## **Check cop extortion** of cattle traders

MPs tells home minister at a meeting

cattle importers and traders and warned of stern action against the officials concerned in case of

The meeting suggested setting

up of mobile courts for Eid cattle

markets for their smooth opera-

Plain-clothesmen and other law enforcers will be deployed in the

up 12 cattle markets for the Eid but

The meeting was attended by MPs from Meherpur, Jessore, Satkhira, Naogaon, Joypurhat,

Farooq, the inspector general of

police, a joint secretary of the

commerce ministry, directors general of Bangladesh Rifles, Ansar

and Coast Guard and DCC repre-

A team of Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) seized four mounds

of marijuana and nabbed two alleged drug peddlers at Airport

Being tipped off, a DNC team held Akhtar Hossain, 28, and Zakir Hossain, 25, with five sacks of marijuana at 6:25am after they

with three others reached the station on a Dhaka-bound inter-

district Upaban train, sources said.

However, other associates of the

The DNC claimed yesterday's

haul as the biggest ever in Dhaka

A case was filed with Railway police.

said Mohammad Zahid, a resident of

was talking to as Shahin, a local ward unit leader of Bangladesh Chhatra

Firoz took a bullet in the chest and was rushed to Suhrawardy Hospital where he died.

The victim's uncle said a gang of extortionists had been demanding money from Firoz for some time, and that the murder could be related to

The two bodies were sent to the DMCH for autopsy.

anti-Ahmadiyya issue at the meet-

declines to include representatives of the BJP and IOJ in the cabinet, they will demand that the prime

ster drop the two Jam

Islami ministers from the cabinet.

not to be named, said the message of the resolution was conveyed to

the prime minister through intelligence agencies.

Narayanganj, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi cities from Tk 125 to

Tk 300. For residential holdings in

those cities the proposed tax is Tk

and Tk 35 as tax per decimal for

residential and commercial holdings respectively at district towns, instead of the present Tk 5 and Tk

The RRC favours charging Tk 20

It also recommends introduc-

ing irrigation tax in the command

areas of large irrigation projects

like the Chandpur Irrigation

Project, Muhuri Irrigation Project,

DND Project, Meghna-Dhanagoda Project, Ganges-Kobadek Project

and North Bengal Tubewell

Irrigation Project. It proposes

collecting 3 percent of the esti-

mated value of incremental output

of crops as irrigation tax in these

Suicide bomber

triangle, where resistance to the American-led occupation is

Tuesday's attacks at Samarra involved people firing from a convoy of eight vehicles, Major Aberle said.

the six others were seized and their 26 occupants were arrested, she

Major Aberle described the way the Iraqis had initially opened fire on the US troops as a "drive-by

soldiers with automatic weapons. They attempted to escape after the initial confrontation," she said.

The four men held after a dawn raid in Samarra are all thought to be nephews of the former vice-president, Al-Douri, who has a \$10m bounty on his head.

American forces suspect they had been sheltering him in a series

Lieutenant-Colonel David Poirier said the men arrested had been "enablers" for Al-Douri and they had good information on his whereabouts.

"We think that [the raid]

brought us one step closer to finding him."

of safe houses.

"The attackers fired on the

Two cars were destroyed while

Land tax

60 per decimal.

22 respectively.

FROM PAGE 12

Sources said if the ruling BNP

A frontline BJP leader, asking

Locals identified the man Firoz

2 held with

marijuana

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Railway Station yesterday.

pair fled, sources added.

Sergeant

FROM PAGE 1

Amini

Home Secretary Omar

Dhaka City Corporation will set

t on the streets, meeting sources

cattle markets in the capital.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of parliament (MP) from the northern and southwestern bordering districts have demanded adequate steps to check police repression and extortion of cattle traders during the ensuing Eid-ul-

They made the demand at an inter-ministerial meeting at the home ministry yesterday with Home Minister Altaf Hossain Choudhury in the chair.

