Local govt roundtable

activities as people still want their involvement in those.

Moudud Ahmed said the government is examining the local government system as a whole and it is not thinking of any immediate and political gain. "We want to take some decisions about local governments keeping in view the future and welfare of the country and its

He went on, "I think at least five to ten vears' time is needed for withdrawing the lawmakers from local activities. If the upazila system is implemented and it runs for ten to fifteen years, it will be the meeting point of the central and local governments.

BNP Secretary General and LGRD and Coopératives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan stressed the need for continuation of major development activities and systems of successive governments.

"It is not true that all activities of a previous government are bad and it is not wise to cancel all the initiatives of any previous government. There should be working unity of both the ruling and opposition parties, which is seen in developed countries," he

Bhuiyan said local governments should be self-sufficient for strengthening the system.

It is witnessed that local government leaders usually do not increase taxes and refrain from collecting taxes at least a year before polls to win those. This conception has to be changed to strengthen local government sys-

Referring to Dhaka City Corporation, he said the DCC has become ineffective as election to it was not held in the last eight years due to legal barriers. "Now there is no legal barrier, but doubts have been created whether the opposi tion will take part in the election although it is a non-political one."

Industries Minister MK Anwar said each lawmaker must be given office at the Sangsad Bhaban to enable them to concentrate on lawmaking and national issues.

Prof Muhammad Yunus urged the government to keep the Upazila system in existence and hold its election immediately. He said weaknesses and loopholes can be detected when a system continues.

Start functioning of the local bodies and bring amendments when necessary. Take urgent steps to hold upazila polls right at the moment, he suggested

State Minister for Agriculture Mirza Fakrul Islam Alamgir said there should be proper coordination between the role of local government bodies and lawmakers.

Prof Rehman Sobhan said MPs are being involved in distribution of wheat as successive parliaments are not becoming effective due to abstention of opposition. He said effective role of lawmakers in parlia-

Editor of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam said the major political parties give utmost importance to lawmakform government. The history of ruling parties in the last ten years is that both Awami League and BNP

failed to ensure development. He pointed out that BNP defeated AL and AL defeated BNP in successive national elections as both the parties worked for partisan interests. The trend would continue until they refrain from this practice

Strengthening of the local government system and bodies and such other steps for the benefit of the people would help reverse the cesss. Mahfuz Anam noted.

NGO activist Khushi Kabir said it is wise for the MPs to concentrate on formulation of pro-people laws and ensure good governance

Dr Zafrullah said MPs should be ven new responsibilities other

nan local development activities. The other speakers included AL MPs Faruq Khan and Rahmat Ali,

Omar Khaiam MP of BNP, Binayak Sen, Dr Salahuddin, journalist Ataus Samad, NGO activists Mahbubul Karim and Shirin Hag, Barrister Swadhin Malik and UP chairmen

3 murdered

FROM PAGE 1

Suddenly, two young men approached them and said they were looking for a driver for appointment. They asked the guard, Hossain, to bring a piece of paper to write down their address. Hossain went inside the house and a little later, came out with a piece of paper only to find Salaudddin lying in a pool of blood.

He was hit by bullets in the chest and throat. Police later sent the body to the DMCH for autopsy.

In yet another incident, Zamilur Rahman, 32, a private phone service provider, was shot in the head in front of his West Kafrul residence on Saturday. He died at the DMCH vesterday morning.

According to sources, gang members of listed terrorist Kala Jalagahangir went to Zamilur's shop and demanded Tk. 50,000 from him. As he refused to pay the money, the gang members shot the business-

The body was sent to the DMCH

5 minor girls

district, was produced before the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) with a prayer for five-day remand.

The court granted two-day remand after hearing the prosecu-

Police said the arrested person is said to be the member of an organised gang of child traffickers.

A case was registered with Mirpur Thana in this connection

Chittagong murder

FROM PAGE 12

charge of the institute, said Bakul Rani had no enmity with any body and dispute over any issue. "That has made us all the more perplexed and shocked." he said.

