NEWS

Cops back jungle rule in northwest | Garment units

FROM PAGE 1

exposed with black, randomly assaulting people terming them as Sarbahara men, extorting protection money and forcing men to wear beards and women to put on burka. villagers in the region alleged.

They said they were fearful of the activities of the group and its 'supremo', Azizur Rahman, also known as Bangla Bhai, but Aziz denied all the charges.

The JMJB, which launched the anti-extremist war in April in the region crawling with the outlawed operatives, has allegedly killed seven people and assaulted hundreds of others who oppose them, terming them as Sarbahara men.

POLICE SUPPORT

Noor Mohammad, divisional inspector general of police (DIG), Rajshahi, told The Daily Star yester day that Aziz and his men were assisting the law enforcers in tracking down the outlaws.

We've asked police stations to support them whenever they go to catch outlaws."

He said the vigilantes caught two Sarbahara operatives at Baghmara in Rajshahi a week ago, adding: "After verification and interrogation, we found the pair to be really outlaws.

'You know Sarbahara men have been quite active in the region for many years and it is not possible for

leaving at least 40 people injured. At

least 10 others were injured when

two groups clashed over occupying

polling centres in Ramganj and over

false voting in Kotechandpur in

organisation, yesterday in a primary

report on the municipal polls

claimed about 50 people were

injured when joint forces led by the

paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles

clubbed some agitating voters who

identified a fake voter at

Kotechandpur municipality in

least 20 rounds of gunshots. The

agitating people pelted brickbats at

At least 17 people were injured in

clashes between supporters of

chairmen candidates backed by the

ruling BNP-led coalition and main

perse the troublemakers and

arrested 18 from different polling

centres. Ruling four-party alliance-

backed candidate Kamrul Hasan

Mintoo won the polls, but the Awami

League has rejected the ballot

reports that polling was held peace-

fully at Mongla of Bagerhat and

Paikgachha municipal corporations

of Khulna districts. No untoward

incident was reported during the

Our Khulna correspondent

Police charged batons to dis-

opposition Awami League.

alleging vote rigging.

pollina.

The law enforcers also fired at

Our Pabna correspondent adds:

Brotee, an election observers'

FROM PAGE 1

Jhenidah.

Jhenidah.

the law-enforcers.

Municipal polls

the undermanned and underequipped police to hunt down them.

Aziz is now helping us.' On the allegation that the vigilantes were taking the law into their own hands, he said police would

The DIG was, however, critical of the aroup's 'over-enthusiasm' in asking people to say their pravers and women to wear Burka.

Asked whether any group like the

State Minister for Home Lutfozzaman Babar last night said he had heard of the group which was providing tips-off to police on outlaw operations.

he said, stressing that nobody their own hands Babar said he had no knowledge

looking into the matter soon.

week to 2,000.

elected chairman after he bagged

3,284 votes. His nearest rival Gazi

Mizanur Rahman of the four-party

Awami League-backed candi-

date Nazrul Islam Khan has been

unofficially elected chairman of

Netrokona municipal corporation.

Nazrul secured 15,415 votes

against 7.206 of his nearest candi-

Our Chittagong correspondent

reported that elections to

Banshkhali municipal corporation

were held amid tight security and

allegations of intimidation on minor-

sons of the local lawmaker and state

minister distributed cash at different

municipalities overnight to woo

votes in favour of BNP-backed

candidate Kamrul Islam Hossaini,

who was a former assistant private

Some voters alleged that two

alliance got 2,463 votes.

date.

ity voters.

charge

STRONG FOLLOWING

keep a vigil on their excesses. ists across the country.

JMJB could carry out the duty of law-enforcers, he said police could seek help from any member of the public

enforcement of harsh Islamic codes, he said the allegations were part of a conspiracy against the

"We encourage such activities," would be allowed to take law into

of Aziz before he read some press reports on the group recently.

He said he tried to contact the DIG of Rajshahi yesterday for further details, but could not contact him. The junior minister promised to

UNB adds: Over 800 alleged extremists surrendered to the JMJB at Raninagar upazila in Naogaon in the last two days, raising the number of outlaws given them up in one

of fire and other mishaps in the past, panicky workers did not use those Aziz with a master's in Bangla from Rajshahi University to his credit and rushed to the staircase launched the organisation on April 1 together, resulting in deaths and injuries in stampede. this year and claims that the group by now commands 3,00000 activ-

On the allegations of his group's

income, he said, "People from all

rungs of society are generously

paying us funds, no one is pressur-

ized for money. If someone happily

makes a donation, there's no prob-

political parties in the pockets of

widespread extremist operations,

political opponent now, we feel

cadres from both the ruling and

opposition parties are secretly

opposing us because of harm to

"Although we do not have a

Asked about the allegation that

opular JMJB'.

propaganda.

want it

agent."

journalists."

were assisting them.

their interests."

Over the last 14 years, around 300 workers were killed and about "Our goal is to root out 1500 injured in 35 accidents in Sarbahara men and corruption from garment factories in the capital, society, seize illegal weapons and including the victims of the latest establish the ideal of the Rasul." he incident on Monday, according to recently told Hasibur Rahman Bilu, newspaper reports. Borga correspondent of The Daily

Garment workers' leaders however alleged most of the factories lack adequate safety measures and other essential facilities for them. They blamed the government and the factory owners for this situation.

"We have had sittings with the "The allegations of harassing government and garment factory women, disregarding people and owners. They repeatedly assured extorting protection money are us of meeting our demands for safety measures and other facilities. "We will continue until Qaiamat," But most of the assurances did not Rahman said, "We will establish a materialise." said Shahida Sarkar, a political party named JMJB if people leader of National Garments Workers Federation. On the JMJB's sources of

But Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) President Anisul Huq said garment factories have met the requirements of law to run their business. They have also installed safety measures including emergency exit and fire

JMJB is working with specified directives from the government, extinguishers. "Accident is always unexpected. Aziz dismissed the suggestion outright, saying, "I'm neither a Nobody wants it. But we try to comgovernment official, nor anyone's pensate the workers for that. For every case of accidental death, we "The police do not protect us, we provide Tk 1 lakh to the family condo not need their help. The police cerned." Hug said.

are there to protect the people and The injured workers get expenses for treatment in most He said people, including union cases but no compensation, he parishad chairmen and peacementioned. loving leaders and activists of

Sources however alleged many factories in the capital operate in a

Vajpayee casts vote

FROM PAGE 12

lower house.

policemen and three civilians.

that," said the 79-year-old premier.

his closest rival by 118,000 votes.

But while surveys show a comfort-

able lead for Vajpayee in Lucknow,

"We will give them an opportunity to correct themselves. If they fail to incidents of violence were also correct themselves, we'll take a tough line against them," he Rajasthan. warned.

Suit filed against **Prothom Alo** editor, publisher, 4

daily Prothom Alo and claimed Tk 15

Wadud Bhuiyan MP, also chair-man of Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board, filed the suit with the Fourth Joint District Judge's

Court, Dhaka for publishing a series

of news items in the daily from March

communalism, and political gam-

FBCCI President Abdul Awal Mintoo

said the business community has

the right to express its opinion on

key national issues, which have

a congenial environment to make

business ventures successful, he

said. "We need good governance

and a friendly environment to

increase productivity and ensure

Chowdhury, President of American

Chamber of Commerce in

Bangladesh Aftab-ul-Islam and

United Group Managing Director Mohammad Noor Ali also

Rape in SUST

(Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal).

protest against the rape.

accept their demands.

Raiuk Chairman Iobal Uddin

competitiveness," he added.

addressed the function

FROM PAGE 12

The business community needs

US envoy

impact on business.

FROM PAGE 12

secretary to the state minister. The journos two brothers however denied the COURT CORRESPONDENT

crore as compensation.

