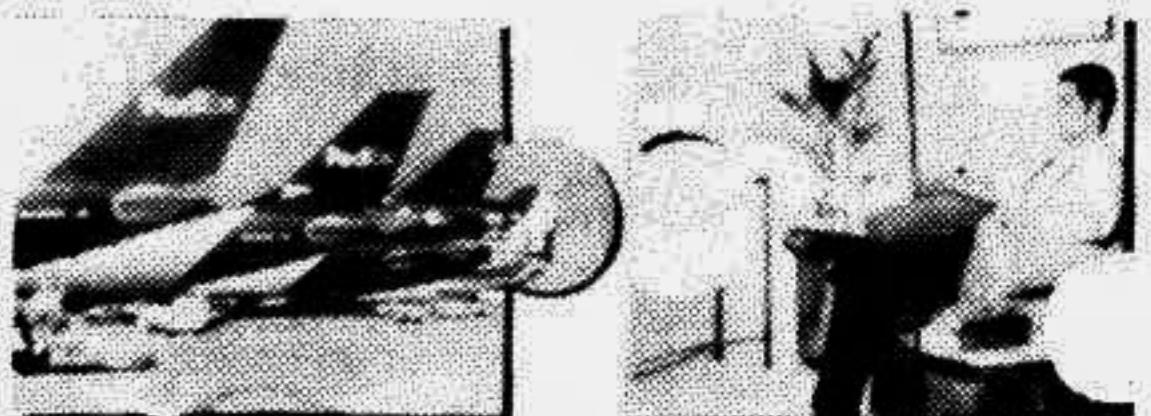
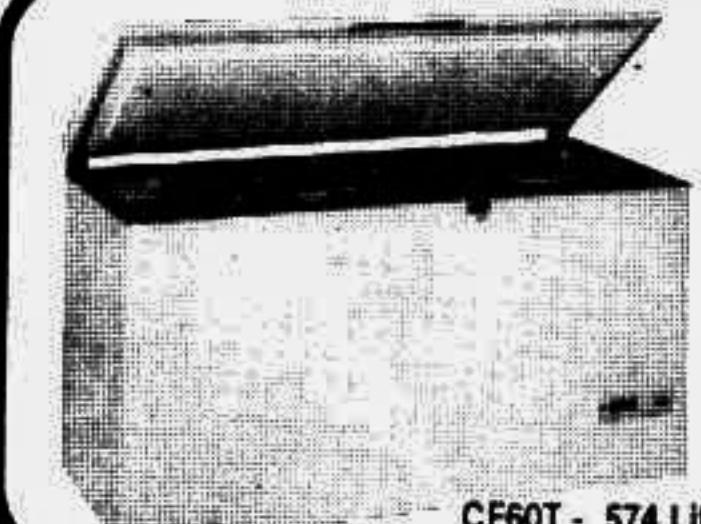


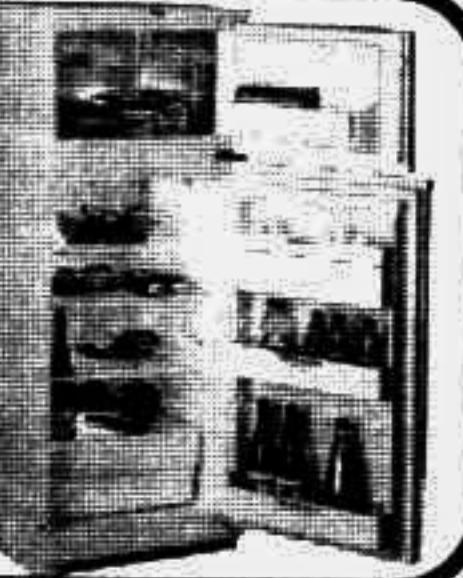
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Taliban rule out Bin Laden's extradition

KABUL, Feb 10: Afghanistan's Taliban militia today ruled out extradition of Saudi dissident Osama Bin Laden, saying such a request was illegal, reports Reuters.

The United States has accused Bin Laden of masterminding the bomb attacks on US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania last August that killed 263 people.

It has offered a reward of 5 million dollars for information leading to his arrest and conviction.

