Hasina defends

tion not to enforce hartals and maintained that parliament should be the place to resolve all problems in a democracy

The government and the opposition should open fresh dialogues to make parliament effective and thrash out all their differences, as well.

The AL is scheduled to enforce a countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal on February 12 if its 15-point demand, including an end to violence and corruption, remain unmet until February 10.

Hasina elaborated on the 15point charter of demands placed before the government by her party recently and said, "The demands we have placed are logical and timely.

"If the government fails to fulfil the demands before the ultimatum expires, we will be forced to launch democratic agitation to unseat the ruling coalition." The opposition chief added that people are frustrated with the present rulers, as their inability to govern the country has been proven beyond a shadow of doubt in their first two years in office.

"Being in the opposition, we cannot sit idle while a failed government runs the state affairs and a quick change is a must to free the countrymen from the bad rule.

On the government's failure to arrest law and order slide, Hasina

ascertain whether the arrestees are

of any outlawed political party or

operatives of an organised gang of

drug-peddlers, who collected the arms and ammunition to facilitate

drug smuggling, or firearms smug-glers and whether they worked as

"We're vet to extract any conclu-

sive information from the arrestees,

but we hope to make a headway in two or three days," the CID chief

Police suspect that more fire-

During the raid, police arrested

arms and ammunition might be in

17 people including two caretakers from the computer office housed

on the first floor of a six-storey building at 1307/D, Monipur at

The arrestees are Abdul Wahed

Bulbul, Mahmudul Hasan, Tariqul

the possession of the gang.

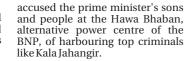
FROM PAGE 12

hit-men.

said.

Kafrul.

Huge arms, drugs



"You, the businesspeople, should better know who are protecting the criminals and how much you have to pay to Hawa Bhaban to start a new business, she added.

The opposition leader also explained her party's position on the issue of export of natural gas. "During the rule of Awami League, we were against the export of natural gas without ensuring adequate reserve for domestic use and for this some international gas companies and their local agents opposed us ahead of the 2001 neral elections."

"Ironically, the agents who pposed the Awami League at that time were appointed by us," she said naming none. Referring to her party's defeat in

the last general elections, Hasina said, "Maybe ... we had to pay for opposing gas export before the ections.

"Our policy is very clear, we don't want to export the country's resources depriving our next generation," she added

Abdul Matlub Ahmad, Abul Kashem Ahmed, MA Rouf Chowdhury, Mir Nasir Hossain, Dewan Sultan Ahmed, MA Awal and Helal Uddin also spoke.

Abdul Mannan.



Shampa Reza **STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Police yesterday interrogated TV artiste Shampa Reza, sister of Azam Reza, at Gulshan Police Station to ascertain the actual relation between Azam and Afsana Mimi.

One of the interrogators said Shampa denied any illicit relation between Azam and artiste Afsana Mimi, saying she only knew of a formal relation between her brother and Mimi.

During the nearly one-hour interrogation, police also asked her say what she knew about the disturbed conjugal life of Azam and Jayanti Munshi Reza, a school-teacher of Australian International School, who was found dead at her Gulshan house last Friday.

A high official of Dhaka Metropolitan Police said his officers interrogating Shampa Reza found her fully cooperative.

He also said they might interrogate Afsana Mimi at some time last hight

Afsana Mimi, at a press conference at the Bengal Art Gallery at Dhanmondi yesterday, announced that the 50th episode of Saretintola, a TV serial, was likely to be telecast on January 15.

She, however, did not say anything about the allegations raised against her at Jayanti's killing.

Police have been interrogating Azam, a Dhaka Bank executive, who has persistently been denying the accusation of killing his wife. He says Javanti committed suicide.

Jayanti's mother Lucille Sadekin in a case filed last Saturday, accused Azam of murdering her daughter.

the canteen, badly damaged it and two other stationery shops. The

shop owners and canteen manag-ers alleged that the students also

snatched Tk one lakh from them.

The DMCH employees con-

fined six students and assaulted them. DU Assistant Proctor Asif

Nazrul rescued them later. At this

time, police were deployed around

went to the DMCH but police encircled them and charged

batons to bring the situation under

control. They also confined six

The students then staged a

lemonstration demanding release

of the six students. Police freed

More than 70 DU students again

the DMCH.

students.

