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**PHILIPS** 

### 1528 holding diplomatic passports, FM tells JS

Some 1528 people are now holding diplomatic passports in the country, Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad told Parliament yesterday, reports

Replying to a question from Kazi Sekandar Ali (AL), the Foreign Minister said those who are carrying the diplomatic passports include the President, former Presidents and their wives, former Chief Adviser, Speakers, Prime Ministers, Deputy Speakers, Leader of the Opposition, Ministers, Whip, Deputy Opposition Leader, MPs and their spouses.

Besides, Mayors and their wives, Judges of the Supreme Court and their wives, diplomats working in the Foreign Office and Bangladesh missions abroad and members of their families, Vice-Chancellors, Major Generals and their senior officers and their wives. Directors and senior officials of international organisations and their wives, Secretaries, Addi-

tional Secretaries and officials equivalent to the Secretaries and other officials and their wives as prescribed by the rules.

A break-up of the numbers of diplomatic passport holders as given by the Foreign Minister shows that the highest 710 red passports are possessed by the Bangladeshi diplomats and members of their families followed by 615 by the category of the people's elected representatives and their spouses.

Civil bureaucrats and their wives are holding 100 diplomatic passports while military officers and their wives 30.

The President, former Presidents and their wives are holding only four diplomatic passports. Only one Vice-Chancellor is holding this passport while the judges of the Supreme Court and their wives are 47.

The Mayors and their wives are carrying six diplomatic passports while the former Chief Advisor one.

But the Speaker asked him to

Chowdhury was not present in

the House when Rabbi spoke. In

her absence, Tofael Ahmed took

the floor. He said the govern-

ment of Sheikh Hasina was a

ready started OMS of rice. Food

for Work programme which was

suspended due to Union

Parishad polls will be resumed

soon," the minister said adding

that the government was also

allegations launched by the

Jatiya Party lawmaker, Tofael

Ahmed said, "The allegation of

importing rice unfit for human

tional daily was not based on

which is said to have imported

the rice, is facing a judicial

probe and before unloading rice

from the ship there will be

1662 Bangladeshis

After the arrest of any

Bangladeshi national in for-

eign jail, the government, he

said, takes step to release the

arrested person by providing

necessary documents or legal

ernment steps, many

Bangladeshis were released and

returned to the country while

duced by the Foreign Minister

shows that the highest 347

Bangladeshi citizens have been

detained in the Maldives, 184 in

UAE, 156 in Pakistan, 150 in

Qatar. 130 in India, 106 in

Oman, 99 in Myanmar, 85 in

UK. 73 in Malaysia, 72 in

Japan, 40 in South Korea, 31 in

Ruling party MP

From page 1

pointed out that the US report

had failed to mention the steps

the government had taken so

far to improve the human

rights situation in the country.

government for protesting

against the US mission's failure

to meet the diplomatic obliga-

tion of taking permission of the

government before holding a

The local US mission had re-

leased the report through the

press conference on February 4

last, while the Foreign Office

summoned US Ambassador

John C Holzman to protest

against the gesture inconsistent

with diplomatic norms. The

government also rejected the

Plan to introduce

From page 1

separate legislative drafting

divisions under the ministry

concerned have been function-

The candidates to be taken

in the new wing must have sec-

ond class LLM degree with sec-

ond class LLB honours. Provi-

sions have been made for ab-

sorbtion of sub-judges and se-

nior assistant judges in this

cadre. Those who have been

working in the drafting section

for five years are elligible for

absorbtion as deputy secretary.

candidates will be facilitated

with proper training both at

home and abroad.

After the encadrement, the

Commonwealth Secretariat

content of the US report.

press conference.

Majumder also thanked the

Italy and 20 in Iran.

The list of the detainees pro-

many are on way to home.

Azad said because of the gov

From page 1

quality control tests."

while some detained.

