

New container terminal project to start soon

NURUL ALAM, *ctg*

The much expected new mooring container terminal project at Chittagong port is going to take off shortly, port officials said.

"We have prepared tender documents and will float international tender soon", a senior port official said.

"Preparations are underway to invite the prime minister to lay the foundation of the terminal", he told The Daily Star seeking anonymity.

Port and Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain during a visit to Chittagong port on Sunday said the foundation might be laid by the second week of this month.

If things go as planned, the terminal will be ready for commissioning in 2005. Chittagong port will finance the project from its funds, they said.

The 750 crore taka project was taken up in 1996 to cope with the rapidly growing container cargo but it was delayed due to red-tapism, they said.

Decision on the project was delayed even after ECNEC approval in May 1999.

In 2000, consultants were engaged to prepare documents for floating international tender. But

preparation of tender documents was delayed for mysterious reasons, port sources said.

Trade circles and port officials say installation of the proposed container terminal is now a crying need to face the challenge of containerisation of cargo globally and to ease the pressure at the port.

Once completed, at least five container vessels will berth at a time for loading and unloading.

The New Mooring terminal will have 1000 metres berthing space with a capacity to handle 300,000 TEUs containers annually, thereby easing the pressure considerably.

In 2001-2002 financial year, the port handled about 500,000 TEUs containers, with a 15 per growth annually.

The multipurpose berths (MPBs), built in 1994 at a cost of Tk 450 crore, now handle only 94,000 TEUs containers annually.

As MPBs can not cope with the growing pressure of container cargo, yards meant for handling general cargo are also used to accommodate containers.

Consignees mostly try to avail container vessels for safety of their cargo. Chittagong port now handles about 1500 vessels annually.

Consensus needed for violence-free campus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister Dr Osman Faruk yesterday underscored the need for political consensus for establishing a congenial academic atmosphere free from arms and violence.

"Without political consensus it is not possible only for the government to establish a congenial academic atmosphere," the minister said in a meet the reporters programme, organised by Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) at its conference hall.

"Students and teachers should have their own political belief but that should not be reflected in party politics," he said.

Recalling the contributions of the students in various movements, the minister said, "Students of the country had contributed greatly in different issues starting from language movement to national independence."

He said the government would try its best to contain politics in educational area but did not elaborate on the point.

Expressing dissatisfaction over the standard of education, the minister said educational institutions performing bad results in the examinations will not get monthly pay order (MPO).

"MPO or financial assistance is not a permanent right, it could be stopped at any time if the performance of an educational institution is not up to the mark," he added.

DU reopens

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violence unitedly and we must win this fight".

The VC was addressing teachers of the university at the TSC auditorium yesterday. Several hundred teachers irrespective of their political leanings joined the programme.

To reduce existing session jam of the university Prof Faiz urged the teachers to take extra classes and stressed rescheduling examinations and curtailing usual vacations.

He said, "The students have already lost valuable time due to the unscheduled closure and we should work unitedly to make up for the loss. The whole nation is waiting for re-opening of the university and it does not want more unscheduled vacations".

AL workers: Hasina

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minute silence was observed in memory of the slain journalists and a munajat was offered seeking salvation of the departed souls.

With Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury in the chair, the inaugural session was also addressed by, among others, journalists KG Mustafa, ABM Musa, Altaf Mahmud and Barrister Amir-ul-Islam. However, three out of four other designated speakers did not turn up. They are Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation President Sara Zaker, Supreme Court Bar Association President advocate Ozaer Faruq and Bangladesh Sangbadpatri Parishad President Kazi Shahed Ahmed.

After the first session, journalists brought out a procession and paraded the city streets up to the Central Shaheed Minar.

Mentioning prime minister Khaleda Zia's visit to the house of slain Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) ward commissioner Raju, Hasina said persons nabbed in the M16 rifle case had named him (Raju) to be involved in collection of the rifle and arrest warrant was issued against him.