AK Firoz Ahmed.

20 DU students FROM PAGE 12

CID officials said eight of the arrestees were from Bheramara students with iron rods, knives, sticks and sharp weapons, leaving and Doulatpur in Kushtia, a den of outlawed parties. Police said Abdul Wahed Bulbul rented the flat about two and a half at least 20 injured. Later, some 50 students went to

years ago and recently made it a den of criminals and a storehouse of arms, ammunition and contraband drugs under the camouflage of computer sales, service and etworking business.

Mohammad Ibrahim, Jasim and

Two separate cases under the Arms Act and Narcotics Control Act and one on charge of assembling arms and ammunition for commit ting crime were lodged with Kafrul Police Station yesterday.

Earlier, on October 14 last year Jolice recovered an abandoned JS-made M-16 rifle with 236 bullets from Ashulia and, on November 30, seized four AK-47 assault rifles, two revolvers, 20

Islam Kiron, Mizanur Rahman Jahed, Sohan Ahmed Jyoti, hand grenades, four time bombs and a large number of AK-47 ammu-Shahadat Hossain Saikat, Rafiqul nition from a signboard shop at Islam, Pradip Kumar Sarkar, Sayeed Hasan Ripon, Hamidur Kuril. Rahman Chowdhury, Monir Hossain, Hasmat Ullah, Noor Mohammad, Farid Hossain, However, no headway has yet been made in the sensational arms

and ammunition haul cases.

UN team

FROM PAGE 12

Rangamati. thorny problem in the way of the peace process initiated by the 1997 CHT peace treaty that ended a two-

The first phase of the one-year project was launched on July 14 last

Officer-in-charge of Ramna Police Station Mahbubur Rahman denied that police clubbed students. "We confined six students or interrogation but later released

hospital.

PM breaks ground Workers call off indefinite

Ministers, MPs, the elite including a large number of academics, diplomats and US Ambassador in Dhaka Harry K Thomas attended the function

The prime minister in her speech called it an historic event not only for the women of Bangladesh but also for the women of Asia where about 60 percent

of the world's poor, most of whom are women, live.

"Most of these women lack proper education and also have inadequate access to higher education," she said.

The prime minister said: "I am happy that the government has been able to provide a home for the unique institution in Bangladesh".

Pointing out that knowledge has become the driving force behind socio-economic development, she said the generation and dissemination of knowledge must ensure that there is no discrimination based on gender.

Referring to the Bangladesh situation where women constitute nearly 50 percent of the popula-tion, Khaleda said no nation can make progress with half of its population being treated as inferior to the other half.

The prime minister said the government is making sustained efforts to address the problems of gender inequities and to bring women in the mainstream of national life.

She mentioned her government's programmes like free education for girls up to higher secondary level and monthly stipend. Šhe also acknowledged the assistance and cooperation from the development partners in this regard.

"Young girls in rural areas no longer suffer from the feeling of being neglected by their families

Don't make mid-term

after meeting with the RRC at the ministry conference room.

Referring to the culture of tax evasion by commercial enter-prises, the minister said, "Although the Gulshan-Banani area hosts hundreds of hotels, restaurants and fast food joints, only a few establishments like Pizza Hut pay

During the clashes, panic gripped the DMCH outdoor wing and patients ran for cover. defeating system for the government in collecting tax. Besides lawyers also do not cooperate with DMCH Director Brigadier General Nazmul Huda visited the the NBR. When we file case against a tax evader, big lawyers demand hospital later and ordered locking the north-west entrance to the cash payment for representing us. But the government can't pay cash, as its system dictates payment in cheques. Therefore, big lawyers do

> The RRC report touches upon notary public services, tailoring services, building maintenance all aspects of tax and revenue collection, including black money, and cleaning, physicians, immiforeign travel tax, land tax, customs gration advisors, commercially run educational institutions, airclearance process, bonded warehouse, duty drawback and laws conditioned barber shops, broadband data transmission service, pre-paid calling cards including and rules. On black money and tax eva-VoIP-enabled ones and pets. sion, the RRC recommends contin-Later on, the RRC says, agriculuation of the amnesty given to untaxed income, if the incometural products should also be holders invest the money in probrought under Vat.

and look forward to a future full of possibilities and promises and to a ife of dignity and self-esteem," she told her audience.