This is not rational to say that Osama should be expelled, extradited or handed over. Any move on these lines against Osama will cause a lot of resentment and a chaotic situation among the Afghans and the whole Muslim world," Taliban spokesman Mullah Abdul Haye Mutmaen told Reuters.

Mutmaen was speaking by telephone from the southern Afghan town of Kandahar after the Taliban leadership there considered a letter sent by the United States.

The letter was handed over

to Taliban envoy Mullah Abdul Jalil during a meeting with Deputy US Secretary of State Karl Inderfurth in Pakistan last week.

Neither side has disclosed the contents of the letter, but the Pakistan-based news service Afghan Islamic Press said on Saturday that Washington had proposed the Taliban either hand over Bin Laden to the United States or to Saudi Arabia, or expel him.

"No Muslim or Afghan would accept the handing over of Osama. We guarantee we will control his political and military activities," Mutmaen said.

Only 12 days

From Page 1

closed business, offices and production for three days at a stretch ending today. When the coming Friday and Saturday are added, the country will have seen an effective shutdown for five days at a stretch.

The Opposition has also reportedly kept another four days of hartial on its anvil. This would see a national shutdown for 96 hours beginning February 22. Hence, in reality the nation would be closed for business and any worthwhile production for a complete week, since the proposed 96 hour hartial would be preceded by the normal two day weekly closure and the Ekushey February holiday.

In fact since the spell of Eid holidays starting on the 18 of last month, few working days were available before political programmes started another spate of disrupted working days.

Boat sinks in Indonesia: 280 missing

JAKARTA, Feb 10: At least 280 people are missing after an Indonesian boat carrying more than 300 people sank off Borneo on Saturday, a port official said today, reports AFP.

The official said a passing cargo ship rescued 19 people but at least 280 people were still missing. It was not clear whether all were feared dead or whether some swam ashore.

Opposition 'not aware'

From Page 1

denied police action and armed attacks allegedly by Awami League activists on the opposition men in Dhaka and other parts of the country on the second day of the three-day shutdown.

The BNP secretary general claimed that at least 500 opposition workers were injured in attacks at the capital, Savar, Chittagong, Chittagong, Bhalo, Joypurhat, and some other places. BNP offices were ransacked and torched at Bhalo and Pabna, he alleged.

Among the injured, the injured, Bhuiyan said. Savar BNP MP Dr. Dewan Mohammad Salahuddin sustained a bullet injury in one of his hands.

He thanked the people for observing the hartial despite attacks by the AL goons and the police.

Bhuiyan said their present agitation is aimed towards holding a free and fair election. For this end they have raised some simple demands including resignation of the Chief Election Commissioner, Mohammad Abu Hena, introduction of voters' ID cards and the establishment of a congenial political atmosphere.

"Hena is not so indispensable that his removal will throw the country into a deadlock," he commented.

About the voters' ID cards, he said the project on the matter was progressing and "we want it to be expedited".

Delay in decisions

From Page 1

"Clearly, Bangladesh presents great opportunities for potential investors, but given the regional economic downturn in Asia and low real energy prices, competition and internal budget constraints will necessarily force companies to concentrate their efforts in the most investor-friendly countries, where investment money can be put to work quickly and profitably."

Calvin Humphrey pointed out, "we think there is scope for streamlining the project approval process, developing greater consistency and transparency in regulatory policy, and improving the legal and regulatory frameworks that will allow Bangladesh to attract the right investments for its future economic growth."

But this must be done expeditiously because of the intense international competition for foreign investment and Bangladesh's need to attract a growing share of these resources. International investors seek returns that justify the risks involved—and since time is money, delays increase greater costs to a project and greater risk that approvals would not be granted.

