College teacher

Motijheel Police Station AKM Rafiqul Islam said they would file a case only after doctors confirmed the boy was tortured.

some drivers rescued the boy from the residence of the deputy secretary at Railway Officers' Colony at Shajahanpur at around 1:30pm yesterday.

"We heard a boy crying often at

"But Nafid took him back. Hearing his scream again, we entered the house and brought him

The drivers took the boy to Motijheel Police Station, where he narrated the brutal torture on him. Police later took him to the DMCH.

station, Rahima denied torture on the domestic help, whom she brought from her village home at Bolakair in Gopalganj in December

She attributed to some 'unknown disease' the old and new marks of injury in the boy's hands legs, forehead and other parts of body. "I used to take care of him as one of my sons and none of my two sons ever tortured him," she

Still looking terrified in his hospital bed, Yasin said, "Nafid used to beat me whenever I was alone in the house. He pressed a hot iron rod on my buttocks about one and a half months ago.

About a red mark in his left eye Yasin said it was caused as Nafid gave a blow on his eye for failing to wake him up in the morning a few

Dr Bipul Krishna Chandra, incharge of the OCC, told reporters, 'The marks on the boy's body are due to torture for a long time. He was tortured both physically and

Rahima's husband Ahsan Sarfun Nur declined to say anything. "The OC (Rafiqul Islam) has asked me not to talk to newsmen."

Jahangir, Amir said: "Who is facing

inconvenience or being transferred

is not significant in this case, but it is

claim to have been holding govern-

ment powers.

facing the same threat

significant that public prosecutors

"If it is the case, all judges are then

The Supreme Court, according to

But the true opinion of the Supreme

Court should be reflected in the

his doubts whether the government actually consulted the Supreme

Court before transferring Jahangir

The judiciary is one of the main

pillars of the constitution. But if the

constitution is not properly under-stood and effectively implemented,

its main spirit will be lost, Amir

risks in the interest of the people and

for the cause of the independence of the judiciary," Amir argued, "not all

judges are as brave as him.'

"Judge Jahangir Husain has taken

In the greater interest of the

Barrister Rokan Uddin Mahmud,

Advocate MK Rahman and some

other lawyers were present in the

court on behalf of the petitioner

while Attorney General Hassan Ariff was present on behalf of the govern-

JMJB engaged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Militants of the dreaded Jagrata

Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) in the name of resisting outlaws

were only engaged in political persecution, said Taskforce against

organisation Bangladesh

Rehabilitation Centre for Trauma

Victims (BRCT) in a press conference here on Friday launched the

report published on the occasion of

the United Nations announced

International Day for the

Zahangir Alam Akas read out the

left at least 12 people killed, 45 mimed and over 300 injured during

its two-month long so-called vigilantism against outlawed Purbo

Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) in

'state run oppression', the report said that those who under the ban-

ner of PBCP committed murders,

extortion and many other crimes in the past, joined JMJB to resist politi-

claimed JMJB operations com-

mander Bangla Bhai and his men to be still active in the region under the

umbrella of some influential politi-

cal leaders while police defied the orders of the prime minister and

state minister for home affairs to

newspaper reports also said that some 254 killings, including 43 in

Rajshahi, occurred in 16 districts of

Raishahi division between January

1 and June 24 this year. Twelve

people fell prey to acid violence

while 27 were raped during the

400 JMJB cadres, armed with hockey

sticks, machetes and other lethal

weapons, besieged Bashikara

village in Adamdighi upazila on

almost all the houses and beat up three people. They allegedly took

said the operation was aimed to nab Goutam Shil, chairman of the

Baragachha union parishad of

Raninagar and reportedly a mem-

JMJB men have been coercing

villagers to sign a paper that said Afsal Hossain alias Hirok was not

killed by JMJB men but by a mob.

Meanwhile, sources said the

ber of the banned PBCP.

Witnesses said they ransacked

three mobile phones. Locals

Reports from Bogra said about

The report quoting different

The report quoting some locals

cal opponents.

period.

the northwestern region since April

Terming the JMJB operations

investigative report that said JMJB

Rajshahi TFT coordinator

TFT formed by a human rights

Torture (TFT).

in political

public and considering its impor-

tance, the constitution should be

interpreted in dealing with the writ

after 16 months of his service.

transfers, Amir argued, expressing

constitution, transfers judges.

