Who will succeed

Desperate to quit office at the earliest, the outgoing president has turned down a BNP plea to continue for some more days prompting the ruling party go for the elec-tion of the next president earlier than the time it would have pre-

The parliament is due to elect a new president on November 14. With the BNP-led alliance commanding a two-thirds majority in the 300-strong parliament, the ruling party nominee is poised to become the next president.

The most potential candidate for the presidency is Foreign Minister and Deputy Leader of the House AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury. One of the founding members of the BNP, Chowdhury has reportedly expressed his will-ingness to get the presidency.

Competent sources in BNP said competent sources in Byr said it is almost certain that Chowdhury would be chosen for the presidency as most policy makers and party high-ups in the BNP are favouring a party confidante for the position to avert any risk of conflict between the president and the government as was the case with the past Awami League government.

The BNP is also learnt to be more comfortable with Chowdhury than any other aspirants because of his acceptability beyond party rank and file.

The names of Khandakar Mahbubuddin Ahmed and Dr RA Ghani, both members of the BNP's National Standing Committee, are also being discussed as probable presidential candidates. Former chief justice Mostafa Kamal and exchief election commissioner Justice Abdur Rouf two big names outside the BNP -- are in content i o n , a s well. But, the prospects of all the three are seen by political experts as very bleak as the ruling party policy planners are learnt to be unwilling to opt for someone outside the

party for obvious reasons. If Chowdhury runs for presi-

Palestinian Authority had sentenced him to life imprisonment but that he

dency, his foreign ministry portfolio may be given to industrialist-cum-lawmaker M Morshed Khan, who has been kept outside the cabinet. Information Minister Dr. Abdul Moyeen Khan and Law Minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed are two other names being tipped r the prestigious foreign portfo-

While such speculations continue to get fanned, the outgoing president, whose tenure expired on October 8, will continue in office until his successor takes over under the safeguard clause of Article 50 (1) of the constitution. Meanwhile, Article 123 (1) of the same says election to the next presidency "shall be held within thirty days after the first sitting of parliament", making November 26 the last date for the election to take

Hindu fishermen FROM PAGE 12

looted most of the shops. They have threatened to kill the people of Kathaltala, Atlia, Maguraghona and Shovna unions, if they shelter the cadres of Mrinal group.

ABM Shafiqul Islam, chairman of Kathaltala Union Parishad, said PBCP zonal leader Ranga Saeed led the operation. The UP chairman blamed the BNP of Dumuria upazila unit for harbouring the PBCP armed

The BNP leaders refuted the allegation terming it a blatant lie. The BNP supports neither the PBCP nor the BCP, said Sarder Abdul Kayum, a top leader of the BNP.

Meanwhile, the armed cadres of both groups are reported to have taken positions in at least seven unions of Dumuria. The villagers apprehend more bloody clashes between the armed cadres.

Security measures taken so far are inadequate to face stronger cadres of the outlawed groups, said political leaders.

Traffic jams Shah Farid's service

said.

extednded

sources said yesterday.

recent general elections.

the sources said.

FROM PAGE 12

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The government has extended the

contractual services of Dr Shah

Mohammad Farid, Member of the

Planning Commission, for an year,

to the Chief Adviser of the immedi-

Planning Commission before the

Rehabilitation Directorate

Shamsul Islam has been made an

OSD in the Establishment Division,

Confce on security

The main objective of the confer-

ence, Andreas said, is to provide a

forum for deliberation on the chal-

lenges of CBMs and security coop-

eration in South Asia to understand

the linkages and connectivity

between the issues in both bilateral

The ambassador also responded

Foreign Minister Prof AQM

Eminent scholars and research-

ers from all SAARC countries as

well as Germany will attend the

conference which is a follow-up to

last year's conference on coopera-

Badruddoza Chowdhury is likely to

open the conference split into seven

to queries on the current US-Afghan

war and the global coalition to fight

and multilateral settings.

against terrorism.

working sessions.

ate past caretaker government.

Dr Farid was Principal Secretary

He was transferred to the

Besides, DG of Relief and

Only rickshaws and ambulances were allowed to ply the campus routes, a policeman said.

Patients to be admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) suffered a lot due to barricades put up on both routes to the hospital in Palashi Bazaar area, he said. No motor vehicle including ambulances was seen plying the two routes. Some students of the Salimullah Hall of the DU damaged three cars near Palashi Bazaar.

