# India offers Nepal all help to root out Maoism

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA. New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister A B Vaipavee has assured Nepalese monarch Gyanandera that New Delhi is ready extend whatever assistance Kathmandu needs to overcome the problems faced by Maoist violence in the Himalayan kingdom.

The assurance by Vajpayee was given when King Gyanendra spoke to him on telephone Wednesday. Both the leaders agreed that enhanced vigil should be maintained along Indo-Nepal border, official sources here said.

Nepal has sought Indian help aware that its own efforts to tackle the Maoists would not be much effective without cooperation from India as attacks from security personnel on both sides of the border can seal the escape routes of the

The sources said Nepalese request for military assistance from India is taken care of by New Delhi's assurance to help Kathmandu in all

possible ways. In fact, India has told Nepal that it would expedite defence supplies needed to combat the Maoists

Nepal is understood to have sought helicopters from India to undertake low-altitude offensives in places in the land-locked Himalayan country which are considered strongholds of Maoists.

The assessment here is that the two countries can jointly fight the Maoists as the ultras have their camps inside Indian territories also and links with certain banned ultraleft wing groups in India, the sources said.

The telephonic conversation between the Nepal King and Vajpayee came a day after the Prime Ministers of the two countries spoke to each other on phone on the developments in Nepal.

The Nepalese Army Chief P Shamsher Jung Bahadur had also met his Indian counterpart Gen S Padmanabhan here last Sunday regarding Nepal's military require-

## Bank in UK

Mohammad Farshuddin went to England several times to pursue the case. And as a result of such efforts. the FSA finally gave the permission

to open a bank Earlier in July, 2000, a threemember FSA team came to Dhaka and had discussions with finance ministry, BB and SB officials. The FSA team submitted a report to its higher authorities after reviewing the financial health of SB.

However, much to the surprise of the country's banking circle the government yesterday issued a press release claiming all credit for starting the banking operation in the UK. The release said, "as part of implementing the election pledge, the present government took special initiatives to set up Sonali Bank (UK) Ltd in the UK.

The government release also put the blame for closure of SB operations in the UK on the immediate past government.But, the BB sources said the operational mismanagement in SB's UK branches had its roots during the autocratic rule of Ershad. Later, despite repeated warnings from the FSA, Bangladesh authorities took no meaningful attempt to overcome the problems. According to finance ministry sources, the finance secretary has been made chairman of the new bank and the additional secretary of the ministry has been made alternative chairman. A Bangladeshi banker Abdul Latif Baro Bhuiyan has been appointed Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and a British citizen Trevor Durritt has beegiven the charge of Deputy CEO. They will also be members of the bank board. Besides, two other British nationals John Wicker and Alex Lee having experience in international banking have also been inducted into the

At the time of its closure, the SB branches had 59 million pound sterling in deposits and 3.3 million pound sterling in advances. About 80 per cent of the advances sterling was classified.

## Worst quorum crisis present. In the process, the number

ters. Most of the frontline treasury bench members including the prime minister Finance and Planning Minister M. Saifur Rahman and Col. (retd.) Oli Ahmed did not turn up on

Most of the handful of ministers present at the House left once their scheduled business was over. So did MPs including those of a section of the opposition belonging to the HM Ershad-led faction of Jativa Party, Krishak Sramik Janata Dal and some of the independent MPs. MPs of the main opposition

Awami League has been boycotting the proceedings since the first And when the House resumed its

business after 44 minutes against a 20-minute recess for Zohr prayers, it was still short of quorum. However, the quorum was restored after five

Worse still, the lawmakers started leaving the House gradually, causing a persistent quorum crisis since 2:35pm when 57 MPs were

of legislators present declined to 51 at 3:00pm, 45 at 3:10pm, 35 at 3:27pm and 27 at 3:40pm. At this stage, BNP MP Akbar Ali tried in vain to draw the Chair's attention to the