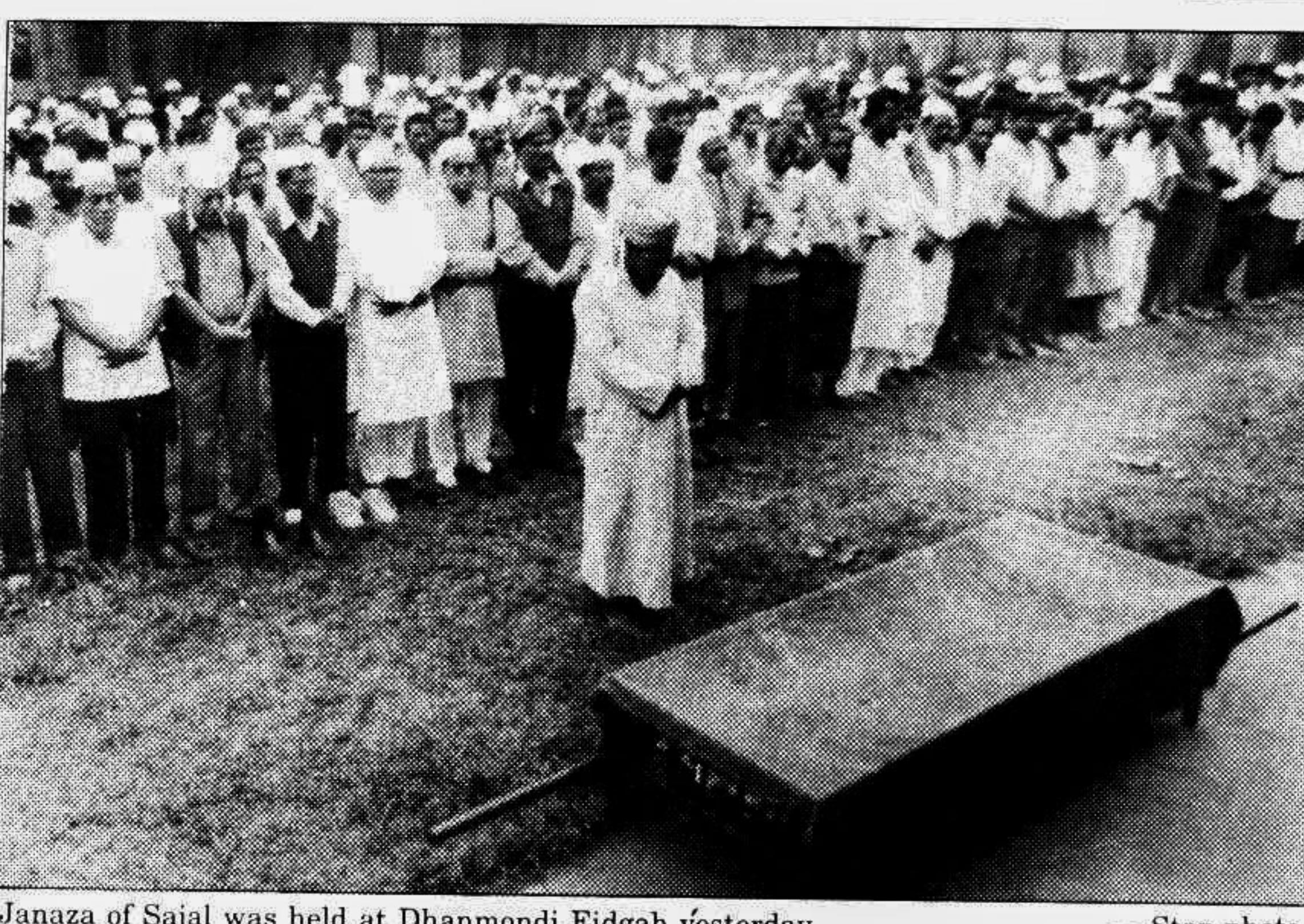
"It is important that Bangladesh and the international energy companies work together to speed project approval and implementation, thus reducing the cost of doing

business here—to the benefit of all concerned."

He also stressed on the importance of arsenic free safe drinking water and pollution free water. "We have brought with us a water purification system developed by one of our laboratories—the Lawrence Berkeley National Lab—that is called the UV Waterworks. Powered by solar energy this unit purifies surface water at extremely low cost, and tomorrow we will unveil a demonstration of this technology which might provide a viable alternative source for drinking water in those areas where tubewell water is contaminated by arsenic."

Quamruzzaman claimed that the current hartial was being observed at the remotest areas whereas the hartsals observed during the past regimes were confined to the district headquarters.

ARM Matin felt that participation of all sections of people in the current agitation would help launch an oust-government movement.



— Star photo

Sajal buried

Sajal Chowdhury, said to be an activist of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, the student wing of BNP, was buried at Azimpur graveyard after Janaza at Dhanmondi Eidgah after Zohr prayers yesterday, reports UNB.