She expressed the hope that the Asian University for Women would be truly international in scope, promote cross-cultural understanding, with respect for and nurturing of cultural diversities of the students of different religions,

ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. She hoped that the institution would soon emerge as a centre of

AL lawmaker

excellence

FROM PAGE 12 Agrabad in the port city of

Chittagong. The charge-framing dragged on, as the lawmaker obtained a High Court stay order in his favour while the prosecution appealed against it, prompting the tribunal to shift the date several times.

The tribunal scheduled the next hearing on the charges for January 20 and will hear 48 witnesses dur ing the trial.

The tribunal responding to a petition allowed bail to Fazle Karim under the MP Privileges Act until January 28

the lawmaker were present in cour vesterday.

The main accused, Azimuddin Mahmud and his mother Elahi Zan, blamed for masterminding the murder in a bid to grab land o Srikanta's family, have been evading arrest since the incident. Srikanta's mother Shikha

Rakshit filed a case against 11 people with Kotwali Police Station and Fazle Karim and another five were named in the charge sheet later.

press, "We shall discuss with busi-

ness people before we take a deci-

The RRC also maintains that the

customs valuation system should

collect all international price

The RRC feels that the diplo-

commissars and hard currency

shops should be abolished while

duty-free shops should only oper-

tax) net, the RRC wants inclusion of

13 products and 25 services in it.

To expand the Vat (value added

Among the products are locally-

Among the services are decora-

"The government should aim at

"For a country with 130 million

people, the total number of income

tax assessees is only 8,58,203 or

0.66 percent of the population.

interest of humanity' the Appellate

Division may issue a directive in

ment to constitute a separate judi-cial service commission and recruit

Bangladesh Chambers of

Commerce and Industry will

accompany her to tap business

potentials. The list of business

people has not yet been prepared

but those already having trade ties

Monday approved the draft of an

agreement on boosting bilateral trade between Bangladesh and

Indonesia. The pact is likely to be

Sources said Bangladeshi work

be taken to sign an agreement for a

long-term manpower export.

The cabinet in its last meeting

with Jakarta will get priority.

her first visit to Brunei.

waiting candidates through it?"

PM to visit

The Appellate Division appar-

favour of them.

FROM PAGE 1

visit.

dom.

made ballpoint pens, cell-phones and different types of fibres.

tors in the cities, dental care cen-

tres, legal services, commercial

ate at the airports.

The finance minister told RRC members though he wanted to implement all the recommendations, reality might not permit so, meeting sources said quoting the minister.

bulletins and use, among other information. matic bonded warehouses, EPZ taxes properly.'

them on request from DU Proctor An NBR top official said, "Litiga-tion remains a very complex and not work for us."

coaching centres, translation and

strike at

Mongla Port

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Mongla Port Dock Workers Union yesterday agreed to withdraw their indefinite strike following a successful discussion with the government.

The government agreed to allocate Tk 12 crore for the golden handshake to 1,200 workers.

"The discussion was fruitful and the workers agreed to withdraw the strike, which was to begin today,' Mongla Port Authority (MPA) Chairman Commodore (rtd) MK Alam told The Daily Star last night. The MPA chairman, joint direc-

tor of labour and representatives from the local administration were present at the discussion with the abour leaders led by President of Mongla Port Dock Sramik Sangha Khalilur Rahman.

Hasina slams shrine blast

STAFF CORRESPONDENT Fifteen of the accused including Leader of the Opposition in

Parliament and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina in a statement yesterday said the bomb blast incident at the shrine of saint Shahialal on Monday night was a 'planned attack by an identified group'.

> Expressing her grave concern over the bomb explosion, Hasina " the heinous act of poisoning Gojar fish at the pond of the shrine was also done by the same group."

Hasina said the incident of bomb blast took place following Delwar Hossain Saidee's remarks about Urs at a Mahfil in Sylhet on January 2. At the Mahfil, Saidee criticised Urs and called for resisting the programme, she added.

The AL chief demanded exemplary punishment to the culprits.