The lawmakers told the meeting that in the past cattle traders had to pay toll and bribe at more than eight spots on their way to the capital. As a result, the cattle prices went up and traders felt insecure on their way back home with

The meeting also discussed harassment of hides and skin traders during the Eid and decided to ensure that hides and skin are not smuggled out. It also decided that genuine traders will be given bankloans.

Participants in the meeting suggested revival of the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) to import onion to avoid its crisis. They feared that shortage of onion would take a turn for the worse before and during the Eid.

The meeting was told that the government would allow more import of cattle but measures will be taken to stop their smuggling. The lawmakers suggested opening of more entry points on the borders to help increase cattle import.

The home ministry already asked the district and upzila

### Singapore Airlines too leaves Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Silkair, the regional wing of Singapore Airlines, suspends its operation on Chittagong-Singapore route from today, airlines sources said.

The suspension will come into effect after take-off of the airlines' final flight

from Chittagong Shah Amanat International Airport at 2:00pm, sources added.

Silkair introduced its service on the route via Yangon twice a week--Monday and Thursday--

in March 2002. Business sources said fall in the number of passengers and relocation of companies to

Dhaka from Chittagong are the reasons behind the suspension. Singapore Airlines is the latest to halt its service from

Chittagong, sources said. Earlier, Phuket Air, a private

Thai Airlines and Indian Airlines suspended their services.

vice on Chittagong-Bangkok route on June 2003 and Indian Airlines suspended its flights on Chittagong-Kolkata route early last year.

## Anti-Dewanbagi zealots ready for showdown

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An uneasy calm prevails at Arambagh as an Islamist outfit has ralling as all islamist outlit has called for a demonstration beside Bab-e-Rahmat, office of the Dewanbagi pir, to stop the annual 'Biswa Asheq-e-Rasul Sammelan' there tomorrow.

Activists of the Iman Aqida Sangrakkhan Committee (IASC) and the Islamic Shashantantra Andolon (ISA) brought out separate processions in the city yesterday, a day after supporters of Charmonai and Dewanbagi pirs clashed at Siddhirganj in Narayanganj, leaving seven people injured.

Participants of the processions that began from the north gate of Baitul Mokarram National Mosque after Asr prayers chanted slogans demanding arrest of Dewanbagi Pir Maddazilluhul Ali and all his disci-ples and a ban on Dewanbagi activi-

Cordoned by policemen to check any violence, the procession ended where it started. The IASC and the ISA later held a joint demonstration there.

## AL leader shot dead in Khulna

UNB, Khulna An Awami League (AL) leader and Union Parishad chairman was gunned down by unidentified assailants near his home in

Police said Chan Mia Sikder, 45, chairman of Sachidaha Union Parishad and organising secretary of AL's Terokhada upazila unit, came under attack at

Terokhada upazila yesterday after-

Boyar crossing in Charpatla area at about 3:45pm while he was returning home from a bazaar by a

Locals said a gang of three shot Sikder point-blank in the chest and head and fled the spot riding a motorbike. He died instantly

Police recovered the body and sent it to hospital morgue for

## JU teacher assault **Probe clears JCD** men

JU CORRESPONDENT

The committee to probe the assault on teachers by the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) men at Shaheed Salam Barkat (SSB) Hall on August 10, last year submitted its report Tuesday without any recommenda-

Provost of SSB Hall AKM Shahnawaz rejected the report, describing it as an eyewash.

The five-member committee headed by Treasurer ABM Enayet Hossain submitted the report to Vice-chancellor Prof Jasim Uddin Ahmed. The report pointed out what should be the students' behaviour rather than accusing the CD. JCD activists of the incident, sources said.

A committee member preferring anonymity said, "No-one came forward with any evidence against the JCD. That is why we made no recommendation." made no recommendation.

The JCD activists assaulted and kept confined the provost and eight house tutors of the SSB Hall to the hall office for five hours.

## Crowley worried

Participating editors, after the meeting with Crowley, said the issues discussed included the treatment of minorities, the economy, good governance, political instability and the negative impression held by the American public of Bangladesh.