Lawyers for full hearing

declined to give in to the pressure. The bench heard the petition for

two hours yesterday when Barrister Amir-ul-Islam argued on behalf of

The court adjourned the hearing until today.

Dr Kamal asked the court for ordering full hearing for interpretation of several articles of the constitu-

Barrister Amir underscored the necessity of interpretation of Article 109 of the constitution, saying: "The control and authority of all judicial activities should lie exclusively with

"Article 116 dictates that the posting, promotion and grant of leave and discipline of persons employed in the judicial service and magistrates exercising judicial functions rest with the authority of the president. But it also dictates that the president must consult the Supreme Court on these matters, Amir argued, "and that means not

controlled by the High Court, the executive tries to transfer judges whenever they wish, "he argued.

Referring to the writ petition by

adding the government and state $\begin{tabular}{ccccc} persecution \\ are not similar things. \\ \end{tabular}$

The petition says any preconstitutional legislation, especially the section, engineered by

from enjoying democracy, free-dom of assembly and speech and to suppress uprising against the then government, albeit estab-lished by law, will have to stand the constitutional test of postindependence Bangladesh.

The petitioner challenged the

The petition says the alleged offence was committed by 'people' at large, but the government excluded all others, including the architect of the Janatar Mancha, and singled out the petitioner along with the co-accused with mala fide

tion case against eight people last year which is pending with the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka.

Some opposition political leaders, government officials and professionals put up the platform against the then BNP government of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the wake of 'sham polls' of February 15, 1996.

Falu's law

FROM PAGE 12

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Traffic (North) Ansar Ali Pathan, however, said the restriction was relaxed to 'test traffic movements' in the area and any reports of orders coming from Falu are 'utterly false'

He said rickshaws and rickshaw-vans will now be allowed to ply the Tongi Diversion Road from 10:00am to 3:00pm and from

However, Inspector of DC north office Kazi Akter Hossain said the ban on rickshaws plying the Tongi Diversion Road was withdrawn according to directions from 'higher authorities'.

Another official from the same office said: "You have to make different promises when you are contesting an election. Maybe the candidate wanted to secure the

vote bank of rickshawpullers and traders in Karwan Bazar Falu could not be contacted for comments despite several

14 accused in FIR for blast at temple

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Fourteen people have been shown report (FIR) for hurling a hand bomb at Arya Dharmasava Temple in the city late Thursday night.

The accused include Khulna city BNP leader Imam Hasan Chowdhury alias Mayna, also a commissioner of ward No. 23 of Khulna City Corporation, Nantu Chowdhury, Paltu Chowdhury, Kala Suman and Mominul Islam.

Six of the accused are allegedly associates of outlaw Raja Chowdhury, who died on June 9 in a shootout with police

Armed police have been deployed in front of the accused BNP leader's house, who went into hiding since the incident.

The officer-in-charge of Khulna Police Station alleged the accused BNP leader is a godfather of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party's M-L faction and mastermind of the bomb attack on the

No progress

FROM PAGE 1 create instability in the country.

Police however arrested amaat-e- Islami leader Delwar Hossain, Jativa Party leader Azahar Ali and Islami Chhatra Shibir activist Shamim in connection with the ammo haul.

Bogra police sources also said the CID concealed a statement by Harunur Rashid Jalal, who was arrested in Dhaka last year, saying the United Liberation Front of Assam (Ulfa) smuggled the ammunition for Maoist guerrillas. Jalal was not allowed to say this in his judicial statement before a magis-

Investigations last year revealed the ammunition were in transit for Maoist guerrillas in Nepal via India. But the case was handed over to the CID in a haste, impeding proper investigation, sources

About 50,100 bullets in 18 plastic bags and 42 packets of explosives weighing two kg each were recovered a year ago from a truck abandoned at a brick kiln of Yasin Ali. Another 11,000 bullets were found in and around the house of Akhlakur Rahman Pintu, convenor of Birkedar union AL in Kahalu

Pintu and driver of the truck Ashish Dev Barman are still absconding while four others including Pintu's wife are under police custody. Sessions Judge of Bogra Khandakar Golam Mostafa on June 17 rejected a prayer for quashing the charges against

The other accused are Jubo League leader Atikur Rahman Dulu, helpers of the abandoned truck Swapan, Kishore Dev Barman and Altu Mia.