Campus sources said the students mostly from different halls of the DU brought out separate processions on the campus at about 10:00am. The stick-wielding students were on guard at the entry points to the campus.

The students of Fazlul Haque Hall and Shahidullah Hall guarded the Chankharpool entry to the Bangabazaar route and in front of the High Court mazaar, while a group of students of Jagannath Hall were seen demonstrating near the Central Shaheed Minar.

The students of AF Rahman Hall put up barricades at the Nilkhet intersection at about 10:00am.

The BUET students put up roadblocks at Palashi and Bakshibazaar intersections.

The fellow students also damaged vehicles at the Shahbagh intersection, in front of the Jagannath Hall, near the DMCH in

Meanwhile, teachers and students of the BUET brought out a silent procession on the BUET campus and laid siege in front of the Jativa Press Club in the morning to protest the Tuesday's road

Addressing a rally there, the speakers demanded exemplary punishment to the bus driver and the police sergeant who was on duty in the area, but did not take any step to nab the driver.

Meanwhile, Prof. Mosleh Uddin Ahmed Tareque of the Department of Public Administration, DU, alleged that some unruly youths damaged his private car (Dhaka Metro-Gha-1484) Tuesday night in the TSC area.

PCP memo

after the October-1 general election, PCP leaders alleged in the memorandum.

Four PCP leaders and activists abducted from Murachhari in Mahalchhari upazila are still untraced, they said. Jibonmoy Chakma and Chandra Kumar Chakma were kidnapped on October 7 and 21 respectively, they

PCP leader Shubhashish Chakma was abducted at gunpoint from Naryankhaiya at Khagrachhari town on October 24.

Norendu Tripura, a school boy, was kidnapped allegedly by UDF workers from Khagrapur area on the same day, the memorandum mentioned.

The memorandum signed by district PCP President Uzzal Chakma and General Secretary Kakon Cakma also said the terrorists are openly demanding toll in the district town.

PCP called upon the government to take steps to stop all sorts of criminal activities in the CHT and apprehended that otherwise the situation might deteriorate

Sheikh Helal Uddin MP, SM Kamal

Hossain and Nasrul Hamid Bipu

will tour Narail, Jhenidah, Satkhira,

Khulna and Bagerhat from

Team-11 comprising Mohammad Nasim MP, Obaidul Kader, Taleb Ali, Talukdar Abdul Khaleq MP, Abdul Majid and Zahid

Malek Swapan will tour Sylhet,

Sunamganj, Moulvibazar and

Kibria MP, Shamsur Rahman Khan

Shahjahan, Raji Uddin Ahmed

Raju MP, Dr Abdur Razzak MP,

Shahjahan Khan MP, Fazle Karim Chowdhury MP and Mahabubul Huq Shakil will tour Chittagong and Cox's Bazar form November 8-

Team-12 comprising Shah AMS

Habiganj from November 8-11.

November 6-11.

Power demand

1,51,000 clients were given connec-

The REB, established through an ordinance by late President Ziaur Rahman in 1977, has so far installed a 134,000-km power line and set up 258 substations, which provided

The number of power connections for irrigation purposes is

Police rescue

Besides, police also rescued an abducted Chhatra League activist, Kamal uddin, from Bhoirab Nagar village. He was kidnapped from Chandraganj Bazar by a gang locally known as Shamsoo Group,

JCD men

details than saying that the team did not return to the police station.

Senior officials of the facilities department could not be reached for any comment despite repeated

Maritime Day

which we are firmly committed," he

approval from the Ministry of Shipping and other relevant organi-

ing for Bangladeshi mariners and save huge foreign currency.

Taliban radio frequencies, replacing the militia's broadcasts with music for the first time since it was FROM PAGE 1 banned by the puritanical regime in 1994, the Afghan Islamic Press

The trip is seen as very important as this will be the highest level visit to Washington after the new govern-

From Washington, Reaz Rahman and Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury will proceed to New York to attend

against strong pressure from powerful aspirant to that position. This

gunfight with the gang took place. At one point, the adductors fled away, leaving the victim.

this connection. They are Mosharraf Hossain of Radhapur, Rahamaullh of bishnupur and

police said.

