Hartal passes off

The shutdown, fifth in a spate of general strikes since February 12, stopped life in Dhaka and other districts on its track. Yesterday's strike was the first to be enforced by a unified opposition since the October 2001 general elections that brought the government of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to office.

Most shops, schools, banks, businesses and the stock exchanges in Dhaka and Chittagong remained closed while cargo-handling at the seaports suffered heavily. All modes of transport except rickshaws, a few three-wheelers and buses were off the roads throughout the day.

Police and other law enforcers vesterday preferred to watch prohartal demonstrators unlike in the last four hartal days and a good number of senior opposition leaders were out there on city streets although the presence of activists was thin. Police did not bar antigovernment demonstrators from staging processions in the streets and the pickets did not try to stand in the way of whatever vehicles were on the roads, either.

Opposition leaders and workers staged demonstrations across the city during the hartal hours. The left-leaning parties brought out processions from near the Paltan intersection since early morning. Top leaders of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), Workers Party (WP) and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu) led the

Around 8,000 law enforcers including paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles fanned out across the capital to head off violence

The AL, WP, CPB, Hasanul Haq Inu-led JSD, Bangladesh Samyabadi Dal, Ganotantri Party and Gano Azadi League simulta neously called for the 6:00am to 6:00pm shutdown also to protest downslide of law and order, unabated corruption, price spiral of essentials and closure of stateowned mills and factories.

In Dhaka, a group of the AL lawmakers led by Deputy Leader of the Opposition in parliament Abdul Hamid took out a procession from the Jatiya Sangsad at about 11:20am and staged a rally at Russell square.

The legislators said they were forced to stage demonstrations on the streets instead of in parliament as the alliance government has made it totally non-functional. They demanded immediate ouster of the government.

Police put barbed-wire fences on both sides of AL's Bangabandhu Avenue headquarters early in the morning. However, senior AL leaders including Amir Hossain Amu, Tofail Ahmed, Abdur Razzak, Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, A s a d u z z a m a n N o o r, Akhteruzzaman, Mahmudur Rahman Manna, Sultan Mohammad Mansur, Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin and Nazma Rahman brought out a silent procession and marched down the streets of Paltan and Dainik Bangla intersections.

Later, the leaders with some 50 workers assembled for a rally at Muktangon at about 10:30am.

Two crackers were exploded near Paltan intersection at the end of the rally, reportedly from a bus.

returned to party office in a proces-

Govt agrees

In the last joint secretary-level meeting, held in the Bangladesh

capital, the Indian delegation pointed out that the delay in clearing the project would have adverse effect for Indian investment in Bangladesh, particularly in view of the proposed free trade accord. Following the meeting, India gained significant headway

towards getting the licence as Bangladesh Commerce Ministry agreed to take up the issue with the concerned authorities and resolve

At about 11:50am, police picked a female hartal supporter named Nupur from near Bangabandhu Avenue only to release her after the

In Chittagong, police and activists of the ruling BNP-backed Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) wooped on a procession of the CPB and its student front Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) Dohazari under Chandanaish thana in the morning, injuring at least three hartal supporters.

hartal hours

Police clubbed the demonstraors in the joint procession in Reazuddin Bazar's Tinpool and Amtala areas and at Central Shaheed Minar premises between 11.30am and 11.50am and dispersed them.

Three Molotov cocktails, hrown from speeding auto-ickshaws, were exploded in front of the AL office in Darul Fazal arket area between 11.15am and 1.40pm, just before and after a scheduled AL meeting there. None was however injured in the

In Satkhira, at least 25 WP lead ers and activists were injured, seven of them critically, when olice charged baton on them at Jazmul Sarani in the town at about :30am. Police also laid a siege to district AL office early in the morning, obstructing AL leaders and activists from assembling there.

In Gopalganj, pro-government CD and AL's student wing Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists clashed at Kashiani thana, leaving at least 20 injured. The BCI men also ransackéd local BNP office during the clash while police fired two rounds of tear gas canisters to restore discipline.

Our DU correspondent reports that the JSD-backed BCL brought out a pro-hartal procession and held a rally on Dhaka University campus. Presided over by BCL President Shariful Kabir Swapan the rally was addressed by its General Secretary Ali Hasan Tarun, Sazzad Hossain, Hossain Ahmed Tafsir and Mohammad Selim.