But later, Awami League men were falsely implicated in the case. Hasina also noted that three

2 arrested in connection with Shadat murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective police yesterday arrested two persons on suspicion of their involvement in the killing of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) ward commissioner Shadat Hossain Sikder.

A team from the Detectives Branch of police led by an assistant commissioner conducted a search in Jurain area of the city and arrested Mohammad Ashiq, 25 and Mohammad Shahin, 40.

On Sunday, unidentified gunmen shot and killed Shadat, commissioner of DCC ward No. 90, at Uttara Model Town.

The victim's brother filed a case with the Uttara Police Station, accusing 14 people. They are Abul Hossain, Zakir, Abed, Khairol, Naim Sikder Bindu, Kala Jahagir, Omar Faruk Kochi, Picchi Hanna, Lamba Bulu, Khokon, Tonai Mollah, Tipu, Habu and Takku Ripon.

Local people suspect that Shadat was killed following rivalry with Shaidur Rahman Shahid, commissioner of DCC ward No. 83. He also had rivalry with a ward commissioner candidate from his ward, they mentioned.

Raju's killers

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The first Namaj-e-janaja of the deceased was held at the Nagar Bhaban premises at about 11:30am. It was attended by Dhaka city Mayor Sadeq Hossain Khoka and Information Minister Tariqul Islam, among others.

The second one, held at the BNP central office at Naya Palatan at 1:00pm, was attended by Industries Minister KM Anwar, BNP Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman, Whip Ashraf Hossain, Food Minister Abdullah Al Noman and others.

The third janaja was held at Shahid Park in Mohammadpur after Asr prayers. Raju was buried at the Mirpur Intellectual Graveyard.

A daylong hartal was observed in the Mohammadpur area in protest at the killing of Raju. Followers of the slain ward commissioner tried to bring out a procession in support of the hartal but police barred them from taking it out.

Additional police forces were deployed in different parts of Mohammadpur to avert any untoward incident.

other BNP backed DCC ward commissioners were gunned down recently but Khaleda did not go to see any of the bodies.

"What will she answer if people now suspect involvement of the prime minister and her family in procurement of the M16 rifle?" asked Hasina.

Quoting from the diary of slain journalist Shamsur Rahman, Hasina said BNP leader Tariqul Islam had threatened him (Shamsur Rahman) of dire consequence, and he was later killed. She regretted that Tariqul, a charge-sheeted accused in Shamsur Rahman murder case and Udichi bomb incident, is now the information minister.

Hasina said the prime minister is instigating criminals by saying that AL had masterminded the recent attack on her (Hasina) in Satkhira. The prime minister's statements encouraged criminals to carry out bomb explosions in Satkhira again, Hasina claimed. "The government committed the heinous attacks but put the blame on Awami League".

Hasina also criticised the government for what she called closing down ETV and curbing press freedom by repressing newsmen and imposing VAT on newspaper advertisements.

24 die as old buildings cave in Syria

AFP, Damascus

At least 24 people were killed and 30 more hurt yesterday when a number of old buildings collapsed in the northern Syrian city of Aleppo, officials and state media reported.

"The number of victims stands at 24 dead," the SANA news agency quoted Interior Minister Ali Hammud as saying.

At least 40 others were feared to be still under the rubble, and rescue work was under way, state television said, showing a woman being dug out of the rubble and an injured boy being carried.

SANA earlier quoted Aleppo Governor Osama Uday as blaming the collapse on a landslide.

The buildings had been constructed over ancient caves in Al-Kallassah, a working-class neighbourhood in Aleppo, 220 miles north of Damascus.

Aleppo's director of antiquities, Sakyur Ulabi, told AFP by telephone that the houses had been built "without permission on terrain that was less than stable." He said a school built there 15 years ago had collapsed before it was even opened.

Hammud and Syria's deputy prime minister for services, Najj Otri, had traveled to the scene and were being briefed on the situation, SANA said.

The tragedy was the worst to strike Syria since June 4, when the Zeizoun dam burst in the northern governorate of Hama. At least 22 people died and thousands of people were left homeless, when waters inundated five villages and some 18,000 hectares.