The minister said, the ship

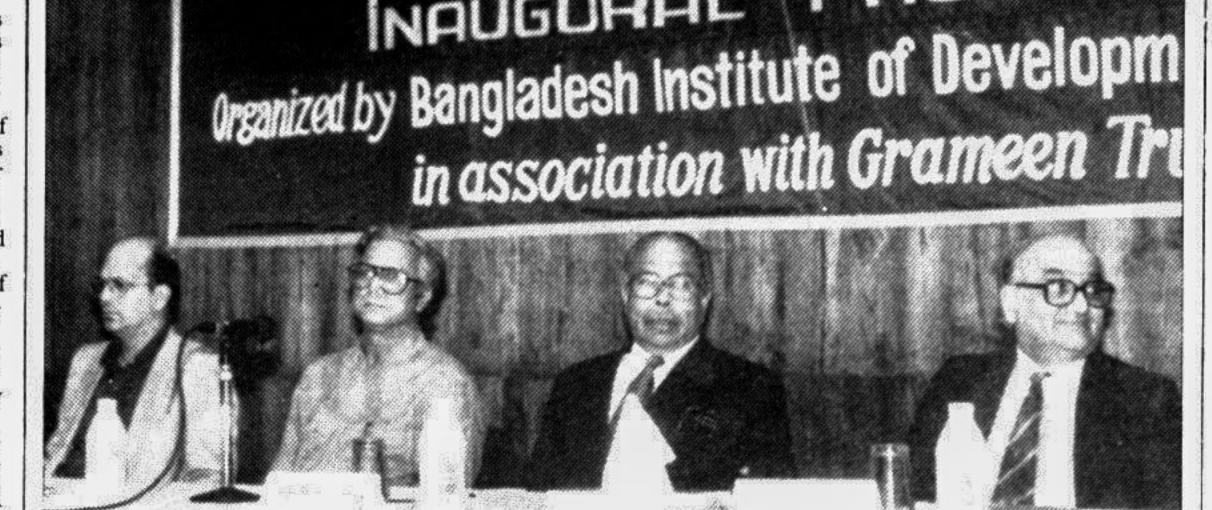
consumption quoting a na-

BSS adds: Referring to the

importing rice very soon.

"The government has al-

Food Minister Matia



An international conference on 'Poverty: Emerging challenges' began at the LGED auditorium in the city yesterday. From right are Prof Rehman Sobhan, Finance Minister SAMS Kibria, Prof Md Yunus and BIDS DG Abu Abdullah.

# Food for Work Programme to resume soon, JS told

By Staff Correspondent

continue.

responsible one.

hard evidence.

Industries and Commerce Minister Tofael Ahmed yesterday assured the Jatiya Sangsad that the situation arising out of the price hike of rice would come under control soon.

The minister, in this regard. also called upon the rice traders to behave patriotically while

running their businesses. The minister's assurance came when Jatiya Party whip Advocate Fazle rising on a point of order, expressed concern over rise in rice price across the country, especially in the country's northern region and demanded an explanation from the government. He also suggested measures to control the situation.

The JP lawmaker suggested that the government ensure open market sale (OMS) of rice all over the country at a price between Tk 10.50 and Tk 11.00 per kg through an effective sys-

Rabbi told the House that Food Department officials in Gaibandha district recently went for OMS of rice at a price of Tk 12.50 per kg. "But none bought the rice, as the people

could not afford it at that price.' He also criticised the present dealership distribution system for OMS of rice. He suggested that one dealership be given at

every Union.

Rabbi was obstructed by Awami League legislators more than once during his speech.

#### OMS dealers

From page 1 rectorate has already scrutinised the submitted applications. Under the new scheme to tackle the rice price hike, 80 markets have been selected in the city where two dealers in each market would sell rice for a government controlled price.

Food Directorate sources claimed the selected dealers were all bonafide retail rice traders in their respective markets of the city. Everyday the government would provide 500 kilograms of rice to each dealer.

If the dealer fails to sell that amount within a day, an inspector would make the necessary adjustments next day assuring that 500 kilograms of rice is always up for sale at the

"At present we have only 30 inspectors to do the job which is an inadequate number but we have requisitioned for 50 more and hopefully they will be made available soon," said an official when asked what steps the Food Directorate had taken for a proper monitoring of the dealer-based sale. He said within a short time the dealerbased OMS programme would be started.

Other sources at the Food Directorate said at present some 15 trucks were being used in the city for the OMS programme. Since January 28 till Saturday some 172.024 metric tonnes of rice had been sold under the programme in the city.

About the quality of rice being sold, the officials said it was BR-11, a coarse quality, which was being sold for Tk 12.50 per kilogram. In the two Central Storage Depots of the city, Tejgaon and Dhaka CSDs, the officials said, there were 13,500 and 3,500 metric tonnes of rice in stock.

"The stock is quite satisfactory and there is nothing to get alarmed about the situation," said a Food Directorate official adding, "moreover today we are receiving tender bids for a further one lakh tonne of rice."