At 3:43pm, State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Ruhul Quddus Talukdar Dulu was able to bring the quorum crisis to the Chair's on as soon as Naiimuddin Alam was given the floor to speak about the president's address to parliament. However, the speaker quickly intervened although Alam tried to continue.

quorum crisis not been brought to my notice," the speaker said before ending the day's sitting at 3:44pm. By that time, the front row of the treasury bench was empty and there were only two members on the second row. No-one was there in the opposition bench while the 216strong treasury bench had only 25

rape and torture" and "we discussed today to take this public anger to a

The meeting resolved to hold the planned national convention on logical conclusion The meeting took stock of the 'Crimes against Humanity' in mid-January and to continue dialogue political scenario, law and order with political parties for this. situation and organisational matters However, the meeting did not of the party, he said.

form any committee for the planned In a resolution the meeting convention. expressed deep concern at the Zillur Rahman said the people government's failure to maintain law fail to understand what prompted

> condemned removal of vice- chancellors of different public universities "illegally"

The meeting resolved that the government deliberately extended the duration of the parliament session just to pass a bill to scrap the

build up resistance against the government's move and to make Šundav's hartal successful.

cil, claiming that occupation of the council office by Redwan Ahmed is

In the suit, 41 people including Redwan Ahmed have been made defendants.

It was stated in the suit that the council is a non-government voluntary organisation. Its executive committee is elected through

three years. The committee comprised 41 people including Ahad Chowdhury. But Redwan Ahmed, under police protection and in violation of the

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has been made Chief Adviser of the

council, the plaintiff claimed.

# **Deaths of 2 female students** in road mishap spark violence at Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Agitated students of Rangamati Government College put up barricades on Chittagong-Rangamati highway, set ablaze vehicles and clashed with police after two fellow female students were killed and three persons injured in a road accident in Rajbari area in the town in the morning.

Police charged batons and fired rubber bullets and tear gas shells to bring the situation under control. Ten people including some students were injured.

Nipa Dewan, 21, and Kulsri Dewan Baishakhi, 21, died on the spot when a bus hit the autorickshaw they were travelling. Sukhendu Of the injured,

Tanchayanga was sent to Chittagong Medical College Hospital in a critical condition. The two others -- Jamal Uddin and Ziban Chakma -- were admitted to Rangamati General Hospital, police said. The injured were also passengers of the autorickshaw.

Witnesses said the autorickshaw collided with the bus coming from Chittagong.

As the news spread, hundreds of students came out of the college and put up barricades on the road. They torched three vehicles and damaged dozens of others. They also brought out a protest proces-

Police then went into action. charging batons and firing shots, the witnesses said. But none was injured at this stage.

As the violence spilled over to a nearby saw mill area with students clashing with workers, police fired at least 10 tear gas shells, leaving 10 people including some students injured and creating panic in the whole area.

The deputy commissioner of Rangamati along with some army personnel rushed to the spot and assured the students and workers of proper investigation into the

The situation then calmed down and road communication resumed in the afternoon.

An inquiry committee headed by Additional District Magistrate Karim Gazi has been formed to prove the incident, official sources said.

# US to attack Iraq, but 'the question is when'

AFP, Undated

The United States will certainly carry out an attack on Iraq but "the question is when", Western diplomats familiar with US policies said.

According to these diplomats the anti-terrorist campaign spearheaded by the United States following the September 11 strikes on New York and Washington "will certainly lead to strikes on Iraq."

One Western diplomat said that Washington "is resolved to put an end to Saddam Hussein's development of weapons of mass destruction and the risk that the Iraqi leader obtain nuclear weapons."

"So the question is not if the United States is going to hit Iraq,

mat told AFP in Jordan.

These diplomats believe that unlike the 1991 US-led war to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation, the United States is now more determined than ever and ready to take the risk of sustaining US war

A military campaign against Iraq will be essentially aimed at "breaking the regime of Saddam Hussein and destroying his armament," one diplomat said.

