Education, not politics will get students jobs

Khaleda says at JCD programme

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has said the students will have to get employ-ment by dint of their academic qualifications, they will not be given jobs only for doing her party politics.

"You all have to acquire proper education along with politics. Not only for our party, you will have to work for welfare of the nation...I won't give you a job on consideration of being a party-man," she told the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) workers while addressing the silver jubilee programme and reunion of her party's student wing at Ramna Parkyesterday.

The prime minister said, "The JCD workers should be good at education and expert at creative work. Their character and work will have to be a model."

She said her government wants "violence-free" educational institutions and the JCD will have to play a pioneering role to this end.

Criticising the main opposition party, she said, "The party is now

trying to create an anarchic situation in the country by calling hartal. They are now busy keeping people in distress at the beginning of a new

The prime minister said, "We got only terrorism, corruption, anarchy, famine, a map and a flag during the rule of a party after independence."

It is now clear to the people that the alliance government is working for people and has done everything for them, she told her audience.

A large number of JCD workers from different units, including Dhaka University, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), Dhaka Medical College, Dhaka College, Jagannath University College and city wards, joined the function. JCD President Shahahuddin Laltu presided. Shahabuddin Laltu presided.

The prime minister inaugurated the silver jubilee celebration by releasing pigeons and balloons. The programme began with national anthem and party song. The JCD was formed this day in 1979.

NCBs look

emphasising IT development in all

The central bank has also decided to go for vigorous reforms in the NCBs, although there are debates on

Chairman and BB Deputy Governor Nazrul Huda notes, "The financial base of these banks are so weak that

On appointing advisers to the NCBs, Huda said, "This measure is being employed in 30 other countries. The government is right in taking such a timely measure.

The commercial banks, meanwhile, are on the lookout for new sectors as potential borrowers, as Pubali Bank Managing Director (MD) Khandker Ibrahim Khaled illustrates, "This year we will open our doors to health, power, textiles

has tremendous investment prospects. A large number of patients seek treatment abroad because of inadequacies of the local hospitals,

"If the private sector seeks loans for power projects, we will also respond positively."

"Threatened by the approaching post-multi-fibre agreement (MFA) situation, the garment sector also needs our help -- especially the smal garment companies. So, we will give more lending facilities to small garment firms to help them overcome the post-MFA hurdles," the Pubali Bank MD added.

Janata Bank MD Murshid Kuli Khan said, "In addition to financing

Attorney general FROM PAGE 12

It is no new practice and all successive governments did so, said a law officer requesting anonymity.

He however did not rule out alleged fixing of bail by some law officers.

sent them to hospital morgue for autopsy. No-one was arrested for the murders till 6:00pm yesterday.

Two separate murder cases were filed with Paikgacha Police Station.

the regular good projects, we are considering lending for power, roads, bridges and other infrastruc-

Bankers say all the big lending for infrastructure projects will be made

through syndication. Asked whether these measures will increase investment, Ibrahim Khaled said, "The success of our initiatives will depend on some non-economic factors like law and order, corruption and governance issues.

Peacekeepers

their home villages by helicopter. Earlier, a namaz-e-janaza of the officers was held at Banani Army Stadium at 8:00am.

President and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Iajuddin Ahmed, Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Hasan Mashhud Choudhury, Chief of Navy Rear Admiral Shah Iqbal Mujtaba and Chief of Air Force Air attended the janaza, among others.

The president earlier paid his last tribute to the army officers, placing wreaths on their coffins.

After the janaza, the coffins of the peacekeepers draped in national flags were taken to the National Eidgah Maidan in a

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina and BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan paid their last tributes to the officers there.

The second namaz-e-janaza of the peacekeepers was held at the maidan which was attended by ministers, political leaders and

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia eceived the bodies on Wednesday when they arrived on a UN plane and the country marked a national mourning day. Prayers were offered for the servicemen in mosques and other places of wor-

8 killed in Iraq

FROM PAGE 1

mostly deserted when 2004 began Most people rushed home after the restaurant bomb blast reverberated through the city center, rat-tling windows of buildings more than a mile away.

