The Daily Star

PDB staff for reforms | BAC ineffective | PM happy over progress to stop loss

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of eight associations representing officials and employees of Power Development Board (PDB) yesterday said "appropriate reforms" are needed to save the

loss-incurring power sector. Such reforms will remove much of the mismanagement, bureaucratic tangle, corruption, lack of transparency and accountability now plaquing the sector, they said.

Addressing a joint press conference at the Jativa Press Club. they said due to lack of "adequate returns" from distribution networks for reinvestment, the sector has become "totally dependent" on donors' loan.

They alleged that project costs of some donor-funded power projects were inflated illogically due to irregularities and corruption, which is ultimately being borne by PDB.

They said the distribution sector is a priority area but its performance is unsatisfactory since the 1980s due to lack of "appropriate reforms' in the distribution system.

"All attempts to bring reforms in the power sector will go in vain if internal cash flow from the distribution sector is not adequate." Mizanur Rahman of Bangladesh Water and Power Engineers Association said

He said, to supply electricity at affordable prices, the officials and employees associations submitted "full-fledged reform programmes" to the ministry after consultations with energy experts, economists and politicians but the proposals were ignored due to "pressure from donors and their one-sided prescriptions".

FROM PAGE 12

sports.

Instead, the ministry went for

The Prime Minister said guide-

lines have been given to the rele-

vant ministry to conduct sports

activities fairly and properly for

award, which includes a gold medal

and Tk 20.000 in cash to each

recipient. Introduced in 1976 by late

President Ziaur Rahman, the

National Sports Award is aimed at

recognising the contributions of

renowned sportsmen and sports

organisers in different branches of

sports organisers were awarded the

Jatiya Krira Purushkar-2000 for

their outstanding contributions.

They are: A S M Raqibul Hasan and

Gazi Ashraf Hossain (Lipu) (cricket).

Abu Taher Batu (posthumously) and

S M Aslam (football), Sabbir Yusuf

(hockey), Abdus Sattar (shooting),

M Raushan Ali and Squadron

Leader M Rafiqul Islam (swimming),

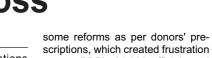
Shamima Sattar Mimu and Razia

Ten renowned sportsmen and

The prime minister presented the

development of the sector.

Nat'l Sports Award-2000



among PDB's 24,000 officials and emplovees The leaders said, instead of FROM PAGE 1

state-run body.

ooliticians

reputed lawyers for prosecution.

and administrative deadlock.

cases still pending.

levels

FROM PAGE 1

transfer of the investigative officers

The report says that BAC has

'immense problem with its inquiry

and investigation stages, including

negligence of officers, unnecessary

delays and lack of proper planning.'

The report revealed that 151

cases against VIPs, including

ministers, MPs and high govern-

ment officials, have been pending

for eight years, while all political

allegations of 1991-2000 are now at

inquiry, investigation or prosecution

filed with the BAC were settled in the

last six years. As many as 31,746

cases were filed during 1994-2000

and only 456 cases were settled a

the country sometime after Januarv

In observance of the homecom-

ng day of Bangabandhu Sheikh

AL to protest

Only 9.2 per cent of complaints

bringing about reforms in the distribution system, the government has taken an initiative to hand over PDB's transmission networks to the Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB) "due to pressure from donors.

It is now clear that the step for corporatisation and privatisation of neration plants is part of a "blue print" prepared by some foreign companies, they alleged. Formation of the PGCB was violation of gov ernment's energy policy.

The leaders said Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) was converted into DESCO as per donors' suggestion, but it did not bear any fruit. The leaders suggested that

generation, transmission and distribution be treated as separate sub-sectors with adequate trained manpower for each. They expressed the hope that

the government would refrain from following suggestion of donors in the greater interest of the nation.

The press conference was attended by, among others, Shahid Ahmed and AZM Lutfe Rabbani of Bangladesh Water and Power Engineers Association, AKM Moazzem Hossain of Bandladesh Water and Power Diploma Engineers Association, Abdus Salam Khan and Alauddin Miah of Bangladesh Jatiya Biddut Sramik League and Kazi Abdul Halim of Bangladesh Jatiya Biddut Sramik Karmachari Union (CBA).