Sajal, 22, a degree examinee from the city's Doctor Maleka Science College, was shot during a clash between pickets and anti-hartial activists at Science Laboratory Tuesday morning. He succumbed to his injuries at Dhaka Medical College Hospital the same day.

A large number of people, including BNP leaders Dr R A Gani, Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed, M Shamsul Islam MP, Abdullah Al Noman, Lt Gen (retd) Mir Shawkat Ali, Harris Chowdhury, Ehsanul Kabir, local ward commissioners Abul Khair Babbu and Abdul Latif, attended the funeral.

Meanwhile, BNP sources said, police picked up two leaders of JCD's Dhanmondi unit—Habibur Rahman and Babu—from the procession carrying the body near Shaheed bus stand at about 12:30 pm.

Local leaders at the janaza demanded that the spot where the student was gunned down be named 'Sajal Chittar' (square).

Newly married woman stabbed to death in city

By Staff Correspondent

A newly married woman was stabbed to death allegedly by her brother-in-law at their Aga Khan Lane residence in the city yesterday morning.

The victim was identified as Afsana Akter, 18, daughter of Samiruddin of 78, Aga Khan Lane under Kotwali thana.

Police and hospital sources quoting relatives said Afsana had an affair with Billal Hossain, a businessman from Jaydevpur. Billal and Afsana later got married, but the guardian didn't accept it. Later it was settled at the initiative of both the families and the marriage reception was scheduled for tomorrow.

BNP, or the opposition for that matter, does not have enough organisational strength

Path of confrontation

From Page 1

hinted that future programmes would be even more aggressive. Terming hartsals as the "most innocent weapons" against the government, Bhuiyan told newsmen on Tuesday evening that the government should not take the risk of witnessing the deadly ones.

Another threat, coming from Khaleda Zia, also gives adequate hint about the opposition's future course of action.

On the other hand, the ruling party has its own understanding about the political implications of frequent hartsals. According to Suranjit Sengupta, Prime Minister's adviser on parliamentary affairs, "hartsals on issues having no direct connection with day-to-day problems of the commoners would rather isolate the opposition further from the people."

The threat of resignation en masse by the opposition MPs is also unlikely to create psychological trouble for the government of Sheikh Hasina, since she has seen such a situation when Khaleda Zia was in power. A member of Sheikh Hasina's cabinet recollects: All the opposition MPs of the fifth parliament had resigned before the election from the party top-notch.

Meanwhile, the ruling Awami League has practically refused to respond to the Chief Election Commissioner's recent call to forge a negotiation with the opposition across the table.

The reason behind the government's reluctance to open a dialogue is, most of the ruling party policy-makers believe that the opposition-planned movement would eventually fall apart.

BNP, or the opposition for that matter, does not have enough organisational strength

Oil tanker

From Page 1

tives of the BOTOA. But no enhancement of the rent of oil tanker has been made during the last two years, the statement said.

"Bangladeshi petroleum market has been squeezed recently due to increase of petroleum products price in the country despite global lower price. As the petroleum sale fell, the oil transportation was also dropped suddenly," the statement said.

The statement issued by T M Giasuddin Ahmed, President of the BOTOA urged the government to realise its demand to facilitate the government and private sector joint enterprise and to applaud the sector for boosting the country's economy, the press release said.

BGMEA polls deferred

From Page 1

Electron to the apex body of apparel industry, BGMEA, scheduled for February 25, has been deferred to March 4, reports UNB.

The change was unavoidable. We will hold it on March 4," BGMEA President Mostafa Golam Qudus said yesterday.

Political unrest and series of possible hartsals later this month forced the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association to shift the polling date, according to a BGMEA executive.

Two panels—one led by the incumbent president and the other by Anisur Rahman Sinha—are contesting the vital posts, including that of president.

Sajal's mother and sisters were too shocked to talk to the reporters, family members said.

Sajal's mother and sisters were too shocked to talk to the reporters, family members said.