9 to March 12.

court on June 2.

FROM PAGE 1

blina.

Our Noakhali correspondent reports that 30 people were arrested A ruling BNP lawmaker yesterday at the polling centres of Pashurhat filed a damage suit against the editor, publisher, news editor, chief municipality for casting fake votes. reporter and two correspondents of

Elections in 22 municipal corporations will be held today, the second day of poll schedule declared by the EC. These are Pirgani Setaboani, Svedpur, Ranopur Gaibandha Dhunat, Nandigram, Naogaon, Shahjadpur, Kumarkhali, Shailkupa, Nawapara, Barguna, Patuakhali, Ghatail, Sherpur Muktagachha, Sunamganj

Shayestaganj, Brahmanbaria,

Chhengarchhar and Bandarban.

FROM PAGE 1

electric wire, switchboard and electric instruments. A number of factories in Moghbazar, Malibagh and Elephant Road areas are located in alleyways, where fire service vehicles cannot enter.

According to an estimate of the BGMEA, there are about 3600 garment factories across the country, of which nearly 2600 are in the capital and on its suburbs. Meanwhile, different organisa-

dangerous way with defective

tions yesterday demanded of the government to go for legal action against the owners of factories which lacked safety measures that led to deaths and injuries to workers on Monday.

They held street rallies and demonstrations to press their demand. The organisations included

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, National Garments Sramik ederation, Samajtantrik Sramik Federation, Bangladesh Sangjukta Garments Sramik Federation, Nari Jote and Karmaiibi Nari.

Delhi offers

FROM PAGE 1 India, he said, persisted with peace efforts with Pakistan despite some initial setbacks and insisted that Islamabad should desist from encouraging terrorism in India.

"Now there is peace instead of war. We recently watched cricket matches between the two countries and this was good," he added.

Asserting India's commitment to having peace with its neighbours, Vajpayee said, "You can change your friends but not your neighbours. If your neighbour is bad, you cannot shift your house elsewhere.

play a full tour in Pakistan for the first time in 14 years.

One person died when rival But projections based on opinion aroups in Bihar clashed while stray and exit polls in the first phases of voting suggest no bloc would win outright control of parliament. reported from Madhya Pradesh and

If his National Democratic Alliance However, the fourth of five rounds, does not win enough seats to form a was largely peaceful as the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) strugmajority government it would have to draw more small parties into the gles to win a majority in the 545-seat coalition, making it less stable.

"I am not nervous" about exit polls, "We should get 272 seats very Vajpayee told reporters before voting. He displayed the ink on his comfortably. I am confident about finger that proved he had voted and His close aide Pramod Mahajan flashed a V for victory sign.

predicted Vajpayee would defeat The opposition objects to the pro-Hindu agenda of Vajpayee's challenger Ram Jethmalani, a leftleaning lawyer who was part of the Bharatiya Janata Party and argues that the government's drive to boost premier's peace bid in Kashmir, by a wider margin than in the last election prosperity has been limited to cities. in 1999 when the premier defeated

PM urges FROM PAGE 1

exit polls from the first three rounds of voting have shown the main opposireligious tolerance is also apprecition Congress party narrowing the ated by foreigners," the prime minister told the delegation. gap. "I see no difficulties ... because I

don't know how they are making such Khaleda said her party and the predictions," Vajpayee said. government are equally respectful to all religions of the country and The prime minister called the

Form independent anti-corruption

commission: B Chy STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Convenor of National Committee of Convenor of National Committee of Bikalpa Dhara (NCBD), AQM Badruddozza Chowdhury has asked the government to form an independent anti-corruption com-mission through amendment of the anti-corruption law.

"The government must amend the anti-corruption law and declare a selective body for an independent anti-corruption commission. They can form the independent commission within two months if they work to that end," said Badruddoza while addressing a joining ceremony of 100 new members at KC Memorial Clinic yesterday.