According to him and some local people, the incident came to light yesterday morning

At around 8.00am, someone drew the attention of Pritam and one of his colleagues that Bakul Rani was absent from the routine assembly at the playground, which was unusual for her.

They immediately sent Sabuj Das, a student of class ten and some others to her residence at the eastern corner of the playground to inquire

The front door of her residence was locked from inside. They entered into through the back door, which was found open. They found their revered 'didimoni' (elder sister) lying on the floor in a pool of blood. "I was frightened seeing the body

of didimoni. I screamed and ran out in tears," Sabuj Das told this corre-

Police said, a sharp and deep injury mark was found on her forehead, which suggests that she might have been killed by the spade they recovered later. Injury marks were also found in her fingers.

"It could be a pre-planned and cool-blooded murder since everything inside her room was left untouched by the killers," the SP said while looking around in the

Bakul Rani, who lost her husband during the War of Liberation. ioined the Social Welfare Department in 1973 as a junior nurse. During her long 29-year service which took her to different areas of Chittagong, she had promotions as recognition of her devoted service to orphans. She became assistant super on April 24,

Bank robbery

Tejgaon thana areas, police sources said. Sources at Mohammadpur thana

said yesterday evening that the case might be shifted to Tejgaon thana. Later at night, the sources said Subinspector Abdur Rauf was hurriedly called and given the charge of inves-

investigated by the Detective Branch or the Special Branch of police, but it was not formally handed over to either of the two agencies till last

Meanwhile sources in DB said they are probing the incident of their own, and have picked up five persons for questioning.

Tejgaon police said the place of occurrence is not under their jurisdiction. Moreover, senior officials asked Mohammadpur thana to probe the incident. "The question of sending the case to us does not arise", the duty officer at the thana told The Daily Star last night

Masked armed bandits looted over Tk 17 lakh and prize bonds for Tk 5000 from the bank vault in a commando style 'operation', locked all its staff and clients in the vault and

Following the incident, banks in the city tightened their security measures yesterday.

Incidents of dacoity increased in recent weeks and the situation may deteriorate further, bankers appre-

But the nationalised commercial banks are facing difficulties in taking additional security measures because it involves huge expendi ture, sources in some of the NCBs

"We have added two armed guards to strengthen security at our branches. From now on, two armed guards will go with the cash instead of one earlier and two will remain at the branch," said a senior official of a private bank

A high official of Sinali Bank said, "Monday's incident was top of the agenda of our discussions yesterday. But it was not possible for us to take a decision immediately. Most of our branches do not have armed

"Branches have been asked to keep the cash at the minimum. If the

make way for Law Minister Moudud Ahmed and Communications Minister Nazmul Huda to tease each other, with the speaker adding fuels. It all began when Huda raised a

egal point rather sarcastically Before he was done while answering to a call attention notice, the communications minister pointed out that Environment Minister Shahjahan Siraj used his (Huda's) microphone while replying to a question on Monday.

"I would like to know if his (Siraj's) statement has been recorded in the proceedings as that of mine," Huda asked the speaker.

"No, it won't be," the speaker said, admitting that the unauthorised act had slipped his attention.

This prompted the law minister to take the stage. Drawing a sharp contrast between Siraj and Huda who sit next to each other, as regards their health, dress, voice and hair, Moudud concluded: There is no scope to record one's statement as being the other's."

Speaker Sircar then drew a comparison between the two lawvers-turned-ministers exchanging humours though Siraj was not

by a tailor in Dhaka while Moudud's by a Jewish tailor in London." the speaker guipped before giving Huda the floor again.

that his hairs are grey, Huda wanted to know how come Moudud's hairs are black despite the fact that he was senior to him (Huda). "I am senior to Huda only by a

year. But he spoke in a way as if I am much older," Moudud replied. As the tripartite fun held back the

disposal of a call attention notice. BNP lawmaker Abdul Mannan later noted that the chair often allowed the front-runners in the treasury bench to speak in violation of the rules. This apparently offended the speaker and the two ministers

Defending himself, the speaker said, "Humours are missing from the proceedings of the House these days. The proceedings should be punctuated by such practice."

being convinced and noted that the rule regarding point of order was being misinterpreted in the parliament. "You are generous to allow the front-benchers as well as the back-benchers to speak, but we sitting in the middle, are deprived of raising valid issues," he said.