Custody

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Burmese currencies and instruments used for making forged notes.

On Sunday, he was produced in court, which placed him on three days' remand. Akkas' family alleged that he was tortured as he could not provide information about making fake notes.

But CID police claimed that the accused died of high pressure that was measured at 140/220.

A statement of facts prepared by Chittagong City Corporation Magistrate Abu Naser also supported the police claim. It said the body did not have any mark of torture and the accused vomited some fifteen minutes before his death.

An unnatural death case has been filed with Kotwali thana.

Akkas' business firm was at Didar Market at Dewan Bazar. He hailed from Monmontar village in Nawabgonj in Dhaka district.

Father of three children, Akkas was scheduled to go to India on Monday for treatment of his 6-month old daughter, family sources said.

Kashmir

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In Doda and Udhampur districts two security force personnel and two civilians were killed by suspected militants overnight, police said.

And in an overnight bomb explosion in Kupwara district a Muslim boy was killed and three others injured, police said.

Police in Pakistani Kashmir said Indian troops shelled across the disputed border Wednesday, killing a woman and injuring a man.

Judiciary

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The SC on three occasions said the deadline would no more be extended, but it budged from its position later on.

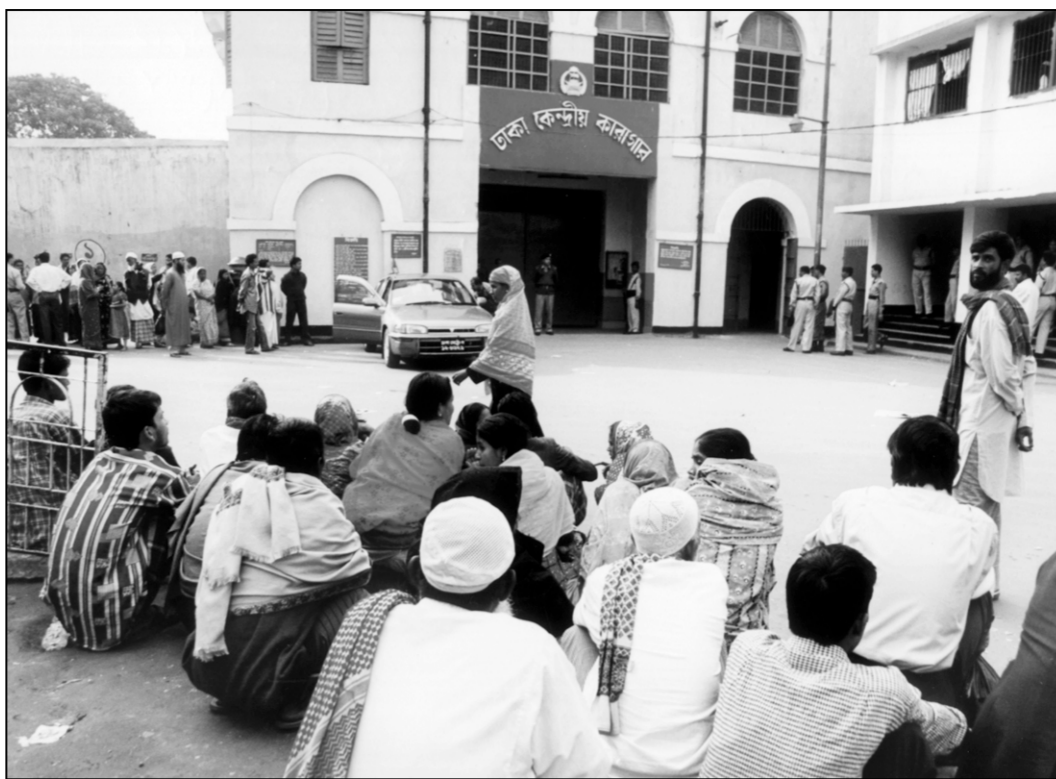
Earlier, the caretaker government finalised three rules on establishing a separate judicial service, a judicial service commission, a judicial pay commission and a draft amendment to the code of criminal procedure.

