Iraq brings in tough security laws

Two national guards killed in heavy Baghdad gunbattle

A heavy gunbattle broke out on the streets of central Baghdad yesterday morning as insurgents shot at Iraqi guards and US soldiers. supported by helicopters, minutes before the announcement of new security laws by the Iraqi government, witnessessaid.

Two national guards were killed and 10 wounded in the battle on Haifa Street, next to Al-Talaya Square on the western side of the Tigris River, a national guard lieutenant told AFP from Al-Karkh hospital.

"Two national guard were killed and 10 wounded," Abu Noor said.

The insurgents attacked the fledgling Iraqi security forces at around 11:00am (0700 GMT), just two hours before Iraq's new iron-fisted security measures were announced.

An AFP correspondent said the insurgents used light weapons and rocket launchers to attack the Iraqi guards, who were also backed by Iraqi

The US troops arrived in their Humvees with air support, witnesses said. Explosions echoed in the area.

A body of one of the Iraqi national guard was lying on the side of the

Four more US marines were killed in action on Tuesday in western Iraq, the US military said yesterday, taking its death toll in the restive region to 14 SECURITYMEASURES

Iraq's prime minister has signed into

FROM PAGE 1 agreed to close the 'communica-

tion gap' between their ministries

that led to the stalemate, sources-

tion gap between us and we have

resolved it through discussion,"

export of manpower for marine

sector jobs only in case of people

who received training at the marine

academy or seamen training centre

trained seamen are now looking for

The tussle between the two

ministries surfaced following an

advertisement by a private recruit-

ing agency for sending 159 workers

for jobs in a shipping company in

A government handout said the

Quamrul Islam told The Daily Star.

"There was some communica-

The ministries agreed to allow

Marine academy

law sweeping emergency security measures, including powers to

that had devastated the country, but

claimed there were checks on premier

Iyad Allawi's powers and that the

tough steps were in line with princi-

to AFP, the law grants Allawi the right

to declare emergency law in "any area

of Iraq where people face a threat to

the lives of its citizen because of some

people's permanent violent cam-

paign to prevent the creation of a

The state of emergency cannot

government that represents all Iraqis."

extend past 60 days and must be

dissolved as soon as the danger has

ended, but it can be renewed every 30

days, with a letter of approval by the

prime minister, the president and vice

issue arrest warrants and impose

restriction on the movement of for-

The law grants Allawi the right to

It also gives the government the

right to open mail, eavesdrop on

telephone conversations, ban politi-

cal groups, cancel meetings and bar

advertisement was illegal and asked

istry requested the Shipping minis-

try to withdraw the handout but it

The oversees employment min-

people not to respond to it.

According to a copy of the text given

ples of human rights.

impose curfews, arrest suspects and Shahid later accused the speaker ban associations, in a bid to end the violence endemic to Iraq since last year's US-led invasion. Iraq's interim government own promise. defended the law as forced upon it by The government doesn't want to the deadly 14-month-old insurgency

listen to constructive opposition criticism that many correct its wrong and help stop its run of failures."

"We wanted to speak on the prime

give us floor to keep our voice unheard," Shahid told The Daily Star. AL lawmakers, who walked out he parliament on Tuesday, joined

FROM PAGE 12 Samrat Mian, Shahin Mian, Moshiur Rahman, Mohammad Rana, Mohammad Sumon, Mohammad Masud and Mohammad Lokman,

The arrestees are members of an organised racket involved in child trafficking. The gang lured girls from different parts of the country with promises of lucrative jobs in the

capital, Rab sources said.

The gang forcibly engaged the victims in anti-social activities in city's different apartments and also smuggled out many girls from the country, they added.

Rab officials were quizzing the arrestees to trace the mastermind behind the trafficking gang.

Democracy

48 and 56 of the constitution, Rafique noted these articles and preamble remain unchanged in the 13th amendment and there is no need for a referendum on it.

Officials hoped the recruiting company, Rabbi International, would now be able send workers to About withdrawal of the handout, they said it might not be rulers, Rafique concluded.

required if the company does not face any difficulties in exporting in Chittagong.

The shipping ministry will provide a list of trained workers to the oversees employment ministry to oversees employment ministry to withdrawal of the handout to restore goodwill of his firm. "I am in a pany already indicated it would not allow us to send workers unless the constitution's basic structure. handout is withdrawn," he said.

Meanwhile, the recruiting agency has already cancelled interview of workers that was supposed to begin yesterday and several hundred people went back frusent on behalf of the petitioner.

Unite to resist JMJB

FROM PAGE 1

Bhabaniganj, at the same time, prompting the authorities to deploy a large contingent of police in the area to defuse tension. The JMJB however cancelled its meeting at the eleventh hour.

AL Presidium Member Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Workers Party Polit Bureau Member Fazle Hossain Badsha, AL Central Committee (CC) Member Prof Zinnatun Nesa Talukhdar, district AL General Secretary Tajul Islam, Communist Party of Bangladesh CC Member Enamul Haque and Jatiya Samaitantrik Dal leader Abdullah Al Masood Shibli addressed the meeting, among others.