The official said on an average between 55,000 and 60,000 tonnes of rice was consumed in the country, everyday.

#### **Editor**: Mahfuz Anam

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# Aftershock kills 250 more in Afghanistan

DUSHANBE, Feb 8: Some 250 people were killed and 50 injured in an aftershock that hit the same area of northern Afghanistan today where thou sands may have died in a midweek earthquake, the Afghan embassy said.

Diplomats at the embassy in the Tajik capital Dushanbe told Reuters the latest quake was concentrated on the remote Rustag district where the initial disaster struck on Wednesday. The diplomats put the overall death toll at about 4,400.

Earlier, a spokesman for the Afghan opposition told Reuters in Islamabad the aftershock had hit the region early today as relief workers arrived to assess the damage from the first earthquake. He had given no casualty figures.

Aid agencies have started to arrive in the mountainous region on the Tajikistan border and to report back on the damage. So far they have not been able to verify the death toll fig-

Biman floats

From page 1

March 30 and the offers for the

The airline is planning to

F-28-4000 by March 10, Biman

add the DC-10-30 aircraft to its

fleet of four DC-10-30's and two

Airbus A310-300, currently

serving 42 international desti-

"We are planning to open at

least three more routes to

Manila. Ho Chi Minh City and

Jakarta later this year and ad-

ditional flight in the Dhaka-

DC-10-30", one official said.

New York route with the extra

week to Manchester, UK, is

likely to be opened in addition

to five flights a week to London.

an 'agreement on principle' for

procurement of a F-28-4000

aircraft from a London-based

company, Fortis Aviation to

replace the similar aircraft

badly damaged during crash-

landing in Sylhet on December

the damaged aircraft failed ear-

lier. It signed an MOU with a

French supplier, but it backed

out. Its attempt to get a F-28 on

dry lease from the Australian

turboprop ATP, serving its do-

mestic routes, making four in-

stead of average nine flights

daily since the damage of the F-

wide-body aircraft to ferry Haji

pilgrims, beginning on March

3, is yet to materialise. Formal-

ities in this regard are expected

to be completed soon, a top offi-

"People want peace and sta-

bility for which the government

is striving hard, but certain

quarters are trying to create un-

rests opposing the peace," she

urged the opposition to return

to Parliament and discuss their

problems inside the House. She

said that the BNP could speak

on any issue after coming to the

sue they boycotted the parlia-

ment, they can raise any issue

on the floor of the House," she

Chittagong Hill Tracts accord,

Hasina said the members of the

Shantibahini would return to

normal life surrendering their

arms and ammunition on

Peace will be restored in the

troubled region of the country

that is very much important for

the overall development of that

region as well as the whole

country, she said. "Only BNP

Referring to the signing of

"We don't know on what is-

parliament.

February 10.

added.

The Prime Minister also

cial of Biman said.

Biman's effort to charter a

Biman is limping with one

National Airlines also tailed.

Biman's efforts to replace

Besides, a direct flight once a

Biman on Saturday signed

officials said

nations.

22 last year.

ures being provided by the Afghan opposition. The embassy in Dushanbe is

loyal to the opposition, based in northern Afghanistan, rather than to the Taliban Islamic government in Kabul. The United Nations in Dushanbe dispatched an aid

helicopter to the quake zone today to assess damage. It was not clear whether journalists had been able to accompany the UN AP adds. A Red Cross plane

packed with emergency medical supplies managed to land today near the quake site in Takhar province, after an earlier plane had to return to the Afghan capital, 150 miles (240 kms) to the south, because of bad weather.

Red Cross officials in neighbouring Pakistan said the fourperson delegation will survey conditions in the devastated area and report back on relief needs tomorrow. The first quake hit Wednes-

# CHT insurgency

From page 1 deposit their guns and ammunition to the security forces today according to highly placed sources here.

The camps are located at Gi lachhari. Maijchhari Dudukchhari and Perachara. The guns without the am-

munition will be permitted to be carried at the surrender cer Tight security will mark the surrender ceremony. The BNPled seven-party alliance oppos-

ing the accord has called a dawn-to-dusk hartal in the Chittagong division tomorrow. They say the agreement 'Hands over' the CHT to India and "betrays" the interest of the settlers from the plains in the 14,200 sq km area by providing "sweeping powers" to a Regional

Council to oversee the administration, police and develop The government denies the allegations and says the agreement, for the first time, restores peace and opens the vista for prosperity of the region, rich in

natural resources. With the preparations being given final touches for the cer emony at the small hill town of Khagrachhari, security is being beefed up in the area for the first ever visit of so many VIP's

All bridges and strategic road points have been put under 24-hour guard and security patrols have been stepped up to deter anyone trying to foil the surrender ceremony, reports from the hill town said.