The caretaker government was scheduled to okay the rules at its last meeting of the advisory council on October 2, a day after the general elections. But the rules were dropped from the meeting list after Khaleda Zia, whose BNP-led alliance won the election by a landslide, said her government would implement the directives.

Later, the coalition government formed the cabinet committee which made some changes in the judicial service commission and the judicial pay commission. But the government ran into resistance from the administration cadre regarding giving-up of the magistracy to the proposed judicial service.

Thereafter, a secretary committee was formed to resolve the problem, which prepared a report. Yesterday, the cabinet committee reviewed the report that suggests temporary inclusion of the magistrates in the judicial service. Later, they would be given the option to join the admin cadre.

The cabinet committee however did not accept the proposal and sent it back to the secretary committee to reframe them to be discussed at the next meeting.



People of all ages wait in front of the Dhaka Central Jail yesterday, as they do every day, for a chance to visit their relatives serving jail terms.

Iraq rejects US proposal

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diplomats say is an invitation to defect.

The resolution would empower inspection teams to remove or destroy any weapons or components, records, materials and equipment. Still under discussion are so-called "coercive inspections" backed up by troops.

Of the five permanent UN Security Council members with veto power, only Britain has so far signed up to the draft, which some diplomats call a blueprint for war because Iraq could never agree to it.

France, Russia and China have strong reservations about authorising the United States to decide when Iraq has violated terms of the proposed resolution. But it is far from certain that they will veto the measure or abstain if no compromise emerges.

Britain joined the United States in rejecting the deal brokered in Vienna, saying the agreement was no alternative to a new, tougher UN resolution.

"Any movement by Iraq is a result of pressure from the UN and the credible threat of force," Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said.

Russia, which has close economic ties to Iraq, welcomed the Vienna agreement. Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov said, however, that Russia was ready to consider further UN resolutions if they were "required for the effective work of the inspectors".

France said it was waiting to study the Vienna deal before it could

say if a new resolution was needed.

Under the proposed US document, obtained by Reuters, Baghdad has seven days to accept all provisions in the resolution. It then has 23 more days to give an accounting of its weapons of mass destruction and an extensive list of related materials and components.

Only after the declaration can UN inspectors, out of Iraq for nearly four years, begin their work.

Should Iraq fail to disclose anything, any United Nations member can use force against Baghdad.

The draft resolution requires Iraq to submit an "acceptable and currently accurate, full and complete" listing of Baghdad's nuclear, chemical, ballistic and biological weapons.

France is pushing a resolution that leaves out an immediate authorisation of force. The inspectors would report "any serious failure by Iraq to comply with its obligations," and the Security Council would then "consider any measure" to ensure compliance. A second resolution would be needed to authorise force.

Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa welcomed the Vienna deal and urged the world community not to "take positions which hinder inspections," without elaborating.

Israeli Defence Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, noting that Iraq is believed not yet to have nuclear weapons, yesterday cast doubt on whether Saddam would attack the Jewish state at all in the

event of war.

One-dayer

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would be decided after having a look at the pitch in the morning today. But Mashud hinted that it would be more or less the same side that played in the last practice match against South Africa on Tuesday.

"We've just reached here in Potchefstroom. Everybody is fine and since there is no injury problem, the morale of the team is also very fine. What all we need is to apply ourselves out in the middle," he said.

The second one-day international will be held in Benoni on October 6 and the last one is billed for October 9. Two-match Test series ensues after that.

SQUADS

Bangladesh: Khaled Mashud (captain), Habibul Bashar, Al-Shahriar, Tushar Imran, Khaled Mahmud, Monjurul Islam, Talha Jubair, Mohammad Rafique, Taposh Baishya, Alok Kapali, Javed Omar, Hannan Sarkar, Sanwar Hossain, Rafiqul Islam, Anwar Hossain.

South Africa: Shaun Pollock (captain), Mark Boucher (vice captain), Dale Benkenstein, Boeta Dippenaar, Allan Donald, Herschelle Gibbs, Jacques Kallis, Lance Klusener, Mfuneko Ngam, Makhaya Ntini, Justin Ontong, Graeme Smith, Errol Stewart, Martin van Jaarsveld.