"The donor countries are also pressing the government with the same demand," he said, adding, "You've already heard allegations of embezzling thousands of crores taka by ministers, their family members and the people of ruling clique."

50 students

FROM PAGE 1 injuries. They are Diba and Nurunnahar Doly of Eden college, and Sajal, Atiar, Golam Mostafa, Rakib, Kabir, Probir Mitra and Mahmudul Hasan Sohag of Dhaka College. The other injured students were admitted to local clinics.

"The NU employees attacked us all of a sudden. Some of the female students including myself fell on the ground and some fainted during the uting leaflets late Tuesdav warning attack. My friends rescued me as disarm Sadr's followers. the attackers pelted us with brickbats," said Nurunnahar Doly while talking to newsmen at the DMCH. of Najaf, where Sadr has dug in with thousands of armed followers Gazipur police arrested five

came under fresh mortar attack students from the scene. early yesterday morning but there Over 800 students of 2nd-vear (honours) from Dhaka College, were not reports of casualties, Èden College, Titumir College, officials said.

Mirpur Bangla College, Jagannath killed in fighting between coalition College, Bhawal College and Tongi troops and Sadr's followers since College went to the NU campus at Gazipur at about 12 noon to press Monday, after the cleric vowed to home their demands. lead his men to "martyrdom". The demands include reforming

and more disciplined and, God the NU syllabus, allowing teachers willing, I'm leading you to martyrof NU-affiliated colleges to prepare dom," Sadr told thousands of followquestion papers, preparing an NU calendar, holding exams during a ers in a mosque near Najaf, accordspecific time period and allowing ing to video film footage distributed by his office. students to retake exams only for the subjects failed. **CUSTODIAL DEATHS**

NU Vice-Chancellor Prof Aftab Two Iragi prisoners were murdered Ahmed said the clash began after by Americans and 23 other deaths some unruly students damaged are being investigated in Iraq and windowpanes of the building where Afghanistan, the US revealed on he was holding a meeting with student representatives on their Tuesday as the Bush administration tried to contain growing outrage ive-point demand. over the abuse of Iraqi detainees.

He claimed the agitating students kidnapped four NU officials and took them to Dhaka College and later released three of them. He said some 13 NU officials and employees were also wounded and

several vehicles damaged during the clash. Tension was running high at the NU-affiliated colleges where stu-

dents threatened to go for a greater movement to force the VC to resign unless their demands are met.

On the other hand, the VC said

Angry Iraqis ask

DHAKA THURSDAY MAY 6, 2004

prisoners stripped of their clothes and being humiliated and abused have badly damaged US prestige and credibility, especially in the Arab world

"The actions of the soldiers in those photographs are totally unacceptable and un-American Rumsfeld said. "Any who engaged in such action let down their comrades who serve honourably each day and they let down their country. Army officials said the military

families are waiting for you -- this country is for Iraqis," said another carried by the protesters. had investigated the deaths of 25 Fighting flared again between prisoners held by American forces in Iraq and Afghanistan and deter-Sadr's militiamen, the Mehdi Army, and coalition troops who raided the mined that an Army soldier and a militia's offices in two mainly Shia CIA contractor each murdered a Muslim towns south of Baghdad. prisoner. Most of the deaths

FRESH CLASHES occurred in Iraq. At least 16 Iraqis and a coalition soldier were killed in the clashes according to hospital sources and

Defence Secretary Donald

Rumsfeld said "any American" felt

apologetic for abuses of Iragi pris-

oners by US soldiers, but stopped

short of offering a direct apology

"Abu Ghraib, witness of American savagery," said one

banner. "US Army go home. Your

From page 12

himself

December 2002.

N'ganj poultry officials. Coalition forces seized Sadr's FROM PAGE 12 long bargain, they agreed to release main office in the southern city of Diwaniya, 180 kilometres from the poultry trader and his son for Tk Baghdad, and confiscated a cache 30,000 of arms.