However, activists of pro-AL BCL could not enter the campus amid a heavy presence of police and JCD men. Police put barricades at the entrance of the camus. The BCL in the afternoon tried to bring out a procession from Dhaka Medical College Hospital area but police chased and dispersed the pro-cessionists.

All the left-leaning parties meanwhile, yesterday announced stage demonstrations across the country on March 9 to protest attack on their party leaders during

25 sued for killing Bagerhat Jamaat leader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

An FIR (first information report) has been filed with Rampal Police Station, accusing 25 people, including BNP leader Shaikh Mohammad Ali, of the killing of Bagerhat Jamaat leader Moulana

Gazi Abu Bakar Siddique. Shahin Gazi, brother of the slain leader and member of Baintala Union Parishad (UP), filed the FIR

on Friday night

Moulana Abu Bakar, vice-president of Jamaat-e-Islami Rampal unit, was bombed to death by unidentified assailants on the nulna-Mongla Highway in the early hours of Thursday Immediately after the incident,

police arrested local BNP leader Shaikh Mohammad Ali and an

Jamaat-e-Islami Bagerhat unit has announced a nine-day programme to protest the killing of Abu Bakar. The programme includes special prayer across the country on March 7 and a protest rally at Rampal upazila headquar ters on March 13.

General Hasan Moshhud Chowdhury yesterday arrived here on a sudden visit. The army chief held talks with

The army chief visited Bandarban in the wake of abduction, extortion and arms smuggling in

team from the United States visited Naikhangchhari of Bandarban last week to look into infiltration of arms including US made M-19 and

AL MPs risk

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdul Hamid told The Daily Star last night that they would take a decision during the next session.

BNP lawmakers was about to cease, but they attended the House for sometime to keep their memberships intact.

Lawmakers of the AL have boycotted parliament for 49 workdays in a row up to March 4 already and their absence may cross 60 days in the current session that will run until March 30.

to be prorogued on March 4, but the business advisory committee extended the duration to March 30 with more than 10 workdays.

The next budget session is likely to be summoned in the last week of May and the ruling coalition wants to pack more than 30 workdays in it to build pressures on the AL to return to Ĥouse. The last two budget sessions of

the current Jatiya Sangsad had 24 The current Jatiya Sangsad started its journey on October 28,

2001 amid the absence of the main opposition. The AL joined the parliament on June 24, 2002 after sitting 72 workdays away. The party revived its boycott on June 25 last year and started anti-

objective of forcing the government from power. Talking to this correspondent Opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid expressed skepticism about the current parliament, hinting at

3 employees

FROM PAGE 12

and Habibur Rahman, security guard of boarding bridge No. 6 at the ZIA the same day of incident.

Humayun Kabir, director of the ZIA, said police was probing the incident adding that the trio was

"They will be sacked if they were found guilty in the incident," he Sources at the ZIA said an influ-

involved in the smuggling attempt.

after a brief scuffle with customs officials during the banknote haul.

According to sources, two suspected Caab employees were attempting to smuggle 19,31,500 Saudi riyals, 79,000 US dollars, 1,11,500 UAE dirhams, 1,000 UK pound sterling and 1,220 Kuwait dinars, stuffed in their pockets in 14 wads. The green paper wrapped wads, written with 'Allah Hefajatkari' (Allah is the custodian), made up Tk 3,77,68,900.

Batticaloa where the regional commander led a breakaway faction challenging the authority of Supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran. A pro-rebel website,

Eelamnation.com, said an unspecified number of "prisoners" held by the LTTE's Batticaloa "police" escaped as the rebels halted civil administration work after the split

and analysts as a serious blow to the already faltering Norwegian-led peace process aimed at ending three decades of ethnic bloodshed that has claimed more than 60,000

4 opposition

FROM PAGE 1

office at Bangabandhu Avenue at 3:00pm, the procession led by AL President and Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina will march major city streets. Hasina is likely to announce next programmes of the oust-government movement prior to the procession.

