

Inside Today

Article

Russia Looks at the
Spectre of an 'Islamic
Invasion'
Page 4

International

12 more US warplanes
to join NATO air
strikesArkansas woman
accuses Clinton of
sexual misdeeds
Page 5

Business

Clinton, Hosokawa fail
to reach accord on
tradeIndia plans to allow
import of foreign
consumer goods
Pages 6, 7

Living

To be One of the
'Irrational Half', The
American Music Awar-
ds; Removing Stains;
Towards More Picture-
sque Cities; Buying
a Flat
Page 8

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day

Cassette Culture on
the Offensive
Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS

Justice Hossain
laid to restFrom Our Correspondent
SYLHET, Feb 12: Election
Commissioner Justice Syed
Mesbahuddin Hossain was
buried at the graveyard ad-
jacent to the mazar of Hazrat
Shahjalal (RA) after Asr prayers
today. His Namaz-e-Janaza was
held in the Darul Iqbal premises.
Several thousand people
attended the Janaza.BNP nomination
seekers' interviewThe Bangladesh Nationalist
Party (BNP) has requested
those who have applied for the
party nomination for the
Magura-2 by-election to appear
before the interview at 3pm
tomorrow at the party central
office at 28/1 Naya Palatan in
the city, reports BSS.Aminul Hoque
returns homeState Minister for Estab-
lishment Barrister Aminul Ho-
que returned Dhaka yesterday
from Washington after
attending the National Prayer
Breakfast programme. The
programme was held at the US
capital on February 3, reports
UNB.

Call money rates

Money rates in the call
money market during the last
week ranged from 2.50 per
cent to 8.00 per cent. During
the same week interest rates
offered by the bank on certifi-
cate of deposits varied from
5.50 per cent to 8.75 per cent.
The bank rate, however, re-
mained unchanged at 6 per
cent, reports UNB.

Sohri, Ifar timings			
Rmdn	Feb	Sohri	Ifar
01	13	—	5:58 pm
02	14	5:11 am	5:59 pm
03	15	5:10 am	6:00 pm

All is set to receive
Chakma refugeesAll is set to welcome the
Chakma refugees when their
homecoming from the Indian
camps begins Tuesday morn-
ing, reports BSS.The government has made
elaborate arrangements to
welcome them back home and
also provide necessary help to
facilitate their rehabilitation,
official sources said.Minister for Communi-
cations Oli Ahmed, who mainly
conducted the discussions for
their return after about seven
years, will personally receive
the first batch of 403 Chakma
families when they arrive at
the Khagrachhari border point
from the camps in the Tripura
province of India.The Governor of Tripura
province Romesh Bhandari is
also scheduled to be present at
Khagrachhari on the occasion
from the Indian side.After the arrival of the first
batch, the refugees would re-
turn home in batches three
days a week, official sources
said.All preparations have been
completed at Ramgarh and
Tabalchhari under
Khagrachhari Hill District to
receive more than four hun-
dred tribal families returning
between February 15 and 22.According to official
sources, 100 tribal families
will return to Bangladesh on
February 15, 105 families onFebruary 17, 76 families on
February 19 and 124 families
on February 22.Over 50,000 tribals left the
Chittagong Hill Tracts for the
Indian state of Tripura over
the past ten years at the in-
stitution of so-called Shanti
Bahini. The tribals are return-
ing to their homes in
Chittagong Hill Tracts on the
basis of an understanding
among the representatives of
India, Bangladesh and the
Parbatya Chattagram Jana
Sanghati Samity in the recent
past.Reception committees con-
sisting of Union Parishad
chairmen and village headmen.
See Page 12 Col 1Security stepped
up in KhagrachhariFrom Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Feb 12: The
authorities have tightened se-
curity in Khagrachhari Hill
District in the back-drop of
recent violence by the activists
of the Pahari Chhatra Parishad.According to official
sources, the security measures
have been taken to ensure
peaceful repatriation of the
Chakma refugees, scheduled to
return home from February 15.The police have arrested
ten activists of the Pahari
Chhatra Parishad in connec-
tion with Thursday's violence.
They are Kalamoni Tripura,
Pranoy Chakma, Kusum Moni
Tripura, Bipul Chakma, Sathya
Bikash Tripura, Prosongita
Tripura, Prodipta Kisa, Rikton
Chakma, Priti Kumar Tripura
and Prakash Chakma.Section 144 has been im-
posed with effect from
February 4 to 24 in a bid to
maintain law and order.Dhaka seeks seat on
top UNHCR body

By Farid Hossain, Guest Writer

Bangladesh, which suffered
two major refugee crises in the
past one decade, seeks to en-
ter the Executive Committee
of the United Nations High
Commissioner for Refugees.The request was conveyed to
the UN Secretary General by
Bangladesh's Permanent
Representative to the United
Nations in June last year. This
was circulated as a provisional
agenda to the Economic and
Social Council last month.Having played host to tens
of thousands of Rohingya
refugees twice in a decade
Bangladesh strongly believes
that it qualifies for the mem-
bership on the Executive
Committee, a policy-making
body that usually advises the
High Commissioner for the
refugees.It put forward two strong
arguments in favour of its
candidature:1. In the past decade
Bangladesh has twice had to
contend with the problem of
refugees on a major scale.
Bangladesh's experience in
this regard would be of rele-
vance to the work of the
Executive Committee.2. Bangladesh has always
been supportive of the UNHCR
and has also received assis-
tance from it relating to
refugees."Bangladesh is thus keenly
interested in the UNHCR and
is in a position to make a
meaningful contribution to the
work of the committee," the
Permanent representative said
in his application.

See Page 12 Col 8

Ramadan
beginsHoly Ramadan begins today
throughout the country, re-
ports BSS.On the eve of the month of
abstinence, President Abdur
Rahman Biswas, Prime Minis-
ter Begum Khaleda Zia and
Leader of the Opposition in
Parliament Sheikh Hasina
have, in separate messages,
greeted the people of the
country.They called for upholding
the spirit and solemnity of the
holy month through utmost
dedication, sacrifice, toler-
ance, and fellow feelings.According to the Islamic
Foundation, iftar today in
Dhaka and its adjoining areas
is at 5:58pm while the last
time for sehri tonight ends at
5:11am.Meanwhile the month of
fasting for Muslims began Fri-
day in parts of the Middle East.Aminul Haq's denial
puts matter at rest

By Staff Correspondent

In a belated reaction yes-
terday Attorney General Aminul
Haq denied news paper
reports about his resignation
and said he has 'excellent'
working relations with the
government.Meanwhile, a government
handout was also issued last
evening cancelling the earlier
order, issued on January 22,
appointing Additional Attorney
General Abdul Wadud Kha-
ndaker to act as the Attorney
General due to the absence of
Aminul Haq for medical
treatment abroad.The reports appearing in
the newspapers about my re-
signation are not correct. I have
excellent working relationship
with the government," the
Attorney General said in a brief
signed statement, ending a
two-day saga which gave rise
to wide spread speculation in
the public mind.The statement came after
Haq called on Prime Minister
Begum Khaleda Zia at her of-
fice yesterday. "I met the
hon'ble Prime Minister today
and discussed some problems
of my office," Haq added in the
statement.He went to the Prime
Minister's Office (PMO) at
around 12:30 pm and re-
mained there until 5 pm. It islearnt that the PMO insisted
he issue a statement denying
reports about his resignation.The day's developments put
to rest speculations about the
AG's resignation, widely re-
ported in all major newspapers
on Friday last, which neither
the government nor Aminul
Haq denied immediately.Rumours about his decision
to quit spread around the
Supreme Court on Thursday
last and gained momentum
after he reportedly called on
the President later the same
day.However, it is learnt that
Haq had actually typed out a
resignation letter at his office
on the same day and placed it
with Additional Attorney
General Abdul Wadud Kha-
ndaker, after signing it.He was reportedly annoyed
with the government's failure
to cancel the earlier order au-
thorising Wadud Khandaker to
discharge the responsibilities
of the attorney general until a
further order.The January 22 order cre-
ated an uproar when Haq dis-
closed that he had returned
from medical treatment abroad
on January 17 and had been at-
tending office regularly since
then. The government gave a
See Page 12 Col 7Ghali invited
to visit
BangladeshThe UN Secretary General
Dr Boutros Boutros-Ghali has
lauded Bangladesh's success in
the field of social welfare and
assured all possible help and
cooperation for socio-econ-
omic uplift programme of the
country, reports UNB.This was stated when State
Minister for Social Welfare Md
Fazlur Rahman met with the
Secretary General at the UN
Headquarters in New York
Thursday, said an official
handout yesterday.The State Minister invited
the UN Secretary General to
visit Bangladesh.During the meeting, the
State Minister gave a brief re-
sume of the government mea-
sures in the field of education,
particularly female education,
health, human resource devel-
opment, employment genera-
tion and credit to the poor.He said, the government
was striving hard to improve
socio-economic situation of the
country through poverty alie-
vation programmes.Also present at the meeting
were Under Secretary General
for Policy Coordination and
Sustainable Development Nitin
Desai and special adviser to
Secretary General Ismat
Kittani.The UN chief recalled the
meetings with Prime Minister
Begum Khaleda Zia.Withdrawal of VAT from
local products demanded

By Staff Correspondent

The Inter-Association In-
dustries Development and Re-
habilitation Committee yes-
terday demanded withdrawal
of the VAT from local products
and implementation of the Sgk
Industries and Revitalisation
Cell immediately.At a press conference in the
city, the leaders of the com-
mittee said the country's
economy, "sometimes called a
command economy, some-
times a mixed economy and
now a free market economy,
was actually a free-style econ-
omy in which the whole popu-
lation was being used as guinea
pigs."Besides the convenor of the
committee, Alauddin Ahmed,
the president of the
Bangladesh Specialised Textile
Mills and Power Loom
Industries Association Col
(reid) Selimuddin, the vice
president of the BangladeshCold Storage Association, the
General Secretary of the BICIC
Shilpa Malik Samity Anwar
Hossain, A Rashid Lebu of the
Cargo Vessel Owners'
Association, M A Malek
Chowdhury of the Plastic
Drabba Prastutkarak
Association and Saifuddin Alim
of the Re-rolling Mills
Association were present at
the press conference."Our exportable items are
threatened by foreign goods
but our market is open to for-
eigners," Alauddin Ahmed said.
"This proved that the open
market policy implemented by
the Finance Minister was
against the interests of the na-
tion but was favourable to the
foreigners. Actually, the open
market economy is a blueprint
designed to destroy the local
industries."The committee demanded
punitive actions against those
See Page 12 Col 1Tk 50,000 reward
for arrest of main
Lalbagh accused

By Staff Correspondent

The government has an-
nounced a reward of Taka
50,000 for handing over to the
police or for giving information
about the whereabouts of Abdul
Aziz, the principal accused in
the sensational multiple mur-
ders in the capital's Lalbagh
area on January 31, according
to a handout issued last night.Aziz, a defeated commis-
sioner candidate of the January
30 Dhaka City Corporation
(DCC) polls, had been abscond-
ing since the gruesome
killings in which six people
died.The handout said Aziz, son
of Haji Abdul Majid of 62/2,
Abdul Aziz Lane under the
Lalbagh thana is wanted in
connection with the murders.So far police have arrested
10 persons, including the fa-
ther of Aziz. The announce-
ment of the reward comes
after a vigorous search by po-
lice to nab Aziz failed.Decision not to
hang photographs,
banners at
Shaheed MinarA joint meeting of the
Dhaka University authorities
regarding preparations for the
observance of the Ekushey
February has decided not to
hang any photographs and
banners at the central Shaheed
Minar, reports BSS.Presided over by the Vice-
Chancellor Prof Emajuddin
Ahmed, the meeting was at-
tended by representatives of
the DUCSU, the hall unions,
students organisations, Deans
of various faculties, Directors
of the various institutes,
provosts, departmental chair-
men, members of the Senate
and Syndicate, the teachers
association, officers association
and other officials of the uni-
versity.The meeting also decided
against holding any meetings
or processions in and around
See Page 12 Col 7Unscheduled debates dislocate
JS order of proceedings

By Nurul Kabir

The Jatiya Sangsad (JS),
which went into its 13th ses-
sion on February 5, is yet to
take up legislative business
thanks to a series of unsched-
uled debates on various sub-
jects.The House also failed to be-
gin discussion on the presi-
dential speech, although four
working days have so far
passed since President Abdur
Rahman Biswas addressed the
House on the opening day of
the session.According to the JS order
of the day, printed and cir-
culated by the Parliament
Secretariat, two treasury
bench-sponsored bills were to
have been tabled in the House
on February 8 and 9.Two other private member
bills, sponsored by the
Opposition, were scheduled to
be tabled Thursday, the private
members' day. Discussion onthe presidential speech was
scheduled to begin Wednesday.The legislators spent the
whole of February 8 debating
the then crisis arising out of
the appointments of nine
Additional High Court judges
by the government. The follow-
ing day passed debating
whether a discussion in the
House was called for in the
changed circumstances vis-a-
vis, the judges' appointments.
The proceedings of the House
were adjourned for another
day on February 10 to mourn
the death of Abdul Quddus
Makhan.Of the four bills so far in-
cluded in the JS order of the
day, one proposed by
Salauddin Quader Chowdhury
of the National Democratic
Party (NDP) is likely to earn
appreciation from both the
treasury and Opposition
benches.The NDP member's bill has
sought job conditionalities of
the officials and employees of
'private companies with lim-
ited liability'.The bill, if adopted by the
House, would stop arbitrary
hiring and firing of employees
by the directors of the com-
panies and put both the em-
ployers and the employees
under some legal obligations to
discharge their respective re-
sponsibilities.The other three bills were
to be tabled respectively by
Minister for Religious Affairs
Mohammad Keramat Ali, State
Minister for Cultural Affairs
Jahanara Begum and Rafiqul
Islam of the Awami League.However, the JS session,
resuming this morning after a
two-day recess, is scheduled to
discuss the issue of the post-
polls violence at Lalbagh in the
See Page 12 Col 6US, Japan appear
to be on
collision course
on trade policyWASHINGTON, Feb 12: The
United States and Japan, ap-
peared to be on a collision
course on trade policy today
despite a friendly parting by
President Clinton and
Japanese Prime Minister
Morihiro Hosokawa, reports
Reuter.After the two leaders had
breakfast in the family quarters
of the White House, Hosokawa
said at a news conference that
Tokyo would not drop its re-
sistance to "numerical targets"
to pacify the Americans on
trade."We will not modify our po-
sition in that regard," the
Japanese leader said.Clinton suggested US retali-
atory action could come
quickly."We'll just have to examine
what our next steps will be,
and we'll be turning to that
next week," he told reporters
See Page 12 Col 8