The congressman expressed dismay over Bangladesh topping the global corruption rankings for three years running. "Even if we work very hard, it's very difficult to sell a country if it remains at the top of the corruption index for three consecutive years," he said, suggesting the nation needs to overhaulits police force.

Greater political consensus and tolerance of minorities are also required to attract increased foreign investment, Crowley said. Investors are discouraged by the government's practice of suspending contracts following regime changes in Bangladesh, he added.

However, Crowley stressed that Americans do sympathize with the challenges Bangladesh is trying to overcome, and that the country can benefit from this sympathy.

Crowley said he will continue to champion free market access to the US for Bangladesh, similar to the access of Caribbean and sub-Saharan countries after 2004.

After the meeting, Abdul Awal Mintoo, President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said, "We are trying to sign TIFA (Trade and Investment Framework Agreement) with the USA. It's the first step towards a sustainable relationship that may lead to the signing of a trade agree-

During his stay, congressman Crowley and his entourage called on both the prime minister and the leader of the opposition, and met with various religious, business and non-profit groups, including the UNFPA-assisted Adolescent Reproductive Health Project at Sonargaon.

### Abducted trader FROM PAGE 12

family declined to pay ransom to his captors, family sources alleged. Unidentified miscreants abducted Saidur on Sunday when he was returning home on his motorcycle at about 9:00pm and they later demanded Tk 2 lakh in ransom, police said.

Gono Bahini of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, an outlawed organisation, might have links with his murder, police suspected.

Police found the wood trader's motorbike near Harinarayanpur field. However, they failed to recover the beheaded body till the writing of this report at 6:30 last evening.

Police handed over the head to the father in the afternoon, sources

A case was lodged with Sadar Police Station.

### JS body FROM PAGE 1

held on January 25 or 26.

"Widespread allegations have been raised against the ministry including its purchase of Volvo buses under the present government. We want to ensure accountability in the ministry activities," Monjur said.

The sub-committee on the CNG scam will start work in a couple of days, he added.

The four-member subcommittee was formed on January 7 in the wake of allegations that Uttara Motors, the sole importer of the autorickshaws, sold 8,000 vehicles at about Tk 3.67 lakh each against the real price of Tk 1.67 lakh each.

Five days after the formation of the body. Communications Minister Nazmul Huda in a letter appealed to the standing committee chairman to recast the sub-committee. "Six members of the eight mem-

per standing committee were present at the meeting, but no one, including the communications minister, disagreed with the formation of the sub-committee," Monjur

"It is quite surprising that the minister has appealed to recast the sub-committee.

Monjur said he received a com-plaint yesterday from Cox's Bazar in which one Zaker alleged that bribe played a vital role in the land allocation for a local CNG filling station.

Zaker alleged that he applied, but was denied the land as he did not pay

Allegations of financial corruption and mismanagement are also rife in BRTC and BRTA.

# RU shut down till February 7

AN RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University (RU) has been closed until February 7 as authorities feared recurrence of campus violence in the wake of Tuesday's armed clash between Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) that left at least 50 people injured.

The RU syndicate took the decision yesterday after proctors of resident halls indicated the situation has gone out of control with armed cadres roaming the campus to establish supremacy.

Sources said ICS cadres raided all men's dormitories between Tuesday midnight and early yesterday. They beat up some 20 JCD leaders and activists with iron rods and ransacked their rooms. RU Vice-chancellor (VC) Prof

Faisul Islam Faruki convened the syndicate meeting just after the JCD called an indefinite strike on the campus to protest what it called was the ICS-sponsored violence to undermine the JCD. Residents of men's dormitories

campus residents were given until 8:00am today to get out. "All classes and examinations have been withheld but admission forms will still be available," said Pro-VC Prof AKM Shahadat Hossain

were asked to vacate their rooms by

6:00pm yesterday while female on

A seven-member committee led

by RU Treasurer Abdul Jabbar investigating Tuesday's incident has been asked to submit its report in seven days.