In 1948, an international conference in Geneva adopted a convention formally establishing the Inter-Governmental Maritime

Consultative Organization(IMCO), which was changed to IMO in 1982. In a recent development, some

necessary training for mariners. The institute has obtained

The institute will provide train-

FM: Washington $expected \, to \, hold \, talks \, with \, senior \, US$

ment took over.

the on going UN General Assembly session and general debates.

had escaped four times. In another development, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat expects British Prime Minister Tony

Israel kills Hamas men

Blair to make a ground-breaking "historic promise" here for a Palestinian state, an official said

Wednesday. If concrete steps follow, Blair's anticipated move would bolster Arafat at a time when he has lost ground to militants amid popular anger over Israeli strikes on self-rule areas in the Palestinian territories.

However, a senior Israeli official in Jerusalem later shrugged off the prospect Blair would be able to bring any "newideas" to the peace process. Blair is currently on a Middle

East tour, but his office has not con-

 $firmed \, a \, visit \, to \, the \, Gaza \, Strip.$ Palestinian officials say the visit will take place on Thursday, on the eve of the anniversary of the 1917 Balfour declaration supporting a

Ahmed Abdel Rahman, the binet's secretary general, told AFP that Arafat hopes Blair will make a "historic declaration, historic promise to put the Palestinians and Israelis on equal

A promise of statehood from Blair would "correct the historic mistake of the British empire" if it is followed by concrete steps ensuring the Palestinian "right to have a state, our self determination and inde-

dovish Foreign Minister Shimon Peres aimed at ending the violence in the Gaza Strip.

Arafat told reporters in Oslo that he wanted to meet Peres for the first time in a month later this week in order "to push forward the peace process.

But he added that "nothing has been agreed upon."

On Tuesday, Peres played down ports of talks with Arafat mooted to take place at a conference of European and Mediterranean countries in Spain on Friday.

US bans flights FROM PAGE 1

man Fraser Jones told AFP.

Homeland Security Chief Tom Ridge earlier warned that US energy companies, among other locations seen as terrorist targets should be on high alert following the FBI warning sued on Monday.

Energy utilities including nuclear power stations and electricity generating dams have been mentioned as ssible new targets for terrorists, following terror strikes using

hijacked airliners on September 11. In addition, the FAA barred all (VFR) within 30 nautical miles of the JFK airport in New York, for a duration of five hours on evenings when World Series Games are in progress at Yankee stadium on Tuesday Wednesday, and if required on

All aircraft have been barred from a three nautical mile radius of JFK airport below a 3,000 feet (914 FROM PAGE 12 Munshiganj and Narsingdi from

Following an ALPP meeting on October 24, Hasina had said, "We've decided to send out Awami League Parliamentary Party (ALPP) teams to areas where the ruling alliance continues repression on our partymen and the minority community. I myself will visit the worst hit areas soon."

Team-1 comprising Syeda Zohora Tajuddin, Adv Rahmat Ali MP, Adv Abdul Mannan Khan, Col (retd) Faruk Khan MP, Dr Hamida Banu Shova MP, Mrinal Kanti Das and Dewan Shafiul Arefin Tutul will tour Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Dinajpur, Nilphamari and Rangpur from November 7-11.

Team-2 comprising Abdus Samad Azad MP, Nurul Islam Nahid, Nurul Majid Humayun, Mostafizur Rahman MP, Ahsanullah Master MP and Abdur Rahman will tour Noakhali, Laxmipur, Feni, Comilla, Brahmanbaria and Chandpur from

November 6-11. Team-3 comprising Zillur Rahman MP, Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, Adv Shahara Khatun, Syed Abul Hossain MP, Nure Alam Chowdhury Liton MP and Shahe Alam will tour Rajbari, Shariatpur, Madaripur, Faridpur and Magura from November 7-11.

Team-4 comprising Abdul Momin MP, Mukul Bose, Akhteruzzaman, Vice-Principal Md Abdus Shahid MP, Tanjim Ahmed Sohel MP, Ashim Kumar Ukil and Murad Jang will tour Team-5 comprising Syeda

AL names 15 teams for tour

Sajeda Chowdhury, Dewan Farid Gazi MP, Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Motaher Hossain MP, Kamal Haider and Ishaq Ali Khan Panna will tour Dhaka, Gazipur, Manikganj and Narayanganj from November 8-11. Team-6 comprising Amir Hossain Amu, Ataur Rahman Khan