Ministry of Youth and Sports M Nurul

Huda, the function was also

addressed by State Minister for

Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman

Patal. Ministers, state ministers,

MPs, high civil and military officers,

sports organisers and sportsmen

country has great potentials in the

talents of the younger generation

and added that games and sports

could play a vital role in keeping

bring diplomatic success," Khaleda

said referring to the ping pong

diplomacy of China in this respect.

She hoped our sports organisers

would play their ambassadorial role

in keeping the national flag flying

"In today's world, sports also

youths on the right tract.

The prime minister said the

were also present.

priority basis.



report made by Transparency FROM PAGE 1

Chowdhury and Mosaddek Ali and International Bangladesh (TIB), a secretaries concerned were present chapter of the Berlin-based organiin the meeting.

try.

sectors.

sation, which identified many rea-Thanking the persons concerned sons for the ineffectiveness of the for the progress made in the programme, Khaleda said the 100-The reasons include weak day programme was placed before charge-sheet and prosecution. stav the nation mainly for two reasons: order of court, lack of evidence, Speedy address to the existing political unrest and influence of problems of the country and immediate start to work since there is no These apart, there is a lack of time to waste witnesses, absence of able and

Mentioning people's overwhelming support shown through the outcome of October polls, Khaleda Zia said public expectation is high and they want a peaceful life.

She also said that her government was able to prove its overall sincerity in taking initiatives to improve law-and-order in the coun-

Besides, the delay in obtaining "We did not make any concespermission from the higher authorision in taking action according to ties to conduct inquiry also hamper law against terrorists and will not the activities of BAC, resulting in compromise in future either," she deadlock in 77 per cent corruption told the secretaries.

The prime minister instructed the authorities concerned to formulate cases against terrorists and criminals in a proper way to ensure their due punishment.

The prime minister said no development is possible without elimination of terrorism.

In this respect she sought cooperation of all to make successful her new initiatives to expand primary

80 held at ZIA UNB, Dhaka

As part of a drive to stop harassment of passengers at the ZIA International Airport, police arrested 80 people on various charges from the airport area yesterday. The arrested were produced

before court later in the day, airport

As harassment of passenger is on the rise at ZIA, Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury made a surprise visit to the airport and asked the law enforcing agencies to take action against the miscreants.

JCD calls hartal at Chitalmari UNB, Bagerhat

Dal (JCD) called a half-day hartal at Chitalmari upazila headquarters today protesting filing of a case against some JCD men.

BCL beats up **3 JCD activists** and women education in the counat Feni The secretaries concerned

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Feni

progress of work in their respective Three Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal fields in line with the government's 100-day agenda and said remark-(JCD) activists were beaten up by some BCL activists at Feni able progress has been made in all Government College vesterday. Police arrested 17 BCL activists In some sectors progress has from the college area following the

exceeded the target, they told Khaleda Zia adding that some additional but relevant programmes were also taken up outside the 100day programme and those have also been successfully implemented.

The different issues of 100-day programme reviewed in the meeting included recovery of illegal arms, arrest of identified terrorists and starting of their trial process, formation of citizens' law and order committees at para and mahalla levels and starting legal process for releasing political prisoners and others detained without trial.

apprised the prime minister of the

Judicial investigation process of the much talked about bomb explosions during AL rule, steps to remove indiscipline and irregularities in Chittagong and Mongla ports, identification of real causes of share scam in 1996 and initiation of a process to identify the guilty, reopening of branches of state-

owned banks abroad were also reviewed. Abducted person rescued, 5 held in Chittagong

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police in separate raids in the city and in Raozan upazila in the district yesterday rescued an abducted person and arrested five kidnap-28). pers.

Acting on a tip-off, Panchlaish thana police arrested Faruk Ahmad alias Sakib. 26. and Md. Shaif. 22. two abductors of the gang, from a commercial phone shop at Didar Market of Dewan Bazar area in the city at 11.00 am.