Police officials said the ammunition were to be kept in Pintu's house for some days be patch through Dhamuirhat border

Mainur Reza Chv

FROM PAGE 1

adviser to the caretaker government in 1996.

Law Minister Moudud Ahmad has expressed profound shock at the death of the former chief justice. In a condolence message, the minister recalled his contribution to the judiciary.

He prayed for salvation of the departed soul and conveyed deep sympathy for his bereaved family.

'Pichchi' Hannan

FROM PAGE 1

also yesterday raided his house at Kanthalbagan apart from looking for him in Uttara since the inci-

Intelligence sources said Hannan and top four criminals were holding the meeting on Thursday night to plot the killing of former lawmaker who resigned a few months back.

A Dhaka court handed down life term to Hannan in Advocate Habibur Rahman Mondol murder

Police pressed charges against him for his link to the killing of Dhaka City Corporation Commissioner Shahdat Hossain Sikder in Uttara on September 29

The notorious criminal has his operatives working across the capital with strongholds in Tejgaon, Shyampur and

Uttara police yesterday filed three cases against Hannan and eight others, one for assault on police, one for possession of illegal arms and the other for possessing banned drugs, on the basis of early Friday's gunfight and the seizure rom the place of occurrence.

The other accused are Babul Mia, Mustafizur Rahman, Rafiqul Islam, Tuku, Motaleb, Nurul Huda Shakil, Nitol, Saheb Ali and Ali. Police produced Babul Mia,

Mustafiz, Rafig, Tuku and Motaleb, who were arrested during Friday's gunfight, to the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka. The court sent them to Dhaka

Central Iail. Nurul Huda Shakil, who was also arrested during the gunfight. is now undergoing treatment at a city

hospital under police custody.

Result improves

School and Collegiate School of Chittagong with 141.

The boys with a 52.82-percent overall success rate have gained upon the girls who have 46.99percent pass rate.

SSC examinations are held simultaneously by the seven mainstream secondary and higher secondary education boards, Dakhil under Bangladesh Madrasa Education Board and SSC Vocational under Technical Education Board.

The average pass percentage in SSC examination under the seven education boards is 48.02, with boys securing 49.71 pass percentage and girls 45.71.

This year, students under Comilla board achieved the high est pass percentage of 58.18, followed by Jessore at 54.59, Sylhet at 52.49, Barisal at 47.56, Chittagong at 46.55, Rajshahi at 45.52 and Dhaka at 43.30.

In the mainstream secondary education, 363,270 out of 756,387 students who sat the exams in March last have come out success-

The number of SSC examinees was 223,571 under Dhaka board, 207,003 under Rajshahi, 85,131 under Comilla, 105,473 under Jessore, 55,591 under Chittagong, 51,446 under Barisal and 28,172 under Sylhet. In Vocational SSC exams, the

pass percentage this year is 51.16, which registers a 12.14-percent rise from 38.92 percent of last year. In the traditional Islamic education system, 59.74 percent

examinees managed to cross the Dakhil exams this year, boosting the percentage by 17.87 point up from 41.87 of last year. In total, 16,090 out of 31,452 examinees under the Technical Education Board and 105,533 out

of 176,668 examinees under the

Madrasa board have made it this

In technical and madrasa exams, too, boys have outdone the girls. In Vocational SSC the pass percentage of boys is 52.34 and of girls 48.53, while in Dakhil 64.91 percent boys have secured passmarks compared to 51.74 percent

Education Minister Osman Farruk and State Minister for Education ANM Ehsanul Haque Milon, accompanied by the education secretary and the chairmen of the country's nine education boards, handed the result sheets over to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday.