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain has also expressed be modernised. The customs department should subscribe to grave concern over the incident and demanded arrest of and pun-Reuters commodity price service, ishment to the persons involved.

means, the internet as a source of Sylhet shrine FROM PAGE 1

They said the fact that no-one from the ruling party visited the shrine goes to show the government's apathy about the tragic incident.

A team of army bomb experts visited the place of occurrence and surrounding areas in the early hours of yesterday. They collected samples of bomb splinters and other evidences.

not find them involved in crimes A 70-strong contingent of the paramilitary BDR (Bangladesh A special meeting of all con-cerned will be held at the DIG's Rifles) together with a contingent of police has cordoned off a 2000office today to make the final prepsquare-foot area around the spot arations. where the bomb went off at around 8:30pm on Monday in the middle charge of Babuganj Police Station, of a huge crowd, about 60 yards

JCD, Shibir men

DHAKA WEDNESDAY JANUARY 14, 2004

lobbing teargas canisters. "At least 30 teargas shells were lobbed," said

Wahidur Rahman a senior police

At 3:30pm, RU authorities initi-

ated a reconciliation meeting which

failed as the JCD workers assaulted

RU Students' Advisor Prof Rafiqul

Islam, alleging that he aided and abetted the ICS-sponsored black

However, taking advantage of the

lull in the clashes for about half an

hour, ICS men captured the vantage

points on the campus and in the

The ejected JCD workers gath-

ered on Dhaka-Rajshahi Highway and obstructed traffic movement for

two hours. They also damaged two

huge contingents of armed police

were deployed to avert further

When contacted, RU JCD General

Secretary Aslam Reza blamed RU

authorities for the clashes. "If they

had acted on our previous com-

plaints of black marketing of forms,

the incidents would not have hap-

RU ICS President Rezaul Karim

said it was in retaliation against a JCD

attack on his organisation's tent on

a meeting to discuss the situation

and none of them could be contacted

did not have illegal arms as it

handed one foreign-made and 16

Awami League leader and a linch-

pin of the Kamrul Group, also

claimed his outfit surrendered 13 firearms, one of them foreign-

made. Swapan is also Agorpur

A police official, who would not

ive his name, said the operatives

id not surrender their guns offi-

cially, adding: "Most went out of

On the cases against the opera-

tives, Additional Superintendent of

Police Tamijuddin said the charges

would be dealt with in line with the

Police described some cases as

the result of an internal conflict

and clashes among the operatives

and said up to eight cases were

withdrawn upon a compromise

Locals demanded punishment

State Minister for Home Lutfozzaman Babar declined to

comment on the move but said he

was not kept posted on the surren-

Barisal Shaikh Abul Kalam said: "I

don't know much about it.

Deputy Commissioner of

Barisal Mayor Mujibur Rahman

Sarwar said all preparations were

complete to organise the surrender

of the people, engaged in crimes.

between the two groups.

to the criminals

order and were found abandoned.

Khaled Hossain Swapan, local

other rifles to police before.

Union Parisĥad chairman.

University authorities have called

Tension gripped the campus as

passenger busses, sources said.

officer posted on the campus.

marketing of admission forms.

residential halls.

clashes.

pened.

the campus.

for comments.

FROM PAGE 1

witnesses and police said. The ICS cadres drove all JCD men out of the campus and occupied the residential halls by 6:00pm.

"Both groups used firearms and the ICS cadres used sophisticated ones," said a senior police official, wishing to remain unnamed.

In the afternoon, a group of JCD men beat up non-student ICS cadre Tuhin in front of the Agrani Bank, RU Branch, while he was reportedly selling admission forms in the black market.

The ICS cadres in retaliation attacked the JCD tent on the campus and all the male residential halls simultaneously. They also ransacked rooms of the JCD workers after locking the hall gates.

The ICS cadres damaged at least a dozen rooms of different halls and burnt party assets and portraits of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and her son Tarique Rahman, sources at the hallssaid

"The rooms of the Madar Bux and Habibur Rahman halls bore the brunt of the attack," a RU teacher said.

During the clashes, ICS cadres threatened RU correspondent of the Daily Ittefaq Ismail Ĥossain Murad with death and asked other journalists to leave the campus.

An hour later, both groups locked

80 outlaws

in a violent clash behind the admin-

istrative building. But police inter-vened and dispersed both groups

talks with the leaders of under-

ground outfits -- Zia and Kamrul

groups -- over the last four months

amid the law and order downslide.