Later, the team arrested another kidnapper Md. Rashed, 22, from a house at Katalganj Residential Area. On the basis of their confession,

the police team raided village Sultanpur under Raozan upazila at about 2.45 pm and arrested two more members of the gang and rescued Mahibullah from a house owned by Md. Masud.

The arrested two others are Shahdullah and Masud.

BCL calls hartal in north Chittagong tomorrow

CU CORRESPONDENT

next programme protesting the killina.

of Awami League and BCL brought

were arrested near the border with Slovenia, Austrian police announced vesterday.

A group of 35 Afghan and

Bangladeshi illegal immigrants

Pakistan freezes assests

tries

said

move

Bin Laden, he said, is success

fully "playing his own game" to avoid

a huge US-led manhunt by staying

on the move between the two coun-

He and his followers "are mainly

Also Saturday, an Afghan

defence ministry source said the

world's most wanted man was using

the Pakistani city of Peshawar as a

base but was constantly on the

spokesman Mohammad Habeel

said bin Laden crossed from the

Tora Bora region of eastern

Afghanistan into Pakistan about a

week earlier, after the defeat of the

Taliban regime which sheltered him.

Sattar said Saturday in Islamabad

he had "no information whatsoever

that Osama bin Laden has come to

Pakistan". The Afghan defence

ministry has also urged the United

States to consider halting its bomb-

ing in the country, saying the last few

al-Qaida fighters have almost been

against humanity" and identified

this as one of the vital reasons for

poverty. He said the per capita

income in the country could be

doubled had there been no corrup

country free from corruption.

Where there is no good gover-

society to pressurise the govern-

ment to set up an independent

commission. Ahmed said nothing

will change overnight, but "some

Dr Kamal Hossain said the

proposed commission must be

independent, impartial and effec-

tive. Integrity of its members must

commission should be identified

and guidelines prepared to remove

those, he said. He urged the gov-

ernment to move a bill in parliament

Hossain urged opposition Awam

League to join parliament sittings to

work together to make the society

corruption-free by enacting "tough

The ruling party stalwart said

people want tougher action against

corruption. "We, who are in higher

posts in various responsibilities, are

mostly involved in corruption. The

poor have no scope to be involved

a survey to find out who is not cor-

rupt," he said adding, a movement

He quoted a survey report which

said 75 per cent of foreign aid is

misused. He expressed doubt

whether the rest 25 cent benefits

against corruption is needed.

"Now, time has cone to conduct

n corruption," said the Chief Whip.

Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar

to set up such a commission.

Impediments to formation of the

Urging members of the civil

nance, corruption is a must.

one has to ring the bell first".

be beyond question.

law"

He said the commonman want a

wiped out at Tora Bora

Pakistani Foreign Minister Abdul

On Thursday defence ministry

in Pakistan and possibly in

Afghanistan", the interior minister

DHAKA MONDAY DECEMBER 31, 2001

FROM PAGE 12 Authorities said Mehmood and Majid defied service rules that apply to government scientists even after retirement, and of violating travel restrictions. They have been barred from talking with reporters of making

public speeches. AFP from Kabul says, a top Afghan minister has accused Pakistan's secret service of helping Osama bin Laden elude his pursuers -- the latest in a series of claims by Kabul that the suspected terrorist mastermind has fled across the rugged border.

"We think that when Mr Osama travels to Pakistan, it does not mean that his activities are not monitored by the ISI (Inter Services ntelligence)," Interior Minister Yunus Qanooni said Saturday in an nterview with Iranian television.

"Undoubtedly they knew what was going on. The fact that there has not been any reaction and that (bin Laden) has not been arrested indicates that he is somehow being supported by the Pakistani ISI. Qanooni quickly added that the

attitude of Pakistan's leadership was "distinct to that of the ISI"

Anti-corruption body

FROM PAGE 1 by a Constitutional Council comprising the President, Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, Speaker and the Chief Justice.