Expressing her satisfaction over this year's SSC-level examination results, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia urged the teachers and all concerned to ensure quality education and help reach its benefits to people of all strata. Khaleda said her government

has attached the topmost priority to education, which she says is reflected in the highest budgetary allocation of Tk 7,600 crore made for education sector in the proposed budget for the coming fiscal vear. The allocation is about Tk 950 crore more than the current year she observed.

Elaborating on the priority, the prime minister mentioned an ongoing six-year project at the cost of about Tk 5,000 crore for development of primary education.

She also referred to a 'special' six-year Tk 400-crore programme incorporated in the proposed budget for 2004-05 which aims at reaching education to the children who are deprived of normal schooling. The 'special' programme would benefit about 20 lakh people, she added.

Reflecting on the exam results, **Education Minister Osman Farruk** said the average pass percentage is snatched my 7.62 revolver, magabetter this year as the ministry had zine, ammunition and my purse asked schools to register only those candidates who pass the tests. Following the step, the number of examinees declined this year, he

"This year only studious boys and girls who were confident to pass sat for the exam," the minister maintained. He claimed the success is also partly due to the awareness that no-one would pass without diligent study created by the awareness raising campaign his ministry had launched against cheating in exams

Denial of direct polls

Dr Kamal said while giving poet Sufia Kamal Memorial Lecture at Sufia Kamal Auditorium in the National Museum, marking the poet's 93rd birth anniversary.

The Memorial Lecture was organised by Sanjher Maya Trust. 'Sanjher Maya' is a book of poems written by the acclaimed poet.

The Gono Forum president recalled the contribution of poet Sufia Kamal in ensuring women's representation in every sphere of life and said she stood against communalism and all sorts of evil throughout her life and was never afraid of speaking the truth.

The Gono Forum president said it appears that the major political parties do not want true representation of women in parliament.

"Although democratic process started in the country with the fall of autocratic government in 1990, true democracy is yet to be estab-

He criticised the country's current electoral process where

money and muscle power rule "How can people expect pro-

poor policy from those who win electoral race through spending crores of taka?" Dr Kamal ques-

Major political parties pledged to give direct election to the women constituencies before the general election but they have breached the commitment, said Di Kamal, observing that true representation of women in the legislative assembly can help improve socio-economic conditions of the

Dr Kamal urged all progressive parties and civil society members to stand united in establishing true people's representation in the House.

Presided over by Nurjahan Begum, editor of the 'Begum' magazine, it was also attended by Sultana Kamal, women activist Farida Akhter and Chairperson of Sanjher Maya Trust Dr Sultana Sarwat Ara Zaman.

Hills home to militants

FROM PAGE 1

Forest officials, declining to be named, said much of the forestland is beyond their super-

The two training camps busted in Hathazari and Rangunia thrived on government land, an indication many more are secreted there.

"There is no government programme in much of the hilly forest. Nobody goes there and we cannot supervise the areas properly, as the forest department is understaffed," says Shamsul Azam, divisional forest officer (DFO) of the northern forest department. "Anyone can set up camps in such unguarded for-

He said the forestland is divided into different beats, each covering between 1,600 and 2.800 hectares with one official, three guards and a gardener to look

Assisted by one of the three, the official is mostly busy in office, he said, adding the other two cannot supervise hundreds of hectares on foot. "We cannot expect them to do so," Azam said. "We don't have information

about militant camps in our areas. Still, we have instructed our beat offices to gather information on the suspicious movement of people. We will seek police help if necessary," the DFO said. "The hills provide a cover for

the militant camps to grow, as population is sparse there," says Hasib Aziz, assistant superintendent of police (ASP) in Chittagong, who led the police raid on the Hathazari camp, 14 kilometres off the local police station. "There may be some other

camps. We are gathering infor-

mation and keeping a close watch

and NGOs," he said without naming the institutions. **HATHAZARI CAMP**

Mir Mohammad Anis, principal of Al-Huda Women's Madrasa, who founded the training camp in Hathazari, fled the camp under cover of dark hours before police launched the predawn raid that found wooden dummy AK-47 rifles, tents, spears and binoculars.