US commanders in Iraq had feared guerrillas would launch attacks over the New Year period to send a message that they would press on with their campaign to drive out occupying troops despite the capture of Iraqi dictator Saddam

PM leaves for Pakistan

FROM PAGE 1 after a gap of two years.

Bangladesh will also take up at the summit issues like trade investment, information and communication technology, environment and cooperation in harnessing common natural

The Bangladesh delegation includes Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, Foreign Secretary Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury Prime Minister's Political Secretary Haris Chowdhury, Principal Secretary Kamal Uddin Siddiqui, Press Secretary Tajul Islam and Home Secretary Omar Faruk.

The foreign minister, foreign secretary and director general of the Saarc desk at the foreign ministry have already left for Islamabad.

On the sidelines of the threeday summit, Khaleda will meet other Saarc leaders to discuss bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest.

She will attend a banquet hosted by Pakistan President Parvez Musharraf on Sunday and

sion on a single currency in the

News agency reports said Pakistan also ruled out talks on the

Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee last month floated the idea of economic integration and creation of a single currency for South Asia.

The official mentioned that while establishment of Safta was being delayed for years, the seven Saarc countries went for bilateral agreements. "That way they have moved towards regional cooperation," he said.

"We think this time a framework agreement on Safta will be signed," the official added.

Salma Sobhan

FROM PAGE 12

paid their last respect to her.

She was laid to rest at her family graveyard at Begum Bazaar in the

Her qulkhwani will be held at Gulshan Central Mosque today (Friday) after Asr prayers.

Salma Sobhan, wife of Professor Rehman Sobhan, an economist and former adviser to the caretaker government, died of cardiac arrest at her Gulshan residence in the early hours of Tuesday.

ICS, JCD men foil Udichi function

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B Baria

A function to be held at a local college to observe the 90th birth anniversary of writer Audwaita Mallabarmán yesterday had to be called off due to opposition from Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activists.

Organised by the local unit of Udichi, the discussion meeting styled 'Audwaita Mallabarman O Γitas Akti Nadir Nam' was scheduled to be held on the Kasba T Ali College campus. But, the viceprincipal of the college clamped a ban on the programme allegedly under pressure from some unruly young men and college students.

Local people said some students of the college as well as outsiders, led by ICS activists and accompanied by JCD leader Iqbal, forced the vice-principal to halt the programme.

Brahmanbaria Sahitya Academy, however, was fortunate, as it could manage to hold a daylong fair at Gaukarna Ghat, the birthplace of the writer, to mark the day. Nirmal Barman inaugurated the fair that included a discussion, where Advocate Liton Dev, M Hasan and AKM Shibly spoke, among others, with MA Yousuf in the chair

72-hr transport strike from January 6

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Malik-Sramik Oikya Parishad (Bangladesh road transport owners-workers unity council) has called for a 72hour transport strike

across the country from January 6 to realise its five-point demand.

The leaders of the parishad announced the programme at a press conference at the National Press Club yesterday. The parishad also demanded the implementation of two agreements

signed with the communications minister on August last year. The transport leaders expressed resentment over non-implemen-tation of the agreements.

Joint Convenor of Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Malik-Sramik Oikya Parishad M Gaffar Biswas, General Secretary of Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samity Mashiur Rahman Ranga, President of Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Sramik Federation Waziuddin Khan, President of Bangladesh Truck Malik Samity Tofazzal Hossain and transport leaders from different divisions were present at the press conference.

Fire guts **Bata shop** in Mirpur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fire gutted leather products and sports accessories reportedly worth Tk 10 lakh at a shoe store in Mirpur Section-10 yesterday.

An electric short circuit ignited the flames at a Bata shoe shop in Shah Ali Plaza that burned down most leather goods and other accessories at about 11:35pm, a fire brigade official said.

However, the blaze could not spread as the shop was closed, he added.