Presided over by Prof. Mozaffar Ahmed, member of the TI Bangladesh chapter, the opening session was addressed by, among others, Dr Kamal Hossain, economist Dr Atiur Rahman, advisors of the immediate past caretaker government Hafizuddin Ahmed and SM Shahjahan, Chief Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad Khandaker Delwar Hossain, Opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid, former chairman of the Public Accounts Committee SM Akram, Jatiya Party MP Golam Mohammad Qader and former cabinet secretary Mujibul Haque.

The opening session was folowed by an open discussion. Journalist Enaetullah Khan, former MP Sudhagsu Shekhor Halder, Dr KM Mohsin, Dr. Syed Anam Hossain, Faruk Khan MP, Dr. Tareq Shamsur Rahman, former director general of the Bureau of Anticorruption Badiuzzaman and Ashif Nazrul took part in the discussion. The speakers admitted that

people of higher stature are more involved in corruption than the poor because they have no access to big deals

The corrupt people are becomng most influential in all areas -from politics to administration. "So, what benefit the commonman will get from the corrupt persons?" questioned many of the discussants

The meeting however could not reach a consensus on the appointing authority of the proposed commission.

the commonman. Summing up the discussion, Prof Mozaffar Ahmed said the

economic and political situation of the country. "We urge the government to revoke the decision of price hike of fuel and other utilities that would increase people's misery," he said. "Otherwise, we'll continue our movement taking people on our side.

field of sports and underlined the need for taking proper steps for the AL presidium member Tofail development of the sector on a Ahmed noted that the ruling alliance raised fuel prices at a time when the same were at a very low level in the She said there was no alternative international market. to games and sports to expanding

"When the AL government took a similar decision, world oil price was US\$30 per barrel. But the BNP-led government increased prices when the world prices are hovering around \$19 per barrel only," he noted.

CPA plans FROM PAGE 12

AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman told The Daily Star last night that the ALCWC meeting also took stock of the latest socio-

Mujibur Rahman, the AL would hold a discussion meeting in front of the Bangabandhu Bhavan at

Dhanmondi in the city on January

Local unit of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra

The case was filed on Friday by a contractor following a clash between JCD and BNP cadres of Bagerhat town over toll collection from the

Murtuza murder

The Chittagong University and Meanwhile, Chittagong city units Hathazari thana units of

incident. Police and witnesses said BCL activists swooped on JCD activists Saiful Islam, Samsuddin and Kamaluddin on the college campus

at 2-30 pm. The JCD activists entered the campus after 12 years. The injured were admitted to

Feni Sadar Hospital. Of the arrested BCL activists four were identified as Hasan Habibur Rahman. Md Shahidullah Nurul Afsar, Jasimuddin and Sunil Devnath.

Barricade FROM PAGE 1

Others joined him in the protest.

At one stage, the MP's son and his accomplices beat two of the agitating people. They also abducted one of the guards of BG Press and confined him inside MM Electric factory owned by the lawmaker. Police later rescued the guard

from the factory. Later several employees of BG

Press, truck drivers and local people demonstrated in the area following the incident and put up barricades on the road in protest

Police went to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Complaint case FROM PAGE 12 than 30 terrorists entered his house at about 10 am Friday (December

They assaulted the family members and looted gold ornaments, electronic goods and cash worth Tk 20 lakh.

They also demolished the boundary wall of the house and ransacked furniture. The attackers left the scene by two police vans, the complainant alleged.

He further alleged that he had to file formal complaint with the Deputy Commissioner (DC) North of DMP as the officials at Uttara Thana refused to take the case in connection with the robbery.

After hearing, Magistrate Shafiq Anwar took the case into cognizance and directed the DC (North) to take legal action against the accused after investigation into the matter

16 Bangladeshis

held near border

with Slovenia

AFP, Vienna

Presided over by Secretary,

PMO yet to clear FIRs

FROM PAGE 1 examined the FIR

Sultana Anu (athletics).