Other madrasa teachers claim that Anis, cousin of a state minister, has no links with any political party or Islamic organisation. But the madrasa organised a

demonstration two days after busting of the camp, claiming Anis had no links with the camp. Leaders of the Jamaat-e-Islami and other ruling four-party coalition partners attended the rally,

addressed by Islamic Oikya Jote's Chittagong chief as the chief guest. An official who was part of the police team says: "We used a source to determine the road to the camp. It was no easy matter for us. We had to cross up to seven hills. Halfway to the camp, we lost track of the road. We could not believe

some people would set up a camp

Hathazari Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mahfuzul Alam told The Daily Star that the camp was built 1,000 feet to 1,200 feet above the sea level and the hills vary in height -- from 150 feet to 1,400 feet.

Woodcutters said they saw people dressed like madrasa students roaming the forest. "We have long been discussing the issue. But nobody listened to us. We believe nolice raids will bring many secrets to light," said Omar Faruk of

Another police official said the peratives used madrasas in Chittagong for overnight arms training but moved into the hills because of police raids on the on some educational institutions religious institutions.

AL seeks

FROM PAGE 12 against the recent bomb attack on a meeting of the party's senior

leader Suranjit Sengupta in

Leading AL leader Tofail Ahmed meanwhile accused the alliance high ups of hatching a conspiracy to rig the by-poll.

Ruling coalition goons are disrupting Bikalpa Dhara election campaign every day but the gov-ernment is reluctant to deploy army on the polls day, he said.

Abdul Jalil said the government came to power with a pledge to provide security for all but they failed to ensure that. On the Sunamganj incident,

planned as the government has plotted to kill all popular AL leaders to stop its downfall. Mofazzal Hossain Maya said it is pointless to ask the government for punishment of criminals behind

the bomb attack as it has failed to

Jalil said, "The attack was pre-

arrest a single criminal as yet. The AL leaders also decried crude comments on Opposition Leader Sheikh Hasina and Suranjit by BNP lawmaker Salauddin

Quader Chowdhury They urged all to make AL's July

Presided over by Mohammed

Obaidul Kader, Mukul Bose,

Hanif, the rally was also addressed

Abdul Mannan and Sheikh Bazlur Revolver

with Tk 150 and some important documents," Sattar said in a FIR (first information report) filed with Motijheel Police Station. "The criminals, aged between 18 and 22, hurled a bomb when I

cried for help and left the scene," he added. The police official said a gang member also attempted to snatch his walkie-talkie, but retreated as he threw it away, causing damage

to the set. Police failed to arrest anybody till 7:30pm.

Clarification

the June 24 report headlined "Mirza Abbas claims speaker's house followed Kahn's design: IAB chief urges PM to protect Sangsad Bhaban design'

The report says, "I admit that the structure on late president Ziaur Rahman's tomb has distorted the original design of Kahn, but let me assure you I'm converting a forest of Chandrima Uddyan into a beautiful garden". The ministerial letter said, "In

fact, the minister said that the structure of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman's tomb was not incorporated in the original design of Sangsad Bhaban by Louis I Kahn. It was built up later. The ministry is aware so that no impairment or distortion may occur to the world famous architectural monument and the government has taken steps to turn Zia Uddyan into a beautiful garden."

Our Reply: We stand by our report.

Not a single pass

FROM PAGE 1

those, but find ways to improve standard of education so that those failing institutes could improve in future," Farruk said adding, "We need to improve curriculum structures and classroom environment to help out

Pointing out that the ministry has been able to lower the tendency of cheating at public examinations, he said only 3,381 examinees were expelled from examination halls this year while the number was 13,000 in 2003 and 35,970 in 2002.

Last year education ministry showcause notices on some 10,000 poor performing

institutions, he added. Many of them have showed reasons including lack of teachers and infrastructure, but now the ministry would see what improvement they have made in this year's examinations, the minister said.