Less than a kilometre away from their five-storey house in West Dhanmondi, BNP leaders, activists and Sajal's relatives and friends gathered at the Eidgah maidan for his namaz-e-janaza. After the janaza, the Sajal's body was placed on top of a truck with a black banner that read "We demand justice for the killing of Sajal". As the funeral procession with four trucks proceeded towards Azimpur graveyard, small crowds gathered on the Satmasjid Road to talk about how brutally Sajal was killed.

3 accords

From Page 1

of US Energy Department Calvin Humphrey is leading the delegation that includes energy officials and representatives from seven reputed organisations.

State Minister for Energy Prof Rafiqul Islam and the Acting Assistant Secretary of US Energy Department, Calvin Humphrey, will witness the signing.

The agreements provide for exploring areas of cooperation that US can offer for the development of gas and power sector and defining the action plan.

The agreements will be on strategic use of gas, energy efficiency and microcredit.

The proposals for the projects and other recommendations have been prepared in consultation with leading NGOs and different ministries engaged in rural development, the sources added.

The recommendations made by Bangladesh as regards rural development and microcredit may be taken up as model projects for common implementation or replication once these are approved by the Council of Foreign Ministers and the summit leaders, they said.

The D-8 is also encouraging establishment of joint business councils among the chambers of commerce and industry and other trade bodies of the member states. The grouping would try to launch a shipping line, and devise methods to sell agricultural products such as cotton, jute and tea among member countries.

It would also try to work out methods for building backward linkages for ready-made garments in the post-Multi-fibre Agreement (MFA) context among other economic subjects of common concern.

Study on strategic use of gas is a 4 million-dollar project of US Trade Development Agency, which it has been pursuing for several months.

The WRIP is aimed at expanding gas supply to the western region and identifying opportunities of gas-based industries like power plants, fertilizer factories and small industries, the sources told UNB.

Chittagong

From Page 1

In Chittagong, the second day of hartial passed off amidst sporadic incidents of violence leaving at least 20 injured.

Four youths were critically injured while making bombs at Sher Shah Colony yesterday afternoon, reports our staff correspondent from Chittagong.

Pickets attacked the Chittagong Customs House several times since yesterday morning forcing the authorities to deploy army troops to deter further attack, UNB said.

Other districts

From Page 1

In Bhalo, at least 50 people including two policemen were

Of police, guns & phantoms

From Page 1

streets bearing testimony to the battle. Earlier one group of youths carrying some of these broken bottles came to notice. One of them had angrily asked the police officer at the entrance of the Abhay Das Lane why did not he moved deep inside the lane and nabbed the "miscreants".

"You know your enemy better. Not me. Why don't you provide their names and addresses? We would certainly catch them," the officer retorted. The youths retreated towards Harkhola.

Back inside one of the alleys, someone whispered at the police officer's ears, beckoning him to probe a flat on RK Mission Road. The officer marauded his forces but stayed off after seeing some panicked women and children, a lady still carrying a plate of rice and chasing her naughty son to eat the late lunch.

"You know he (police officer) is my relation. So I spoke to him," a jeans-clad pot bellied man in his thirties told these reporters apologetically as the police officer brushed him aside and led his men away down the alleyways unhappy at the poor intelligence about the miscreants.

As the police marched away, they split and another group went the other way around, but failed to nab any of the troublemakers who were quite visible for sometime but disappeared whenever policemen moved ahead.

Finally at the end of the KM Das Lane, the police officer said, "they are urchins who paid Tk 50 to hurl a bomb, Tk 500 to throw it at policemen and Tk 2000 to kill one of them. These urchins don't understand what they are doing. They do it only for money."

Why didn't the policemen nab the others who brandished

Vajpayee

From Page 1

prime ministers have met twice before but never on each other's soil.

Vajpayee's trip has sparked hopes of a new spirit of detente between the rivals, who dramatically upped the stakes in their antagonistic relations by conducting tit-for-tat nuclear tests in May.

Responding to taunts from right-wing Hindu groups that he should take a tank to the border rather than a bus, Vajpayee said: "They already have tanks there."

Vajpayee announced his intention to travel to Pakistan last week, after Sharif gave an interview to an Indian newspaper in which he issued an impassioned appeal for improved relations after five decades of waste."

Police playing wise to prevent trouble took position all around the Paltan and Bijoynagar and Kakraria areas after a Jatiya party procession led by Kazi Zafar Ahmed was chased by anti-hartial elements. Several