Row over draft law

about the government's enacting a law to allow limited trade union rights in the export processing zones (EPZs) due to its delay in placing the draft law before parlia-

US Ambassador Harry K Thomas at a function at the National Press Club yesterday warned Bangladesh of withdrawing either the GSP facility or exportimport bank financing if it does not adhere to labour standards and allow trade unionism in its exclusive trade zones by the month-end

The US embassy expressed its reservations about the language of the draft law written in Bangla and wanted it in English, which is against the Bangladesh parliament rule. The argued that the bill should be in English as it is related to the international bodies, the officials

translation of the draft law but differed on some of the wordings. For instance, the draft law said a special tribunal court shall be

formed, but the embassy insisted on replacing the word 'shall be' with 'must be'.

Chairman of Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (Bepza) Mohammad Zakir Hossain, however, told The Daily Star a bill, prepared on the basis of an understanding among the government, US embassy in Dhaka and the World Bank, to allow the workers in the zones the right to association would be placed and passed in the current session of

He said the law ministry is putting final touches to the draft law that a cabinet meeting approved on May 23 before placing it in the form of a bill to parliament. The objections made by the US embassy have been taken into consideration and there is no disagreement over the issue now, Zakir added.

The final copy of the bill would be sent to the US embassy within a couple of days, he said and hoped the embassy would have no prob-

Uplift vow Falu's plank

Press Club in the afternoon, Falu attended a public meeting near the Matsva Bhaban intersection.

Addressing as the chief_guest Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan asked BNP leaders to be on the alert for Bikalpa Dhara supporters.

"After the defeat of their candidate, they might engage in clashes and shift the blame onto the BNP,"

"Once Falu is elected, development in Ramna-Tejgaon area that could not be done in the last 15 years will be possible in the remaining two and a half years of the ruling government as all ministers like him.

Falu asked his supporters to bring voters to polling centres on the polling day, rain or shine. MANNAN'S CAMPAIGN

The Dhaka City Corporation did not give Mannan permission to hold an election rally at Karwan Bazar or at Muktangan, saying they did not take a decision on the firs place and two other parties booked the second meeting venue.

The AL and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal yesterday campaigned for Mannan in the constituency seen as the prestige clash between the government and the opposition, accusing the ruling coalition of misrule, failure to deliver, unabated crime and widespread

Talking to The Daily Star, Bikalpa Dhara leaders said their campaign was hobbled a bit by court battles over election symbol and the government's virtual rejection of the election commis-

sion order to deploy army in each polling centre and a rash of attacks But the party hustings gathered pace after the AL and other opposition parties extended support to the newly floated party.

Coming out of the High Court yesterday after the hearing of his writ petition on army deployment, Mannan went to the AL headquarters to hold a strategic meeting with the party's Dhaka City unit.

AL leaders who attended the neeting with the unit president Mohammad Hanif in the chair agreed to add spark to Mannan's campaign in each ward of the

to ensure our candidate's victory," unit General Secretary Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya said.

The meeting decided to bring out a colourful procession from Matsya Bhaban at 3:00pm today.

Mannan also exchanged greetings with leaders and activists of AL's women, youth, student, volunteer and workers' fronts.

The Bikalpa Dhara candidate along with AL leaders and activists conducted mass contact at Mogh-bazar and Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

India, Pakistan talks

each other's territory.

The chief Pakistani negotiator, Foreign Secretary Riaz Khokhar, said the joint statement was "not overly ambitious, which is the right approach." "We are moving carefully,

cautiously, but in the right direction," Khokhar told the Indian news channel NDTV. The countries during

day talks had a "free exchange of views" on Kashmir which has triggered two of their three fullfledged wars, Indian foreign ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna said.

"Naturally these proposals are going to be studied on both sides,

The negotiators reached no agreement on opening a longproposed bus service between the two sides of Kashmir, Khokhar denied there was no progress, saying a technical-level meeting would be held on the bus.

"When we sit at the table we will discuss it," Khokhar said.

The New Delhi meeting marks the first attempt to resolve the Behari Vajpayee and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf in the Taj Mahal city of Agra.

Sarna said the two sides this time had a timeframe for future talks, with the foreign secretaries, who led the delegations in New Delhi, due to meet in the third week of August ahead of a previously scheduled higher-level meeting

would not be derailed by violence.

ism is not good for India or Pakistan and we must work together to remove this scourge

India says all of Muslimmajority Kashmir is an integral part of its territory and accuses Pakistan of fomenting an insurgency against Indian rule that has claimed tens of

a third of the disputed region, rejects the charges but calls the rebellion a "freedom struggle" and demands a plebiscite among Kashmiris as called for by UN resolutions.