However, BAC today will again send the copies of the FIR with a forwarding letter to the PMO seeking its approval.

The director general (DG) of the BAC and a director went to the PMO at vesterday noon along with FIR copies of four graft cases and returned to their office in the evening.

Sources said the officials including four deputy directors of BAC remained standby round the clock to answer to queries or assist the PMO, and to file cases with different police stations of the city in case the FIRs were approved.

High officials of bureau had a meeting with the DG at around 8:00pm. The meeting over, the DG informed other bureau officials that the PMO did not clear the FIRs. He instructed the officials to remain ready to file the cases today.

Pressured and persuaded by some bureaucrats who fear that they might be implicated in the upcoming graft cases, the PMO has taken the unusual decision to scrutinise the FIRs a few days ago.

BAC has been told that from now

227 killed in Lima blaze

FROM PAGE 1

Interior Minister Fernando Rospigliosi said the fire was brought under control shortly before midnight

"Dozens of people have died," he said. He said the victims included shopkeepers who had shut themout looters. The fire broke out in an selves inside their stores to deter looters them from the colonial era, used as

Efforts to fight the blaze were hindered at first by low water pressure and by crowds of onlookers who blocked fire trucks from the scene.

return to the capital. He declared The fire chief said 440 firefighters Sunday and Monday national days were called in from several districts of mourning. to fight the blaze, about four blocks from Peru's Congress in the historic during Christmas and New Year downtown section of Lima. celebrations and are sold on streets

Officials cut electricity to the area to limit the possibility of short circuits son. Rospigliosi said the sale of adding to the fire, and firefighters used portable generators to power fireworks should be banned in Peru.

on all FIRs should first be sent to the PMO before being their filing. The PMO usually grants permission to BAC for launching investigation, covert or otherwise, and filing cases

Earlier on December 11, BAC filed a dozen graft cases against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and six of her colleagues ir the past Awami League government. Around 40 former and serving bureaucrats and businessmen were also implicated in the cases.

However, BAC then was no required to send the FIRs to the PMO before filing cases with different police stations of the city for its approval

SAARC

FROM PAGE 12 The BTMA feels that the SAARC cumulation will not give any major boost to the garment industry, rather it would cripple the spinning and weaving industries and would reduce foreign exchange earning

retention. On the other hand, the BGMEA feels that the SAARC cumulation benefit for the RMG sector would bring an additional US\$500 million annually with half of it as value addition.

floodlights trained on the blaze.

Twenty municipal water trucks

were sent to the scene to support

the firefighters. Streets in the area

were ankle deep with water and long

plumes of smoke rose into the night

area of aging buildings, some of

shops and apartments.

Police blocked the site to keep

President Aleiandro Toledo cut

Fireworks are popular in Peru

through the capital during the sea-

short a trip to the north of Peru to

pilfered from the protected areas in last one year. Even a fully loaded intact container was taken outside the port shed recently. This triggered a stormy situation at the port, they said

The stolen container could not be located yet though efforts are on.

In early November, imported computer accessories worth ever Tk one crore were stolen from port sheds by breaking the container

But punitive action was hardly taken against any port staff, except formation of a probe committee, the sources said.

Imported container cargo worth will enforce a half-day hartal in north over several crores of taka were Chittagong tomorrow (Tuesday) protesting the killing of Ali Murtuza Chowdhury, senior vice-president of BCLCU unit.

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL)

Ali Murtuza was shot dead allegedly by Shibir cadres on Chittagong University (CU) campus Saturday evening.

Local people said there was a rivalry between Ali Murtuza and Shibir terrorist Habib Khan. Hazi Ilias and Bahadur over control of the nearby Madrassah area.

Murtuza's body was buried at his family graveyard at 5 pm yesterday. CU BCL will hold a press conference at local press club at 11am today (Monday) to announce the

out a protest procession and held a rally in front of the Shaheed Minar at 2 pm yesterday.