Commercialisation grips

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books deals.

The roads between Gulshan 1 and 2 and other residential areas, including Dhanmondi, Kamal Ataturk Avenue and Uttara, face the same fate.

Some plot owners told The Daily Star that they did not seek approval for conversion of their residential plots.

Earlier, town planners, architects and environmentalists alerted people to such an unscrupulous approval by Rajuk.

Hundreds of offices and small business establishments sprouted in Gulshan, Uttara and Banani in the extended corners of residential buildings.

Worse, the rising trend in the setting up of unauthorised corner shops like grocery, electronic repairing house, decoration shops and medicine store add to the urban chaos.

And hundreds of establishments like clinic, restaurant, fast food outlet, school, shopping mall and cyber cafe are also mushrooming

without permission.

Abu Zafar, a landlord in Gulshan, told The Daily Star that the local people were facing numerous problems for unplanned non-residential-turned-commercial establishments.

Meantime, Rajuk has decided to stop approval for non-residential conversion of residential plots on a prime ministerial instruction.

At a recent review meeting on the "land use and development projects" with Rajuk and others concerned, the prime minister directed Rajuk to stop approving commercial and non-residential conversion. The prime ministerial directive says that 'residential area should be kept for residential purpose only'.

At present, Rajuk is carrying out a survey on the residential areas to find out how many residential plots have turned commercial, Rajuk sources said.

Asked if Rajuk will enact strict laws to stop further commercialisation and if the already commercialised plots go back to residential,

a top Rajuk official said it would be decided following the survey report.

Contacted, a town-planner preferring anonymity has said that it is possible to turn the commercialised areas back to residential areas.

Referring to the setting up of a commercial zone in a residential area, which is called central business district (CBD) in developed countries, he said, "Establishing and maintaining proper zoning character is the only solution to save residential areas. It needs nothing but honest efforts to make the city liveable."

Bush

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Relations Committee was to take up the bill yesterday, ahead of a full House vote expected next week.

Lawmakers will have opportunities to change the language, but they are unlikely to mount any serious challenge to a resolution agreed to by leaders of both parties and the White House.

Satkhira blasts

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On September 28, a powerful blast rocked Roxy Cinema Hall at about 7:30pm and five minutes later, a second bomb went off at the Satkhira stadium.

Meantime, police are preparing a list of people who have a track record of making bombs in the district, sources said.

Police believe if they could arrest these people they would have clues to the bomb blasts.

Meantime, police arrested two people Mizan and Akbar -- from Kamalnagar and Kuchpukur areas in the district town yesterday. However, they denied that the two have been nabbed on suspicion of their involvement in the bomb incidents.

The newly appointed Deputy Inspector General of police, Khulna range, Enayetullah Dewan yesterday visited the spots. He told local newsmen that the blasts were preplanned and executed to 'put the administration in trouble'.

The DIG was optimistic that the administration would be able to unearth the motive behind the blasts

and arrest the people responsible for the act in a few days.

However, rumours are rife in Satkhira town that the authorities are not conducting the investigation in a 'proper way' and some people might be made scapegoats.

Meantime, the injured people in the bomb blasts are not getting any financial support for their treatment from the government although it promised to do so. While visiting the places of occurrence the day after the incident, Home Minister Altaf Hossain Choudhury had assured that the government would bear the treatment costs of the injured.

District Civil Surgeon SM Mostafa Anwar told journalists yesterday that so far they received Tk 5,000 from the government for shifting injured people to hospitals in other districts.

Extortionists attack two houses, injure five in Natore

UNB, Natore

Extortionists in Dilalpur-Roaypur village attacked two houses with guns and bombs, leaving at least 5 persons badly injured Tuesday night after failing to realise tolls.

The victims said armed members of Bhasan Bahini had demanded Tk 30,000 as toll from Hasen Member and Siddique by September 30.