The syndicate will also request the government to launch a judicial probe into the armed clash, sources

## **Artiste Mimi** interrogated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police interrogated TV artiste Afsana Mimi at Gulshan Police Station to ascertain the relations between her and Azam Tuesday

One of the interrogators said

Mimi claimed to be Azam's friend, with whom she had travelled many places during the last few months. She will go through further interrogation to clarify the relations, the nvestigator added.

Mother of Jayanti and her brother-in-law have also been questioned by the investigators and high officials, according to Police are interrogating Azam, a

Dhaka Bank executive, who is persistently denying the accusation of killing his wife Jayanti, saying she committed suicide.

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

# 150 seats to JS

minister told the meeting that a bill providing for the enhanced JS seats would be passed in the upcoming JS session. The move is aimed at keeping pace with the rising popu-

"The 300-member parliament was suitable for the seven crore population what has virtually doubled over the years," a meeting source quoted Khaleda as saying.

**PORTRAIT DEBATE** The premier also hinted at the

passage of another bill proposing for hanging of the portraits of the heads of state and government at

BJP Chairman Naziur Rahman Manjur reminded the prime minister of her commitment in the Jatiya Sangsad to hang the portraits of national leaders, including Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, at government offices. Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary

General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid objected to Manjur's remarks, saying his party would not support any move to hang Mujib's portrait at government offices. "You (Jamaat) are controversial

as razakars for your opposition to the War of Liberation. You don't have any right to suggest anything about the Bangabandhu," an incensed Manjur thundered on hearing Mujahid's comments.

Khaleda and other key leaders kept silent, but BNP Standing

## 50,000 'fake'

FROM PAGE 12

parliamentary committee, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"This time we asked the ministry to maintain transparency in the ongoing process. As the fakes have been crossed off the list, the number is supposed to be fewer than the previous one's.'

The parliamentary committee decided that six lawmakers of the committee will monitor the enlisting process.

Meanwhile, the liberation war affairs ministry will provide a loan of Tk 25 crore to the war-wounded freedom fighters without interest.

Committee Member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain stepped in to restore calm.

After the debate, Khaleda said the portraits of all former presidents and national leaders were at Bangabhaban and they could be hanged in Bangladesh missions abroad to enable foreigners to know

She said the portraits of the president and prime minister would be hanged at government offices and the portrait of no one would be hanged permanently.

The prime minister rejected the demand of anti-Ahmadiyya agita-tors to declare the sect non-Muslim when Islami Oikya Jote Chairman Azizul Haq raised the issue at the

the two-hour meeting. Some alliance leaders raised the issue of Awami League's (AL) ultimatum to the government to step

down, but the premier appeared less concerned over the opposition "We have nothing to fear. Don't

read too much into Awami League's threat. The alliance did not take office banking on the AL vote," she

led the government to improve the security arrangements.

discussed a new security strategy drawn up by police and discussed at different meetings between the police and Special Security Force

The protection formula was not however finalised as the meeting felt it needs further improvement. Representatives from the President's Guard Regiment, the SSF, Directorate General of Forces Intelligence, Criminal Investigation Department, Special Branch and Detective Branch were present among others.

# Anti-Ahmadiyya

Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ), on January 20 for the same demand.

Majlis-e-Tahaffuz President and Khatib of Baitul Mokarram National Mosque Obaidul Haq will preside over tomorrow's demonstration to be addressed by the outfit leaders from Egypt, India, London, Pakistan and Saudi

what it said were objectionable materials in Ahmadiyya publications that "hurt or might hurt the sentiments of the majority Muslims"

The ban viewed as the first step towards declaring the Ahmadiyyas non-Muslim, came after religious bigots, represented mainly by the IOJ, launched an anti-Ahmadiyya campaign with Hifazate Khatme Nabuwat Andolon at the forefront.

that includes another demonstration on January 23 at Paltan Maidan, Majlis-e-Tahaffuz General Secretary Mohammad Nurul Islam at a press conference at its office in Dhaka welcomed the

ing people with their books," he

said, tamping down the allegation by socio-cultural, political and rights groups of human-rights violations.