Khokhar said the insurgency was not a "stumbling block" in negotiations, as "what is happening inside the (Kashmir) Valley is not our problem."

18 die

FROM PAGE 1

Jamaluddin, Siddiqur, Aruna, Shafique, Shahabuddin, Nur Islam, Mokbul and Habibur.

Traffic on the busy route halted for half an hour following the

Khulna a 'valley of death'

president further said

safe from the hands of the BNPbacked killers, extortionists, rapists and other criminals. Hasina reiterated her call for a

escape legal actions, she said.

and police are becoming victims of extremists' attacks in the southwestern region of the country.

Humayun Kabir Balu would not have been killed had there been a fair and impartial investigation gation into crimes, she alleged.

probe into it is not possible as the top bureaucrat in the home minis-

try belongs to ruling coalition partner Jamaat-e-Islami.

party leaders including Talukdar Khaleque MP, former whip Shuja and Khulna city AL Secretary

Mizanur Rahman Mizan.

The AL chief arrived in Khulna in the afternoon, went straight to the residence of the slain editor and sympathised with his bereaved family. She then went to Balu's paternal residence at Iqbalnagar to console his 81-year-old mother Rabeya Khatoon. Later, she paid her last respects to the deceased and prayed for salvation of his departed soul.

Hasina said she will do her best to ensure proper education of Balu's children.

AL presidium member Abdur Razzak MP, Joint Secretary of the party and former state minister Obaidul Kader, former state minister Talukder Abdul Khaleque MP and Jubo League Chairman Jahangir Kabir Nanak were present at the meeting. The senior vice-president of the press club pre-

Meanwhile, Dainik Purbanchal Editor Liaquat Ali, Editor of the Daily Tribune Begum Ferdausi Ali and Dainik Probaho Editor Ashraf Hossain have expressed deep shock at the tragic death of Balu and demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of his

Budget

FROM PAGE 1

people for failure to check it. Earlier in the morning sitting of the House, Nazmul Huda said, "The

opposition is engaging in various destructive activities and putting the blame on the government to destroy its image. Huda brushed aside opposition lawmakers' allegation that he had kicked on the door of the chief

iustice's chamber during the previ-

ous AL rule and said if anyone can prove it, he will no more come to the Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain blamed criminal activities on the prevailing political culture. If a party wants to set fire to vehicles to inforce hartal, it hires criminals to do the job. Its opponent party natu-rally hires criminals to counter that,

he said. About education system, the shipping minister said Madrassah

education needs radical reforms. In the afternoon sitting, he however said, " I think there may be misunderstanding about my earlier should be allowed up to class eight.'

BNP lawmaker and Mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) Mizanur Rahman Minu rejected the alleged existence of dreaded vigi lante commander Bangla Bhai in his region and accused the AL of fabricating stories about the 'imaginary

"No-one named Bangla Bhai is in our region," he claimed.

The RCC mayor, one of the alleged patrons of Bangla Bhai, said AL men killed many people in the region and put the blame on outaws to hide the fact. When people started to resist them unitedly, AL started blaming a non-existent Bangla Bhai for the killings.

Opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid said the proposed budget is a document of failure of this govern-

Lack of good governance has created a chaotic situation in the country, Shahid said. "The country nas turned into a police-run state as the political government has failed absolutely."

Jatiya Party (Ershad) lawmaker Rawshan Ershad said lack of mutual understanding between the ruling and the opposition parties is retardng development work.

Other lawmakers who took part n the budget discussion included Shahjahan Omar and KM Obaidur Rahman of the BNP, AL's Asaduzzaman Noor and Hamida Banu Shova and Jatiya Party's Golam Habib Dulal.

Mannan's profile

developed a fish-processing unit in Cox's Bazar and soon emerged as a leading entrepreneur of the country.

In 1979, he founded Azim Mannan Garments Ltd and in subsequent years he set up a number of export-oriented industries in various sectors that include garment, sweater, chemical, textile weaving,

He set up insurance, industrial leasing, housing and land develop-ment companies before starting aviation business.