Kaiser, Sudhangshu Shekhar Halder, Syed Asharful Islam MP, Mirza Azam MP and BM Mozammel Huq will tour Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Sherpur, Tangail, Kishoreganj and Netrokona from November 6-11. Team-7 comprising Abdur

Razzak MP, MA Mannan, Mahamudur Rahman Manna, Shamsur Rahamn Dilu MP, Ahmed Hossain and Mosharraf Hossain will tour Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Gaibandha and Joypurhat from November 8-11. Team-8 comprising Tofa Ahmed, Prof Hanif, Sultan

Mohammad Mansur, Abdul Hai MP and Iqbalur Rahim will tour Jessore, Kushtia, Chuadanga and Meherpur from November 8-11. Team-9 comprising Abdul Jalil MP, AKM Jahangir Hossain MP, Prof Sirajul Akbar MP, Col (rtd) Shawkat Ali MP and Enamul Huq Shamim will tour Pirojpur, Barisal,

Nov 11. Team-10 comprising Suranjit

Team-13 comprising ASHK Sadek MP, Adv Yunus Ali, Adv Abdul Hamid MP, Bir Bahadur MP, Asaduzzaman Noor MP and SA Mannan Kachi will tour Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachhari from November 9-Team-14 comprising Prof Abu

Sayeed, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Nuh Ul Alam Lenin, Lutfur Rahman Mou and Shafi Ahmed will tour Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj and Natore from November 8-11. Team-15 comprising Matia

Chowdhury, HN Ashiqur Rahman, Mirza Sultan Raja, Adv Promod Jhalakati, Bhola and Patuakhali till Mankin MP, Kazi Zafrullah MP and Abu Syed Al Mahmud Swapan will tour Bogra, Naogaon, Sirajganj and Sengupta MP, Abdul Mannan,

FROM PAGE 12

year to give electricity connections to 350,000 clients. A 3700-km line was already built till September and

power connections to 35 lakh clients.

FROM PAGE 12

Three persons were arrested in

Harunur Rasid of Sonapur villages.

FROM PAGE 1

ules piled up in front of them. The ICD cadres told the contrac-

tors that the brother of a deputy minister and an MP elected from Dhaka, both also JCD leaders, will decide on who will get the works and let the firms know about where and when the negotiation will take place.

A team of Ramna police went to the Shikkha Bhaban at around 4:45pm following complaints over the phone. The duty officer of Ramna Police Station could not give more

The witnesses said the clerk stopped issuing the schedules and left his seat after police entered the

FROM PAGE 12

added.

maritime enthusiasts have formed an institution named Maritime Institute of Science and Technology (MIST) in private sector to provide

President under fire, unfairly

without seeking a referendum on the issue.

Unocal's proposal for the 'Bangladesh Natural Gas Pipeline Project' envisages an investment of 1.2 billion US dollars, which includes 310 million US dollars for Sensing Unocal's pressure for pipeline export of gas, Petrobangla

added

proposal's implications. "is expected to be built by an Indian consortium", according Unocal. The Unocal proposal includes construction of a 30-inch diameter, 1363 kilometer (847 mile) pipeline

market of Unocal.

to conclusion of a Gas Purchase and Sales Agreement, will be at least the wellhead PSC price plus the transportation tariff for the trans-Bangladesh section of the pipeline," according to Unocal's Bangladesh Natural Gas Pipeline

thousand cubic feet of gas (Mcf) in Bangladesh (about 343 km) and US\$0.92 per Mcf in India (about 1020 km). "The proposed sales price at the Bangladesh-India border, subject

According to Unocal projection the pipeline project would give the country "an estimated US\$ 3.7 billion total revenue over the 20year project life and US\$500 to US\$700 million immediate foreign direct investment".

FROM PAGE 1 President to the parliament were nothing more than government

version of things, not a word of the

speech on October 28 October was a cabinet prepared and approved one in accordance with the law of the land, one that was formulated by the AL tying the President's hands completely. Point can be made about his numerous public statements on the need for national consensus, restraining student politics, curbing corruption, stopping political violence, etc. where he clearly followed his own conscience while speaking. The fact is that the President's public speeches do not require cabinet approval, only his addresses to the parliament and those on state functions do. That made all the difference, as it did on

