from the
house of another Jatiya Party
leader.Rob alleged that many lead-
ers and workers, including
former MP Abul Hussain and
city JP secretary Abul Kashem,
were also in hiding in appre-
hension of police harassment.
Rob who was elected
Khulna chamber president for a
second time also alleged

S M A Rob

that the BNP lodged a case
against him under the Anti-
terrorism Act after the Jatiya
Party had nominated him to
contest the mayoral polls.
The JP nominee said the
Khulna municipality was up-
graded as a city corporation by
the Ershad government Deve-lopment works in Khulna,
including sodium street lig-
hts, Khulna university, medical
college, a 250-bed hospital,
traffic signal lights, drainage,
etc. were started by the Jatiya
Party government.S M A Rob said, he would
launch what he called, a cru-
sade against miscreants and also
take steps to maintain law and
order in the city.He alleged that crimes like
murders, muggings, robberies,
and thefts had alarmingly in-
creased in the city."No contractors got work
orders without bribing the
engineers and staff of the city
corporation during the BNP
regime," he further alleged.
"If elected mayor, I will use
all available resources honestly
and sincerely to develop the
Khulna city like a modern
city," S M A Rob added.

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina seeking votes for her party candidates contesting the DCC elections during door-to-door campaigning in the Sobhanbagh-Tollabagh area of the city yesterday