Shahriar

The same court on March 3 assigned two lawyers Advocate Zead-al-Malum and Advocate Khondaker Abdul Mannan to watch the cassettes in absence of the accused Shahriar Kabir.

in presence of the lawyers and the accused Shahriar.

The Investigation Officer (IO) filed a petition with the court, seeking cancellation of the order for screening of the video cassettes in resence of the two lawyers.

In its petition the investigation officer said that the secret informascreened in presence of the law-

court rejected the petition of the IO. Shahriar Kabir was arrested at Zia International Airport on his return from Kolkata on November 22 last year. Police also seized

Later, a sedition case was filed against Shahriar Kabir with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court. Dhaka on December 8 last

Charsheet

FROM PAGE 1

incident to humiliate Mahima's family, which drove her into suicide on February 19.

of the evidences, the investigation officer told The Daily Star that the report mentioned the signs of rape.

Police recovered trousers Mahima wore on the day and a photograph of the incident.

Forensic experts found sperms in the trousers. But they could not ascertain the identity of the rapists in the photograph. Human presence was also found

at the sugarcane plantation. But the man was beyond recognition. Earlier, the postmortem report

confirmed that Mahima was raped by more than two persons

Hedayetullah

FROM PAGE 12

from the opposite direction jumped off his rickshaw, broke the flag stand of Hasina's jeep and damaged several vehicles in the motorcade. The security personnel of the opposition leader caught him. "The reason for such behaviour of the arrested person is obscure," it said.

The government has taken the seriously. Soon after the matter incident the government security personnel arrested the attacker Later, a case was filed against him under the Public Safety Act, added the press release

The attacker, Hedayetullah, pounced on opposition leader Sheikh Hasina's car on her way from Naogaon to Gobindaganj on Monday. She was unhurt.

Treasury bench C'wealth summit ends

FROM PAGE 12

by low-lying island states. Zimbabwe dominated the summit, pitting black Africa against the "old" white Commonwealth led by Britain, and its future in the group remains unresolved after leaders decided to take no action against the strife-torn African country until after this weekend's presidential election.

"I hope we don't have another CHOGM like this one," said New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark at the end of the four-day summit. " think the Commonwealth has to get its act together for the future. It has failed to wrestle effectively with

Credibility on line Britain, backed by New Zealand and Australia, had sought

Zimbabwe's immediate suspension saying President Robert Mugabe is win the election. But the move was blocked by African states, which forced the 54-

nation group of mostly ex-British

colonies to delay any measures until after the March 9-10 presidential

The leaders agreed to form a three-nation taskforce to take actions ranging from "collective disapproval to suspension" if

"The next two weeks are going to be very critical," said Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien, who also opposed Zimbabwe's immedi-

A largely symbolic act, suspension would bar Zimbabwe from Commonwealth events. But it opens the door to states imposing sanctions, following the lead of the United States and the European The inaction over Zimbabwe

highlighted the downside of one of

the Commonwealth's most precious

features -- its amalgamation of rich

and poor under an umbrella repre-

senting 1.7 billion people, or almost a third of the world's nations. While creating a unique stage for talks on poverty eradication, the spread of AIDS and the promotion of democracy, the very diversity of the Commonwealth makes its principle of acting only by consensus an often

"It is important (that the Commonwealth) passes this test of its credibility," said British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who still believes Zimbabwe should be

laborious hurdle.

NBR

FROM PAGE 1

But after the formation of the coalition government, Saifur upped the target by Tk 500 crore.