He also disagreed with many Arab leaders who fear that an attack on Iraq will have "catastrophic" consequences.

"A real democracy in Iraq will be beneficial for many Iraqis and for

US President George W Bush on Monday warned Saddam he must allow UN arms inspectors back in Irag to prove to the world he is not developing weapons of mass

Arab countries," the diplomat said.

destruction British Prime Minister Tony Blair said on Wednesday he fully agreed with Bush's latest warnings to Iraq over its suspected efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction but cautioned against any hasty response to the problem.

Blair said any extension to other countries of the US-led military campaign against suspected terrorist networks in Afghanistan should be carefully considered.

### Gas reserve: scientific study discovered in early 1960s need for national consensus like

and some other parts of the country. The left leaning parties will hold a national convention on the issue on

Against this backdrop, the government last week took the decision to form two committees to reassess gas reserves and analyse economics of gasxport. The committee to reassess gas

reserves would reexamine the existing studies including the latest one jointly done by Petrobangla and the United States Geological Survey (USGS). "Do we really need a reassess-

ment while an in-depth study is already underway?" commented a source, referring to another study by the Norway Petroleum Directorate NPD) and the Hydrocarbon Cell of the energy ministry. The study report is due in a couple of months. He added that Norway's scientific method to estimate and assess gas resources was completely different from USGS'. But at the same time. NPD enjoys the same level of prestige as that of USGS.

"Although the Norwegian study is expected to cast a new light on the issue, we do not expect the debate on gas reserves to die with its completion." he added

never before to reassess the current gas reserves, the government should have conducted a full-scale scientific study instead of reviewing The last detailed scientific study

on the country's gas reserves was done in 1991 which put reserves at 10 TCF. "Back in 1986, Petrobangla

undertook a scientific study with British technical support called 'Hydrocarbon Habitat Study Project'. The country's geology, geo-history and known or discovered gas fields were assessed under the project," said a source.

The 1986 study was further reinforced by an Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) study of the greater Kushtia region.

In 1991. Petrobangla undertook another study with Canadian company Intercom Kanata Management (IKM) financed by CIDA as part to update gas reservoir status.

IKM scientifically studied the country's eight main gas fields out of a total 18. It conducted seismic surveys, drilled a few wells and used existing data for assessment. The IKM study put the total figure at slightly more that 10 TCF. As a result of the study, the reserves of Titas, the country's biggest gas field increased significantly. Later in 1995, Petrobangla

wanted to have another study done with World Bank (WB) finance and technical assistance from the French Petroleum Institute. However, due to dilly-dally of Petrobangla, the WB did not release the full fund and the study prematurely ended last year.

The 1995 study was confined to the gas fields of Habiganj, Kailashtila, and Bakhrabad. As a result of this study, gas reserves estimation of Habiganj and Kailashtila increased while that of Bakhrabad was scaled down. Currently, the number of opera-

tional gas fields has increased to 22 due to the involvement of Shell and Unocal. This has all the more made it important to conduct a scientific

TCF higher than official estimate," noted an expert. "But why should we guess when we can gather actual

# Accord on interim council

The delegations will decide who will Bakhshi said.

population of Afghanistan's 28 provinces or if it would be based on nation's ethnic makeup, he said.

for comment.

interim council was still being hammered out.

We have to reconcile the four ideas into one clear idea, Fawzi said.

Brahimi in a working session yesterday afternoon. Diplomats said all sides broadly agree that the popular ex-king, exiled in Rome since his 1973 overthrow, should have a symbolic

lead role in overseeing an initial interim administration. But the northern alliance dampened expectations Wednesday. saving such a role for the ex-king should first be approved by a tradi-

The alliance also rejected sending an international security force to Afghanistan, saving its own fighters are providing enough security.

hanged a man yesterday in the center of Kandahar as an American spy as US forces flew in more equinment to their base in southern Afghanistan US bombers pounded Taliban forces around the city.

than a half-dozen senior leaders of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network and several hundred of his most loyal fighters have been killed in the war in Afghanistan so far, US officials say.

target in the war, and the military's focus on its leaders has severely hurt bin Laden's ability to communicate both in Afghanistan and with terrorists overseas, officials say.