Addressing the rally, the leaders of the Awami League and BCL demanded immediate arrest of the killers of Ali Murtuza. On the other hand. Samajtantrik

Chhatra Front (SCF) yesterday condemned the murder and demanded immediate arrest of the killers Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS)

denied its involvement in the murder. They said that BCL leader Murtuza was killed following internal feud

One of those arrested, an Afghan woman who was ill, was taken to an Austrian hospital with her four children.

members of the group back of the Slovenian border where they initially succeeded in escaping into

A few hours later an Austrian police patrol picked them up again when they attempted to re-cross the border

Pakistani troops fired tracer bullets

Nighttime firing across the bor-

The firing, on the rise along with

the escalation of tensions over the

Pakistan's central Punjab province.

inland for their safety

kilometer from the frontier.

India, Pakistan redeploy troops to borders

measures

Afghanistan "If the situation continues to aggravate and there is an imminent threat of the use of force, Pakistan cannot but think in terms of shifting these forces from the western part to the eastern side ... But we have not jumped into any conclusions We have not taken any precipitated actions," he said to CNN.

FROM PAGE 1

territory

Meanwhile, Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said yesterday he was confident that growing international pressure would force Pakistan to act against

militant groups operating from its

In a meeting with the leaders of all political parties, Vajpayee said the global community was aware of India's anger in the wake of the December 13 attack on its parliament, which New Delhi has blamed on Pakistan-based militant outfits operating at the behest of Pakistani military intelligence.

"I firmly believe this will put sufficient pressure on Pakistan and it will be forced to act against the terrorist groups," Vajpayee was quoted as saying by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pramod Mahajan.

During the meeting, Mahajan said all party leaders had agreed that while every effort should be made to avert a war, India was fully prepared for any action should a conflict "be forced upon it".

Mahajan said opposition leaders had spoken in favour of pursuing diplomatic pressure and added that Foreign Minister Jaswant Sing had unveiled a series of possible further

"What the government is also doing is to put diplomatic pressure, and nothing but taking diplomatic moves for that," he added. Singh said India would hand

Pakistan a list of militants it wants to see arrested.

The foreign minister also told the leaders that India's troop build-up along the border was a "defensive deployment" and not for launching a war with the neighbour.

In separate phone calls Saturday from his Texas ranch to Vajpayee and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, US President George W Bush urged both leaders to work to reduce tensions in the region.

But he specifically called on Musharraf to "take additional strong and decisive measures to eliminate the extremists who seek to harm India; undermine Pakistan; and provoke a war between India and Pakistan and destabilize the coalition against terrorism," said Bush spokesman Scott McClellan.

Bush told Vajpayee that the US is determined to cooperate with India in its fight against terrorism, McClellan told reporters

over the attack on Indian parliament, calling it a strike against democracy.

Bush's calls appeared part of a broad international push to prevent tensions between the two countries, which have fought three wars since they won independence from Britain in 1947, from escalating into a fullscale military conflict. French President Jacques

Saturday and urged him to renew and mortars yesterday along the dialogue with Pakistan, a day after border dividing the two neighbours he had telephoned Musharraf in Jammu and Kashmir urging the Pakistani leader to crack "They (Pakistani troops) fired down on "terrorist groups" in Pakistan

Chirac telephoned Vaipavee on

tracer bullets on Indian positions at The White House said Bush had several points along the internaalso spoken with British Prime tional border ... of Jammu region Minister Tony Blair, who plans to today," a senior defence official told visit both countries shortly, and Reuters, adding that the intention discussed ways that the United was to burn down Indian defence States and Britain could cooperate and civil installations to ease tensions in South Asia. The official said Pakistani troops

AP adds: President Musharraf met with Pakistan's top politicians yesterday to discuss his response to tensions with India. The country's leaders seemed

rating relations with India. "Our anxieties are mounting, not few days

receive information about the moveder with India is becoming part of ment of Indian forces on the border, daily life for villagers near the dis-Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar said puted border in Pakistan's Sialkot yesterday region, forcing many of them to flee

clerics, to discuss what he called

The gathering did exclude the Indian defence officials said

Twenty Afghans and 16 Bangladeshis had crossed the border on foot under cover of darkness Saturday night where police in the eastern region of Burgenland arrested them.