October 28. Having said all the above, we will still fault the President on two counts. First, he should have been more aware of the historic nature of the occasion and the extraordinary political sensitivity of his every action. It was for the first time that he was addressing a BNP-led parliament and it was clearly his last address to that august body. Second, seeing the extremely partisan nature of the draft he should have made it a point to add, as he did in 1997, that phrase about the speech being one that was prepared and approved by the cabinet. His oversight or lapse of judgement, and that is what we think it is, has been most unfortuthis embarrassing situation? Why drag him into political controversies, which we all know, lead to no solution but only to denigration of

about the BNP's immediate plans, its future goals and about the challenges we are likely to face in the turbulent post-Twin Tower world. Did the BNP have to use the President to castigate the Awami League the way it did? Did the new ruling party have to use the position and the person of Shahabuddin to give credence to its accusations of Sheikh Hasina's government? We think it was a cheap political trick of the BNP to use the speech of the President to mouth its own political propaganda offensive against the AL government, which the PM had already done. The event is more unforgivable as the new ruling party will have ample chance to attack the former government. The BNP really didn't need to use the

President. But shamefully it did. think it has reasons to be disappointed and even angry. The words in the speech were a virtual reproduction of those of the BNP chief. They were hurtful for the party that elected him to the exalted office.

However, being disappointed or angry, even if justifiably, is not a license to indulge in falsehood. To accuse President Shahabuddin to be a part of a conspiracy to defeat the Awami League is without a shred of truth. It is outrageous, shameful and perverted, not to mention devoid of even a semblance of any proof. The former prime minister now links him to the four-party alliance and terms him a fellow conspirator in engineering her defeat. Abdus Samad Azad has called him a traitor.

him ungrateful, betrayer, turncoat, etc. All these are lies. Their accusations and the language in which they are being made have crossed all boundaries of decency and

political parlance.

We vigorously protest this denigration of the office of the President and the person of Shahabuddin. We think he has made a singular contribution to the promotion of democracy in Bangladesh. Let us recall how he came into public office. He never aspired to be anything other than being a judge. In fact, he led such a low-profile life that practically no one knew him (except his own circle) when he was suddenly catapulted to power, limelight and politics. As he was reluctantly dragged from the premises of the courts to the corridors of power his only condition was that he be allowed to go back to being a judge, simply because he never wanted to be anything else. Following a totally uncharted path and with no precedent anywhere, he led the nation to democracy through holding a free and fair election with literally a makeshift constitutional arrangement. This diminutive and totally unassuming man rose to the occasion and through his honesty, strict neutrality and unwavering sense of purpose saw us through to an elected government. He brushed aside suggestions of continuing in the office and quickly returned to being the chief justice in October 1991 and buried himself in anonymity as far as it was practicable. After retirement in January

stands out today as Sheikh Hasina's single most popular

Shahabuddin's tenure as the President was exemplary. He surprised all by his simplicity and austere lifestyle. He dramatically reduced many of the customary expenditure of the Bangabhaban and cut staff and perks to the annoyance of the establishment. Presidential foreign travel is always full of pomp, glamour and ceremony, which only men of character can resist. In his five years in office he travelled only once to Turkey, saving the exchequer millions in foreign exchange. Nothing about this man either smacks of ambition, vanity, pomposity or any desire for self-aggrandisement. On many occasions he thought of resigning but refrained from doing so only to save the government from consequent embarrassment. He consistently exhibited an exceptional disdain for being in the limelight. He is a simple man with no sense that he would ever be at ecause destiny so ordained.

Citizens' rally slams attack on minorities

DU CORRESPONDENT

The establishment of rules of law and democracy in the country would not be possible, if the attacks on the religious minorities and opposition activists continue, peakers at a citizens' rally in the city yesterday said.

Blaming the attacks on the activists of ruling BNP and Jamaate-Islami, they said, "They have been torturing the minority communities and the opposition activists over the last one month following the victory of the four-party alliance in the October 1 general election.

They not only plundered properties of the tortured people but the public ones as well, the speakers told the rally at the Central Shaheed Minar in the afternoon, organised by 'Peace Movement Against Terrorism (PMAT)' in the wake of terrorism across the coun-

Presided over by Barrister Amirul Islam, the rally was addressed by, among others, Ahmed, Prof. RIM Aminur Rashid, Advocate Sahara Khatun, Advocate

Cox's Bazar-3

FROM PAGE 1

Farouk and Lutfur Rahman.