"In some cases they are severed from communicating by any means whatsoever," said Rear Adm. John Stufflebeem, a Pentagon spokesman, on Wednesday.

in its online edition Wednesday night that anti-Taliban forces are believed to have captured a top al-Qaida operative who is the son of a sheik convicted in the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center. Ahmed Abdel Rahman, 35, ran a

key terrorist training camp in Afghanistan, the Times reported, citing US intelligence officials. He reportedly is being held in an undisclosed location. Thousands of al-Qaida fighters are still alive in Afghanistan,

to take the place of top bin Laden

Moreover, al-Qaida terrorists outside Afghanistan may still be capable of proceeding with planned attacks, even if they're unable to communicate with leaders still inside Afghanistan, officials warn.

### 15 Bangladeshis shot dead by BSF in 3 months

UNB, Panchagarh

Indian Border Security Force shot dead 15 Bangladesh nationals in the frontier areas of Panchagarh and Thakurgaon districts in last three months

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) sources, however, confirmed 11 deaths. The majority of the victims were day-labourers. The last incident took place on November 17 when two stone

collectors Liakat Ali and his son

Shah Alam were gunned down by

BSF at Banglabandha in Tetulia The other victims in last three months, were Daya Rani, 11, Choitali, 20, Moksed, 30, Shahidul, 20, Dalilur, 30, Hafizul, 25, Ansarul, 26, Kuddus, 24, Samad, 28, Darul,

35, Jabed, 20, Noor Islam, 40, and Mosharraf, 35. During the period BDR and BSF exchanged gunshots at least 10 times over planting seedlings at Maihipara and constructing groins

BSF flag meetings, firing by BSF continued in the border creating panic among local people, BDR have advised the people to move

## 3 killed as truck hits another truck in N'gani

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj** 

Three people were killed on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway under Bandar than a here in the early hours of yesterday when a speeding truck hit another truck parked on the

Police said at around 4 am the speeding truck rammed into the truck parked on the roadside at Kantal area and fell into a ditch. The driver and two others were sleeping in the perked truck. The three were killed on the spot.

The identity of the dead could not be known. Police seized the trucks and a

case was filed in this connection. UNB adds: A middle-aged man was crushed under the wheels of a bus on Pirojpur-Bagherhat yester-

Witnesses said mason Pankaj Samaddar was run over by the bus near Mohishpur bus stand in Bagerhat district at about 7.30 am.

### Jubo League

FROM PAGE 12 They chopped Morshed with sharp weapons, leaving him seriously

Morshed was first taken to CMCH and later shifted to Centre Point Hospital at Jamal Khan where he died at about 12:20 am. District police along with

Mirersarai police personnel in a predawn raid yesterday arrested seven BNP-Jamaat activists from different parts of Mithanala union in connection with the killing.
They are Md Mainuddin, Md
Nasiruddin, Mesbahuddin, Arif

Mohiuddin, Igbal Hossain, Jahiruddin and Fayez Ahmad. Awami League leaders blamed Nurul Amin, joint secretary of

Mirersarai thana BNP, former UP

chairman Igbal, Jamaat cadre Kala

Karim and their gang for the killing.

### Launch mishap FROM PAGE 1

about 3:30 pm vesterday. According to witnesses and other sources, the Barisal bound launch --M L Jahangir--sailed from Bhola at 2 pm with about 150 passengers. It sank instantly when hit by another launch, MV Coco, a Dhaka bound double-decker.

Some life buoys were thrown from MV Coco which saved some of the passengers. Some others swam ashore, witnesses said.