Bagmara upazila AL Acting President Motiur Rahman chaired the public gathering, the venue of which was shifted to Bakultala from Bagmara Upazila Council premises following JMJB threats.

"Four masked JMJB terrorists asked us to pack up and get out of the upazila council premises when we were constructing the meeting's nodium. Police and upazila administration also advised us to change the meeting site," said Bagmara

Upazila AL General Secretary Zakirul Islam Santu.

Local speakers, including some family members of JMJB torture victims, at the meeting narrated tales of horror and oppression. They termed Bangla Bhai a bandit, and said his men targeted people who oppose the politics of the ruling coalition partners. The Islamist zealots tortured their victims to death or maimed in such a way that made their lives meaningless, the speakers said, adding, all these they did in order to establish dominance of a particular political party.

Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir said,

This government has broken the backbone of neutrality of police and magistracy by forcing 971 police officers and 476 magistrates out of job, and so police and magistrates are supporting Bangla Bhai."

"If police and magistrates do not help people to get rid of a terrorist like Bangla Bhai, people by themselves should launch an antiterrorism drive and take law in hand to resist Bangla Bhai and his follower," the frontline AL leader told

Court stops move

Kahn had earmarked the site as an open space where the government took up the residence construction at a cost of about Tk 6 crore. The buildings are now complete with interior designing being done.

As soon as the government gets the certified copy of the June 21 High Court verdict, it plans to seek permission to file an appeal petition against the order, according to sources in the Public Works and Housing Ministry.

But pending the petition, Additional Attorney General Fida M Kamal yesterday first appealed to the bench comprising Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassir Husain, Justice Fazlul Karim , Justice MA Aziz and Justice Amirul Kabir Chowdhury for a stay order on the High Court ver-

Considered worldwide as one of the finest examples of modern day architecture, Sangsad Bhaban complex has been subjected to repeated infringement on its The Awami League government built the NAM conference hall demolishing the Weather Building originally designed by Kahn.

The ruling coalition distorted Kahn's design by taking up a massive project to build a bridge across the Crescent Lake behind the main parliament building and convert a large area of Chandrima Udyan into a mausoleum of the late president Ziaur Rahman. The under construction complex consists of a mosque, a seminar hall and other installation. Experts say such massive distortions of the original plan would not only destroy the beauty of Sangsad Bhaban but also hinder the international process of declaring the parliament complex a World

Heritage Site. Dr Kamal Hossain, who along with Barrister Tanjib ul Alam yesterday opposed the government move, told The Daily Star: "We now all hope that the government would declare the parliament complex a national

Speaker denies
FROM PAGE 1
AL lawmakers shouted at the top of their voice that the speaker adjourned the sitting even after promising them floor at the instruction of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and senior ministers.

'Now we don't have enough time. You will get chance to speak after the Maghrib break," Sircar told Opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid, who was demanding floor to formulate a point of order when the Houseway dealing with call attention. House was dealing with call attention

of adjourning the Jatiya Sangsad in haste at the instruction of Khaleda and cabinet minister reneging on his

minister's doubt over the threat to the life of Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina. The treasury bench signed to the speaker not to

yesterday's sitting after Asr prayers sitting outside during prime minis ter's question time.

Rab rescues

FROM PAGE 1

The provision of referendum. mandated by the fifth amendment to the constitution, has come in the form of martial law proclamation, which is an illegal by-product of martial law

Advocate Wadud pointed out the caretaker government does not have the power to make policies. It has the mandate to conduct a free and fair election and can only aid the Election Commission, which is why the provision for interim administration is by no means a blow to the

Additional Attorney General Fida M Kamal made a brief submission on behalf of the government, which has been made a party to the petition, while advocates MI Farooqui and Ruhul Kuddus Babu were pres-

The chronology

Prothom Alo telephone poll overwhelming support for abandonment of

01 February 2003 Large protest rally at construction site.

and environmentalists.

01 February 2003 Stop building houses in Jatiya Sangsad Area" protest rally attended by general people, architects, artists,

Letter from President, Institute of Architects, Bangladesh to the Prime Minister urging her intervention to

stop the work. High Court ruling to stay construction

21 May 2003 Construction work continues unabated despite court order.

23 May 2003 Work at site ceases.

31 July 2003 Human chain in Sangsad Bhaban Complex in protest of building in Sangsad area.

18 August 2003 Appellate Division stays High Court ruling allowing construction work to continue for three months.

14 May 2003 Writ to the High Court jointly by Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BAPA) and Institute of Architects Banglades

18 May 2003 Stay order on construction again.

28 august 2003 Chamber judge vacates stay order

21 June,2004 High Court declares the construction of the Speaker and Speaker's residences illegal. The bench also directs government to take necessary steps to declare the parliament complex a national heritage.