The polling on October 1 in the constituency was postponed due to the death of BNP candidate Advocate Khalequzzaman while he was addressing a projection meet-The present BNP candidate

Mohammad Shahiduzzaman is the brother of Khalequzzaman. Election Commission has taken

in a free and fair manner. Nearly 200 observers are likely to be in the field to oversee the voting. There are 2,90,978 voters includ-

ing 1,40,913 female who will vote in

In another development, armed

Taliban soldiers yesterday took over a field office run by the United

Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the southern Afghan border town of Spin Boldak,

AFP correspondents with oppo-

US warplanes also struck near

Kabul and the northern city of

Mazar-i-Sharif, a Taliban spokes-

Over the past week, US planes have intensified attacks on Taliban

frontline positions to soften them up for an eventual ground assault by

forces of the opposition Northern Alliance, backed by US military

US Defence Secretary Donald

Rumsfeld confirmed late Tuesday

that the US troops on the ground in Afghanistan were directing

airstrikes and co-ordinating supply

operations for the Afghan opposition.

Afghanistan estimated the number of US personnel in the country at

around 40, while the Taliban have claimed that 500 US and allied

forces are with the regime's ene-

The United States, meanwhile,

was bracing itself for a possible second wave of terror attacks seven

weeks after hijackers took control of

four passenger airliners and crashed them into US cities, killing

alert after senior officials said they

had "credible" fresh evidence that

terrorists linked to bin Laden's al-

Qaeda network could strike again

experts view this information as somehow related to al-Qaeda or bin

Laden, else we wouldn't have

ramped it up," Homeland Security Chief Tom Ridge said at a news

"We believe the United States

The fear of future terrorism

added to the panic surrounding a germs-by-mail bio-terror attack,

which claimed its latest victim

Kathy Nguyen, 61, worked in a supply room at the Manhattan Eye,

She was the first to die of the

disease in New York and the fourth victim overall since a spate of

anthrax-laced letters started to

appear in media and government offices in the aftermath of the

Meanwhile, Attorney General John Ashcroft and FBI Director

Robert Mueller were "furious" to

cutters - like the ones thought used

to hijack the September 11 planes -

and maps of a nuclear power plant in Florida and the Trans-Alaska oil

pipeline, had been detained and

released by immigration officials, a

senior law enforcement official told

Ear and Throat Hospital.

September 11 strikes.

could be targeted this week, this next week or so, with a terrorist

"You can fairly assume that the

Security services were on high

around 5,000 people.

this week or the next.

attack or attacks.'

vesterdav.

Intelligence sources in Northern

sition Northern Alliance forces in Afghanistan saw a US B-52 bomber

130 polling centres.

a ŬN official said.

6,000 fighters.

reported.

(31 miles) north of Kabul.

man in the capital said.

Meanwhile US forces

all measures for holding the election

Subrato Chowdhury, Advocate Shamsul Alam, Advocate Mehedi Hasan and Advocate Shamsul Alam Dudu.

The speakers said the culprits tortured Hindus even during the Durga Puja, their greatest religious festival, and the home minister together with other cabinet members of the government denied the incidents and did not take proper steps to resist the attacks.

Activists of the BNP and the Jamaat as well as their respective student organiations captured different institutions, halls, terminals and markets.

They are now targeting doctors, lawyers, journalists, and NGOs, the speakers said calling for resistance.

Due to delay in her arrival, her programmes will be rescheduled and she will leave Dhaka on

Saturday. Foreign ministry sources said that during her stay here, she will meet the Prime Minister and hold official talks with Foreign Minister Badruddoza Chowdhury, Both

programmes are likely today. Ms Jamil is the grand daughter of late Hussain Shaheed Shurwardy.

Saifur

ADP. The Awami League government adopted an over Tk 19 thousand crore annual development budget for the current fiscal year, during the passage of the national budge

at the end of its tenure.

the passage of the national budget at the end of its tenure. Taliban positions

Federal agents were scrambling

The Awami League government adopted an over Tk 19 thousand

crore annual development budget

for the current fiscal year, during

to track done the six men -described as Middle Eastern in appearance and carrying Israeli passports - who were stopped at the weekend but released when their passports were found to be in order. The incident will fuel fears that Islamic radicals are planning another spectacular strike on US

targets, as US aviation authorities slapped no-fly zones around 86 conduct at least two bombing raids on Taliban frontlines 50 kilometres sensitive installations, including nuclear plants. It was the first time a B-52 was Saudi opposition sources said yesterday that radicals in the Gulf seen in the region, where the Taliban have concentrated up to kingdom were communicating with

> planning a new attack before Ramadan, the Muslim fasting month expected to start on Washington has yowed to topple the Taliban and force it to hand over bin Laden to face justice, but more

than three weeks of airstrikes have

extremists in Afghanistan and

made little visible progress in weakening the militia. As support for the strikes began to waver amid growing reports of civilian casualties, rumours are growing that US ground troops may e sent into Afghanistan to secure a base, support the opposition and lead the manhunt.