About 50 passengers of ML Jahangir remained missing and are feared drowned, local sources said when this report was filed last night. Local people recovered one body from the river and sent it to Bhola

but its identity could not be known. The UNO of Mehendiganj and the OC rushed to the spot.

### Businessman FROM PAGE 12

wives, was having strained relations with his first wife and was staying with his second wife. His second wife Jainal Bibi filed a

arrested till last night. In another incident, an alleged mugger was beaten to death by a mob at Basiruddin Road in

case with Mirpur police station

following the murder, but none was

Dhanmondi, police said. He was identified as Ridov alias Shipu. 20. a resident of Kazipra in Tegaon area. The incident took place when a gang of three tried to snatch valu-

chased the gang, caught two of them and beat them severely. Badly injured, both were sent to DMCH where Ridoy died in the early hours of yesterday. The other identi fied as Ripon was shifted to Pangu Hospital.

ables from a rickshaw passenger on

Bashiruddin Road. As he raised an

alarm, local people and pedestrians

Some sources, however, said the incident followed previous enmity with some people. A case was filed with Dhanmondi thana in this regard.

**JS** tidbits However, Shahidul Islam was later outwitted by Agriculture

Minister Motiur Rahman Nizami.

Shahid had all the sweet words

for the agriculture minister to per-

suade him to accept his second resolution on setting up of an agri-

culture diploma college at his

Jhenaidah constituency. "Mr.

Nizami is my dulabhai (brother-in-

law) and I am sure he will accept my

Shahid's resolution, a kind of motion

rarely accepted by ministers. "De-

spite my willingness I cannot accept

Mr. Shahidul Islam's proposal. Because, it will be deemed as an act

of nepotism since the honourable

member has called me dulabhai,

Education Minister Dr. Osman

Faruk mistakenly addressed

Speaker Sircar as the education

minister. However, Dr. Faruk stood

fact that it was on the previous occasion that I was education

defeated Awami League heavy-

minister," Sircar said jokingly.

"You were correct except for the

BNP MP Hafiz Ibrahim, who had

eight Tofail Ahmed in the October

1 national polls, said he and his

constituents deserved special

thanks. "Mind you Mr. Speaker, it

(Tofail Ahmed's absence) will

enable you to run the House

a few in the last parliaments to have

the city on Wednesday, Ibrahim

wondered how a leader who has lost

in three seats could lead his party's

President assents

President Prof. AQM Badruddoza

Chowdhury yesterday assented to

two bills passed in the first session

(Whips) (Amendment) Bill, 2001'

and "The Law Officers (Amend-

ment) Bill, 2001," a Parliament Secretariat press release said.

170 shops gutted

A devastating fire gutted about 170

shops at a local bazar in

Charfashion upazila early yester-

from a short circuit at a shop at 4 am

and soon engulfed the entire bazar

gutting shops of various commodi-

ties, including books, clothes,

Sources said the fire originated

The bills are "The Bangladesh

For a reminder, Tofail was among

Referring to an AL procession in

smoothly in the next five years."

given the BNP difficult time.

to two bills

of the eighth parliament.

in Bhola

UNB, Dhaka

But Nizami would not accept

motion "the BNP MP said

Nizami quipped.

correct instantly.

bottom of the order," Sobhan said no sooner had Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain recast the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills and

Regretting his position in the committee, Sobhan reminded that his party was a partner of BNP in the electoral battle and in formation of the incumbent government. seems that he (chief whip) had no option but to include me in the committee," he said, suggesting that frontline leaders (of the BNP should consider the age and experience of a lawmaker in taking such

Khandakar Delwar was in no mood to leave the Jamaat MP alone, though. "I did not know that Mr. Maolana had been an MP since the Ayub (Khan) regime. But I wonder how a big leader like him speaks about such a small thing.