Also attended by other high

police officials, including the

superintendent of police, the meetings were held at the DIG's

residence in Barisal and in differ-

ent places of Gournadi, Uzirpur

and Babuganj, the southern upazilas believed to be strong

Assistant Public Prosecutor

Shamsul Huq said the case or

allegation against any person

could be dismissed, removed, or

excused only by a state order and

cases of murder, arms, explosives

and other serious crimes cannot be

"Only surrender does not put an end to their cases," he said.

opportunity for them to return

home. The court will deal with the

cases against them. We have noth-

charges," the DIG said last night.

since then," he emphasised.

ing to do with clearing them of

"I am convinced that the opera-

tives have no firearms now. I have

watched them since June and I did

"Friday's programme is just an

FROM PAGE 1

bases of outlaws.

disposed of without it.

decade tribal insurgency in the region, PCISS leaders were quoted as telling the UN team.

They said any peace initiative that fails to address the 'honour able rehabilitation' of the region's thousands of indigenous internal refugees would be unwelcome.

On the other hand, Bangalee leaders demanded that their com-munity be brought under the donor-sponsored development programmes in the region without any discrimination.

In a written statement to the UN team, Bangalee Chhatra Parishad, student organisation of local Bangalees, alleged that they are treated unfairly by donor organisations in terms of jobs, which, they said, are awarded mostly to the indigenous people.

During the team's Khagrachhari visit, local Bangalees staged a demonstration demanding equal rights.

The high-profile UN team reportedly rushed to the CHT after the PCJSS raised objection regarding the potential beneficiaries of the UNDP-aided 'income generating and confidence building pro-ject' through its CHT Development Facility (CHTDF) field office in

ar after a long security assessment and a one-year study reflecting the opinions of all parties involved in

FROM PAGE 12

possible under the BNP-Jamaat coalition government. So, the possibility of our participation in the Kushtia by-elections is very slim," AL General Secretary Abdul Jalilsaid.

February 8

Indo-Bangla

FROM PAGE 12

start of the census as a milestone in cross-border collaboration to protect globally significant biodiversity.

Attempts to assess the number of Bengal Tigers in the Sundarbans have been undertaken before using satellite images and a method called 'sampling', where tigers are counted in particular habitats and the figures are extrapolated to estimate numbers in similar hab-

However, a method that involves collecting impressions of tigers' footprints left in the mangrove mud during low tide has proved most accurate. From the footprints scientists can ascertain the age, weight and gender of an animal. This method will be used by the census teams.

Earlier this week, six officials from the Bangladesh Forest Department travelled to West Bengal to join their Indian counterparts to begin the census, said the press release. They will also learn new skills for trapping 'stray' tigers and relocating them in the wild. Upon their return, the Bangladesh officials will train a further 200 forest department staff in the new tech-niques.

the CHT peace process, sources said.

AL may boycott

FROM PAGE 12

The AL Parliamentary Party will review the latest political situation and take a final decision on joining the by-polls by January18, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Some smaller opposition par-ties including Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Inu) will contest the by-polls.

Nomination papers for the by-elections are to be submitted by January-24, scrutiny of nomina-tion papers will take place on January 25 and the last date for withdrawal of nomination is February 8

The AL has boycotted all by-polls, except for the Netrokona-3 ballot, held after the October 1 general elections in 2001. The BNP candidate was elected in Netrokona-3 and the AL rejected the polls results raising allegations of rigging of rigging.

The joint tiger census is expected to begin in the first half of February in the Bangladesh part of the Sundarbans, and Indian experts will work with the survey tramehere.

figures on the Bengal Tiger.

the habits of tigers.

Local communities living in and

To further preserve the dwin-

'As a safety precaution villagers

around the Sundarbans will be

consulted during the census for their firsthand knowledge about

dling tiger population these com-munities will receive training on

elping to relocate 'stray' tigers.

generally kill tigers that wander too close to their settlements. We estimate that five to six stray ani-mals are killed by villagers in Bangladesh each year," UNDP

Programme Officer Aminul Islam

of local communities has proved very effective in India, where villag-ers now alert the forest department

of potentially troublesome ani-

Relocating tigers with the help

teams here.

them on assurance from the DU authorities that they would not disturb peace at the DMCH," he said.