The yearly turnover of his exportoriented industries now stands at

He launched a mother and child healthcare programme -- Save the Mother And Children -- which operates both in urban and rural

To provide financial aid to the poor students, he established Mannan Foundation in 1987 and raised a micro-credit financial insti-tution Daridra Bimochon or DABI to help the rural poor find a way out of

Mannan won his first senior government post in 1991 when he was appointed as a state minister. He was at the helm of the Ministry of Textile, Civil Aviation and Tourism until 1996.

He was the senior vice president of Dhaka City unit of Bangladesh Nationalist Party and chairman of the parliamentary standing commit-tee on Ministry of Home Affairs until his resignation from the party as well as parliament on March 10 this year. The same day he joined Bikalpa Dhara Bangladeh as its member

Grameen Bank

FROM PAGE 12

The prize was awarded on Sunday on the eve of the DGF Forum 2004. Prize sponsors are Deutsche Telekom AG and Microsoft. Deutsche Telekom and the State of North Rhine-Westphalia sponsored the prize sored the prize.

Grameen Bank, which provides microcredit to poor people, began the Village Phone project, through which women entrepreneurs could start a business providing wireless payphone service in rural areas of Bangladesh, the press release

added. In selecting the winner, an independent panel of jurors focused on the scale of the project's

The NGO has created a new class of women entrepreneurs who have raised themselves from poverty. Moreover, it has improved the livelihoods of farmers and others who are provided access to critical market information and lifeline communications previously unat-tainable in some 28,000 villages of Bangladesh.

"I hope from now on the world will pay more attention to the power of information technology in ending global poverty," said the NGO's Director Muhammad

Jorge Quiroga, former president of Bolivia, led the panel of jurors. Other members were Vinton Cerf (USA), MCI; Vallampadugai Arunachalam (India), Carnegie Mellon University; Hisham ElSherif (Egypt), IT Ventures and Nile Online; Miriam Meckel (Germany), State Government of North Rhine-Westphalia; Wendy Millin (South Africa). Hewlett-Packard: and Westphana, Weldy Millin (South Africa), Hewlett-Packard; and Mary O'Kane (Australia), Mary O'Kane & Associates Private Limited, World Bank's Carlos A Primo Braga worked as a adviser for the panel.

EPZ trade unionism

2004", released on June 14. The efforts of governments to fight human trafficking are rated in tiers in the report, based on concrete actions taken throughout the year.

Thomas observed the report was critical of police co-operation with traffickers and failure to arrest these policemen, substantial decline in convictions and the failure of the "Speedy Trial" antitrafficking court to convict a single

He expressed concern over the misuse of funds provided for victims of human trafficking and address internal corruption issues with the police and judiciary. He added Bangladesh would be moved back to tier 2 in the report if the government makes further efforts to implement actions pledged to combat human traffick-

ECONOMIC RELATIONS

Thomas asserted Bangladesh should stand up and be competitive in the global market and move away from a 'help us' attitude as "no country gets wealthy off hand-

"You (Bangladesh) are not a

poor country, you have tremendous natural and human resources," said Thomas when asked how Bangladesh can compete in the global market being a He said the Bangladeshi civil society must work to solve the

problems themselves, as these are their problems and urged the civil society not to attach importance to opinions of TIME magazine (which published an article calling Bangladesh the most dysfunctional Asian country) or ÚS ambassadors. Asked how US assistance

programmes fit into the 'self-help',

he said Bangladesh should adopt a 'Depend on trade not aid' attitude after it becomes stronger through greater education of its human

resources, which is provided by

various state- and donor-funded

Ambassador Thomas also agreed with Enayetullah Khan, editor of the Daily New Age and Weekly Holiday, that Bangladesh should not be termed as a moderate Muslim or a Muslim country, but a country which has a Muslim

majority. National Press Club Secretary Shawkat Mahmood made the welcome address, while its President Reazuddin Ahmed, The Daily Prothom Alo Editor Motiur Rahman and The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam were also present.

Noab slates

The Noab also expressed deep concern at the continued deterioration of the security situation of journalists in discharging their

The press release said a few months ago Manik Chandra Saha, a veteran journalist of the Khulna region, was murdered and his killers are yet to be apprehended. Threats to journalists and physical assaults on them are becoming frequent events in that region.