Faruq Hossain, a firefighter, was hurt while dousing the flames.

Nine fire-fighting units from the head quarters, Mirpur and Mohammadpurtamed the flames at about 1:55am, sources said.

Trade Fair

FROM PAGE 1

and gardening, dairy products, chemical and allied products, cosmetics, jewelry, automobiles and electrical and electronic items. and electrical and electronic items. Food and groceries, gift items, handicrafts, carpets, home appliances, leather, leather goods and footwear, sports gears, sanitary wares, textile and garments, toys and stationary, watches and clocks, ceramic and melamine products and plastic products are also among some of the main attractions of this show.

The exposition will remain open to visitors from 10:00am to 9:00pm on weekdays and from 10:00am to 10:00pm on holidays. Like the previous year, the price of an entry ticket is Tk 10 for adults and Tk 5 for

Cold snap

FROM PAGE 12 light fog wrapping itself across the

"The weather over the next couple of days may be colder espe-cially in southwestern districts," Karmakar said.

BSS reports from Manikganj: The normal ferry movement between Paturia-Daulatdia and Paturia-Nagarbari routes has been disrupted since Wednesday due to

Dense fog has also seriously hampered road communications between the capital and 35 south and northern districts of the country, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation sources said

Dhaka-bound passenger buses, trucks and other vehicles have been stranded here due to fog and cold

The sources said this is the longest disruption of ferry service on the routes caused by heavy fog.

Summit focuses

December which narrowly missed killing President Pervez Musharraf.

As roadblocks are erected around Islamabad city council gardeners are busy planting palm trees, bougainvillea and daisies along the main boulevards in a lastminute beautification.

Even a replica of the Ghauri nuclear missile, which held pride of place on a busy intersection for the past five years, has been

The summit is the 12th in Saarc's 18-year existence and the first since January 2002. It was cancelled last year when India refused to send its leaders to Pakistan in the midst of fierce tensions over a December 2001 attack on its parliament, which it blamed on Pakistani-based mili-

Ruled off the agenda are bids by outside countries to join the forum and a single South Asian currency.

Founded in 1985 to foster economic cooperation among the region's 1.4 billion consumers, Saarc's sluggishness in realizing its objectives has been blamed mainly on hostilities between India and Vajpayee's decision to travel to

Pakistan for the summit, eight months after his "hand of friendship" offer triggered a series of tiemending gestures, has been hailed as a sign that Saarc could revive its

"The significance of the upcoming summit is that it will revive the functioning of Saarc, which was stalled because the Indians were not ready to sit on a conference table with Pakistan," said Khalid Mahmud, chairman of the Institute of Regional Studies. India, which forms 70 percent of the total area in South Asia and holds about twothirds of the region's population,

"Saarc can make progress if India... settles disputes with others including the Kashmir issue with its big neighbour Pakistan," former Pakistani ambassador to Thailand Kamal Matinuddin said.

nomic forum and its charter bans the raising of contentious issues in While Islamabad and New Delhi have not ruled out a sideline chat

between Vajpayee and Musharraf.

But Saarc is essentially an eco-

there is still no public commit-Vajpayee is the only one among the six visiting heads of state who has not requested to meet Musharraf separately, Khan revealed Wednesday, as he urged India to follow what is a Saarc

"This is a very long-established tradition that usually the visiting delegations and their leaders call on the host head of state or government and I think that this tradition should be respected," he said.

Pakshey Bridge

and Iswardi. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the bridge in March 2004.

Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) has provided most of the finances for both projects -- Tk 820 crore out of the total project cost of Tk 1.065 crore for Pakshey Bridge and Tk 435 crore out of Tk 551 crore for the Rupsha

The government component of the cost was used mainly for acquisition of 120 hectares of land as well as tax and customs duty for raw materials import. Project officials said 1,500 people, who account for 95 percent of land owners, have already been given compensation of about Tk 28.50 crore through a non-governmental organisation.

The rest of the land victims are yet to be paid because of a dispute over land documents, they said.