The AL Central Working Committee at a meeting on February 17 enforced the programme, which coincided with historic March 7, a turning point in the struggle for country's independ-

Lawmaker Abdul Jalil, general secretary of the AL, urged all to join today's mass procession and make

Youth's tongue severed, burnt brutally for not dropping case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Miscreants set fire to a youth after severing his tongue with a knife in his house at Fatulla in Narayanganj yesterday, local police said. Kamrul Ahsan Kakon, 19, the

victim, with most of his body severely burnt, is now clinging on to his life at ward No. 31 in Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). Relatives of Kakon claimed the

attack came on him, as he did not

yield to their (miscreants') demand

Relatives said, four youths slipped into Kakon's room in his house at 127/7, Sher-e-Bangla Road in Majdair Bazar, when he went out to urinate at 2:00 am. As he got back, three intruders swooped on him, while the other one severed his tongue. Then, after having tied him up with plastic rope and wrapped around with bedcover, they poured

kerosene on him and set fire. The attackers left the place in a

black taxicab.

taken to the DMCH.

Hearing the shoving at the door a tenant of Kakon rescued him and rushed him to Narayanganj Khanpur Hospital, where doctors stitched the severed part of his tongue. Later at 9.00 am Kakon was

Kakon's aunt Lutfonnahar said, local criminal Anwar Hossain, a cadre of ruling BNP, stabbed Kakon with a machete two years back as he refused to give him a gold chain as extortion. Kakon filed a case against them, but was under huge pressure from Anwar gang to withdraw the case. As he did not withdraw the case they stabbed him again a year ago and another case was filed. The family, bombarded with

death threats, withdrew one of the cases lately, but was dilly-dallying with another one. Kakon's mother Kamrun Nahar

filed a case with the local thana.

Fatulla police said last night they are yet to arrest anyone in this

Mixed bag over CPJ untrue although repression and murder of journalists are indeed

the other hand, found the CPJ comment objective.

The information ministry yesterday dismissed the CPJ statement as 'totally motivated' and 'biased' as it did not reflect the realities. It also alleged the conclusion was reached without collecting the data of other

"The present democratic government never took any step against any journalist for doing journalism or any paper for publishing any news. Rather, it has instructed deputy commissioners and superintendent of police to ensure security for the journalists so that they can carry out their responsibilities safely," it noted. "The government has not forgiven anyone who attacked journalists and

Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain however believes the CPJ statement reflects nothing but the truth. "They have come here and talked to many journalists and others. They have gathered information on killing and repression of all journalists of various times -- from the attack on Tipu Sultan to the killing of Manik Chandra Saha."

The CPJ leaders during their visit watched how the activists of ruling BNP's student front Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal attacked journalists at

the law enforcers not to charge batons on the journalists and when the ruling party activists attack them, the police should protect them," Kamal added. "In the Dhaka University incident, the police had

dated all by terrorising them. And journalists have become their targets as their reports are exposing their

Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, presi dent of the pro-opposition faction of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) noted, "The CPJ has given its observation on the basis of its interaction with various local journalists upon their visit here. This is not their off-hand remark. These are based on their findings and observations.

security for journalists. Otherwise, Bangladesh will continue to remain as the most violent Asian nation for the press and the situation will only worsen," he added. Ruhul Amin Gazi, secretary

general of the pro-government faction of the BFUJ noted, "There is no doubt that journalists of Bangladesh are exposed to high professional risks. But I don't agree with the way the CPJ drew its conclusion. Its sweeping remark is partially

taking place in the country. He however was quick to point an accusing finger at the CPJ. "The CPJ itself is not fair. It did not condemn

the killing of journalists in Iraq. The CPJ should be fair in the first place." Altaf Mahmud, president of the out that the CPJ statement only reflected the insecurity of Bangladeshi journalists. "We will ask

the government not to reject CPJ's remarks just like the other issues and instead to address the situation." President of the pro-government DUJ faction Elahi Newaj Khan questioned, "How did the CPJ conclude that Bangladesh is the worst among

the Asian countries as far as the repression of journalists is concerned? Has it collected data of other He however added, "It's true our journalists are working amid high risks. But the CPJ is working on the basis of a pre-conceived notion and we can smell politics in it."

Bush close

Ros-Lehtinen that the announcement was imminent in response to her letter urging Bush to expedite implementation of the sanctions The congresswoman heads a House of Representatives subcommittee on the Middle East. "They're ready to go," another ource said of the sanctions, calling

it "a serious signal to the Syrians that it needs to throw out terrorist

Syria says its support for the Palestinian and Lebanese groups it calls freedom fighters is merely political and their only activity in Syriai speakingto modifie Syria is speaking to media.

Supply dearth FROM PAGE 12

reduced navigability in the rivers in the dry season.