At least two people have been killed in clashes between police and protesters since the accord had been signed on December 2.

She said that following the

signing of CHT peace accord, the

longstanding war-like situa-

tion has stopped and an envi-

ronment for development has

ship, the Prime Minister said

the opposition leader had told

that the region from Feni will

become part of India after the

signing of CHT peace agree-

of the country didn't become

part of India and the opposition

leader was not carrying an In-

dian passport while going to

parishad elections, Hasina said

the elections were held in an

utmost free and fair atmo-

sphere. "We have been able to

create an atmosphere where

people can cast their votes

said, has for the first time in-

The present government, she

Referring to the union

Saudi Arabia, she said.

"It was a damn lie ... that area

Criticising the BNP leader-

posing the peace."

been created.

6.1 in the isolated Rustag district, nestled at the junction of the Hindu Kush and Pamir mountain ranges. First reports of the quake

day night with a magnitude of

reached Kabul two days later and details were still emerging Sunday. Another tremor rocked the area Saturday night and again at 4 am Sunday, adding four more villages to the dozen or so destroyed or damaged ear

Officials with the military alliance that controls the area said the first quake left as many as 15,000 families homeless when hillsides collapsed onto each other, crushing the mud and brick homes perched on the slopes.

#### Decision on Tullow From page 1

ernment offered Tullow both the blocks in October, but it is also trying to get Tullow a 'big' partner in these two blocks.

The last government-mediated talks between Tullow and Chevron-Texaco, held in late January, failed as these companies could not agree on equity share and other issues. The US joint venture's proposal of eq uity share was Chevron-Texaco: 70 per cent, Tullow 20 per cent

and BAPEX 10 per cent. Soon afterwards Chevron Texaco submitted a revised proposal to the government with better terms for Tullow, This time, the proposed equity share was Chevron-Texaco: 60 per cent, Tullow 30 per cent and BAPEX 10 per cent.

The Negotiation Committee was supposed to report all these developments to the Investment Committee on the first week of this month. But the Investment Committee could not hold any meeting last week.

Sources said that in a couple of days, the Investment Committee will give a clear cut direction to the Negotiation Committee about making Chevron-Texaco a partner of Tullow in Block 9.

The other companies which are ready for partnership with Tullow in blocks 9 and 11 are Petronas-Mobil and Shell-Although the government

intends to finalise selection of companies in 12 blocks by February 15, sources said that i would be impossible to do so.

"What kind of finalisation can take place within a week when the negotiators have not even discussed profit sharing with any of these companies?

will definitely affect the negoti-

allowing the women to take

part in the UP elections di-

Responding to the local de-

mands, the Prime Minister said

Satkhira Pourasava will be

given the grade one status as

soon as the relevant conditions

She declared that honours

and master degree courses

would be opened in Satkhira

College while science section

would be opened in Govern-

ment Mohila College. She told

the cheering students that they

would have to devote whole-

Minister Salah Uddin Yusuf,

Awami League presidium mem-

ber Abdul Jalil, Education Min-

ister ASHK Sadique, State Min-

ister for Relief and Disaster

Management Talukder Abdul

Khaleq, Akhtaruzzaman MP

and Abdul Mannan Khan also

addressed the meeting.

Health and Family Welfare

heartedly to their studies.

rectly.

are fulfilled.

ation process if it lingers on.

said a source. Another source pointed out that after February 15, two members of the government's negotiation team will go to Minister Tofael Ahmed assured Malaysia for over a week. This

Rice stock sufficient: PM and some of its allies are op- troduced a system for the emter's office recently. powerment of women and passed a bill in the parliament

# Greater cooperation between SAARC, ASEAN stressed

By Staff Correspondent

Foreign Minister of Indonesia Ali Alatas yesterday underscored the need for increasing cooperation between ASEAN and SAARC to face together the forces of globalisation and increasing international competitiveness.