As the money was not paid, the extortionists went to the two houses at around 10:00pm on Tuesday, and fired gunshots and exploded homemade bombs creating panic in the village.

As Hasen and Siddique were not home, the extortionists mercilessly beat the inmates of the two houses and injured them with bayonets.

Of the injured, Akhterul, 25, was rushed to the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital and Alam, 22, Babul, 20, Siddique, 28, and another unidentified young man were admitted to Lalpur health complex.

No case was filed till yesterday for fear of reprisal.

Shazneen case

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and two other accused completed cross-examination of the witness.

All the six accused -- Shahid, Hasan, Shaniram, Badal, Minu and Parvin, now in the jail custody -- were produced in the court yesterday.

Special Public Prosecutors (PP) Arfanuddin Khan, ABM Sharfuddin Khan Mukul, Mahbub Ahmed and Saima Khanam and Assistant PP Anisur Rahman appeared for the state. Advocates Mohammad Hanif, Anwarul Kabir Babul, Mizanur Rahman and MA Kamrul Hasan Khan Aslam represented the accused.

Agri revolution

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Labour-intensive agro-based industries are also to be set up to help alleviate poverty and check migration of rural people to cities for jobs, she pointed out.

Khaleda Zia hoped that the conference would provide a guideline for regional cooperation and help implement the national programme to make villages self-reliant and agriculture a more profitable and prestigious occupation.

She said Bangladesh, which was affluent in all sectors, had turned away and gained little from agriculture. Emphasis was laid on industries but it failed to take the country much forward.

Khaleda listed major obstacles facing Bangladesh as lack of appropriate technology suiting the environment, imbalance in nature, wastage of huge cultivable land due to fragmentation, increase in landless peasants, lack of marketing facilities for agri products, population pressure and natural disasters.

She said steps like allocation of Tk 200 crore in grants for setting up agro-processing industries and increasing exports have been taken by her government.

The prime minister also mentioned afforestation, preservation of the Sunderbans and wild lives, promotion of poultry, pisciculture, goat farming and plantation of fruit-bearing trees are part of the plan to improve the natural environment.

Khaleda Zia said she is convinced that that the impossible can be made possible if the available resources are best utilised and well coordinated.

Referring to the regional effort, the prime minister said she believed peace, friendship and humanity will flourish and prosperity be attained in the Asian continent that had enlightened the world with its religion, civilization and philosophy.

Maulana Nizami said private sector could play a more formidable role in providing inputs for further development of agriculture.

Eminent agro-economist and Education Minister Dr M Osman Faruk said that although poverty had been nominally reduced during the 1990s but still half of the coun-

try's population lived below the poverty line.

He stressed the need for development where agriculture and non-agriculture production is properly coordinated.

Mirza Fakrul Islam Alamgir, in his deliberation said reforms are necessary to attain surplus in all aspects of the agricultural sector.

Economist Mahabub Hossain in his keynote paper said a broad-based rural development rather than a narrowly focused agricultural development is absolutely essential for poverty reduction in an extremely land-scarce country like Bangladesh.

He noted that Bangladesh has made respectable progress in population control but it is still growing by two millions every year.

"As the population has started declining, the proportion of population in the working age group will continue to grow for some time, putting additional challenge to the policymakers for generating productive employment," said Mahbub.

Police escort

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The government has also learnt that notorious gangster Kala Jahangir has had a hand in the assassination of ward commissioner Sayedur Rahman Newton and Shahadat Hossain Shikder.

Sources said an influential ruling BNP leader is harbouring Kala Jahangir, who returned to the capital from Kolkata only last week. The killings of ward commissioners KM Ahmed Raju and Shikder coincide with his return.

Police's failure to arrest killers of the ward commissioners and 18 of the top 23 listed criminals has irked a section of government policy makers, including the prime minister.

Even some ruling party MPs fear that they may well be on the hit list and have asked the ministers to take drastic measures to arrest the downside in the law and order in the capital.



Participants at a function marking the first anniversary of the BNP 'ballot revolution', organised by the Jatiyatabadi Samajik Sanskritik Sangstha at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday.