Dhaka, Washington

of the US Embassy in Dhaka, was also included in the US delega-tion. US Ambassador Harry K Thomas joined the talks at a later

Wills also met Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury after the trade talks.

"Though there is no big difference over any major issues it would take some time to sign the agreement," Suhel told newsmen after the meeting.

Dhaka sought duty- and quota-free access of its goods to the US market and increase in the number of items eligible for the generalised system of preference (GSP) facilities. It also demanded reservation of 20 percent and 30 percent import of apparels and low-tech products by Washington from least developed countries (LDCs) including Bangladesh.

The US officials told their Bangladesh counterparts that duty-free access of Bangladeshi goods is a very sensitive issue in Washington as thousands of people lost their jobs in textile factories in the US in the recent past. They observed that reservation of a certain percentage of import from the LDCs would be difficult for them, as the idea is very new.

The US delegates expressed concern over the non-transparent investment climate in Bangladesh and sought ways to close the trade gap with Dhaka, meeting sources said.

They, however, assured Bangladesh that after signing Tifa, both sides would sit together on all trade- and commerce-related issues including the items to be allowed GSP facilities.

The meeting also discussed the Doha round of negotiations under the World Trade Organisation and agreed that Tifa would cause no harm to the multilateral discussion under the WTO. Instead, it would complement the negotiations.

Later, at a press conference at the American Centre, Wills termed Bangladesh a very good economic partner of the US. "The US signed Tifa with only those countries with which it had a very good and close relations.

"We do not sign Tifa with those countries which do not honour our values," he elaborated.

DU deadlock may end on **Saturday**

DU CORRESPONDENT

The regular academic activities at Dhaka University (DU) is expected to return to normal as agitating teachers may withdraw their class boycotting programme

The DU Teachers' Association DUTA) started an indefinite strike on February 28, demanding immediate arrest and punishment of 'real attackers' of eminent writer Prof Humayun Azad, resignation of the home minister and sending Azad abroad for treat-

Assailants chopped Azad with butcher's knives in front of Bangla Academy at about 9:00pm on February 27 when he was returning to his campus house from the Ekushey Book Fair.

DUTA General Secretary Dr Mohammad Akhteruzzaman vesterday said they will visit Azad at Combined Medical Hospital today. "If his health improves, we'll cancel the boycott programme on Saturday or Sunday but continue demonstration until our demands are met."

Admitting that DU students have suffered for the agitation, he said the government should be held responsible, as it did not pay heed to anyone's demand.

"We'll hold a general meeting tomorrow to discuss the overall situation of the campus in last 20 days. The decision to withdraw the boycott programme may come at the meeting," he added.

Badruddoza

FROM PAGE 1

strength to resist those who oppress people," he said. National committee Member-Secretary Maj (retd) Abdul Mannan and committee member Mahi B Chowdhury were also present.

"This government is not working for people's welfare. Without an honest government, proper democ-racy will not be established," said Mannan.

"On March 11, hoodlums belonging to the government tried to kill the former president. But by the grace of Allah, he is well," said Mahi B Chowdhury, adding the milad was organised to express gratitude to the almighty for Badruddoza's safety.

"There is no force in Bangladesh that will resist us," he added, urging the ruling party to refrain from

Afterwards, a procession was brought out.

Cab owner FROM PAGE 1

from those rooms, victim's brother

Meanwhile, Mohammdpur police said both Ali and Alamgir filed about 15 cases against each

other with them. Victim's father-in-law Abdul Malek lodged a case with Mohammdpur Police Station accusing 10 people for the murder.

Explaining the reasons for his visit to Dhaka, Wills said he came here mainly for two reasons -one was to discuss about the prospects of signing Tifa and the other was to know Bangladesh's position on trade union rights at

ts exclusive industrial zones. He expressed satisfaction decision to allow limited trade unions rights in the export processing zones (EPZs). "We hope that the right to association of the workers in the EPZs will be

Paralysed Utpal put behind bars

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Modhupur police has put paralysed Garo teenager Utpal Nakrek, who went missing since Tuesday after Modhupur police took him away from a Savar clinic where he was undergoing treatment, behind the bars of Tangail jail.

Shaheen Khan, duty officer of Iodupur Police Station, told The Daily Star that the 16-year-old boy who took a bullet in the back, which completely paralysed the lower half of his body, was sent to jail as he was an accused of an unlawful assembly

Pointing at Utpal's 'improved' health, he said, "We took him away from the CRP as he can now move with wheel chair and is cured enough

"We have also contacted his parents and asked them to seek bail for their son, but they are yet to respond to it," he added

Ignoring the plea of Savar's Centre for Rehabilitation for the Paralysed (CRP) physicians, Modhupur police took the 10th grader with them to an unknown destination on Tuesday, sources

CRP doctors were treating Utpal for bullet injuries, which he suffered during police fire on a Garo demonstration last January.

The demonstrators were protesting a government move to convert the Modhupur forest into a national park when police and forest guards opened fire, killing a demonstrator and injuring 25 others including Utpal.

Dhaka to sign **FTA with Delhi** if NTBs go

Bangladesh will sign Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with India if it takes necessary steps to remove

"There are many impediments to signing the FTA with India. But non-tariff barriers (NTBs) are the biggest ones," Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury told a preparatory meeting yesterday ahead of a three-day Indo-Bangla joint secretary-level talks, beginning here on March 23.

Officials from various government bodies, including Tariff Commission, were present in the meeting.

"We'll sign the FTA with India if terms and conditions are favourable for Bangladesh," the minister

Tariff, NTBs and FTA are on the agenda of the Indo-Bangla joint secretary-level meeting, which will first discuss non-tariff and tariff barriers on Mar 23 and 24.

Bangladesh would go for discussion on the FTA with India if the first two days' talks are fruitful. It will take up similar strategies to sign the free trade deal with Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Earlier, Bangladesh identified 14 barriers and stood firm that it would not go for FTA talks unless India remove the non-tariff barriers (NTBs) that made difficult for Bangladesh commodities to enter

Bangladesh also pointed out anti-dumping and other trade barriers that impede exports to India. It pressed for inclusion of a provision to give special and differential treatment (SDT) to its exports

to India. India agreed to give some sort of trade preferences to its small trading partners, but did not agree to call it SDT because of certain 'obligations' relating to the WTO (World

TU in EPZs

FROM PAGE 1

about the difficulties faced by Korean investors in implementa-tion of the Korean EPZ project in

During the meeting, the FBCCI President assured him of working with all concerned to maintain a working relation in the EPZ in spite of the introduction of TU activities which, he mentioned, is in fulfilment of a requirement of American Federal Labour Union.

Mintoo promised to take up the matter with appropriate authority for ensuring adequate security in future and expediting the implementation of KEPZ scheme.

He further assured that he would take up the matter with all concerned to ensure that any trade union allowed in EPZs is 'not politi-

Titas GM transferred for graft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Petrobangla authorities have finally transferred the general manager (Planning) of Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd (TGTDCL) for his alleged role in a Tk 60-crore graft.

The TGTDCL board at its meeting last month decided to transfer Titas' GM Planning Engineer Mahbubur Rahman so that he could not supervise the Bangabandhu Bridge Approach Road Project (BBARP) pipeline

project planning and supervision of the extension of two 210km pipelines under the BBARP. The pipeline construction was initially approved at a cost of Tk 30 crore that later doubled in a way that no

of the construction has also raised question among a Petrobangla

8 killed in road accidents

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

A speeding Bogra-bound mini-bus rammed into a Kahalu-bound tempo at Padmogari on Bogra-Durgapur road at about 2:30pm, killing Akbar Ali, 45, Badsha, 45, Maksud Muhuri, 50, and an unidentified man on the spot and injuring nine others, police and witnesses

Lutfunnessa, 25, Putu, 30, Ibrahim, 29, Mosharraf, 14, Gopal Chandra, 35, Nepal Chandra, 28, and Miru, 29, to Mohammad Ali Hospital in Bogra, police said.

hospital, they added.

Seriously injured Lutfunnessa and Miru were shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital

Meanwhile, a speeding truck knocked dead Javed, 20, at Fateyabad when he was riding his bicycle on Chittagong-Hathazari road at around 5:00pm, sources said.

the same road, a jeep smashed pedestrian Shafi Alam, 26, at around

Separate cases were lodged with

Submarine cable

end in France.

The submarine cable link is also said to provide the infrastructure for large-scale software export and scopes for investment to establish IT-enabled value-added service e.g. call centre, tele-medicine, distance education at overseas universities.

The Executive Committee for National Economic Council (Ecnec) at a meeting yesterday approved a fund of Tk 40 crore, which constitutes 10 percent of Bangladesh's mandatory contribution to the consortium for project expenditure to launch the initial

The fund is to be disbursed by April 4. All consortium members are required to pay 10 percent of their own expenses by that time.

It will cost Bangladesh Tk 657 crore to implement the project and the government will arrange the fund. Dhaka has sought a \$60 million credit from the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) for the purpose, sources said

The government conceived a project to have a private submarine cable link with Singapore via Chittagong in the late 1990s with its own fund. The project was originally designed for launch in September 2000, but foreseeable

neck and wrong planning, among other reasons, stalled the project.

The project was also envisaged at a cost of Tk 921 crore, nearly Tk 300 crore more than what Bangladesh has to pay once it ties up with the consortium.

"The idea of implementing the project through a consortium will be cost-effective," said a telecoms ministry official. The consortium will take care of the maintenance at a low cost and Bangladesh will have to make no additional spending to land its cable in the member coun-

BTTB believes government earnings from telecommunications sector will shoot up as it can raise the number of telephone circuits with the consortium mem-

The tasks under the project includes construction of cable landing station, a 22,000-kilometre trunk route and 1,200-1,400-km branch route of submarine cable, installation of optical fibre link between Chittagong and Cox's Bazar along the highway, upgrading of the existing Chittagong-Dhaka optical fibre link, installation of optical link between Chittagong and Cox's Bazar over electrical grid line and other instal-

Prof Azad

FROM PAGE 1 attack on February 27.

Unknown assailants attacked the professor of Bangla at Dhaka University with sharp weapons on his way home from Ekushey book fair at Bangla Academy.

Sources at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the CMH said the decision to send him to Bangkok was actually taken a few days ago but Azad was not yet not fit to fly.

A team of senior medical specialists at the CMH recently checked Azad's overall condition and said the writer is now strong enough to be flown to Bangkok.

"Now he has improved further and is able to withstand the stress of the journey," said a source at the The government will bear all his

medical expenses at Bumrungrad Hospital and arrangements for his admission there as well as visarelated formalities are almost complete, a source at the PMO told The Daily Star yesterday.

Sources said a political secretary to the prime minister has

will accompany him, the source

already sent the necessary papers

to Bumrungrad Hospital and that the Bangladesh embassy at Thailand has also confirmed his booking at the hospital.

Officials said booking had also been made at Singapore's Mount Elizabeth Hospital but CMH doctors opted for Bumrungrad citing the hospital's good treatment of journalist Tipu Sultan who had suffered serious fractures in a terrorist attack a few years ago.

Sources quoting CMH doctors said Prof Azad can now swallow liquid food and walk with assistance. But he will need more time to be fit enough to move alone.

Khaleda

BNP renegades-former lawmakers Mannan and Mahi.

Before Khaleda Zia could say anything Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar, who was presiding over the session then, intervened suggesting the question raised by the Krishak Sramik Janata League lawmaker was not relevant and the prime minister could skip the

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia then opted not to answer the question and skipped to the next question from a ruling party lawmaker.

Md Mofazzal, a sub-contractor under whom the victims worked,

FROM PAGE 12

suspected rise in temperature in the tank led to the blast. Meanwhile, sources in the Department of Explosion said they will start a probe today to find if a

behind the accident. No case was filed in this connection till the filing of this report yesterday evening.

Yusuf hailed from Barguna and was living with his garment worker sister at Narikeltola Kalshidighir

Launch land

the roads and highways department, railway, shipping ministry and other government organisations fell to the encroachers' hands.

The standing committee in a previous meeting asked the land ministry to prepare a list of grabbed government land with district-wise distribution.

ment agencies to work out the details of the recovery drive taking into consideration the strength of the grabbers.

The meeting also asked the land and law ministries to take steps to amend laws in the next three months to stop land grabbing.

mended for a six-month drive in the first phase and another one until the complete recovery of the lost land.

observed. It said in Dhaka and other cities the recovered land could be given to city developing authorities for development and allotment of plots to government officials and other

Mahbubur said government agencies with unutilised land received from the land ministry were renting the property illegally. $"Such \, landed \, property \, should \, be \,$

or to the original owners," he said.

either returned to the land ministry

The meeting observed that many indigenous people lost their lands to cheats from plains and lived Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Inu) in a inhuman life in grinding poverty.

ministry officials.

Spain PM rejects

thousand people, including the queen of Spain, gathered in Madrid's largest cathedral for a service to remember those killed in the attacks.

European leaders are calling for a co-ordinated policy to prevent similar attacks in the future, including improved co-operation between intelligence services.

Police in London have warned that a major attack there is inevitable, but are urging people to go about their lives normally

Bush said the goal of the "cold-blooded killers" who carried out attacks like the Madrid bombings was "to try to get the world to cower... to try to shake our will"

He added: "It is essential that the free world remain strong and resolute and determined.

He was speaking after a meeting in Washington with Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende whose country has itself deployed troops in Iraq, against significant public opposition.

The Netherlands and Denmark have both said they will keep their troops in Iraq, despite the incoming Spanish prime minister's announce-

"It is essential that we remain side-by-side with the Iraqi people, said Bush.

Ex-MP Sujan

FROM PAGE 12

The judge, however, acquitted Khorshed Alam, Abdul Mannan alias VP Mannan, Akhter Hossain, Forkan Uddin, kamal Ahmed, Giasuddin jalali and Faruq, of the murder.

He said the charges of death penalty against Dr Alam were proved but considering his old age, e was given life term.

Hena Akhter, mother of the rictim broke into tears as the verdict was pronounced. She said that she was not satisfied with the judgment. Victim's family will appeal to the High Court against

Sujan, 35, a former BNP MP from Brahmanbaria-6 constituency and former vice president of Haji Mohammad Mohsin Hall Students Union of Dhaka University, was abducted by his rivals and found dead near the Doyel Chattar on the Dhaka University campus on July 3, 2001.

11 parties FROM PAGE 1

"We do not have any negative atti-tude towards the new platform," said CPB President Manzurul Ahsan Khan. "We have our own platform in the 11-party alliance and we will launch our movement to topple the government on our own. We will not oin other platforms for antigovernment agitation.

"We may hold discussions with leaders of the new group in future, though, once they have laid out their policies," Manzur said.

Gano Forum General Secretary Saifuddin Ahmed Manik retorted "If some parties including the CPB can operate in the Left Democratic Front and the 11-party alliance alike, Gano Forum can also be part of the 11-party alliance and the Oikya Mancha."

Manik reiterated Gano Forum's anti-hartal stand and said there is no chance of the 11-party break-up. "There are alternative forms of protesting the government's mis-

On why the CPB was absent at an alliance meeting at the BSD office yesterday, CPB leaders said the party boycotted the meeting as it has a strong view that if the WP, BSD, and Gano Forum attach more importance the new platform, the

left alliance is irrelevant. But BSD Convenor Khaleguzzaman said: "CPB leaders were busy with some of their own programmes and couldn't attend

Khalequzzaman laughed off any 11-party split, saying: "It is ludicrous to suggest that. The alliance is here to stay.

"Different parties within the alliance can do different things. If Gano Forum wants to launch a new platform, let it go ahead," he said.

Bangabandhu

FROM PAGE 1

across the country.

the nation's independence. The Awami League, its front cultural organisations observed the day with various programmes

In the capital, the AL started its programme hoisting national and party flags at its office at 6.00am. The AL leaders and workers also placed wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu at Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi

in the city. A rally of children and juveniles was held in front of the Bangabandhu museum in the morning and a discussion was also held there in the afternoon, organised by

At Tungipara, Hasina offered fateha and placed wreaths at the Bangabandhu Complex. A milad mahfil and a voluntary blood donation programme were also held on the complex premises.

The other programmes included drawing competition for the children, discussion and cultural programme.

The Bangabandhu Lalitakala Academy, Sonar Bangla Jubo Parished, Bangabandhu Sishu Kishore Mela, Swadhinata Chitikshak Parished, Bangladesh Chetar Laggar, Bangladesh Tortilo Chhatra League, Bangladesh Textile and Garments Workers League, Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote and Youth Gonoforum also observed the

"Al-Qaeda understands the stakes. Al-Qaeda wants us out of Iraq because al-Qaeda wants to use Iraq as an example of defeating freedon and democracy.

Bush did not refer to elections in Spain on Sunday, which saw a surprise victory for the socialists amid public anger at the government's handling of Thursday's bombs and its participation in the Iraq invasion.

However there is no doubt the Bush administration has been stung by the results.

US administration officials say President Bush has already called several world leaders to insist they remain on the offensive in the war

And White House spokesman Scott McClellan cautioned Spaniards and others against sending a "terrible message" by letting terrorists influence their elections

50 hurt as BNP factions clash in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

At least 50 people were injured, 12 of them seriously, in a clash between two factions of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) at village Kazihata in Bheramara upazila of Kushtia

BNP leader Abdul Awal and another by upazila BNP vicepresident Ábdul Kuddus-clashed over establishing supremacy in the Police said the clash erupted at

staying at upazila BNP office, rushed to spot and locked in a clash with their rivals. Both the factions used lethal weapons and exploded crackers

during an hour-long clash that left 50, including five women, injured. Bheramara police reached the

the situation under control. Of the injured, 23 out were admitted to local health complex. They are, Billal Hossain, Ali, Nilufar Yasmin, Makeka, Rahima, Rizia, Sariful, Anawar, Wazed, Tariqul, Rabiul, Rafiqul, Siraj, Nipu, Karam Ali, Mansur Ali, Jahidur, Momena, Azizul, Biltu, Rahat Ali, Abdul Mannan and Dulal Hossain. Two

Rheramara Police Staiton. Police arrested three people of Awal group. They are Dulal, Babul, and Mahabul.

Kotwali, Sutrapur businessmen to keep shutters down on Mar 31

Businessmen of old Dhaka's Kotwali and Sutrapur areas yesterday floated a common platform and decided to keep shutters of all establishments in the areas down from 9:00am to 2:00pm on March 31 protesting the killing of three businessmen in the areas as well as rising robbery and extortion.

Leaders of 40 business associations formed the Sammilita Beboshayee Oikya Parishad and announced March 31 programme at a meeting of Bangladesh Electric Association where the president of Bangladesh Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), the apex trade body of the country, and three of its

During the half-day shutdown on March 31, the businessmen will brought out processions in Kotwali and Sutrapur areas in support of their demands that include a stop to killing, robbery and extortion and arrest and punishment of the killers.

FBCCI President Abdul Awal Mintoo urged the old Dhaka businessmen not to give any programme before the FBCCI declares an agenda soon aiming at removing all problems facing the businessmen in particular and people in general.

He however did not elaborate

The businessmen expressed grave concern at the slide in law and order in old Dhaka where three businessmen have been killed and cash and goods from nine shops

looted in the last few months. They protested the attack on the companies of Abdul Mannan, who recently resigned from the ruling BNP and parliament, and observed that businesspersons will wind up their investment from country where state-patronised criminals attack business institutions

3 abducted

FROM PAGE 1

Udipur under the upazila, Jahidul was picked up at gunpoint while returning home from Kushtia town. The gang, later demaned Tk 2lakh ransom for his release.

police could not rescue any of the

Rahman was involved in the

authority was involved in the pro-The authorities have so far taken no punitive measure against any officials, although evidence of corruption is visible and the quality

Eight people were killed and seven accidents in Bogra and Chittagong

Locals rushed to spot and sent injured Alim Mian, 26, and Kalam,

Alim and Kalam died minutes after they were admitted to the

In another accident at Charia on

11:00am, killing him on the spot,

abducted in

Teenaged boy

Jessore STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khlna Unidentified miscreants abducted

a teenaged schoolboy from Keshabpurin Jessore on Monday.

A gang kidnapped Abu Salam, son of Satbaria union parishad member Abu Jamal, at gunpoint from a local fish market at about 10:00pm, sources said.

His captors demanded Tk 2 lakh from Jamal and threatened to kill the 13 years old boy if the ransom was not paid by yesterday, police coid

PM terms CPJ

FROM PAGE 1 countries appeared to her a sweeping comment. She said her government took no repressive measures against any journalists or newspapers. Sometimes journalists might have come under attacks but those were not for journalism but for other reasons. In such cases, she

claimed, her government immediately tracked down the offenders and took action against them. Khaleda said the CPJ's statement did not reflect the reality in Bangladesh.

She then referred to the confer-

ences of two journalists' forums in Dhaka and as many as 467 foreign journalists' visit to Bangladesh last year. None of those foreign journalists including 14 from US and 86 from UK said anything about repression on journalists in the country, she added. Opposition Jatiya Party law-Rowshan Ershad, however, said journalists were being repressed and attacked frequently

minister's thinking about the killing of journalist Manik Saha in Khulna In reply, Khaleda expressed her government's firm commitment to ensure safety and security of the media people but she hastened to add that freedom of the media did not mean blackmailing and spreading of wrong information leading to chaos in society.

Responding to another ques-

tion, the prime minister said the

government has taken measures in

line with the international chil-

dren's rights charter for improve-

and wanted to know the prime

ment of the condition of children and juveniles in custody. She told another questioner Bangladesh has no outbreak of bird flue and that the government has taken steps to protect the poultry

One of Azad's family members

FROM PAGE 1 a member of the committee, told The Daily Star yesterday that despite acute shortage and price spiral of fertiliser and diesel, there

was no report of imports.

"The prime minister instructed immediate import of 50,000 tonnes of potash, but any consignment is yet to reach Bangladesh, he said. "Farmers are getting indirect subsidy on urea only. But they need subsidies on all inputs including potash, diesel and seeds. The minister (MK Anwar)

said he was ready to give farmers subsidies, but the finance ministry did not agree." The committee said that in line with a recommendation of its previous meeting, the agriculture

ministry wrote the energy ministry for immediate import of diesel to help irrigation in peak boro season.

But the energy ministry is yet to

On BNP lawmaker Shafi

respond to the request.

Shaptahik 2000

FROM PAGE 12 Hossain from Dhaka's Mirpur, threatening to kill him. "This (the shroud) is your reward for writing about us in Shaptahik 2000 and (your books)
Bangladesher Underworld Ebong Rajniti and Ghatana Theke Sangbad Ebong Sangbadikata," the letter

On the same day, he received an

anonymous phone call. "The letter

is not meant to just scare you, but to

give you tidings of your impending death. The angel of death will visit you within a few days," Mortoza quoted the caller as saying. Mortaza, who is well-known for his investigative reports on religious fundamentalism, minority oppression, criminal underworld terrorism, said the caller specifically mentioned his reports on the February 27 terrorist attack on Prof.

Humayun Azad and the Kadiani

"I do not consider it an isolated incident. It is part of an attempt to silence free press," Mortoza said, adding he suspects fundamentalist groups are behind it. Shahadat Chowdhury, editor of Shaptahik 2000, said Mortaza's family and colleagues are extremely

worried about the situation and

asked the government to protect the

Mortaza filed a general diary

with Ramna Police Station on

journalist.

Blame on ministries Ahmad Chowdhury's allegation of creation of an artificial crisis of

> minister assured the committee of tough monitoring to find out hoarders and price manipulation. The meeting observed that the premier denied reports of fertiliser and diesel crises in her rallies in the past weeks to the frustration of farmers who pegged the claims

Some committee members felt

as ridiculous.

fertiliser by unscrupulous traders

for a hefty profit, the agriculture

Khaleda should avoid such speeches for the sake of her and her government's image until the government could effectively resolve the crises. The meeting, chaired by committee Chairman Abdul Mannan, also discussed the low quality of seeds on the market and stressed the rise in seed production capac-

Corporation. 48-hour hartal

Working Committee will finalise

the next agitation programmes

including more hartals at a meeting on March 23 chaired by party chief Sheikh Hasina. Sources said the AL will stage a demonstration in the last week of this month as part of its one-point

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) and discussed the current political situation. Saber, also political secretary to AL President Sheikh Hasina, told The Daily Star that the AL and other like-minded parties have agreed on the point that the present government has failed to deliver and

there is no alternative but to force it

to step down "to free people of its

with Manzurul Ahsan Khan and

Mujahidul Islam Selim, president

and general secretary of the

"More discussions are forthcoming and AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil will sit shortly with the other parties to find ways to launch a united platform for a vigorous ant-government movement," he The AL, CPB, Workers Party and

first-ever display of opposition unity against the 30-month-old administration of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia observed hartal on March 6 and staged demonstra-

Khulna police is holding a minor on remand that started yesterday to go till today for questioning in a robbery case. Sumon Pal, a 10-year old boy, is son of one Surendra Pal of Moulavipara under Khulna thana. The robbery, in which he was implicated, took place at about

10-yr old boy

remanded

for robbery

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

midnight on March 11 in the Miapara house of one Mohmud Kamal. The dacoits looted Tk. 15,000 in cash, gold ornaments worth Tk. 1,50,000 and other valuables worth over Tk 25,000 as mentioned in the FIR lodged with Khulna thana on March 12 naming none as accused. The masked dacoits, aged between 25 to 30 years were carrying arms as learnt

from the complaint. However, police could not arrest anyone else out the boy in this connection. Police picked up Sumon on Tuesday morning and showed him as arrested in the dacoity case and later took him on remand. Meanwhile Sumon's father alleged, the boy was clubbed by the Investigation Officer (IO) of the case and fell sick.

Advocate Syeda Sabiha Manju, programme officer of Khulna unit of Jatiya Mahila Ainjibi Samity has described the arrest and subsequent remand as a flagrant violation of child rights. She intends to fight for the boy in the court, she

BTTB cellphone

phone network down to the upazila level and evaluated Siemens and Huawei as the lowest bidders among eight participating companies. Siemens and Huawei offered 403 and 233 base stations but their prices did not fit in the BTTB budget.

Instead of negotiating for lower-

ing the prices sought by Siemens and Huawei, the BTTB asked the

two to scale down the network

about 34 percent to match its budget. The German and Chinese vendors revised the base stations down to 281 and 160 units. The BTTB did not mention the consequences of the changes in its purchase proposal. In a presentation to the government, it rather claimed maintaining the original characteristics of the cellphone

Bitumen tank

temperature and pressure of gas might have caused the crack on its roof. The company will soon start an investigation to ascertain the actual cause of the accident, he added.

rise in temperature or any in-built defect of the tank was the reason

Besides, 29,000 acres of land under

ity of state-run Bangladesh Agricultural Development It decided to sit with law enforce-

The committee said it recomoust-government movement. By selling or leasing out the land, AL Organising Secretary Saber the government could raise a good Hossain Chowdhury yesterday met amount of revenue, the committee

professionals.

The meeting also asked deputy commissioners not to issue land documents to outsiders planning to buy landed property in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Committee members Kabir Hossain, Abdul Karim Abbasi and Ali Kadar participated in the meeting also attended by high land

district Tuesday night. The factions-one led by local

about 8:00pm when the BNP men belonging to Awal group attacked the house of one of the supporters of Kuddus group. Hearing the news, Kuddus' men, who were

spot at about 9:30pm and brought

separate cases were filed with

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

directors were present.

on the agenda.

Son of Abdur Rahman of village

Three separate case were filed with police stations concerned. But

three till 6:00pm yesterday.

politics of revenge.

Salauddin alleged.