The police took the other 31 Slovenian territory.

existing Bureau of Anti-corruption can not make use of its full potency due to lack of independence. 'The nation has been paying a

lot due to dangerous corruption that ruins the economy of the populous, small and poor country," said Ahmed who moderated the two sessions.

He termed corruption a "crime

10 city streets

FROM PAGE 12 drug and Phensidyl in the metropolitan area.

During the meeting the communications minister said the police force with their sincerity could reduce traffic congestion in the capital along with maintaining peace and stability in society by combating terrorism.

He directed the police officers to arrest the identified terrorists of different areas including Damrai, Nababganj, Jinjira, Savar, Mirpur and Demra

He also asked them to remove illegal installations from both sides of the second Buriganga Bridge by giving notice to its owners and to take immediate steps to stop illegal parking of rickshaw, bus and truck over the bridge.

Golam Mohammad Qader MP suggested that the judiciary be made accountable to parliament The opposition lawmaker also demanded appointment of an

Ombudsman. Former Secretary Mujibul Haque said the President of the country should be elected by elected representatives of local government bodies and parliament members to ensure his neutrality. He also suggested revision of the law on contempt of court.

Abu Baker Siddig, Director of the Bureau of Anti-Corruption, mentioned limitations of the bureau's activities and emphasised its empowerment for smooth function-

Irene tells Altaf

FROM PAGE 12 explained the ground on which Kabir was arrested. He also elaborated on government actions as the Al secretary general deplored the reported post-election attacks or

minority people. Irene Z Khan emphasised on maintaining communal harmony and protecting the rights of minorities. She also reiterated AI's call for punitive measures against those responsible for the attacks on minority people before and after the October 1 election in the country.

BNP decides to revamp

ing

FROM PAGE 1 affairs

> A similar situation has also been prevailing in the party's front organisation, district and thana unit offices

> The BNP secretary general in a circular has asked all cabinet ministers, state ministers, deputy ministers, chief whip and whips to effect the PM's order.

All ministers irrespective of their portfolio. chief whip and whips have been instructed to attend at least one party programme when they go outside the capital.

divided region of Kashmir since They have also been asked to December 13 has all but emptied visit party offices, hold workers' and villages like Thati Kalan, less than a public meetings and exchange views with party leaders and workers during their tours. "Firing was going on overnight

All ministers, chief whip and and early this (Sunday) morning,' whips have also been advised to Sufi Mohammad Siddiq told Reuters inform the party central office. by telephone from Thati Kalan, district and thana unit presidents which is around six kilometers from and general secretaries and MPs Sialkot, an industrial town in concerned about their visits at least 20 days in advance.

Besides, they have been instructed to hold regular party programmes in their respective districts, constituencies and thanas. The BNP secretary-general in his circular instructed all ministers, chief whip and whips to attend the

party central office regularly from the New Year's Day. A weekly roaster have also been sent to them to exchange views with leaders and workers and listen to their problems.

The ministers have been asked to be in touch with the party secretary-general to resolve problems of the party, front organisations and of the leaders and activists.

A highly placed source at the BNP on condition of anonymity told The Daily Star that all ministers. chief whip and whips have also been advised to inform the party secretary general in writing if any minister fails to attend the party office due to his or her illness or state programmes outside the capital as per schedule.

also resorted to heavy machinegun fire on Indian positions along the line of control (LoC) in Poonch sector of the troubled state yesterday, ending less than optimistic about deterioa relative calm seen during the past

only by the day but hours, as we

Gen Rashid Quereshi, spokesman for Pakistan's military-led government, said all "mainstream political parties" were invited to the meeting with Musharraf that was part of consultations with various sections of society, including Islamic

India's aggressiveness. two main fundamentalist Islamic parties, Jamaat-e-Islami and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, which organised mass protests against Musharraf in October after he decided to support the US-led coalition in Afghanistan.

Bush also reiterated his outrage