The minister said the government has no other option but to expand the VAT and income tax net as foreign aid has been declining.

The meeting also expressed concern over the falling revenue collection particularly in import duty. The overall revenue collection till

According to available figures, the revenue earning till January this year was 1.45 per cent behind the target. It is however up by 9.35 per

cent from the corresponding period

February this year is around Tk 200

crore behind the target, the meeting

of last fiscal year. A total of Tk 10525.83 crore was collected during the period against the target of Tk 10,678.95 crore.

The NBR officials pointed out that the collection fell behind the target because of declining import

Islam Group: Phony loans

waiver and the remaining amount would be placed in a block account with the unpaid principal amount, according to the proposal.

Following the central bank's unearthing of the fictitious accounts, stern actions could have been taken under the Special Powers Act 1974. Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) 1860 and Banking Company Act of 1991. But the central bank decided to be lenient and rescheduled the loans to be paid within a period of four years, according to a report sent to the secretary of the Finance Division by the deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank on January 29,

However, not only did the group dodge criminal proceeding but it also managed to get their loans rescheduled four times. And, every time the repayment amount was reduced and the time extended. Recently, the group applied for a fresh rescheduling facility that includes 50 per cent interest waiver.

A special inspection report of Bangladesh Bank said Islam Group illegally opened a large number of fictitious accounts with various branches of the banks and embezzled the money. None of these loans were secured, meaning the loans

were given without any collateral. After detecting the fraud, the central bank allowed the group to reschedule the loans in four years time in installments. However, the group secured the loan by mortgagng "title deed of 400 bigha of land in and around Dhaka city, approximate value of which stands at Tk 200 crore. Moreover, the group also mortgaged 68,000 shares of Uttara Bank and 2,65,000 more of IFIC

Highly placed sources say the group this time used political connections to put pressure on the board to have the proposal endorsed. The group managed to have a letter issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) to the Bangladesh Bank in this regard. Though the letter did not suggest any out-of-the-way action, the letter itself denotes an unusual interest of the PMO, which normally has noth-

ing to do with it. The central bank informed the group that any such proposal should come through the lending bank concerned after having it approved by the boards of the respective

The proposal is now likely to be placed before the boards of the banks for their opinion, which, bank as the chairman of Islam Group is the incumbent chairman of the IFIC Bank and one of its major share-The present IFIC board com-

prises 10 directors including the managing director and the chair-There are three nominated

directors of another business group. which similarly managed to siphon off Tk 118.46 crore against fictitious accounts from the bank. When the central bank detected the financial rregularities, the group owned these loans and is enjoying the rescheduling facility the central oank had allowed it. Banking sources fear that if such

precedence is set then other bia

bank loan defaulters would resort to similar means to get a waiver. There are also four nominated director of the government whose role would be important, the sources "If these directors vote in

definitely get approval from the board," a top banker said. The banking circle also feels the finance ministry's role will be crucial

favour of the proposal, it would

If such rescheduling of the loans is allowed, the banks' balance sheets would show an altogether different picture, as the profitability of the company would come down since the banks had been treating these interests in the income state ments over the years Talking to The Daily Star,

Chairman of the IFIC Bank and

Chairman of Islam Group Manzurul

Islam said he had inherited the

liabilities, owned those later on and never defaulted on payment of a single installment. 'So far, I have paid Tk 219 crore against the inherited liability of Tk 232 crore and would have to pay another Tk 212 crore by December 2009. Once I complete it I don't know how much more I will be asked to pay as it is cyclic, like a never-

ending process," the chairman of the group said. But, when it was pointed out to him that he had also inherited the huge asset of the company and that it was a common global business practice that both assets and liabilities are inherited together. Islam said he has successfully run the businesses so far but had to shoulder a huge liability against which he did not receive the money. "But I have to earn money from the exist-

ing business to repay the loans.' Islam admitted he wanted a 50 per cent waiver on the outstanding nterest and transfer of the remainstanding principal amount to a blocked account. "If such a transfer is made to a block account, then specifically know what amount I would have to pay in what When pointed out that such a facility would cut back on the bank's

profits Manzurul Islam said the bank extends such facility to different clients time to time .He had only asked for it to make sure that he does not default on loan repayment in future and can plan his busiesses accordingly.