"In order to meet the sudden rise in demand for diesel in the northern districts since the last month, we were forced to use up even our emergency reserve of 2-crore-litre," the official added.

He, however, hoped that the situation would become normal within a week upon completion of some ongoing dredging work at different points of the river route analysing tapkers to carry diesel to enabling tankers to carry diesel to their optimum capacity to the region. Another BPC official alleged the abrupt rise in demand was also

partly caused by smuggling of oil out to India through various border points in the northern districts, of which they had received reports but no evidence.

But, another BPC official in Bogra said, "The price of diesel varies only by 10 rupees across the border. So, the quantity of diesel smuggled out of Bangladesh is too insignificant to seriously affect the diesel situation."

Khaleda asks Hasina predicting that the number of its lawmakers would further dip in next

hartal anymore.

Huge crowds from Lalbagh-Kamrangirchar and its adjoining areas converged on the venue, overcrowding roads, lanes and

Dhaka city BNP organised the meeting as part of its eight public rallies in all constituencies in Dhaka. Similar meetings were held in Jatrabari on February 14 and Bashabo on Feb 28 and the next meeting is slated for March 9 at Badda Progoti Sarawani. In her 25-minute speech, the

BNP chairperson alleged that the main opposition believed in the 'politics of violence, destruction and of dead bodies and suffered the polls debacle in 2001 for it. "They are now desperate for bodies to heat up politics," she said, adding the carrying of coffins in

their processions proved it. On AL's one-point demand, Khaleda said after the last general elections the party created pressure on then president Shahabuddin Ahmed, the chief election commissioner and others concerned to cancel the polls and delayed law-makers' oath-taking by asking the former speaker not to administer the oath.

"The opposition has no moral right to raise the demand of dissolution of the Jatiya Sangsad," she said,

She expressed the confidence the next general elections that

four-party alliance to office. She listed her government's development activities implemented in the last two years and

under implementation. On a local demand of relocation of Dhaka Central Jail, the premier

A recreation park will be constructed and roads will be expanded after relocation of the jail, she said. Presided over by local BNP unit Convenor Golam Morshed, the rally

was also addressed, by LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Health Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain,

AL for 'one China policy'

'one China policy' and will strictly abide by and enforce it in future,

China," Hossain said while commenting on establishing Taiwanese liaison office in Dhaka. He said the deviatory step by

The relationship took a new height during the previous Awami League government when the Chinese investment rose to a record

high, he added.

chair with some newspapers lying beforehim.

"Seeing those photos, anyone may get a wrong impression of his health. The pictures and the claim that he can walk portray him as making a significant improvement

"My father's condition now is such that he has to labour a lot to speak, can't bear the strain of thinking for a long time and yet unable to rise from the bed and sit by himself. We alone can comprehend a few of his laboured words. "Why does someone want to say a

man can walk with assistance when he can't even sit up on his own?" she wondered.

Quoting yesterday morning's eview by a medical board comprising senior specialists of the armed forces, the ISPR reported his condi-

tion as improved further in that he

was conscious, orientated to time

and space and could communicate verbally. "His pulse, temperature, respira-tion and blood pressure are within acceptable limits. He is getting liquid

Azad's family members also protested yesterday's newspaper stories that said he asked to know the situation of Dhaka University campus and read newspaper.

"As he is gradually becoming more orientated to time and space, he wants to know the news, and so

we read out the news headlines to him," she described.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police that is probing the case could not make any headway till yesterday. The CID requested the CMH authorities for permission to talk to Dr Azad, which

Benapole land FROM PAGE 1

with the help of token given by

On Thursday morning, BSF personnel prevented C&F officials from entering Bangladesh and India through Petrapole and Benapole borders without multiple visa for security reason. Hundreds of trucks laden with

export and import goods remained stranded on both sides of the frontier, causing huge revenue losses.

Historic March 7

tionary conspiracies" of the BNP-Jamaat alliance.

"The coalition government is giving indulgence to criminals for committing terrorism, killing, rape, loot, extortion and violation of human rights across the country," she alleged.