Dhaka, Seoul

defence industrial base through joint training and research, exchange of armed forces personnel and information and procure-ment of defence materials and services.

Brig Gen Ismat Ahmed Chowdhury and Mohammad Alimusshan, joint secretaries of the ministry, also attended the signing ceremony at the defence ministry.

GMG flights FROM PAGE 12

Dhaka-Kathmandu and Chittagong-Kolkata routes.

But GMG did not get the coveted routes, as Biman Bangladesh Airlines occupies the flight frequency allotted in air services greements with India and Nepal.

GMG would have to purchase et aircraft to fly to international destinations, as turbo-propelled planes in their fleet are unfit for long-distance flights, sources said.

Beginning its operation on April 6, 1998, GMG now connects Dhaka to Chittagong, Sylhet, Jessore, Barisal and Cox's Bazar with 28 flights a day on average.

Dazzles FROM PAGE 12

late Dr. Lyman Spitzer, Jr. He was one The census is expected to reach all corners of the world's largest mangrove forest and provide the first consolidated population of the 20th century's most influential scientists, and in the mid-1940s, he first proposed placing telescopes in space.

"NASA's newest Great Observatory is open for business, and it is beginning to take its place at the forefront of science," said Nasa's Associate Administrator for Space Science, Dr. Ed Weiler. "Like Hubble, Compton and Chandra, the new Spitzer Space Telescope will soon be making major discoveries, and, as these first images show, should excite the public with views of the cosmoslike we've never had before."

"The Spitzer Space Telescope is working extremely well. The scientists who are starting to use it deeply appreciate the ingenuity and dedica tion of the thousands of people devoted to development and opera-tions of the mission," said Dr. Michael Werner, project scientist for the Spitzer Space Telescope at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, Calif

ductive activities The RRC suggests cancellation raising the tax-GDP (gross domesof the tax holiday system and tic product) ratio at the rate of 0.45 introduction of a uniform reduced percent of GDP per annum in real tax rate for the industrial sector. terms till it reaches 12.61 percent of GDP by 2012," the RRC report says.

The government should scrap the pre-shipment inspection (PSI) system and instead introduce scanning devises to monitor shipments to save time and avoid harassment.

This is perhaps the lowest among the developing countries," RRC On the issue of scrapping the PSI, the finance minister told the notes.

Dr Kamal accuses govt

FROM PAGE 1

of judiciary clearly states how recruitment of judges should take place. The court cannot ignore that directive

The court however has not said anything on Dr Kamal's appeal. It observed that the time given to the government to implement the 12point directive on the separation of judiciary had not expired.

Dr Kamal submitted to the court, as per Article 112 of the constitution, it is mandatory upon the government to implement the High Court directive. But various quarters are trying to convince the government that if judiciary is separated, the administration cannot be run properly. But judiciary has been separated in India and Pakistan through court orders and they are not facing any problems.

Dr Kamal suggested the Supreme Court to give a week's deadline -- without hurting the status of both the executive wing and the judiciary -- to form a judicial service commission.

"We don't want any clash between these two pillars. But if the government does not implement the High Court verdict without any valid reason, contempt of court charges should be brought against

Pleading for appointment of judges through 22nd BCS cadres Barrister Rafiq-ul-Haq said that the selected BCS examinees were getting old waiting for their appointment. Therefore, 'in the

from the mausoleum.

The law-enforcers will remain deployed there indefinitely, official sources said.

Elsewhere within the precincts of the shrine and the adjacent mosque, this correspondent saw thousands of devotees chanting and praying at around 4:00am, only a few hours after the blast.

The deputy inspector general (DIG) of police (Sylhet Range) formed a 4-member committee of police officials to investigate the explosion. The committee has been instructed to report to the DIG within seven days.

Requesting anonymity, a senior police official hinted that the bomb went off minutes after it was planted, possibly a few inches underground.

A brother of the shrine's caretaker filed an FIR with the Kotwali Police yesterday and demanded punishment to the culprits.

He said that over several days leading up to the bomb blast, shrine authorities received anonymous phone calls threatening to disrupt the Urs.