At less than 1 percent interest rate, the loans are repayable in 30 years with a 10-year grace, said Tomohiro Hamada, JBIC representative in Dhaka.

The Major Bridge Engineering Bureau of China began construction of the Pakshey Bridge in August 2000. Some 300 Chinese technicians and 1,400 local workers have been working round the clock to build the massive bridge. some 300 metres from the existing Hardinge Railway Bridge.

The concrete bridge will have 17 spans running parallel to the Hardinge Bridge designed to protect the massive structure from strong currents during monsoon.

"Each of the 91-metre-long pillars of the bridge has a diameter of three metres. Such a large diameter has been chosen to counter the

severe turbulence in Padma," said Robert Aves, a bridge expert and consultant engineer for Pakshey Bridge project.

Chris Round, leader of the team of engineers, said 2,500 vehicles could cross the bridge daily and predicted a minimum 100-year life span for the bridge.

He said extensive training programmes have been taken up for its proper maintenance.

"The latest bridge technologies have been used for Pakshey Bridge including Tk 11 crore worth of shock absorbing units to protect it from earthquakes measuring up to 7 on the Richter scale," said Anwar Ahmed, the project director. The four-lane bridge will also

have gas, electricity and telephone line transfer facilities, Ahmed told a group of journalists. The bridge will ease huge traffic ams caused by thousands of vehi-

cles lined up at Pakshey ferry ter-

minal. Besides, the problem of

dealing with emerging shoals on

the river to keep ferries running will also be avoided Only a portion of earth-filling to link the bridge with the approach road on the West, construction of road dividers and installation of lighting facilities remain to be completed before the inauguration in two to three months, Ahmed

Construction of two toll plazas on both sides of the bridge is progressing rapidly. The government has also floated a tender for appointment of private firms for

vehicular toll collection. Anwar said the toll rate would be moderate, which will help recover the cost of construction

AL enforces hartal

FROM PAGE 12

taken at an emergency meeting of the AL presidium on December

The AL is also scheduled to hold

n mass rally at Paltan Maidan on January 10. Party chief Sheikh Hasina is expected to announce 'tough agitation programmes' on the day to dislodge the govern-Meanwhile, the AL and its front organisations have taken preparations to make tomorrow's hartal a

in the last few days exchanged views with different professional groups and held extended meetings with different thana and ward units ahead of the hartal. Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil while addressing a rally yesterday in support of the hartal urged the people to observe tomorrow's hartal to register their no-

success. Dhaka City unit of the AL

confidence in the present government. "January 3 hartal is a crucial event in the process of dislodging the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition government by April next," he said at the rally organised by Awami Jubo League, youth wing of the party, in front of its central office at Bangabandhu Avenue.

He said the hartal is to protest the 'autocratic activities' of the coalition regime and if the government resists it the AL will draw up indefinite agitation programmes.

The AL leader accused the government of trying to thwart AL's reorganisation efforts by foiling council programmes at places. He said, "The rulers are afraid of the planned antigovernment movement by the Áwami League and are out to foil it by unleashing atrocities on opposition leaders and activists.' Presided over by Jubo League Chairman Jahangir Kabir Nanok,

the rally was also addressed by AL

Joint-General Secretary Obaidul Kader and Jubo League General

Secretary Mirza Azam

After the rally, a procession was brought out, which marched down some city streets shouting anti-government slogans and urging people to observe the

Deadly devices

Bandarban town. The arms are then handed over to local traders for sale, they said.

"The government is pursuing an active campaign to contain all terrorist outfits dealing with arms and drugs," the press release said. In another raid, the BDR detained six terrorists and seized a

haul of arms and ammunition from

a slum at Chunarughat in Sylhet

early yesterday. A .303 rifle with 9 bullets, a .9mm pistol and 11 bullets were seized from the arrestees, the ministry press release added.