Aamra Dhakabshi President Shamsul Haq will chair the January 23 demonstration, which will also begin after Friday prayers.

Activists of the organisation will bring out processions and stage rallies in different parts of the city from January 18-22 in the build-up to the demonstration for which Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis expressed solidarity with Majlis-e-

At a press conference yesterday Khelafat Mailis Amir and IO Chairman Shaikhul Hadith Azizul Haq asked the government to declare Ahmadiyyas non-Muslim and identify them as a minority community.

"We welcome the ban on Ahmadiyya books, but it was just part of the demand," he said.

Muslim and pave the way for peaceful coexistence with people of other sects and religions," he "Ahmadiyyas are misinterpret

ing the holy Quran to establish Mirza Golam Ahmad as a prophet," alleged Khelafat Majlis Secretary General Abdur Rab Yusufi.

## Cops chase down 7 robbers in **Motijheel**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday arrested seven alleged inter-district robbers with firearms in Motijheel after chasing the bus they boarded down for an hour from Sobhanbagh.

Mohammad Sohrab, 28 Mohammad Amirul Islam, 29 Alamgir, 27, Mohammad Anisur Rahman, 30, Anwar Hossain, 28, Mizan, 29, and Abdul Barek, 30, were arrested with a pipegun and a cartridge, police said. Tipped-off, the police team

approached to search a Gabtolibound bus (Dhaka Metro Ja-5072) in front of Prince Plaza at Sobhanbagh at about 1:45am but it speeded up to dodge police, said MA Malek, officer-in-charge of Mohammadpur Police Station.

"We chased the passenger bus and asked all police stations to stop it as its movement raised suspicion among us," he added.

Despite the alert, Tejgaon and Ramna police failed to stop the vehicle at different city points.

Motijheel police put up a roadblock in the Danik Bangla intersection as Mohammadpur police were chasing the bus down. However, the bus took a U-turn in a last-ditch evasive action but could not go far off, Malek added.

Barek jumped from the bus during the chase and was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with head injuries

During preliminary quizzing the alleged robbers said they looted buses and other vehicles at various points between Gabtali and Gulistan and on several highways, Malek said. Two cases were lodged with

Mohammadpur Police Station.

### Asian Art

FROM PAGE 12

inaugurate the 17-day exhibition at Osmani Memorial Auditorium at 12:00 noon.

The participating countries include Algeria, Australia, Bahrain, Bhutan, China, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malaysia, Morocco, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine Philippine, Qatar, Korea, Russia Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, UAE, Vietnam, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

A total of 633 artworks of 375 artists of the participating countries will be put on display at Osmani Memorial Auditorium, National Museum and Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy during the exhibition.

Some 214 artworks of 185 artists of host Bangladesh are among the 633 artworks.

This year, the jury consists of five members. They are Prof Ali Akai of Turkey, Prof Gholam Hossain Babai of Iran, Prof. Gholam Mohommad Sheikh of India and artist Prof Murtaja Baseer and art critic Mijarul Quays

of Bangladesh. Three artworks will receive the Grand Prize, carrying Tk 1 lakh, on

the recommendation of the jury As part of the exhibition, Shilpakala Academy will organise a two-day international seminar, titled "Duality in Asian Art -- The Ethnic and the Global" at its premises, beginning tomorrow Eminent artists from home and abroad will take part in the semi-

## Foreign docs

disposal of petition of foreign

doctors for registration. The health ministry in a notification on December 4 last suspended its previous temporary permission to practise subject to obtaining registration from the

But the foreign doctors contin-

ued practice without registration. The ministry had also laid down conditions on foreign doctors which include: 1) they will provide medicare and training; 2) report arrival, stay and departure to the home and foreign ministries, 3) submit weekly report of their activities, 4) will not carry any data or information while leaving the country and 5) two local doctors should be associated with them during their service and training.