"I have not defaulted so far, but one never knows whether I would be able to continue earning enough to

repay the loan. Now it seems like a

never-ending process and I just

want an end to something I have nherited although I had no hand in it." he said. Asked why had he gone to the Prime Minister's Office with the proposal. Islam said he went there to hand over the proposal to the principle secretary to the prime minister. However, he admitted that the letter was addressed to the prime minister so that 'there was no

"I also wanted to make sure that no-one misinterprets it and to have the PMO informed in advance so that nothing was reported in a distorted way," added Manzurul

Rejoinder

programme of existing BTTB digital exchanges at Dhaka.

These expansions have been requested to be guoted by the existing suppliers of the respective exchanges of BTTB. Out of the received offers of the existing exchanges suppliers, Alcatel protion committees on the lowest cost per line. The expansion orders for 24 KL and 27.5 KL have been therefore awarded to the lowest bidder on this basis.

It is not understood how the expansion cost per line of a new this bid price comparison purpose.

This kind of misleading information in a news article will only bring confusion and undesired negative impact in the mind of the people, it

supplier (Nortel) Networks Canada/Turkey) or any other who's exchanges are not installed in Bangladesh can be considered for

increased during the period "The Awami League as well as the BNP governments limited freedom of assembly, particularly for political opponents, and both the Awami League and the BNP governments on occasions limited freedom of movement," the report

they felt were the government's

The report alleged that despite repeated promises to do so throughout their five years in power, the Awami League government failed to enact legislation to establish a National Human Rights Commission. In the past, the government has

also has included long delays in issuing reentry visas for international human rights activists. The exhaustive report carried US concern over the growing number of acid attacks of which nearly 80 per cent of victims are female, more

Spending in ADP

agement and service delivery," it

deficit by at least two percentage points of the GDP to avoid 'prejudicng' growth and financial stability.

of the GDP in FY01, slightly reduced

and has already impacted the balance of payments and external reserves positions.' As a result of the increasing deficit, the World Bank said domestic borrowings has increased interest rates for loans exceed 12 per cent in real terms and gross

The recent reserve position is slightly over US\$ 1.3 billion. To bring back fiscal sustainability, capital expenditures

Bangladesh is one of the lowest in the world. "Current spending represented eight per cent of the GDP in 2001, by far the lowest in South

"Unfortunately, even this low level of expenditure is financed primarily by the domestic banking system, which puts macroeconomic

stability in a vulnerable position," it observed.

Analysing the country's social sector spending, the bank said almost 35 per cent of the total budget allocation went to this sector

But the donor agency said. "Given the macroeconomic limits on deficit financing, and assuming unchanged levels of tax revenues, it will become increasingly difficult to maintain such high level of social sector spending, especially as demands for funds for debt servicing, infrastructure maintenance, and for reforms of the NCBs and the

Khaleda

FROM PAGE 12

non-resident Bangladeshis (INRB) from those

laurels of CIPs in the country would be selected by the Board of Investment and the Ministry for Welfare of Expatriates, she said.

expatriates to the national economy, also considering providing the NRB investors with facilities similar to those given to foreign investors.

The prime minister hoped that investment by Bangladeshis would come for promotion of the tourism sector in the bay resort town of Cox's Bazar, Kuakata, Saint Martin's

Raging inferno ables from their houses, shops and

nearby areas went to the spot, creating problem for firefighters. 'Even our teams were misguided by the people," alleged one of them.

Some people helped the

firefighters but most of them were onlookers. The fire fighters reached near the spot from two directions and started their operation. But it was not

nel also rushed to the spot to help the firefighters. BDR men were seen controlling the crowds to make way for the firefighters.