UNB reports: The arrestees are Kokek Tripura, 22, Philips Debabarma, 24, Manjak Bebabarma, 20, Bukhuk Debabarma, 24, Satish Debabarma, 25, and Shoilen Debabarma, 25, from the Indian state of Tripura. They are said to be members of

the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT). **BANDARBAN BUSTS** CHRONICLED Army seized an M-16 rifle, an

AK-47 rifle, 124 bullets and a for-

eign-made wireless set in

Bandarban in the first week of July.

Security forces seized an M-79 rocket launcher, two M-56 grenade launchers, 39 antitank grenades, an M-16 assault rifle, a singlebarrel gun and a pistol on August The forces seized two firearms

a gang of operatives deep in the hill forests in the district on August 26. The BDR seized two AK-47 rifles, 1,500 bullets, a Chinese rifle and a walkie-talkie from the border area of Naikhangchhari on

8 JCD cadres in Sylhet jailed for assaulting army officer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The Court of Speedy Trial, Sylhet yesterday sentenced a Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activist to five years in prison while each of his seven associates were given three years term for assaulting an army officer at Barudkhana in Sylhet.

Magistrate Shoaib Ahmed Khan jailed Ahmed Habib Ibne Islam alias Chamak to five years in jail and fined him Tk 5,000 for misbe-having with Second Lieutenant

Saiduzzaman Lavlu, Ahmed Hakim Khan, Mubinul Haq Chowdhury Rahi, Aminul Islam Pamel, Junel Ahmed, Lipu Banik and Dibya Roy were each sentenced to three years in prison and fined Tk 3,000 in the same case.

On November 7, 2003, a gang led by JCD cadre Chamak swooped on Jubayer and some of his friends after a heated debate over honking of horns. Chamak also brandished

Musharraf rule

FROM PAGE 12 Parliamentary business has been paralysed by protests since Musharraf assumed wide-ranging powers in 2002.

Legislators have disrupted proceedings by banging their desks, interrupting speakers and walking out of proceedings.

The amended constitution allows the president to dissolve parliament and to dismiss the prime minister with the approval of the Supreme Court.

As part of the package of mea-

sures that took effect on Wednesday, President Musharraf appointed a new chief justice to oversee the Supreme Court. He has picked Nazim Hussain Siddiqui -- a senior Supreme Court

judge -- for the post. In 2000, Justice Siddiqui was one of a panel of Supreme Court judges who ruled against opposition leaders when they challenged the bloodless coup that had brought General Musharraf to

Two other Supreme

judges have questioned Justice Siddiqui's appointment, claiming they were senior to him and ought to have been considered for the Under the agreement between the president the Muslim coalition, the MMA, it was agreed that General Musharraf would stay on as president until 2007, but would step down as head of the army by the end of 2004

South Asian trade FROM PAGE 12

such an accord. However a new confidence among Pakistani manufacturers and planners, inspired by an industrial turnaround in the past couple of years, have brightened the chances of Safta being signed.

"We feel that we are very much competitive against Indian goods now," said Pakistani commerce ministry joint secretary Zafar Qadir. "I am hopeful the Safta will be

Pakistan's business community visualizes long-term benefits from the agreement. "Our engineering and automohile sector is somewhat more

exposed to competition with Indian goods. But on the other hand it would definitely benefit consum-ers," Biloursaid. Industrialists, fixing their eyes on the vast market India represents for their goods, are equally supportive of a regional trade pact.

find a vast market of 200 million urban dwellers in India to attract more business for their goods," he Bilateral trade between India and

"Pakistani manufacturers would

Pakistan stood at 204 million in the last financial year. Informal trade is said to be around 1.5 billion dollars a Studies by the Saarc Chamber of Commerce and Industry suggest bilateral trade between India and Pakistan alone can grow up to four billion dollars, provided newly-thawed relations keep getting

Over 70,000

FROM PAGE 1

instruction of the home ministry. A vear into its review operation the district committees were dissolved on October 1, 2002 and a new two-member committee was formed in the 28th inter-ministerial meeting on the law and order in November, 2002. A home ministry joint secretary (police) and a law ministry solicitor sat on the commit-

On the report of the new committee, 1,458 more cases were withdrawn and more than 12,900 accused freed.