"We would like to reiterate that lack of security of journalists hinders freedom of the press and media. Noab members demand immediate capture of the killers of Humavun Kabir Balu and security of journalists in carrying out their professional work, without which freedom of press, democracy and fundamental human rights will all come under threat," the press

Send e-mails thru'

People would be able to send and receive e-mails from their GP handsets without using any computer and e-mail account with Internet service providers, he

The GP has introduced the system considering less computer penetration in the country, Mehboob said.

According to the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2002-2003, the country's personal computers per 1,000 people stood at 1.9. Bangladesh Computer Samity, an association of computer vendors, put the number at 7 lakh in the current

"We believe that the new facility would be able to reduce the digital divide and motivate people to be IT (Information Technology) friendly," said the top GP execu-

Youths would be benefited most from the service and able to get rid of their shyness in the IT, he added.

The unique service would enable subscribers to remain connected with their email

Without paying any additional

Service) to 2233 from their handsets to register themselves with the

To register, they will just write an SMS: reg/register, their desired ID name and send it to the operator's server. Registration confirmation will be notified by a return

For each SMS, subscribers will be charged Tk 2.00 plus 15 percent value added tax.

The system will provide a globally accessible identity styled as yourname@cellemail.net, mail inbox check and management facility, mail reading facility of maximum 3X160 characters, VIP e-mail ID facility with automated notification alerts on e-mail arriv-als. It will also feature address book

If any GP subscriber is reluctant to receive e-mails from any particular ID, he/she would be able to block e-mail ID or domain exten-

Inforev Limited, a local software company, supports the system on behalf the GP, which has its network in all the districts and most

However, the system will be formally launched through a cerecharge, GP subscribers would have to send an SMS (Short Message is available at www.cellemail.net.

10 suspects held

Islam, City Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman, Awami League (AL) Presidium Member Abdur razzak MP, Central Organising Secretary of AL Abdul Mannan, Talukdai Abdul Khaleque MP, Panchanon Biswas MP, Mian Golam Parwar MP, former whip Mostafa Rashidi Shuja, City BNP Secretary Nazrul Islam Manju, City AL Secretary Mizanur Rahman Mizan and JP (E) leader SM Babor Ali attended the

The second namaz-e-janaja was held at Iqbalnagar Mosque Ground after Zohr prayer and was also attended by a large number of people. Journalists including

presidents and secretaries of all press clubs and both factions of journalists' union of southwestern zone and Barisal attended the namaj-e-janaja after paying their homage to the fellow journalist. A guard of honour was given to Balu, also a freedom fighter, at Shahid Hadis Park before laying

him to eternal rest at Besupara

right beside his father late Imam Ali

Top officials of civil and police administrations were present in the funeral rites all along. The coffin was brought to the Press Club at 8:00am from his paternal residence at Iqbalnagar Mosque Lane. Scores of mourners including leaders of all the political parties, socio-cultural organisations and NGOs lined the press club premises, where Balu lay in state, to pay their last respect to the deceased.

Journalists wore black badges while black flags were hoisted at Press Club and all local newspaper offices as part of the seven-day programme declared earlier to demonstrate against the brutal murder. Tomorrow a daylong hartal will be observed here and on June 30 journalists will break their pens as a gesture of protest at 10:30

am at Picture Palace Cinema Hall. Local journalists, dejected with the law enforcers' role in probing many other journalist killings including that of Manik Saha, unanimously decided not to seek

Rested Czechs rout

Sardar's grave.

the first 45 minutes, the Czechs hit

"The Greeks have a certain advantage over us because they have had more rest. We have had three days less time to recover than like Greece," said Brueckner.

Czechs' Group D started on June Greece beat France in their quarter-final on Friday and will

ment like this, you plan for six matches in the time allowed," Brueckner said. "We have three days less time from our first game to our last than the Group A teams.

Nine players were dropped for the Germany game, which the

justice from police.

Czechs won 2-1, and the Danes

were swept aside in the second half

with two goals from Milan Baros

"We had enough energy and

"Our play was a bit different

from the group games because it

was a knockout match - there are

defeat is a tragedy. It is like heaven

and hell. But we are through to the

semi-finals and that is a success as

Sunday's win, achieved through

"I don't think we are the favour-

ites," Brueckner said. "Greece has

beaten Portugal, the hosts, and

beaten France, the defending champions. And they have had

power with precision in the sec-

"Only victory is a success now,

and one from Jan Koller.