The caretaker's family sources also alleged that authorities of the adjacent madrassah did not allow ently annoyed replied, "Are you asking us to change our own ver-dict? Why don't you ask the governcar parking facilities on their premises under pressure from the Jamaat-e-Islami that has allegedly been trying to thwart the Urs programme.

Kotwali police picked up 24 people from nearby areas and began interrogating them yesterday afternoon, a police official said

The 2-day Urs ended through a munajat after Fajr prayers. Several thousand people were still in the area yesterday evening.

UPDF men FROM PAGE 12

Naniarchar upazila, killed three and abducted 10 villagers appar-ently for sheltering UPDF men.

signed during the prime minister's Police could not make any headway into the incident, as the abducted are still missing and the Khaleda will fly to Brunei on January 25 from Indonesia and stay attackers at large. But police filed a murder case, said sources in District Special Branch (DSB) of there until the day after. This will be police.

Besides trade, the focus of Police Saturday recovered official talks will fall on increasing another body of an indigenous youth claimed to be an activist of export of manpower from Bangladesh to the oil-rich kingthe Paharee Chhatra Parishad (PCP), student wing of the PCJSS, from Boroiyatola in Barkal upazila. ers are highly appreciated in Brunei and this is why efforts will

The PCP Rangamati district unit at a rally in the town Sunday demanded immediate arrest of the killers.

said both groups agreed to end attacks and counter-attacks.

Mohammad Zaman, officer-in-

On the surrender of the operatives without arms, Golam Mostafa Nanna, ex-vice-president of Babuganj upazila BNP and a leader of the Zia Group, claimed his group

Sarwar, also one of the Jatiya Sangsad whips, said some socalled sarbaharas surrendered their arms to police following an understanding with law enforcers and would now formally surrender themselves.

Ahmadiyya book ban

FROM PAGE 1

awarding contracts is another issue affecting trade and investment in Bangladesh, and all these are leaving a negative impression on the US, he told

Crowley also mentioned that presently the US has a huge trade deficit with Bangladesh, which needs to be closed.

He also praised garment exporters for creating job opportunities for the women and Bangladesh for being a moderate Muslim nation.

"Bangladesh is a tolerant nation having a liberal, open and democratic society. We need Bangladesh more as a friend today than in the past," said the lawmaker, who is the founder and cochair of Congressional Caucus on Bangladesh pursuing Bangladesh's interest in the US.

He dismissed the notion that Bangladesh's demand for a preferential access to the US market is linked with the export of natural gas.

BGMEA President Quazi Moniruzzaman highlighted the challenges of the industry in the quota-free trade regime, barely a ear away ties.

"Because of the upcoming changes in global business, it might not be possible for us to survive if the US does not allow preferential access of the Bangladesh garment products to its market," he said.

"The privileges offered by the JS to Bangladesh's rival countries nave created an uneven playing field for Dhaka.

"As a result, Bangladesh's export to the US market has reduced by 18 percent in 2003 compared to 2001 in terms of

value. "The USTDA-2000, NAFTA, bilateral agreements between the US and many other countries like ordan, Israel have made Bangladesh's export highly competitive," he said.

The US abolished quota on 29 apparel categories on January 1, 2002, which helped only China to increase its exports in these categories by \$980m to the US. But the rest of the countries experienced an export slump to the tune of \$813m due to the quota removal, said the BGMEA president.

China, now fifth largest apparel exporter, might see a 150 percent increase in their overall textile and clothing exports for the quota phase-out, he feared.

According to a World Bank estimate, China will control nearly half of the world's clothing by 2010.

Crowley meanwhile explained that Bangladesh missed out on the Trade Ďevelopment Act 2000 (TDA) mostly because Dhaka did not resolutely pursue its inclusion in the trade bill.

Under the TDA, some 72 Caribbean and African countries, including few LDCs, have been granted preferential market access to the US.

He pointed out that at the time of enacting the TDA 2000 there was no lobbyist for Bangladesh to plead its case with the US authori-

Bush unveils

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tighten restrictions aimed at curbing the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

Bush termed the expanded cooperation as "an important milestone in transforming the relationship between the United States and India. That relationship is based increasingly on common values and common interests.'

"We are working together to promote global peace and prosperity. We are partners in the war on terrorism and we are partners in controlling the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them," Bush said