AUS base near the Shia holy city

At least 20 people have been

"We want you to be more viailant

Photographs showing Iraqi

They freed Yusuf and Musa Nine militiamen were killed in residents of Jeudhara area in town, at clashes there and several others injured, according to a spokesman Narayanganj No. 2 railway gate at for the cleric. Five civilians were also 10:30pm only after Ahmed paid them killed in the fighting around the the money. office, hospital sources said. The poultry trader identified five

Violence also ripped the Shiite kidnappers as Zaman, Kalam, Selim Ziaul and Humayun and suspected they are residents of Nayannagar shrine city of Karbala, where Polish troops took over several buildings occupied by the Mehdi Army. At area under Bandar Police Station. least three people were killed, However, police failed to nab any of the abductors till 6:00 in the evening. including a coalition soldier, coali-In another incident at Siddhirgani tion and hospital sources said.

robbers looted 58 tola of gold orna-Polish forces, which command the force in Karbala, started distribments yesterday, but abandoned the booty as locals and traders chased they would conduct nightly patrols to them. Our Narayanganj correspondent

adds, two armed youths took away the jewellery at gunpoint from Zaman Jewellers at Saleha Super Market when the owner of the shop was arranging those at 9:30am.

Zaman, owner of the shop, raised a cry for help as the duo got on their motorbike to flee.

Locals and other traders chased the robbers hearing Zaman's alarm. They fled the area leaving behind their bike and the looted ornaments.

JCD leader

FROM PAGE 1 JCD leader demanding money had threatened his family members with death.

Officer-in-charge of Nabinagar Police Station said Farid was an identified extortionist and involved in a number of cases of repression on women.

Protesting the killing, JCD activ-ists ransacked eight shops at Nabinagar Bazaar yesterday. They demanded punishment to those involved in the killing of Farid.

force. "No fabrication was made nor

any false information included during

the preparation of seizure list," he

accelerate anti-government move-

"Proshika designed a blueprint to

Government yet to build

claimed

FROM PAGE 1

office and cancel Proshika's registration. More than 10,000 staff and 1.25 crore beneficiaries will be affected in the event of cancellation of the registration. Many see Sunday's filing of the

Minister Khaleda Zia's administra-

raided the Proshika headquarters in

Mirpur and sources said the govern-

offices across the country to gather

evidences against the organisation.

"We are looking for evidences that

"We have seized some official

A Proshika official said 10 police-

Proshika officials said they knew

He said police forced five

Proshika had distributed the blueprint

tion.

Mahbubur Rahman, sitti SN chairman of Paikgachha municipal corporation, has been unofficially

Politics of conflict

FROM PAGE 12 difficult to carry forward the reform initiatives.

Christine Wallich, World Bank country director in Dhaka, said election is a costly process in Bangladesh as at least Tk 20 million is spent on each seat.

She urged the major political parties to continue discussions and debates on political differences.

Saber Hossain Chowdhury, political secretary of Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, said while the NGOs should not be involved in politics, the government should also not patronise any such institution.

The government can't have a double standard. We have to differentiate between the NGOs and the NGO workers, who have a constitutional right to be involved in politics," he added.

Hasanul Huq Inu, president of the Jativa Samajtantrik Dal, said parliament may become dysfunctional with politics turning more confrontational in the next two years.

Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, former commerce minister and a ruling party MP, urged the NGOs not to tarnish their image by getting involved in politics. About donor funds, he said some-

Proshika staff

FROM PAGE 1

"If plausible evidences of wrongdoing exist against Proshika, against any of its staff or any other NGO, then specific lawful action should be initiated rather than resorting to methods and actions that can be construed as political victimisation, Abed said in a press release yester-

day. The poverty alleviation and literacy programmes of the Proshika favourably affect the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, Abed said, adding that any undue interference in its works is tantamount to hindering poverty-focussed development programmes.

The Brac chairperson said the authorities have carried out investigations into the alleged wrongdoings by some staff of Proshika for several years now, but nothing concrete seems to have emerged out of this.