Germany," Brueckner said.

no second chances.

far as I am concerned."

tournament favourites.

more rest days.

three second-half goals past tiring opponents. But the Czechs fear the boot will be on the other foot in Thursday's semi.

those teams that were in Group A, The Greeks began the tournament on June 12 with their shock defeat of Portugal while the

have had plenty of time to prepare for their next game. "When you come to a tourna-

sion as blacklist. upazila and growth centres.

redeem themselves by September this year, they will be killed," the massage said. Prof Azad yesterday said, "I'm concerned not only for myself but

also for the country as fundamentalism is spreading its wing." "The government should take stern action against the fundamentalists. If it fails to do so, it will come out one day that the government is harbouring Islamist bigots," he

"Most probably the al-Qaeda has set up its den in Bangladesh," Azad said, adding, "if so, then the coun-try's image will be tainted." South Asian People's Union against Fundamentalism and Communalism and Ekattarer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee

yesterday in a statement con-

demned the death threat and

accused the government of spreading fundamentalism in the country. "The prime minister will be held responsible if the three professors

are attacked," the statement read. They also urged the progressive political parties and common people to be united against the

communal forces. The signatories to the statement included Prof Kabir Chowdhury, Hena Das, poet Samsur Rahman, writer Shahrier Kabir, Prof Hasan Azizul Haq and journalist Kamal Lohani.

US envoy

FROM PAGE 1 now arrest Bangla Bhai and other fundamentalists."

The US envoy was addressing reporters in a meet-the press talk titled 'US-Bangladesh Relations'. Jatiya Press Club organised the programme at its VIP lounge yesterday as part of its golden jubilee celebration

"Extremists in the political right or political left, both are funda-mentalists," he said adding, "These people are not good for civil socipower to come good because we preserved some energy against Asked on a recent visit by three

Asked on a recent visit by three US embassy officials to inquire into Bangla Bhai's atrocities in the country's north-western region, Thomas said, "We learnt that Bangla Bhai is living in your doorstep and that's the concern. We were concerned about the reports of a vigilante claiming to be an of a vigilante, claiming to be an extremist. "We wanted to find it our-selves," he said adding that it was a routine exercise run by most embassies in Bangladesh to probe into issues of concern.

defensive solidity in the opening On what the team found after their investigation, the envoy said, "We are still assessing the situa-tion" half and lightning attacks mixing ond, has made the Czechs 11-8

"Some people may consider Bangla Bhai to be Robin Hood, but I think he is a criminal," said Rubaie vowed the trial of Saddam would not turn into a Thomas.

He also sent his condolences to Balu's family and wished a speedy recovery for his son.

Govt rejects EC request

Stringent law

Officials pointed out there was growing pressure from different

quarters to allow setting up of industries and other installations,

including a private university, on

the privately-owned land in the park, home to various species of

The committee noted that the

government on May 15, 1990

banned any permanent or tempo-rary lease of land in the forest area

and ordered cancellation of all

previous lease orders. On July 11, 1995, the government also decided

not to allow setting up of small and

cottage industries, agriculture

poultry and dairy farms on private

November 11, 1999 prohibited setting up of any installations,

including industries, farms and

But the committee found as

many as 196 industries and other

installations have been established since the forest was declared a

Two poultry and fishery farms, a

private primary school, a mosque and some 70 thatched houses are

located in the core area of the park.

Environment gave clearance certificates to 16 industries in the forest.

The Department of

The committee suggested imme-

diate removal of the installations in

It suggested identifying the Bhawal National Park area as

"Greater Park Area" and bring the pieces of private land in and around

the forest into its fold. It strongly

recommended strict implementa

tion of the government orders that

banned all sorts of construction and

establishment in the entire forest

making any comments on a pro-

posal of the army for 221.78 acres of

and in the natural forest for estab-

lishing a brigade group under

had earlier taken control of over

700.77 acres in Bhawal area, includ-

objected to giving more land to the

ministry said, "It is a sensitive mat-

Official sources said the army

The forest department has

A top official of the environment

He however said the committee

clearly recommended banning of

any installations in the forest area.

So, there is no need to mention the

army proposal separately, he added.

Fundamentalists

city. The organisations claimed the

decision was made at a meeting at the DU Arts Building at 10:00am

Ekaedullah, Maulana Keramat Ali

Maulana Abdul Jabbar, Mufti Saleh

Ahmed and Maulana Mufti Kudrat-

e-Elahi were present, the message

"If the three professors don't

Maulana Zakaria, Maulana

Gazipur Cantonment.

ing 16.80 acres in the forest.