But the crux of the problem with the whole review process surfaced when an inter-ministerial meeting on law and order on September 22 2002 decided to empower the minis ters-in-charge of districts, local MPs and district and thana BNP presidents with the authority of making recommendations to the review committee. The process provided the ruling partymen with an opporinfluence the withdrawal decisions of the home ministry.

The new arrangement prompted hectic lobbying by grassroots party leaders directly with the home ministry for the release of their party leaders and workers. and 37 bullets after a gunfight with The district judge of Dhaka

refused to withdraw the murder case against the brother of ruling BNP MP Nasir Uddin Ahmed Pintu and a judge in Barisal also declined to those accused of setting fire to the house of an Awami League leader.

Health plan launched without budget

The health ministry yesterday launched the three-year ambitious Health, Nutrition and Population Sector Programme (HNPSP) without specific plans and budget, as

The development partners for

the first time are not taking part in such a programme. They refused to finance the HNPSP as it lacked specific plans and strategy',

The main goal of the HNPSP is to reduce malnutrition and maternal and child mortality.

Under the programme, the health ministry also plans to form a separate directorate for nutrition. The programme was earlier scheduled for a July 1 launch. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia had

instructed the health ministry on

January 29 last year to complete the

preparations in time for the scheduled launch but the ministry failed. On December 24 last, establishment, finance, planning, health, external resources division and implementation, monitoring and to discuss the launch of the HNPSP, which is yet to be approved by the Executive Committee of the

(Ecnec) They sought about Tk 450 crore a

National Economic Council

ear for the HNPSP. The meeting also discussed the non-payment of salaries of about 80,000 field staff of the family planning wing of the health ministry since August. It suggested payment

Teenaged boy In the early hours of November 19, 2003, 11 persons including eight women and a 4-day-old boy of the family were incinerated at Shadhanpur Shilpara under Banshkhali upazila. 'beaten to death' in

Hazaribagh STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Medical College Hospital (DMCH) yesterday, a day after his apparent abductors allegedly roughed him up at Hazaribagh.

16, at about 11:00pm on Tuesday after he returned from his workplace at Saree Bazar in Eastern Plaza and took him to Hazaribagh Park Goli, said Babu's mother Feroza Begum.

An unidentified youth called

out Mohammad Sujon alias Babu,

On Wednesday morning, a rickshaw-puller informed Babu's parents that Sujan was lying dead at Advocate Solaiman's residence at Moneshwar Second Lane.

Relatives recovered and admitted Babu to the DMCH Wednesday where he died at 7:00am yesterday, the victim's elder sister, Shirin, told journalists at the DMCH yesterday. "Babu went to steal pigeons from my house on Tuesday and injured himself falling from the fourth floor," Solaiman told police.

But the victim's father, Baset Solaiman's men beat up Babu and threw him down from the building when he became sick.

However, no case was filed till the writing of this report at 7:30 yesterday evening. In another incident vesterday an unknown CNG three-wheeler driver dropped a body of an unidentified man at 1:00pm in

The man of about 55 and in

front of the DMCH.

white trousers and panjabi had 12 photographs of him in his pocket, The CNG driver told DMCH staff that his passenger fell sick suddenly. However, he fled the area leaving the body behind,

sources added. Ramna police recovered later the body and sent it to the DMCH for autopsy.

Muggers might have poisoned the man to death, police suspected. of their salaries from block alloca-

In September 2002, the health ministry had hired three local Tk 1.5 lakh, Tk 80,000 and Tk 50,000 and a foreign consultant (a nutrition expert from the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Control, Bangladesh) to prepare the project implementation paper

But having failed to do the jobs the consultants prepared an alter-native PIP, which was rejected by the development partners, saying it lacked specific plans and strategy. They also refused to finance the

The health ministry had also initiated a number of pilot studies involving an estimated expenditure of about Tk 12 crore to prepare the

The studies were on recycling of user-fee, voucher schemes, cash transfers, community health insurance, expenditure tracking, how and to what extent informal fees hinder access to services for women and the poor, and public and private healthcare providers' role in the healthcare delivery system.