"I believe that no individual or organisation is above the law of the land. I also believe that an NGO should not directly involve itself in party politics," Abed added.

times millions of dollars are spent on preparing reports, which in many ases are not implemented.

In his keynote presentation Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, executive director of the CPD, said macroeconomic situation is now robust. But a weak foreign aid utilisation capacity, leading to low implementation of annual development programme is a maior concern.

The citizens feel disempowered to observe that the government, instead of being responsive to its citizens' concerns, is more responsive to similar demands from the donors.

Kutubuddin Ahmed, president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said politicians should behave in a way so that the economy is not hurt. "Confrontational politics is not desirable. What we need is a peaceful atmosphere. It is not desirable that we become the champion in corruption for consecutive years." M Syeduzzaman, former finance

minister, said the practice to make parliament dysfunctional for years has to be stopped.

Ataus Samad, an eminent journalist, said citizen's security is a major concern now. Professor Rehman Sobhan, CPD

chairman, chaired the dialogue,

Diego back FROM PAGE 12

Since then Maradona has played golf, practised skills with a football and had constant visits at General Rodriguez, a town 50km outside the capital city.

Maradona said in a television interview on Friday that he would soon be travelling to Cuba and Italy though he intended to be in Buenos Aires for the 15th birthday party of his youngest daughter on May 21. Photographers captured the 1986 World Cup-winning captain playing golf and driving a golf cart on

a private course. And he was reportedly paid £45,000 for a television interview in which he said he "was dving" but that fans had called him back to life. The reasons for Maradona's

latest admission to hospital and the President Dr Rashed Talukder, the state of his health have not been made clear.

However, reports claim he was fit enough to walk from the ambulance Akhtarul Islam and former general secretary Dr Kabir Hossain. into hospital

In the lawsuit, Wadud said the news items titled 'Khagrachharite Ek Nabyya Godfather' (A new godfather election early, hoping a bumper harvest and peace moves with Pakistan would win his coalition a

in Khagrachhari) and some other reports defamed his reputation. new five-year term. The defendants are Editor of the "Now cricket is being played, not newspaper Matiur Rahman, Publisher Mahfuz Anam, Sanaullah war," Vajpayee said in a speech Tuesday, referring to the government Lablu, news editor, Provash Amin, chief reporter, Mamun Abdullah, staff allowing the national cricket team to

reporter of Chittagong bureau, and Azim-UI-Haque, Khagrachhari district correspondent. After hearing, Judge Mohammad Salauddin took the suit into cognisance and issued summons upon the defendants to appear before the

Public life

list of Bangladeshi export products was handed over to Khokar for Dr Kamal also urged all pro-"favorable concession" from democracy forces, professionals, Pakistan. civil society and conscious people to Dhaka also requested Islamabad unite under the NPU to resist oppression, crime and corruption,

to grant duty-free access of its jutebased products, alongside Bangladeshi tea and jute to Pakistan to mend the trade imbalance against Bangladesh.

Pakistan already offered duty-free import of 10 million kilogrammes of Bangladeshi tea and jute following a meeting between Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf in Dhaka in 2002. Khokar said both sides agreed to

ask their commerce ministries to expedite the process of current FTA (Free Trade Agreement) negotiations between the two countries and that Pakistan would also encourage its businessmen to invest in Bangladesh to take advantage of a lucrative investment climate.

He also mentioned the establishment of a joint business council following Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry President Abdul Awal Mintoo's recent visit to Pakistan

Khokar said the two secretaries discussed the thornv issue of repatriating 2.5 lakh stranded Pakistanis and agreed to continue talks until a solution is reached to the "complex" problem.

alleged accomplice Mamunur Referring to President Rashid Shanto, ex-general secre-Musharraf's offer of full scholarship tary of the SUST unit of JCD for 75 Bangladeshi students to During a rally in the afternoon, pursue higher studies in Pakistan, Chowdhury said the first batch would the teachers also demanded punbe in Pakistan at the start of next ishment to a group of JCD cadres for academic year. attacking students, teachers and