The time has come for us to begin moving in earnest towards a partnership. When cooperation takes place between two regional organisations that represent one-third of the human race, the positive impact can only be tremendous.

"For one of every five individuals in the world today is a citizen of a SAARC country. while one out of ten is a citizen of ASEAN," Ali Alatas ob-

The visiting Indonesian foreign minister was delivering the keynote address on "ASEAN and SAARC: The Imperatives of Cooperation at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) yesterday. State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury presided over the session which was attended by diplomats, leading academics Jute Spinners Ltd

#### reopens today By Staff Correspondent

The Jute Spinners Limited n Khulna reopens today. The decision was taken at a

meeting between the authorities and leaders of the workers union on Sunday. The authorities, in a press release on Sunday asked the

employees and workers of the mills to report to their duties from 6 am today The authorities closed the

mills on January 28 following agitation by the workers and employees of the mills demanding payment of advance money against the Wages Commission

#### Four killed in Tamil Nadu blast NEW DELHI, Feb 8: Four

people were killed and three injured when a bomb exploded in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said today, reports

The overnight blast took place at a rice mill housing supporters of a regional Tamil political party in the Saliamangalam village of Thanjavur district, a police spokesman

#### JS discussion

Nurul Islam Nahid, who was the lone speaker on the Presidential speech yesterday, thanked the President for a "constructive speech that" reflected both the activities of the government and its future priorities for the welfare of the people."

In his ten-minute speech, Nahid bitterly criticised the major opposition party in parliament, BNP, for its "destructive politics of agitations and parliament boycott."

Referring to the BNP-called hartal in Chittagong division on February 10, the day scheduled for surrender of arms by the Shantibahini, the AL legislator said, "The BNP gesture clearly proves that the party and its allies do not want peace in the troubled region of Chittagong Hill Tracts. On the issue of BNP's contin-

uous boycott of parliament proceedings. Nahid said that the action had already been challenged from within the party and hoped that the party high command would respond positively to the desire of the party's elected representatives who want to return to the House.

Earlier, the House witnessed Jatiya Party's concern over the price hike of rice across the country specially in the 16 northern districts. Commerce and Industries

the House that the situation would come under control soon. Later, AL legislator Mujibur Rahman demanded that the Home Minister issue a statement in the House on the gunshot fired in the Prime Minis-

Rising on a 'point of order,' Mujibur Rahman said that there was no scope for anyone to consider the matter an isolated incident. He claimed that the incident

was "masterminded by those whose call for a mass-movement against the government of Sheikh Hasina was ignored by the people. "They wanted to kill Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina," he said.

Rahman asked the Home Minister to ensure adequate security measures for the Prime Minister.

The home minister, however, did not make any statement on the issue yesterday.

Earlier, Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury disposed of two call attention notices, including one on the Dhaka-Sylhet services by Biman. The House also witnessed a usual one-hour question-answer ses-Akhtaruzzaman was detained for several days under the care-

The Speaker adjourned the session at 2:35 pm to resume again at 11:00 this morning.

## and scholars and foreign min-

istry officials. Ali Alatas said that a comparison of the strategies, activities and programmes of SAARC and ASEAN "shows a remarkable similarity and cor-respondence which means that we are driving towards the same goals using approaches that are

similar.

"While SAARC working to develop the South Asian Preferential Trade Arrangement (SAPTA) into a South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA), we are also striving hard to achieve an ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), a few years from now," he said.

The foreign minister, a veteran diplomat observed, "There is much that we can learn from each other and perhaps much that we can do for each other.

Ali Alatas said that the countries of ASEAN in general and Indonesia in particular have responded with enthusiasm to the initiatives of the SAARC Ministerial Council to establish institutional cooperation between the two organisations through their respective Secretariats.

Responding to a question by AMA Muhith, a former finance minister, about the rapid success of ASEAN compared to SAARC, Ali Alatas felt that it had been perhaps possible because there was more stability

#### New thana to be set up in city, JS told

Home Minister Major (retd) Rafigul Islam (Bir Uttam) informed the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday that a new police station with parts of the Dhanmondi and Mohammadpur police stations will be set up in the city. reports BSS. The minister told this while

replying in the negative to a question from Alhaj Moqbul Hussain (AL-Dhaka 9) whether new police outposts will be set up in Mohammadpur and Dhanmondi police stations.

The government has taken up a plan to provide at least one patrol van and wireless sets to each police station across the country, he said.