Banshkhali arson victims get aid in rehabilitation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The family victimised in November 19 Banshkhali carnage received Tk 4 lakh for its rehabilitation

Reportedly instructed by the prime minister, State Minister for Environment and Forest Jafrul Islam Chowdhury, also the local member of parliament, handed

the family at a ceremony held at the upazila headquarters. Sons of Tejendra Lal Shil and his brother Shachindra Lal Shil, received the money from the state

over the money to the members of

Addressing a gathering on this occasion, the state minister reiterated their vow to punish those involved in the atrocity and announced a Tk 10 thousand award for nabbing any of the crimi-

Government officials, local politicians and the elite were present on the occasion.

Jatka

FROM PAGE 1 production worth nearly Tk 2,000 crore," it added.

The study said the contribution

of Hilsha fish earnings to the coun-

try's gross domestic product is 4.2 percent and this sector provides try's export earnings. According to a study of Chandpur Fish Research Institute (CFRI), 3,000 to 6,000 tonnes of Jatka

have been netted between 1990 and A recent CFRI study also shows that currently 19,000 metric tons of Jatka are being caught every year.

The CFRI study also shows that in 1992 the average length of Jatka fish was 35 centimetres which by 2000 reduced to only 13.12 centimetres, as wanton Jatka netting reached its peak in the recent years. Chandpur district administra-

tion has taken some programmes

to warn fishermen against netting Jatka and at the same time, discourage people from buying those Under the plan, mobile courts will be deployed in the Meghna during the breeding season to prevent Jatka netting and an awareness drive will also be launched to prevent such illegal

Hasina pays respect

FROM PAGE 1 Sangsad, which the opposition is boycotting since the last budget

After placing the bouquets,

Hasina, also president of the main opposition Awami League (AL),

offered a munajat, praying for the

eternal peace of the departed souls. She also consoled the bereaved family members. Senior AL leaders were present. After the janaza, the officers'

bodies were kept at the Eidgah to

enable people to pay their last respect to the peacekeepers. AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil at a briefing in the city yesterday bitterly criticised the ruling coalition for not making any official arrangement for the leader of the

opposition to pay homage to the

army officers either at the airport or

"We wrote two letters to the Army Headquarters expressing Hasina's desire to pay respect to the 15 army officers, but they did not respond to our requests," Jalil

at any other convenient place.

He said the government undermined Hasina's privilege as the leader of the opposition.

"Such a behaviour also looks down upon the honour of the opposition leader as well as the

Jatiya Sangsad.' The AL leader also took a swipe at Prime Minister Khaleda Zia for

making the high-profile 45-minute delay at the airport in receiving the officers' bodies on Wednesday. He also questioned the receipt of the bodies by Khaleda, adding 'As the supreme commander of the

armed forces the president should

have received the bodies. Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed said the ruling coalition was planning to bring the separate obituary reference in the

He said the final decision on the reference would be taken on the premier's return from the Saarc summit in Islamabad. As the AL is boycotting the

House, the party lawmakers are

likely to miss the chance to pay

respect to the army officers in

Jatiya Sangsad.

parliament. On attending discussion on the probable obituary reference, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdul Hamid said: "We're boycottng parliament as the government did not oblige to our preconditions. So how can we take part in the discussion on the obituary

reference?

Saarc leaders on Monday.

join the retreat along with other A foreign ministry official ruled out the possibility of any discus-

decisions. That's the reason we are

we have no alternative but to reform them." Such reforms are now being resisted by, what the banking sector believes, "bad bankers" and "bad

and other untapped sectors. "The health sector, for instance

the law officers not to oppose bail.

Two murdered FROM PAGE 12