AL General Secretary Abdul Ialil in

a statement called upon the people to observe the day all across the country ALleaders and workers will assem-

ble at the Bangabandhu Bhaban in the city's Dhanmondi at 7:30 am today and place wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu, the unequivocal leader of the country's Liberation

Various socio-political and cultural organisations have also taken up elaborate programmes on the occa-

More vigorous

and the recent attack on writer Humayun Azad. Meanwhile, the AL and JSD (Inu) are desperately trying to get the CPB and WP to hold a joint rally n the day

"We're planning to hold the March9 rally at the same time and same venue -- maybe the Central Shaheed Minar -- provided all other parties agree. This way we will be able to carry forward the opposition unity against this BNP-Jamaat regime," JSD chief Hasanul Haq Inu told The Daily Star astnight.

CPB General Secretary Mujahidul slam Selim however ruled out the possibility. "The time has not come et. We've already announced our rally at Muktangan at 4:00pm on March9." Against this backdrop and follow-ing yesterday's hartal, the AL leader-

of the situation and decided to announce certain programmes at today's AL rally in the city to be addressed by Sheikh Hasina. Workers' Party President Rashed Chan Menon said the movement to orce this government for an early exit

ship at a meeting last night took stock

would gather momentum after today's meeting of the 11-party alli-CPB General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim told The Daily Star last night that the fact that it called for hartal on the same day as the AL should not be interpreted as its support for the main opposition.

"We do not believe only in change of power from one party to another. Rather, we would like to see a qualitative change in the country's demo cratic political culture," Selim said. He also asserted that a left-democratic force could be evolved by going beyond bipolar politics.

Unidentified youth shot dead in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Miscreants gunned down an unidentified youth at Purbachal housing area in Badda on Friday. A five-member gang shot two bullets in the head of the man of 18

who was talking to them at an abandoned place in Ukilvita at around :15pm, locals said. They also saw a man fleeing with revolver in hand. The victim lay in a pool of blood to die at around 5:00pm.

Badda police sent the body to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy at about 1:30am yesterday. A case was lodged with Badda Police Station.

FROM PAGE 12 The superintendent of police of Bagerhat later suspended the constables.

Cops suspended

Meanwhile, the daylong hartal passed off peacefully in Khulna city. The security forces took position in front of the Awami League (AL) office from morning till 6:00pm. The AL, Communist Party of Bangladesh and Workers Party

Shops and educational institutes remained closed and traffic on the road was minimal. But all scheduled trains ran and production in mills and factories was normal.

Zoo vets

FROM PAGE 12 risk of transmitting disease.

take the bird to the central veterinary hospital at Kazi Alauddin Road," Rahman suggested. The youths, unable to travel the

long distance during the hartal hours, tried to force-feed the bird

through a plastic syringe at the gate of the zoo where at least a dozen vets with a full-fledged hospital work to look after 2,220 inmates. The owl passed away after about Although Jatiya Party-Ershad (JP-Ershad), the second largest opposition in parliament, has indefinitely postponed its mass procession scheduled for March 10, it has nonetheless initiated a process to forge an opposition alliance on its own.

The party held a meeting with ASM Rob-led JSD last week and JP leader and lawmaker GM Kader hinted at more such meetings with other opposition parties as well. "We're not calling hartal vet as we want to use it as a last resort. Let's see whether this government can improve upon its record," Kadersaid.

Badruddoza Chowdhury will most likely announce his political platform from Ramna Green or Institute of Engineers since he was denied use of ne Paltan Maidan.

Apart from its convenor Dr Kamal Hossain, the March 14 national convention of Oikya Procheshta will also feature Prof Kabir Chowdhury ournalist Ataus Samad, Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, Mozaffar Ahmed, Khan Sarwar Murshid, Badruddoza Chowdhury and chief of Krishak Sramik Janata League Kader Siddiqui.

Mafizul Islam Kamal told The Daily Star yesterday that most political parties except the ruling alliance will be invited to the convention while Oikya Procheshta leaders are still unsure about inviting Awami League.

FROM PAGE 12

said over cell phone yesterday. "We reported the incident to DU Proctor AK Firoz Ahmed, but he did nothing for us, " he added.

The Ham, a spontaneously formed protest platform, has been staging cultural performances including dramas, songs and recitation of poems in front of a sculpture titled Razu Bhaskerjo adjacent to the DU Teachers-Students Centre all through the week since the attack on Professor Azad.

Magnwhile some 40 fourth year

Meanwhile, some 40 fourth-year undergraduate students, many of them JCD members, took out a procession and held a rally on the varsity campus yesterday demanding immediate resumption of

They also urged the DU authorities to hold the final Bachelor Honours exams by April 20 so that they could sit for the 25th Bangladesh Civil Service examinabangiadesh Civil Service examina-tions. The students will submit a memorandum to DU Vice-chancellor Professor SMA Faiz and the DU Teachers' Association (Duta) today demanding return to normal academic activities.

In another development, the Duta has planned to visit DU Chancellor and President Professor I a j u d d in A h m e d a t h is Bangabhaban office today, Duta President AAMS Arefin Siddique said, adding they could not yet fix the time of the meeting. Siddique said, "We will request the president to take immediate steps for sending Azad abroad for better medical treatment," adding

RMCH interns go into

wildcat strike **OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur**

Intern doctors at Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH) went into an indefinite strike yesterday to press home their three-point

monthly salaries, providing security at the hospital premises and adequate hostel seats for them. They went into strike after their

"We would continue our programme until our demands are

BB restricts

ABB circular last week stated, as per a guideline of the central bank, he commercial banks can not do such trading without the requirement of their clients.

technical knowledge indulges in such trading is most likely to end up with losses. That is why the central bank comes in to impose the restriction.

banking sector. But such practice

900 gram (tin) of Nido will be Tk 141 and Tk 402, which should be around Tk 145 and Tk 410 in the retail market, he noted. The Australian dollar rose more

three months, according to banking "The buying price of the Australian dollar was Tk 43.96 per

"Many foreign banks are involved in such trading and they are making profits as well. Many banks having no such expertise embraced bankruptcy in the past," said a high official of a private bank

regard this BB move positively.

could lead to bigger losses for the

Private banks meanwhile

banks, the circular noted.

VAT

FROM PAGE 1 expenses within the range of com mon people, the government had earlier reduced the tax incidence on

on locally produced MS rod the government, at the same time, had retrenched the imposed VAT to Tk 225 from Tk 600 from per ton of MS

"Despite remarkable reduction of tax-duty on these commodities to keep up pace of development works--although it entailed consid-

Gulshan-Banani plot waters have been occupied, resulting Gulshan-Banani land is open to all.

But it is natural that we have to give priority to ministers, lawmakers and judges. And the number of plots is very limited," said Iqbaluddin Chowdhury, Rajuk chairman. Rajuk is reportedly in a sticky

situation as these minister-

lawmaker applicants outnumber the

plots being awarded under the

Sources said only 50 to 60 plots (total 20 bighas of land) are available

under the project at Banani near

Chairmanbari where a slum now sits on the land. Another source claimed

project.

the number of plots is as many as 108. All past governments have made plot allocations based on political consideration disregarding the principle of fairness. The last government in 1999-2000 allocated 16 plots in Gulshan-Banani under special rules. Before that, formal allocation of plots in the area were made in 1994 when 130 plots were distributed. The posh Gulshan-Banani resi-

dential area was developed in the

1950s and was the lone diplomatic

enclave before Baridhara was devel-

oped. The zone is served by only two

commuter corridors and now a

strong trend of medium- to high-

density apartment type develop-

ment is visible in almost all parts of A substantial number of houses in Gulshan and Banani have been leased out for commercial use and the areas are slowly losing their residential character. Rajuk's bid to save the Gulshan Lake from encroachment and pollution has all but failed. Chunks of open spaces in the area that helped drain floodin local flooding and water-logging.

Rajuk has invited applications for another housing scheme, the Uttara Residential Model Town (3rd phase), under which plots will be distributed In 2000, Rajuk acquired nearly 2,000 acres of wetland for the project on the eastern side of the Dhaka

Flood Protection Embankment from

Mirpur to Ashulia. The wetlands of

Baunia, Diabari, Nalbhog,

Chandalbhog and Bailjuri mouja

were acquired from the local people

who are yet to get compensation for

the acquisition, a top official, said. "The land is now under water. The area will be developed after receiving all applications. We will decide on the number of plots after all applications are in," said Zahurul Hague, Rajuk town planner. However, Rajuk in its prospectus

for the 'model town' says it will only fill up the land and build roads. There will be no water and gas supply facilities, which will be developed by Wasa (Water and Sewerage Authority) and Titas Gas Company Limited as and when possible depending on the budget of the utility service providers. No drainage will also be available for the plots, the number of which will exceed 5,000, officials said. The original February 29 deadline

for applications has been extended

to March 15. About 30,000 people

have already bought applications.