On regional and international photojournalists on April 26 during a issues, the two foreign secretaries discussed the follow-up to the 12th The SUST Teachers' Association Saarc (South Asian Association for (SUSTTA) earlier issued a 10-day Regional Cooperation) summit held ultimatum to the authorities to in Islamabad in January early this year. They also discussed the situa-Chaired by SUSTTA Acting tion in Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan and Cyprus.

rally was addressed among others Chowdhury said Saarc foreign by its General Secretary Zahir Uddin Ahmed, former president Dr ministers would meet in Islamabad in July to monitor the progress in activities since the 12th Saarc summit

observed that the religious harmony in Bangladesh is intact. She said people of all faiths

perform and celebrate their religious activities and festivals freely and enthusiastically, and the government extends all possible cooperation in celebrating their festivals in a free and congenial atmosphere.

Describing Pakistan's relationship

Pak foreign secy

FROM PAGE 1

Secretary Shamser Mobin with Bangladesh as "special", he Chowdhury after holding official talks said, "I'm hopeful that Bangladeshat the Foreign Ministry vesterday. Pakistan relations are set for high Chowdhury told reporters that a

level and intensifying." Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury said he had a frank and fruitful discussion with his Pakistani counterpart, covering all areas of bilateral relations as well as regional and

international issues. On the issue of Iraq, the two sides called for maintaining sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country and a central and decisive UN role in dealing with the post-war situation.

Both foreign secretaries condemned the torture of Iraqi prisoners by US and British soldiers, saying such violation of human rights is "very sad and regrettable."

was on to arrest drivers of five other trucks and one crane hired for

Ten truckloads of smuggled weapons were seized from the jetty of Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Ltd (CUFL) while they were being

A CID team during its drive quizzed some members of local smugglers operating in the coastal areas and in the city markets, sources said. But the CID police kept mum on this

The source said probe is on to trace whether Hafizur Rahman, who supervised the unloading, had any link with Pakistani ISI or any other international agency. The source said Hafizur and

other key suspects, including Din Mohammad, Haii Sobhan, Abul Kasem Madu and Barmayia Jahur, are still in their hideouts in Chittagong.

The CID earlier arrested another key suspect Jasim Uddin, younger brother of pro-Jamaat labour leader Din Mohammad, Jashim, who the source said supervised the unloading with his brother, was sent to jail custody on completion of a four-day

the standard of education will suffer greatly if the authorities give in to these demands.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Samaitantrik Dal and its labour wing Samajtantrik Sramik Front yesterday strongly condemned the attack main opposition Awami League in its on the students and demanded attempts to overthrow a little-overpunishment to the attackers two-and-half-an-year-old Prime

BDF meet

FROM PAGE 1 mentation of a Supreme Court directive for separation of the judiciary from the executive and urged the government to move quickly on the issue.

The note to be discussed at the Proshika has 200 Area Development three-day meeting beginning in Centres (ADCs) covering 257 thanas Dhaka on Saturday touches upon of 60 districts across the country. many other non-economic burning issues like corruption, law and order, institution of a Judicial to all branches, but we haven't found Service Commission and an indeanything as yet," admits Officer-inpendent anti-corruption commis-Charge (OC) of Pallabi Police Station sion, mishandling of NGOs, investment and regulatory climate and Nurul Amin, adding the raids will continue until they stumble into the any issues hindering Bangladesh's evidences. development.

The donors feel there is a need 'to end the tradition of opposition documents but not found any 'antiboycotting parliament' and to 'engovernment discussion papers'," he sure application of rules of procetold The Daily Star. dure to allow opposition to voice views and to represent citizens men stormed into Pallabi Thana ADC concerns' swearing at Proshika officials on

They observe improving human Sunday. Police showed them a paper security is an urgent priority of the containing anti-government mesgovernment given the regular sages and claimed that according to reports of violence and insecurity their intelligence, a similar note was There has been a surge of politically sent to Proshika's Pallabi ADC from motivated violence in the recent its head office. Police then asked the months, the donors noted.