Bosnian talks end without progress

GENEVA, Feb 12: Bosnian
peace talks broke up Saturday
despite increased pressure on
the warring sides to reach a
settlement before a NATO
deadline against Bosnian
Serbs, reports AP.Despite the pressure from
the United States and Russia,
United Nations mediator
Thorvald Stoltenberg said
there was no progress made
during the three days of neg-
otiations among Bosnian
Muslim, Serb and Croat lead-
ers."We failed to solve the issue
of disputed territories,"
Stoltenberg said, adding that
a new meeting will be held
at the end of February or be-
ginning of March.The warring sides are
committed to further talks on
the basis of a European Union
initiative, with Serajevo to be
under UN administration,
Mostar under EU administra-
tion and one-third of the terri-tory to go to a future Muslim-
led state. Stoltenberg said.Earlier, Bosnian Serb leader
Radovan Karadzic accused the
West of encouraging rival
Muslims to stall the talks while
waiting for the North Atlantic
Treaty Organization's February
20 deadline to pass."Muslims are buying time,"
Karadzic said. "They are en-
couraged by the NATO threat
and are not negotiating in good
faith."The Western military al-
liance issued an ultimatum
Wednesday night for the Serbs
to pull back their howitzers,
mortars and anti-aircraft guns
20 kilometers from Sarajevo or
face bombing raids.The United States has put
new pressure on Bosnia's
Serbs to make major conces-
sions for a settlement of the
war in the former Yugoslav re-
public, now in its 22nd month.
Russia also pledged more ac-
tive role in trying to persuade

the Serbs to be more flexible.

"There is no doubt that
Russia and the Americans are
working together... for the
common good and in the in-
terest of the political settle-
ment," said Vitaly Churkin,
Russia's deputy foreign minis-
ter and a special envoy at the
talks.But he added: "A solution
will be extremely difficult to
find" despite the joint effort.Churkin and US envoy
Charles Redman, both of whom
were stepping up their pres-
sure on the Bosnian leaders,
had apparently hoped the
Serbs—faced with the NATO
deadline—would be willing to
make major concessions.International mediators
have been trying to partition
Bosnia among its warring
Serbs, Muslims and Croats in
what would remain a loose
union. But the new US diplo-
matic approach apparently
seeks a stronger constitutionalunion of the three major eth-
nic groups.Any such strong union has
been vehemently rejected by
the Bosnian Serbs, who hold
about 70 per cent of the
Bosnian territory captured
during the war. They want to
divide the state and eventually
secede to form a union with
neighbouring Serbia.The NATO ultimatum—and
the diplomatic support from
Washington—have apparently
encouraged the Bosnian gov-
ernment to assume that the
Western military alliance is on
its side.But Russian envoy Churkin
said air strikes "while they
may do certain things, cer-
tainly cannot bring a political
settlement about."The European Union me-
diator at the talks, Lord Owen,
welcomed the new US diplo-
matic approach, but said it may
take some time before this re-
sults in progress in the talks.

Pak senate polls Mar 2

ISLAMABAD, Feb 12: Pakis-
tan today scheduled March
elections for nearly half the
Senate seats, with Prime
Minister Benazir Bhutto's party
vying to improve its position in
the house dominated by oppo-
sition members, reports AFP.Polling will take place on
March 2 to elect 41 new
members to replace those due
to retire later that month at
the end of their six-year
terms, the election commis-
sion announced.Chief Election Commis-
sioner Naemuddin said nomi-
nations for the Senate elections
would be accepted up to
February 17.Currently the main oppo-
sition Pakistani Muslim League
(PM), led by former Prime
Minister Nawaz Sharif, com-
mands a majority in the 87-
member upper house, for
which members of the four
provincial assemblies act as an
electoral college.The ruling Pakistan
People's Party (PPP), voted
into power in general elections
last October, has been contin-
ually embarrassed in the Senate
by the majority opposition
there.Unlike the directly elected
lower house or National
Assembly, the Senate has en-
joyed constitutional immunity
to dissolution by the head of
state since its formation in
1985.The lower house was pre-
maturely dissolved three times
in 1988, 1990 and 1993.According to the election
commission list, about 50 per
cent of the senators retiring
on March 20 belong to Sharif's
PML, including party Secretary
General Sartaj Aziz, a former
finance minister.The PPP—which has 11
members in the Senate—and
its allies hope to tilt the bal-
ance in their favour at the
coming Senate polls, analysts
said.