The chief whip also pointed out that Sobhan did not object when the committee was originally formed on November 5 when his name also was at the bottom. "Today, I have only changed the chairman of the

On a later occasion. Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar termed Sobhan a seasoned parliamentarian prompting the Jamaat lawmaker to remind the House of his political career once again. "Many of the members here do not know that I had been a parliamentarian since 1962. I was the deputy leader of the opposition while late Abdul Malek Ukil was the opposition leader

"Yes, I know about your history as a parliamentarian, Mr. Sobhan, the speaker comforted the Jamaat

BNP lawmaker Shahidul Islam gave Speaker Sircar a tough time as he had the highest number of scheduled items to speak about in the House on the private members day yesterday. Besides dealing with two resolutions he had moved Shahid also proposed amendments to three other resolutions moved by his colleagues in the treasury bench. And every time, the speaker had a word or two with the BNP

But Shahid outsmarted Sircar at least once. "I see, you have posed to be the

home minister. While the minister has refused to accept my resolution you say that the minister has given me an assurance." Shahid told the speaker who asked the BNP deputy if he would like to withdraw his resolution seeking setting up of police camp at every union of the While withdrawing his motion as

party won the last general election promising to fight terrorism. "None of us will be spared if terrorism was not checked," he said pointing his finger at the Chair as well as the home minister. Apparently losing his battle this time round, the speaker did not miss

requested by the minister, a frus-

trated Shahid reminded that his

stationery and shoes. The loss has been estimated at about Tk 25 crore. Fire-fighters who were rushed in

### any chance to have a go at the ruling party MP whenever he took the floor from the district town, 64 km off the spot, extinguished the flame after hours of frantic efforts

afterwards.

Earlier, police took position at the Hathazari Bazaar. When Humayun and his operatives arrived at the bazaar after the gunfight, police encircled them from every side and nabbed the terrorists at around

Humayun, an influential associ-

ate of detained Shibir cadre Nasir, and also known as the most ferocious marksman in Chittagong, is accused in over 20 criminal cases, including sensational Bahodderhat eight-murder, Fatikchhari AL president and freedom fighter Zahurul Haq murder and different killings, abduction and arms dealing. The police team from the

Hathazari Police Station also arrested the listed terrorists --Lokman, Farid, Abdul Hakim and Mahmudur Rahman -- in the opera-

Humayn along with others was brought to the police super's office

amid tight security for interrogation

and later, in a critical condition, was

admitted to the Chittagong Medical

College Hospital (CMCH), where he

three years.

## 11 top officials

FROM PAGE 1

postings of over 700 officials have been changed. They include 23 secretaries, nine additional secretaries and 39 joint secretaries.

In the last one and a half months,

been changed in the police administration also.

officers including 10 of the rank of major general have been changed.

graphed by The Prothom Alo. The

photograph showed him leading a

group of seven cadres during the

could be reached last night for

No high official of the university

It was learnt that during the four-

vear term of the former vice chancel-

lor about 67 students were expelled

at different times for their involve-

ment in terrorist activities on the

official letter regarding their expul-

None of them ever received any

clash at Jagannath Hall.

comments on the issue.

The university authorities did not

fronts of BNP and Awami League over occupation of residential halls left 15 persons injured.

Sources said that the probe body failed to find any involvement of Motafizul Islam Mamun, general secretary of JCD's DU unit in the incident though Mamun was photo-

Nasir's aide Humayun

died at 10.00pm. Humayun had been involved in criminal activities of the Nasir group in the absence of Nasir for around

Earlier were arrested two other associates of Nasir -- Saiiad Khanam, an accused in the eightmurder case, and Chhoto Nasir, a suspected killer of Nazirhat College principal Gopal Krishna Muhuri

Awami League leader Tofael Ahmed had influenced recruitment of party men in government cadre service in

More than 500 postings have

In the army, postings of over 20

# DU expels 4

ist activities on the campus. The press release further said that the six expelled students were identified on the basis of photographs published in different

national dailies after the incidents. The release identified two of the expelled students by their full names and respective departments and the four others by their nicknames only.

specify the term of expulsion of the campus. students and only two students were identified by their departments. This has given rise to questions among students regarding sincerity of the authorities in taking stern action against culprits on the campus.