Rumsfeld will travel to Moscow

Friday for talks with his opposite

number Sergei Ivanov then visit countries in central Asia, Pentagon spokeswoman Victoria Clarke said. US forces are already operating out of bases in Uzbekistan and, reportedly, Tajikistan, in their campaign, as Russian as well as local support would be necessary

Daschle said yesterday after meeting with US President George W Bush, that more troops might be sent to join those already in the theatre of operations. Meanwhile close US ally, Prime Minister Tony Blair of Britain arrived in Saudi Arabia on the sec-

for any intensification of the ground

Senate Majority Leader Tom

up reluctant support for the US-led anti-terror coalition in the Middle Earlier he had held talks in Damascus with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and they told a news conference that they had agreed terrorism must be combated and urged international action to

His itinerary was kept secret, but

ond leg of a diplomatic tour to shore

is expected to include talks with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. As the refugee situation remained critical, the office in Islamabad of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees said

Spin Boldak camp, set up by the Taliban near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Pakistan yesterday closed the border crossing by the camp after allowing 4,000 of the neediest refugees over to a temporary camp nearby at Killi Faizo near Chaman.

conditions were deteriorating at the

Division

FROM PAGE 12

fight the scourge.

ministries one for the Independence War and the other for the welfare of the Bangladeshi expatriates. Accordingly, the Ministry on Liberation War Affairs has already been set up.

Foreign Minister AOM Badruddoza and Labour and Employment Minister Abdullah Al loman attended the meeting. Another member of the committee Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman, however, did not

pendence," Abdel Rahman said. Meanwhile, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat said Wednesday he hoped to hold talks with Israel's

Unocal proposal

However, another constitution expert said that being elected by the people of the country, the government could decide on exporting the country's resource.

experts have already done their

homework to understand the

"We already have a set of recommendations to add with the Petrobangla report on gas export," said a source. "Our recommendations would include that the government would allow gas of only a designated gas field operated by the oil company to export and it would not allow blending of gas from the Petrobangla's own

reserve.'

company. And the gas export price cannot be lower than the gas sold to the Petrobangla under a production sharing contract (PSC)," he said. "There should be export profit for the government.' Meanwhile, the top level of the government has decided to proceed cautiously on the gas export issue keeping a positive outlook. A

source said that the process is

underway to form a high-level

committee to assess the country's

gas reserve and look into the issues

of gas utilisation for economic

"The pipeline owner and the gas

field owner cannot be the same

development. The government would also look into the benefits of power export in bulk quantities to India, the source said.

The provision of power export has multifaceted economic returns for the country as it would generate employment and help local gas market expansion, he

the Bangladesh portion of the project and 881 million US dollars for the Indian portion. The pipeline from the Bangladesh-India border to Delhi

(mmcfd) from the Bibiyana gas field to Delhi in India, the targeted According to the Unocal proposal, the project is expected to require tariffs of US\$ 0.45 per

with an initial capacity of exporting

500 million cubic feet of gas per day

Project' summary.

president himself So President Shahabuddin's

We think a question needs to be

raised as to why the BNP prepared

such a partisan speech for this

highly respected President, who

has tried so hard to steer a neutral

course in the political quicksand of

Bangladesh? Couldn't they and

venerable institutions?

The draft could easily have been

On the Awami League side we

1995 he totally removed himself from public view till the newly elected Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, invited him to become the President. It was to her great credit that the AL chief could rise above narrow party vision and select a man of Shahabuddin's stature action and will remain so in history regardless of what she or others may say today.

the helm of history, but one who rose to the occasion to serve his people to the best of his ability He came to public life in 1990 not of his own volition but because we collectively pleaded with him to. He performed extremely difficult tasks, again at our request and not by his choice. He adorned the post of the President not because he sought it but because we requested him to. Can we name any other public figure about whom we can say the same? Those who are insulting him are only bringing themselves down in the

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