Proshika officials to show them their "Laws and practices inconsistent copies of the paper. with international human rights treaties signed by Bangladesh nothing of such papers, but police should be revoked and institutions searched the office computers, took to promote the protection of human rights established," the note says. printouts of office documents and finally made a seizure list. The last The development partners item mentioned on the seizure list expect the government to update them on the establishment of a National Human Rights was 'anti-government discussion paper-2 pages'. Commission and appointment of an

Ombudsman. The Daily Star that police did not give The government should guaranthem any copy of the seizure list. tee the protection of rights and "Police found no anti-government human security of all sections of messages in our office. They themsociety, including minority, ethnic selves brought the so-called 'antiand religious groups, the note says. government discussion paper-2 Decentralisation and developing pages' and claimed to have found it local government institutions will be here," the Proshika official added. key to improving accountability of public service delivery and the Proshika officials to sign on a paper donors are keen to see the governthat read. "Although it was not menment's detailed plan for decentralitioned in their employment contract. sation, it added. they have to make a regular donation

The note terms the enactment of to Oikyabaddha Nagorik Andolon a law for forming an independent (ONA, where Qazi Faruque serves anti-corruption commission a posias member secretary)". tive step. But it says donors now welcome more details on strategy, commitment by the officials that they sequencing and timing of reforms to ensure that this body becomes will testify as and when required, he operational with the shortest possisaid. But OC Nurul Amin said he ble delay and that it is independent knew nothing about police's taking signatures of Proshika officials by and effective

ment that included sticking posters case as the beginning of the stringent writing songs and distributing leaflets measures the government has been with anti-government slogans," the threatening against Proshika since OC also claimed. coming to office in October 2001. The BNP-led coalition government has been accusing the NGO of aiding

Qazi Faruque, however, has denied outright any involvement with the Awami League to topple the government by April 30 and also denied plotting against the government

Nasima Akhtar Lovely, ADC zonal co-ordinator for Mirpur, Kafrul and On April 20 and May 2, police Pallabi, told The Daily Star she has been receiving threats on the phone for continuing with her job and has ment has ordered more police raids filed a general diary with Mirpur on the central and regional Proshika Police Station.

Meanwhile, arrests of some Proshika officials, police raids on its offices and relentless political threats have frightened its 10,000 employees across the country. Scores of Proshika officials complained that staff are fearful of arrest and harassment while going to office, which has hit Proshika operations hard.

Sources said at least 100 of over 600 employees of Proshika's head office are not coming to the office since the April 20 raid and arrests of five officials including its cultural wing Deputy Director Abdur Rab. They fear being caught by police and coerced into giving 'confessional' statements against their organisation's anti-government involvement, sources said.

Police allegedly forced Rab to give a confessional statement before a magistrate, which Rab later retracted. Police also picked up Dhaka city President of ONA Harunur Rashid and allegedly forced him to state on camera that Proshika played an anti-government role. After television channels telecast the video clip, Harun sent another statement from a hideout later saying that police coerced him into making such a statement.

Some Proshika officials said the BNP, which believes the NGO is A Proshika official of the ADC told working against it. has made no attempt to hide its angst against the organisation since its previous 1991-1996 tenure. Proshika was targeted for its anti-fundamentalism and pro-Liberation War roles and for its efforts to empower women, educate voters and promote cultural activities, the officials said.

"Since our activities go against the ideologies of some political parties, they became hell-bent on stopping us." said a Proshika official asking not to be named. "So, this government has blocked the release of over Tk 300 crore funds after it came to office," he said.

The statement also included a The official added that the NGO is struggling to expand its programmes due to fund crisis and currently running 28 programmes with its Tk 600 crore assets

Ctg arms haul FROM PAGE 1

transportation of the weapons.

unloaded from two fishing trawlers.