He told the house during the question hour that the Ministry of Home has already provided 247 pick up vans to the police stations and the remaining police stations would be provided with transports at the earliest. In this context, he said during 1996 six prison vans were provided to various police stations.

He said after assumption of power in June 1996 the government has taken up various projects to make the police vigilance effective. He pointed out that as part of those programmes the communications system for the police personnel would be improved.

#### HC order From page 1 from service illegal and without

lawful authority.

The HC also directed the government to allow him to join his service and to give him all back salaries with seniority, increment and promotion with attending benefits within 60 days from May 12, 1997.

The government preferred appeal against the HC judgment in the Appellate Division. It was submitted in the ap-

peal that the writ petitioner was dismissed from his service under the Martial Law Order No-9 of 1982 which was immune from challenging because of the

protection granted under paragraph 19 of the Fourth Schedule to the Constitution. Additional Attorney General Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan also submitted that the writ petitioner could have preferred a petition for leave to appeal from the judgment and order dated November 18, 1990 passed

by the Administrative Appel-

late Tribunal before the Appel-

late Division within 60 days. He further submitted that the petitioner lost his identity as a civil servant, because he contested the parliamentary election in 1991 and 1996 for which he is not entitled to the relief as prayed for.

Dr Kamal Hossain, Barrister Amir-ul Islam and Barrister Shafique Ahmed appeared for SP Mahbub.

#### Akhtaruzzaman MP From page 1

conviction. She questioned how a mem-

ber of parliament could be convicted when the parliament is in session. She deplored that when the

accused of Shima Murder Case

were released unconditionally. an MP who always fights for democracy is imprisoned. Two sons of Akhtaruzzaman - Shahriar Zaman and Sabbir

Zaman — and some BNP leaders of Kishoreganj district were present. On May 1, 1996, Major (Rtd)

taker government of Justice

Habibur Rahman on the same

charge.

"Your region involves larger countries which saw higher political friction. However, you are now witnessing increasing cooperation." In reply to another question,

among the countries of ASEAN.

he admitted that the South East Asian currency crisis has affected the private entrepreneurs of Indonesia like the others in the region. "The rapid devaluation has been so massive that it would be impossible for many concerns to repay its foreign loan burden.

Asked by another participant when the one-party system in Indonesian would be dismantled, an unruffled Ali Alatas replied, "We do not have a one-party system. We have a vibrant and effective democracy suited to the genius of our

people." Even the western countries have different versions of democratic system — the US one type. Britain another type and France, vet another.

He said that there were now three major parties in his country, but one party — the ruling party — was dominant.

The foreign minister making an oblique reference to criticism in his country on the President Suharto's relatives said, "If sons and daughters of the President work and earn money for profit in a proper way in a free economy, there is nothing wrong."

The welcome address was delivered by Major General Mustafa Kamal, Chairman of BIISS, while Director General of BIISS Brigadier Shahedul Anam Khan gave the vote of thanks.

#### Alia Madrassah From page 1

admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), two to Orthopedic Hospital, one each to Mitford and PG Hospital. The others were released after first aid at the DMCH, police and hospital sources said.

The authorities yesterday closed the Madrassah for an indefinite period and asked the students to vacate the hostel by The clash began when about

25 outsiders, reportedly the

supporters of Sagar group, attacked Allama Kashgari Hostel to oust their rivals known as Jonny group Police said Sagar group equipped with firearms, hockey

Madrassah area at about 11 pm. They entered the hall firing gunshots and exploding bombs on the campus and started beating some members of their rival group. In retaliation, the members of the Jonny group fired gunshots. Both the groups exchanged fire and exploded bombs during an hour-long

sticks and bombs came to the

Lalbagh police rushed to the spot and fired teargas shells to bring the situation under control. Police said they arrested 15 people from the spot. Police also raided the hostel

pipe guns, 24 bullets, hockey sticks, a huge number of crackers and bomb-making explo-Ibrahim's body was sent to

and recovered two guns, two

the Mitford Hospital morgue for Additional police forces

were deployed on the Madrassah campus. Four separate cases were lodged with Lalbagh thana in

#### Poverty alleviation

connection with the incident.

From page 1

more accountability. Prof Teodor Shanin of the University of Manchester, who later joined the ceremony. made a brief speech. It was also addressed by Dr Abu Abdullah, Director General of BIDS, and Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman of

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# MORE

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# and lesser political tension