Lalbagh police and BDR person-

ments were called up.

The firefighters had to stop their vehicles far from the spot and connect additional pipes. "Our effort was delayed by about 20 minutes due to the narrow lanes.

The damage could be minimised if we could reach the spot in time.' said a firefighter at the spot. As the fire spread, people were

factories. Many of them were seen running with whatever belongings they could carry on heads. Black smoke and flames were

the recent past, was brought under total control at about 4:30pm. Most of the victims of the slum

Neither police nor the Fire Bridge could say anything how the fire originated. Some people of the area said it might have originated from an electric short circuit at a shanty

Hafez Mozammel Haq, a busiincidents, but those were not as

Revenge attacks

siles at Palestinian security headquarters in the town of Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip, causing severe damage. One man was wounded.

Yesterday's violence began at around 2:15 a.m. local time when a Palestinian gunman armed with grenades, a knife and an M-16 assault rifle opened fire on the Seafood Market, an all-night restaurant and nightclub in a commercial district of Tel Aviv, where a group of women was attending a

Meanwhile, US President George W. Bush condemned the surge in violence in the Middle East, calling on Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to do more to stop the

"Chairman Arafat must do every-

reduced before peace talks can President Hosni Mubarak of

Egypt brought a mixed message to

the Bush administration yesterday. He is urging caution in considering any attack on Iraq while supporting the U.S. campaign against terror Mubarak met first with Secretary of State Coin Powell and had a

ing yesterday with President George W. Bush. For three decades the United States has looked to Egypt and a handful of other Arab countries for support in peacemaking. Mubarak's help is even more vital now because the region is in the throes of violence and many Arab governments con-

Defence attaches

FROM PAGE 1

Brig. General Aminul Islam will be the new defence advisor in the New Delhi mission, replacing Brig. General Ekramul Haque, who is due to take over as GOC, Jessore

new defence advisor in the Islamabad mission, replacing Brig. General Moinuddin Ahmed. Brig. General Rafiuddin has recently been posted in China as defence attaché. Brig. General Rokonuddowlah earlier held the

position. Brig. General SMS Iqbal has returned from Kuwait and Brig. General Saiful Ali has been appointed the new defence attaché. Brig. General Mustafizur Rahman has become the defence attaché in Saudi Arabia, replacing Brig. General Abdul Wahab, who has joined the army headquarters.

Turkey, Brig. General Kamrul Huda

Chowdhury in the US and Brig. General Selim Akhtar in Myanmar. Commodore Golam Touhid

Nine countries are learnt to have

Dhaka missions

defence wings in Dhaka include China, the US, India, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Turkey and South Korea. China has three officers, the US one, India two. Russia two and the rest have one officer each. Britain has a nonresident defence attaché.

AL rally

about the outcome of the meeting

deep concern at the 'attempt on the AL president's life' responsible for breaching the secu-

and said the AL presidium expressed

Azad said the killers were encouraged to make attempts on the two surviving daughters of Bangabandhu by scrapping the Father of the Nation's Family Members Security

alleged that the BNP-Jamaatbacked 'fascist government' had also targeted Hasina's security system. Azad said the attack on Hasina's

where the bank branch is located is on the border of Mohammadpur and

They also said the case would be

"We have to spend more on security now." he said.

cash crosses the limit, it will be transferred to the head office imme-

"Mr. Huda's suit has been cut out

Retorting to Moudud's comment

But Mannan appeared far from

But the defence lawyers submitted the petition, seeking permission for screening of the video cassettes

tion would be leaked out if the seized video cassettes are After hearing both sides, the

some video cassettes from him

US report on human rights played photographs of the rape legislation and national issues Dwelling on judiciary, the human Asked about the forensic reports rights report appreciated that the higher levels of the judiciary displayed a significant degree of inde-

> tive, and are reluctant to challenge government decisions, the US State Department noted. On the issue of good governance, the paper says the Official Secrets Act 1923 can "protect corrupt government officials from public

> > all levels".

pendence and often ruled against

the government. However, lower

iudicial officers fall under the execu-

scrutiny, hindering transparency and

accountability of the government at

Detailing the economic sector.

the State Department noted that the

government's commitment to eco-

nomic reforms was weak. "Efforts to improve governance and economic growth through reform have been unsuccessful, and were blocked by bureaucratic intransigence, vested economic interests, endemic corruption, and political polarization," says the US report.