Bank officials receiving the applica-

tions expect around 15,000 submis-

Army chief goes to Bandarban

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant

high army officials in Bandarban about which, however, the officials kept mum

the district. Meanwhile, a weapons experts

of withdrawing a case filed against

In the last parliament, membership of the then main opposition

The current session was slated

government agitation with the

snap polls in the wake of strong anti-government agitation.

withdrawn from duty roster.

ential ruling party leader was However, till the writing of this report at 8:00 last night, Airport police failed to nab the boarding bridge operators who dodged arrest

LTTE (LTTE) were closed in the district of

was revealed Wednesday. The split was seen by diplomats

will not do so.'

Dhaka University while the students protested the attempt on eminent writer Humayun Azad's life, he "The government should instruct

the responsibility to protect the He noted violence has reached such a height that 'we all know jourto their life'. "Criminals and terrorists now believe that they have intimi-

"The government should hand down exemplary punishment to the criminals and terrorists."

"We would expect the government to take measures to ensure the

would take place after completion of the tenure of the current parlia-ment would return the BNP and the

said her government initiated work on the plan.

Communications Minister Nazmul Huda, DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, legislator Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed, Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas, State Minister for Cultural Affairs Selima Rahman, State Minister for Labour and Manpower Amanullah Aman, Barkatullah Bhulu, local MP Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu and business leader Abdul Mottaleb.

UNB, Dhaka The Awami League (AL) favours

said its International Affairs Secretary Syed Abul Hossain MP. "We believe in indivisible

some vested quarters for allowing Taiwan to open so-called represen-tative office will destroy the rela-tionship between Bangladesh and

Azad's health

FROM PAGE 12

In the ISPR photos, Humayun Azad is seen flanked by his wife Latifa Kohinoor, daughters Mouli and Smita and son Anonnyo. "They [ISPR] asked us to form a family pose and clicked quickly. We didn't know they were going to send those pictures to newspapers," said Smita in

which isn't true," she observed.

An ISPR bulletin circulated at 11:00am yesterday claimed Azad could then sit and walk with assis-

food orally. His overall condition is improving but further intensive care is needed," the ISPR bulletin read.

"The truth is I took newspapers to his room Friday to see whether he could read. But he failed, as he didn't have his spectacles and was yet to regain enough physical strength to read," Kohinoor said.

Contacted, ISPR Director Lt Col Nazrul Islam said, "We took the photographs as some people asked for his photos with his family members." The ISPR did not give any wrong information in the photo captions nor had any covert intention, he added.

Association come to Benapole also

FROM PAGE 1 foiling all "anti-liberation and reac

"I firmly believe people's democratic movement will prevail and the end of BNP-Jamaat's misrule is inevitable," she said.

Sheikh Hasina will lead a mass procession from in front of the AL headquarters at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city at 2:30pm.

Bangali Sangskriti Kendra (Bengali Cultural Centre) will hold a discussion and poetry recital at Suhrawardy

"I can't do anything. You may

a couple of hours in care of the

The BB is also worried over the upswing in such trading, which is reported in a recent review of the

The prices of 350 gram (carton) and

unit on December 4 last year against Tk 46.68 on March 1, 2004," a banker

Co-ordinator of the convention,

JCD cadres

To protest the JCD's assault, the Ham will take out a procession starting from the foot of Aparajeyo Bangla at 10:00am today.

the Duta would also discuss the latest campus situation with the chancellor.

Earlier, they placed a memorandum to the RMCH director and demanded regularising their

ultimatum with the director expired yesterday, an intern doctor told The Daily Star in the evening.

trading on its own to make some quick profit.

"Swapping and forward-booking of foreign exchange is actually sort of gambling. This trading can lead to profit or loss," a top BB official told the Daily Star. But if a bank without proper

Baby food

han 6 percent against taka in last

said, mentioning that the prices vary on day-to-day transactions.

He also admitted such trading is similar to gambling. "When a bank loses in such trading, it tends to gamble again. But that usually leads to greater loss."

the main raw materials of the MS rod to 23.62 percent from 39.25 percent, the NBR release noted. To reduce the total tax incidence

erable revenue loss--price rises of MS rod continued on the market," the government authority regret-

The government warned of tougher action "if any quarter tried to hinder development process creating artificial crisis of MS road