Among others, Education Secretary Faruq Ahmad Siddiqui, chairmen of all educational boards and education ministry officials attended the press brief-

Stipend

FROM PAGE 12 According to Dutch-Bangla Bank

Limited press release, a student who gets scholarship at HSC leve will continue to get scholarship till completes his master's degree provided his year to year academic performances are satisfactory. In this way, after five years the

total number of schlarships will stand at 1250 for which the bank will need to spend about Tk 3.74 crore per year, the press release Bank's Md Yeasin Ali also informed that the DBBL would provide financial assistance for 400

rural divorced women and 100 acid victims next year. "Profit is not our only mission, our banking is also to support society to grow

MR Akhtar Mukul

 $\begin{array}{c} undergoing \ treatment \ at \ the \\ Intensive Care Unit (ICU). \end{array}$

He left behind his two sons, two daughters, grandchildren and a host of relatives and admirers.

Mukul inspired the freedom fighters and countrymen during the Liberation War by his oratory popularly known as 'Charam-patra' on Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra, the radio station of the then government

The eminent journalist was born in West Bengal in 1929. After the partition, the family of MR Akhtar Mukul migrated to Mahasthangarh

Mukul was also involved in the Language Movement.

After the independence of Bangladesh, Mukul joined the gov-ernment service. After his retire-ment, he involved himself with book He wrote 36 books during his lifetime. 'Ami Bijoy Dekhechhi' (I have seen the Liberation), 'Mohapurush', 'Mujiber Rakto Lal'

are his famous books. Mukul worked as journalist in

different daily newspapers including the daily Ittefaq. He was also a col-

Mukul was one of the founder members of the National Press Club and the owner of the well-known publishing house, Sagar Publisher. President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia have expressed profound shock at the

death of MR Akhtar Mukul. In separate messages, the president and the prime minister recalled with gratitude his contribution to the War of Independence in 1971.

They prayed for salvation of the departed soul and conveyed deep

Board websites

FROM PAGE 12

"The domain provider downed the server after more than six lakh people logged on to the site at a time," she said. "They have been taken aback by the huge number of hits," she added.

"We expect to put the site back

in place shortly and the system

engineers are working to upload it," she added. People who were able to access the site told The Daily Star it was

"You can have results in detail including name of the examinee, educational institution, department and grade point average (GPA) all by just typing the roll number," said one guardian.

AL nominates

FROM PAGE 12

He said the AL candidate has already begun campaign with other district leaders and workers.

date of filing nomination is July 3 while the last date of withdrawal is The seat fell vacant following the murder of AL lawmaker Ahsanullah Master on May 7.

According to schedules declared by the Election Commission on June 21, the last prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee in mid 2001.

31 die in Iraq

Minister Iyad Allawi's party. Two guards were wounded in the attack on the office of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, a moderate Shia group. One of them said the gunmen stormed the building in

8:30 am (0130 EDT). In a separate attack in Baquba, armed men chased the guards from a building used by Allawi's Iraqi National Accord group and then destroyed it with explosives,

The blast in Arbil, 220 miles

French press

said the popular Aujourd'hui/Le Parisien daily, wallowing in

The national sporting disaster, comparable to France's shock exit in the first stage of the 2002 World Cup held in Asia, was a joint effort by "players at the end of the line and a coach (Jacques Santini) who decided, even before the competition had started, to jump ship and sign a lucrative contract with an English club side (Tottenham)," the paper opined.

as they had done throughout the competition, the French seemed out of it, "almost anaesthetised' in the middle of the noisy stadi-

paper continued.

For L'Equipe sporting daily the French legacy in the tournament was of "their disorganisation and impotency," with the team abdicating its title with a performance unworthy of its sympathy to the bereaved family

Leader of the Opposition and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed deep shock at the death of Mukul.

In a statement, the opposition leader said the country has lost an honest and dedicated journalist at the death of MRAkhtar Mukul.

She prayed for salvation of the

departed soul and conveyed her sympathy to the bereaved family. Jatiya Party Chairman H M Ershad also expressed his deep shock at the death of MR Akhtar

State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Rezaul Karim, Bangladesh Muktijoddha Council, Dhaka University Teachers Association, Udichi Shilpi Gosthi, Bangladesh Chhatra League and different sociocultural organisations expressed their deep shock at the death of Mukul. Mukul will be buried at the

Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in Mirpur this afternoon. His body will be brought to his Baily Road residence at 8:00am today where AL chief Sheikh Hasina and other leaders of different political parties will pay their homage

The body will be brought to the National Press Club at 10:00am. Later, the body will be taken to the Muktijoddha Central Command

The namaj-e janaza for Mukul will be held at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque after Zohr prayers.