The committee however avoided

the core area of the park.

A gazette notification on

lands in the forest area.

houses in the national park.

national park.

FROM PAGE 12

birds and animals.

yesterday decided to wait for the HC verdict on a writ petition on the deployment filed by four candi-dates including Bikalpa Dhara's retired army major MA Mannan.

The HC Division Bench of Justice MA Matin and Justice Tarik Ul Hakim yesterday heard the petition, but did not give a verdict as the Attorney General's Office sought time. It will hear the issue today again.

The EC is hopeful that the HC would ensure fair polls to uphold people's hopes and aspirations.

The EC at a meeting on June 13 decided to ask the government to deploy army in each polling centre of the Ramna-Tejgaon constitu-ency and Chief Election Commissioner MA Syed on June 15 sent a letter to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia conveying the deci-

"We wanted to inform the High Court of the matter. But as the matter was taken to the highest court before us, we are waiting for its decision," Acting Chief Election Commissioner Safiur Rhaman told

Bangla Bhai men

FROM PAGE 1

ornament from them. They asked the women to keep mum about the incident, otherwise they (JMJB)

would kill them all. The abducted Shafinun Nahar, her child Suborna and mother Shahida were not tortured, but were asked about whereabouts of Nahar's husband Abdul Barik.They too had to sign on a blank paper to get their release

The militants also warned villagers of Raipura of dire consequences and asked them to keep silent about the abductions. "If anyone utter a word about the abductions, they will be termed

Sarbohara and fined Tk 10,000 each", a villager of Raipura said quoting a JMJB cadre. They also asked the villagers not to till the land of Abdul Barik.If anyone help Barik prepare land for growing crops, he would face a fine of Tk 10,000.

The home ministry circulation of May 24 that reads two companies of army along with other law enforcement agencies will remain on guard during Munshiganj-1 and Dhaka-10 by-polls was revived on Sunday. The circular was issued ahead of June 6 by-polls to the seats, but a legal battle over election symbol held back Dhaka-10 ballot.

Bikalpa Dhaka candidate Mahi B Chowdhury swept back to parliament from Munshiganj-1.

Talking to The Daily Star, Election Commissioner AK Mohammad Ali said the government did not comply with the EC's decision taken for holding free and

fair polls. "We still stick to our decision."

The HC in a verdict on a similar writ petition on June 20 said the petition was premature as nobody turned down troops deployment in the constituency in line with the EC

Outlaw leader

FROM PAGE 12

arms and ammunition among his 50 cadres and hid the rest of his arms cache in the village.

As the police team approached a betel leaf garden, Arab's accomplices opened fire on them. Police returned fire, triggering a shootout that lasted for about an hour.

At one stage of the gunfight, Arab, handcuffed, leapt out of a police van and tried to run away, but received three bullets in his chest, abdomen and head and died on the pot on the spot. Police said Arab recently organised his own clique Arab Bahini with about 50 cadres active in some areas in Kushtia and Jhenidah and

carried out criminal activity including abduction, robbery and Arab hailed from the housing area in Kushtia town and was accused of at least 25 criminal charges including nine for mur-

Sources said Arab was earlier arrested three times but secured his release on bail, as police could not press charges properly.

Iraq militants threaten

Brigades." The name refers to the uprising against the British after

The group, which has claimed responsibility for previous anti-American attacks, first surfaced in an Aug. 12 statement claiming the United States was hiding its casualty tolls in Iraq to help President Bush's election chances. Hassoun's family in the Salt Lake City suburb of West Jordan asked people to join them in prayers.

"We accept destiny with its good

and bad," Hassoun family friend and spokesman Tarek Nosseir said

in a brief statement Sunday to

reporters. "We pray and plead for his safe release and we ask all people of the world to join us in our prayers. May God bless us all." Judy Hassoun, Wassef's former sister-in-law, said Hassoun is serv-

ng his second stint in Iraq. She did not know he was missing and has not seen Wassef in about five years. She said he was born in Tripoli, Lebanon, educated at American schools and is fluent in Arabic. "He is a great student," she said. He is

very peaceful, but very brave, very loving. Judy Hassoun said Wassef, one of six children, studied hard and "always wanted to get good grades. He helped everybody. He helped his

mother alot.