The BMDC refused registration to foreign doctors as it said patients were not getting treatment free of cost at Sikder Medical College & Hospital. Dr Kamal Hossain, counsel for

the petitioner, submitted that the foreign doctors were not receiving financial benefits. They were providing service to the patients free of cost. Refuting his contention, Additional Attorney General Zaman Akhter Bulbul informed the court that the foreign doctors

were taking away huge money out

of the country. The hospital is

peeling the patients in the name of

foreign doctors. Quoting relevant laws, Bulbul submitted that no foreign doctor is allowed to practise in Bangladesh. They are coming on invitation or hired by the voluntary organisations.

# **Uzbekistan plane** crash kills 37

All 37 people aboard a Soviet-built Uzbek passenger plane, including the nation's top UN official, died when the aircraft crashed and burst into flames as it landed in thick fog in the capital of the Central Asian country, officials said.

Uzbekistan's public prosecutor, Rashitjon Kadirov, said the landing gear on the Yak-40 aircraft had failed to deploy.

He said there were no indications that the crash resulted from terrorism, but a full investigation would be held.

The 28-year-old plane, which was almost at the end of its working life, crashed and burst into flames approaching Tashkent airport on a flight from the southern city of Termez, near

Afghanistan, at 19:27pm (1427 GMT) on Tuesday, Kadirov said. After its undercarriage failed to deploy, it smashed into a con-

crete barrier, burst into flames and then fell into a river, he said. Among those who died was the I's resident coordinator in Uzbekistan, Richard Conroy, 56, and the head of the Tashkent

A foreign ministry spokesman said that Penner was a Canadian citizen and not, as officials had earlier indicated, from the United

and 32 passengers, including one child, died in the crash. There

## Opposition criticises

Kamal Hossain said the increase in the seat number is rational because of population growth. However, he believes this should be done through a national consensus.

ment is required to implement the decision, a national consensus is also an imperative," Dr Kamal, also the framer of the constitution, said.

On women's representation in parliament, he said, "Women deserve to be directly elected to

### Non-govt teachers' indefinite strike from today

UNB, Dhaka

The non-governmental teachers and employees will go for an indefinite strike today to press home their eight-point demand.

Teachers and Employees

The leaders also urged the eachers and employees to instantly stage demonstrations and hold press briefings in case of any obstruction by any quarter during the strike.

## Sarbahara

FROM PAGE 12

eyewash. The apparent change to tomorrow's programme came from a meeting at the office of the deputy inspector general (DIG) of police in the final hours to the event that high police officials say will clear the way for the operatives to return to normal life after years of gang-

outlaws popularly known as

Sarbaharas. "It's a great chance for the operatives to return to normal life. If they blow the chance, they have to face dire consequences," a home ministry official told The Daily Star,

But legal experts questioned the intent of the programme that comes after a spike in crimes in

Political observers view it as a scheme to rehabilitate the ruling BNP-patronised outlaws.

## Gaza suicide

FROM PAGE 1

stalled by persistent violence. A caller to Reuters' office in Gaza claimed joint responsibility for the bombing in the name of the militant Islamic group Hamas and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, an armed offshoot of President Yasser

a campaign of suicide bombings during three years of violence, said it sent a woman for the first time because of growing Israeli security "obstacles" facing its male bomb-The move could pose new

smaller militant groups. "Resistance will escalate against this enemy until they leave our land and homeland," Hamas

identified by Hamas as Reem Al-Reyashi from Gaza City, was limppersonnel at the Erez crossing.

told reporters.

of Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip,

Uzbekistan's border with

States. Two Afghan businessmen

were no survivors, Kadirov said.

President of Gono Forum Dr

"Since a constitutional amend-

competent women lawmakers. President of the Communist detailed observation once official process starts on the decision."

In a statement yesterday, leaders of the National Front of

requested the guardians not to send their children to educational institutions during the strike.

for five days rogation on the recent blast at the shrine of Hazrat Shah Jalal (RA).

land violence. Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury will attend the programme in Agarpur village in Babuganj, a southern upazila believed to be a strong base of

asking not to be named.

Barisal and accused law enforcers of stage-managing the event that they say has no legal grounds.