12 killed

FROM PAGE 12 critically, he added.

"The seven men killed were all members of the local village defence committee," Gupta said referring to groups of villagers who are armed and trained by Indian security forces to guard remote hamlets from militant attacks.

The dead were all Muslims,

police added. No militant group has claimed responsibility for the Another senior police officer suspected that the attack might

have been triggered by a recent

campaign on state-run TV which

showed women in Kashmiri vil-

lages joining village defence committees and taking up arms alongside their menfolk. "The attack took place in the same area shown on TV," the officer told Reuters on condition of anonymity. "This was probably to

teach the villagers a lesson and scare them away. The killings took place hours before Pakistani Foreign Secretary Riaz Khokhar was due in the Indian capital for talks beginning today to tackle the Kashmir dispute, at the core of half a century of hostility

between the nuclear-armed neigh-The two-day talks between Khokhar and his Indian counterpart Shashank, who uses only one name, will be the first to focus on Kashmir since a failed summit between Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and then Indian

keeper and wounded Mahmoud

Mohammed, culture minister in

the Kurdish regional govern-

"I was on my way to the minis-

try. There was a car bomb. The blast hit my car from outside. The

people who were with me were injured too," Mohammed told

"It is like any terrorist attack.

democracy. The only language

they know is violence. They don't

want the situation to go well for

trouble since US-led forces

invaded Iraq last year, though

twin suicide attacks on Kurdish

party offices in February killed

In another attack in the north,

gunmen ambushed a police

patrol 30km (19 miles) south of

Kirkuk, killing one policeman

and wounding another, police

American soldier died of his

wounds overnight after an

ambush in Baghdad. That

brought to 623 the US combat toll

in Iraq since last year's invasion.

expect more violence in the run-

up to the June 30 handover of

A group led by Jordanian militant

Abu Musab al-Zargawi claimed

responsibility for those attacks

and on Friday US planes bombed

what the US military called a

known Zarqawi network safe

"Somewhere between 20 and

house" in the city of Falluja, west

25 people were killed in the

strike," said a US-led coalition

power.

of Baghdad.

RABBITVICTIM

US and Iraqi officials say they

The US military said an

Arbil has been relatively free of

the Kurds," he added.

more than 100 people.

They want to end peace and

Reuters from his hospital bed.

ment, in the head.

killing three guards, and blew up a building used by interim Prime

the mixed Sunni-Shia town at

police said.

north of Baghdad, killed a shop-

FROM PAGE 12

"There was absolutely nobody to impose even a semblance of real football," the

Against the Greeks on Friday,

France "bowed out of Euro 2004 via the tiniest of doors. Their defeat by Greece was a close one, but the difference in play, in spirit and in work-rate was enormous," the Liberation daily complained.

official after the raid, the third on suspected Zarqawi safe houses in Falluja this week. The house was reduced to rubble, but one Falluja resident at the scene denied that anyone had been killed in the strike. "I swear to God, nobody died here except this rabbit," said a man in

an Arab robe, dangling a dead rabbit in one hand. (Reuters, AFP)

of this report at about 7:00pm. Officer-in-Charge (OC) of

The incident came to light as

the house for a long time. Being suspicious about it, we peeped through the window today (Saturday), saw the boy crying in a room and brought him out of the house, said Salamat, one of the drivers.

out," he added.

Talking to reporters at the police

hobbled his judicial activities. He also said he was transferred to Barisal within 16 months of his service at the special tribunal as he

Jahangir. Senior lawyers including Dr Kamal Hossain and Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud were also

the High Court.'

whole Supreme Court." "If the transfer of a judge is not

Acting CEC

The High Court Division Bench Says human rights colonial rulers to suppress people

entire criminal proceedings against him, saying they were brought without prior sanction necessary before initiating such an action against the holder of a constitutional office enjoying the privileges of a Supreme Court

The government filed the sedi-

8:00pm onwards.

attempts.