The gunfight between student

Bush: Khaleda FROM PAGE 12 and for personal contribution to peaceful elections and dedication

In response to the Prime Minister's invitation to visit

# to democracy in Bangladesh."

Bangladesh, the US President said, "Mrs Bush and I will give it serious consideration."

### cases which can be tried under the existing laws while the rest can be settled through a new law.

protection of restricted areas, and fighting destructive organisations for maintaining law and order.

the government to withdraw the special security to Sheikh Hasina while it is being provided to former president Shahabuddin Ahmed and head of the last caretaker government Latifur Rahman for one year. 'Sheikh Hasina, even while in

ing the Act," said Zillur. He said all the party lawmakers present at yesterday's meeting expressed deep concern at Hasina's security risk and said tougher programmes should be announced after Sunday's hartal.

AL Presidium member Abdul Jalil

told this correspondent that people

power, faced attempts on her life in

Gopalganj. The government is

making her life vulnerable by repeal-

## of the country were "aggrieved at SPA, PSA

FROM PAGÉ 12 under trial or under investigation. So, the question arises about the fate of these cases if the laws are repealed. Sources said there are some

BNP sources said some legal experts have suggested the government to repeal all repressive articles of the two laws and keep some other clauses like imposition of curfew, restriction on entry into some areas.

AL programmes

and order and control price hike of In another resolution the meeting

The meeting urged the people to

### Redwan FROM PAGE 12

secret ballots. Its last committee was elected on February 27 for

rules and orders of the council, occupied the council office on

"I could have continued had the

Sources said since there is a

be included on the interim council during further talks Thursday, There was disagreement, however, on whether the representation would be decided based on the

No one from the ex-king's delegation was immediately available UN spokesman Ahmad Fawzi cautioned that a full accord on the

The four delegations were to meet with UN envoy Lakhdar

tional assembly of Afghan ethnic leaders.

In Kabul the Taliban reportedly

The Afghan Islamic Press, based in Pakistan, reported from Kandahar that the Taliban arrested a man found with a satellite telephone and hanged him at an intersection known as Martyr's Crossing. According to the agency, the

man, who was not identified, was

accused of pointing out bombing

targets to the Americans. The

Taliban have not allowed Western journalists in Kandahar. where the movement was sounded in the early In Pakistan, an anti-Taliban tribal official. Abdul Jabbar. said US warplanes bombed positions near Kandahar's airport early Thursday

after Taliban forces fired rockets at

local tribesmen who radioed for

Pakistani border said bombs fell

around the city overnight, but could

Kandahar residents fleeing to the

American air support.

give no details of casualties or Reuters says: The Taliban's supreme leader urged his forces to stand and fight Wednesday as US Marines poured into a secret base in Afghanistan and the CIA said one of its officers had been killed, the first American to die in the ground campaign to hunt down Osama bin

trapped in their southern stronghold of Kandahar but their supreme leader forbade surrender. "Don't vacate any areas." said Mullah Mohammad Omar, who is being targeted for harbouring bin

"This is not a question of tribes,"

Omar was quoted as saying in a

radio message. "This is a question

Pinned by American bombing, in

the sights of the Marines and under

assault from Afghan tribal foes, the

fundamentalist Taliban were

study on reserves. "We know that Titas gas field's actual reserve is likely to be different from projection. Unocal and some BUET experts are projecting a higher total gas reserves on the assumption that Titas reserve was 5

AP from Washington says: More

Al-Qaida is the top American

The Los Angeles Times reported

believed to be mixed in with Taliban fighters and willing to fight on. And a second rank of leaders is stepping in lieutenant Mohammed Atef and others eliminated in the US bombin the river Mahananda at Despite several rounds of BDR-

carefully. However, some poor people are still going to the frontier rivers to collect stones and catch fish risking the prospect of becoming victims of