Arafat's Fatah movement. Hamas, the main group behind

dangers to the Jewish state, which has already been hit several times by woman bombers dispatched by

founder and spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin told Reuters in Gaza. Witnesses said the bomber,

ing when she set off a metal detector operated by Israeli security "She managed to hoodwink the soldiers by saying she had a metal surgical implant," Israeli Brigadier-General Gadi Shamni, commander

office of the Washington-based humanitarian organisation World Concern, Richard Penner.

> were also among the dead. A total of five crew members

women seats," he pointed out.

must be discussed in parliament and public opinion taken. He also feared the move might be a four-party ploy to increase their vote banks in marginal seats. Ershad also demanded direct elections to the reserved seats for

Chairman of a faction of the Jatiya Party HM Ershad also agreed on expansion of parliamentary

seats in proportion to population

growth. However, he said the issue

women. He said the idea of

reserved seats would preclude

Party of Bangladesh (CPB) Manjurul Ahsan Khan also opposed the decision to increase seats. "Nowhere in the world would such a major constitutional amendment be made without extensive consultation with other political parties." The Workers Party of Bangladesh President Rashed Khan Menon said, "The constitu-

tion belongs to the people. Such a decision without consulting other parties is unacceptable."

Hasanul Haq Inu, president of a faction of the Jatiya Samjtantrik Dal (JSD), however finds the move logical. "Any increase in seats in accordance with the growth in

population should be scientific.'

Shrine blast

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, SYLHET A magistrate's court in the city placed on a five-day remand five of the 24 people taken into custody for inter-

The rest 19 including five women were released after no important information could be squeezed from The five-member body headed

SP Shahadat Hossain said they would take a few days to complete

Meanwhile, the eight-hour hartal yesterday called by Sylhet district and City Awami League to protest the bomb blast passed off peacefully.

The speakers said involvement of religious fundamentalists in the blast should not be ruled out.

Jatiya Party (Ershad), which also called a hartal in Sylhet yesterday protesting the blast, held a rally in the Hawkers Market area in the after-

## PCJSS rejects BDR DG's remarks

in New Delhi that a section of

DG's allegation on January 10 and the PCJSS has taken note of it. The PCJSS claimed the allegation is false and baseless and

protested it.

"It is mandatory to consult the people before making such an important move," Menon added.

"If the expansion is done without a general consensus or scientific regulation, a new government can revert the act," he said.

Five remanded

by the superintendent of police (SP), Sylhet, probing the blast incident started interrogating the five people

soon after they were remanded.

the job. "We are waiting for the army explosives expert team's report on the blast," he added.

A post-hartal rally was held in the city's Court Point area with district AL President ANM Shafique in the

## The ruling four-party alliance held an anti-hartal rally at the Court Point with MA Haque, district BNP president, in the chair.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

The Parbatya Chattagram Jana

Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) has

dismissed certain remarks made by the director general (DG) of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) after a high-level meeting with Indian Border Security Force (BSF) in New Delhi recently. In a press release issued yesterday, it said the DG told journalists

members of Shanti Bahini, PCJSS' armed wing disarmed after the 1997 Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) peace accord, did not return home. And they are now reorganising insurgents with the assistance of Indian intelligence agencies. Several dailies carried the

The movement against about one lakh Ahmadiyyas in Bangladesh comes after the gov-ernment banned all publications of the Muslim sect on January 8 for

Announcing the programme

"The government took a step to safeguard human rights by pre-venting Ahmadiyyas from deceiv-

Tahaffuz and Aamra Dhakabashi.

**AHMADIYYA ISSUE** 

Meeting sources said coalition partners, especially the BJP and IOJ, were unhappy as the prime minister declined to discuss other issues at

VVIP security FROM PAGE 12 up security for the VIPs and VVIPs. He however declined to say what

"Pass a law to declare them non-

"As they are distracting Muslims this way, the governments of 40 Muslim countries including Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Kuwait, Malaysia and South Africa have declared them (Ahmadiyyas) non-Muslim,

# Sources said the two ministers