The State Department found

Bangladesh government's human

rights record poor in many significant areas, and it "continued to commit serious abuses", although it respected citizens' rights in some The report was highly critical of the activities of the police administration saying that there was widespread police corruption and lack of

discipline. "Police officers commit-

ted numerous serious human rights

abuses and were seldom disci-

plined, even for the most egregious actions." it said. Police committed a number of extra judicial killings. According to

people died as a result of the use of lethal force by the police during the "Police committed a number of extra judicial killings, and some persons died in police custody under suspicious circumstances. Police

other forms of abuse while interro-

It criticised the police for fre-

quently beating the demonstrators.

gating suspects", the report said.

one human rights organisation, 44

unlawful deaths," the US report pointed out. The Human Rights Report 2001 stated that the government continued to arrest and detain persons "arbitrarily", and to use the Special Powers Act (SPA) and Section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which allow for arbitrary arrest and

The Public Safety Act (PSA), enacted in early 2000, gives the police "even greater opportunity to abuse their powers", the US State Department says about the tough law enacted by the Awami League government to deal with rising acts of terrorism. Dealing with "freedom of press" the State Department report said

virtually all journalists practised

some self-censorship. Attacks on

journalists and efforts to intimidate

them by government officials, politi-

party activists, and others

preventive detention.

It regretted that even with the assage of laws, the public still believes that there is no real autonroutinely used torture, beatings, and omy for BTV and Bangladesh Radio. "Government intrusion into the selection of news remained a pervasive problem. Many journalists at these stations exercised self-"The government rarely punishes censorship out of regard for what persons responsible for torture or

> put pressure on individual human rights advocates, including by filing charges against them that are known to be "false". Such pressure

than 40 per cent under the age of 18.

The WB also prescribed that the country needs to reduce its fiscal

The fiscal deficit was six per cent from 6.2 per cent in FY02. "The current consolidated deficit

of the public sector (about eight per

cent of the GDP) is unsustainable

official reserves have fallen to slightly over one month of imports.

would need to fall to about four per cent of the GDP, which is unrealistic given the country's dire development needs. The bank also mentioned that government spending in

vielding considerable results.

SOEs continue to grow."

who would be doing and promoting investment in the country to accord special dignity The NRBs who would get the

Reiterating the contribution of the Khaleda said the government was

seen billowing in the sky from far away places. Many panic-stricken people broke into tears, losing everything.

nave taken shelter at the nearby

from a spark at a plastic factory. nessman of the area, said he did not see such a devastating fire in the last 30 years. "There were some fire

bachelorette's party.

series of high-level meetings on tap leading up to a White House meet-

possible peace to lay down their arms." Bush told reporters. Egyptians privately do.

Brig. General Imrul Kayes is in the process of being appointed the

Brig. General Akbar Yusuf is in

Three other defence attaché positions are being held by Air Russia . Air Commodore Shafig in Malaysia and Commodore Sarwar Jahan in Sri Lanka.

The fire, the most devastating in enough to tame the fire. As the fire was spreading quickly, reinforce-

while some others said it could be

thing he can to convince those Palestinians who want to derail any sider the Bush administration titled in Israel's favour, as many

The countries which have

FROM PAGE 12

The meeting held the government rity of Hasina by repealing the special security act.

Referring to the recent raid on the residence of Major (retd.) Igbal, who supervises the personal security team of Sheikh Hasina, the AL leader

motorcade on Monday in Naogaon was not an isolated incident.

defence wings or personnel in their