She said Wassef moved to the Salt Lake City area and joined the Marines after moving there. Earlier Sunday, the Pakistani driver was shown on a tape broadcast by a different Arab television station, Al-Arabiva, The hostage displayed an identification card issued by the U.S. firm Kellogg, Brown & Root.

freed prisoners held at Abu Ghraib and three cities of central Iraq Balad, Dujail and Samarra. The gunmen said they captured the Pakistani near the U.S. base at

Four masked men holding

assault rifles across their chests said

they would behead the Pakistani

within three days unless Americans

Balad, 50 miles north of Baghdad They did not say whether they were affiliated with any group, The hostage, who gave his name as Amjad, urged Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf to close the

Pakistani Embassy in Iraq and to ban Pakistanis from coming to Iraq. "I'm also Muslim, but despite this they didn't release me," he said, bowing his head. "They are going to

cut the head of any person regard-less of whether he is a Muslim or In Pakistan, an official at the Foreign Ministry said they were trying to get information on the driver. "We heard about him in the newspapers this morning," the

official said Monday on condition of anonymity. "Pray to Allah for peace for that man." It was unclear if either set of kidnappers was linked to Jordanian terror mastermind Abu Musah al-Zarqawi, who claimed responsibility for the decapitation deaths of

American businessman Nicholas

Kim Sun-il last week.

Falu's profile

worked closely with Khaleda to organise and inspire BNP against the Awami League regime during 1996-2001, the handbill goes on to

Falu was re-appointed as the PM's personal secretary after BNP roared back to power in 2001 and quit his post only when he filed his nomination for the by-polls. A prominent sports organiser, Falu has been the president of the Mohammedan Sporting Club for the past decade. He has also received numerous awards for

peddlers in his constituency. Asked about his background at his election campaign rally yester-day, Falu assured The Daily Star of providing his autobiography. It did not arrive till filing of this report

Saddam to be put

will know where he is," Allawi told a small group of reporters.

But US Secretary of State Colin

Powell said the ex-dictator would remain in the physical custody of US forces for the foreseeable future. In an interview with CNN from Turkey ahead of a Nato summit in Istanbul, the chief US diplomat made the distinction between

keeping him under guard. Allawi, however, appeared convinced he has the manpower to hold the ex-president securely.

transferring legal responsibility for

Saddam to the Iraqis and actually

"We have the forces, we have the udicial system," he said. "He is going to court and it will be a just trial unlike the trials he gave

for the Iraqi people... and he will face whatever the Iraqi judicial system decides.' The prime minister declined to specify whether Saddam, who executed tens of thousands of his

own people during a brutal dicta-

torship, could also receive the death

penalty. "I am going to endorse what the judicial system decides," Allawi

replay of the war crimes trial of former Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic at The Hague, in which he

organising educational, cultural and social activities and playing significant role against drug-

could grandstand and appeal to the sympathies of people back home. "We have put some restriction on the political discussion. Basically

then recited the alleged crimes that the jailed dictator would be judged "Saddam Hussein, why did you kill Sadr?" he asked, referring to Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Sadeg Sadr assassinated in 1999,

allegedly by the former regime.

this is going to be purely his criminal acts," Rubaie said.

The Shia Muslim political leader

"Why did you kill tens of clergy? Why did you kill tens of thousands of people? Why did you commit the massacres? Why did you use the chemical weapons against our people in Kurdistan? Why did you start the Iran-Iraq war? Why did you invade Kuwait? Why did you bring this country all of these miseries?"

centre on Iraq's former international airport, according to a humanitarian organisation. The camp is reportedly set for

under tight security at Camp Cropper -- a US military detention

Saddam is currently being held

closure. An unkempt, long-haired and bearded Saddam was captured by

US forces on December 13, after he was found hiding in a hole on a farm near his northern hometown of

united movement to end 'misrule' and 'misdeeds' of the present government. The situation is worsening as culprits involved in

Kashmir dispute since a failed summit in June 2001 between India's then-prime minister Atal

Kabir Balu, the Awami League (AL) rule of law is non-existent in the country and that no-one is now

murders and other heinous crimes She pointed out both journalists

into journalist Manik Saha murder case, Hasina said, Ministers, lawalliance impede impartial investi-

She mentioned that extremists

constituency and swing votes. "We'll employ our full strength

between foreign ministers. Sarna said the peace process "It was underscored that terror-

thousands of lives since 1989. Pakistan, which controls about

makers and cadres of the ruling About the sensational Chittagong arms haul, the opposition leader said anti-liberation forces are involved in it and that a fair

have issued death threats to her