July 7, 2004 Appellate Division declines to pass a stay order on the June 21 High Court verdict and also brushes aside government plea to put an embargo on media coverage on any development works at the parliament complex.

FROM PAGE 1 Biman's Flight Operation Office at Zia International Airport said the absence of the F28 plane -- one of on Tuesday, but the engine of the plane went off when the plane was about to go to runway for take-off, sources said. It developed glitch the two F28s procured from an

again when the plane started toward the runway after a one-hour repair at the hangar at Chittagong airport. The passengers then boarded another plane to fly to Dhaka. Since its maiden flight on June 3,

the engine of the newly bought F28 aircraft went off six times. The engine of the other F28 plane went out of order twice. Biman bought the pair from an Indonesian company at a cost of \$2.91 million.

However, a Biman press release, received last night, said after successful flights to Kolkata and Kathmandu, one of the newly procured F28 plane yesterday operated on Dhaka-Yangoon-Bangkok route. The two newly procured F28 aircraft have so far been used in 307 flights on domestic and regional destina-

Airbus, Boeing vie

FROM PAGE 12 Biman has also invited offers for dry lease or dry lease with option to purchase or to buy outright two DC10-30 aircraft. The tendered bids

will be opened on August 5. The government meanwhile has formed a seven-member expert committee to vet the technical and financial aspects of the aircraft majors' proposals. The committee will hold its first meeting on July 11

Indonesian company only last month --forced rescheduling of 14

flights on domestic and regional

However, Acting Managing Director of Biman Mahmoodur Rahman told The Daily Star yester-

day that the engine shutdown in Chittagong is a minor technical fault

and the plane would be brought

can happen to any aircraft of any

airline but the minor fault can be

repaired easily with the existing expertise of Biman. The passengers have nothing to worry about," said

Rahman, also director (Marketing

The Biman flight, BG 624, was

scheduled to fly for Dhaka at 6:15pm

"The incident is not unusual. It

back into operations shortly.

and Sales) of Biman.

routes yesterday.

Former civil aviation and tourism secretary and presently Acting Communications Secretary M Shafiqul Islam heads the committee, which includes Ashfaq Hamid, additional secretary at the finance ministry, and Prof Maglub Al Noor of the mechanical engineering depart-ment of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology as

Apart from them, the committee also includes four Biman officials --Acting Managing Director Mahmoodur Rahman, Director (Engineering) S Zilani Mahbubur Rahman, Director (Flight Operations) Kamal Mahmood and Director (Finance) Anwar Hossain.

Sources said Airbus, a joint venture of the three major European powers, has offered to sell two Airbus-320 for Biman's domestic flights and two Airbus-330 for its international operations while its American rival Boeing has placed a quotation for Boeing 777, the latest of Boeing's long-range aircraft series. The four Airbuses will cost about Tk 1,400 to 1,500 crore. Biman Acting MD Rahman told committee will have to sit several times, as the proposals are very technical and complicated.

"The procurement move is presently in an embryonic stage. The committee will need four to five months to decide on the proposals. If it okays a proposal, it will be forwarded first to the Biman board of directors, then to cabinet purchase committee and finally to the prime minister for approval," said Rahman, who is also Biman's director (Marketing and Sales).

If the new planes are added to its fleet, Biman can widen its present global network comprising 26 destinations -- eight South Asian, six Southeast and Far-East Asian, nine Persian Gulf and Middle-East, and six European and North American Biman's fleet now consists of 15

aircraft -- six DC-10s, four Airbuses and five F-28s. Of the four Airbuses, two were purchased with Biman's own resources and the rest are on The national carrier currently

does not have any Boeing aircraft. It previously had five Boeing 703, which were sold out or their lease agreement had expired in 1990s. A source alleges there is pressure

on the expert committee to back the Airbus offer, as the Tolouse-based joint venture of France, Germany and the UK offers commission to the buyer while the Seattle-based US heavyweight does not and sells directly, without any intermediate

Tk 390cr edn plan

FROM PAGE 1 non- fomal schools, the project will

provide education allowance and educational materials to every The allowance will be Tk 800 each

per year for students of class one to class three and Tk 970 for class four and class five. Students of class one at a rate of Tk 50 each per month besides an annual payment of Tk 200 to cover other expenses. Students of class four and class five will get Tk 60 a month each besides

Candidates for primary scholarship examinations will be given an additionalTk200.

Girl children are likely to consti-tute about 60 per cent of the children supported under the project, one

Children will continue to receive allowances if they maintain an average of at least 75 per cent attendance in classes and show satisfactory achievement level, to be reported by class teachers. Allowances will be given to chil-

dren through bank accounts managed by their mothers, or guardians in the absence of mothers. Students enrolled under the project will follow the curriculum

and textbooks of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB). A 10-member Centre Management Committee (CMC)

comprising guardians' representatives -- mostly mothers of students, local woman members of union parishad -- will run the LCs or schools under the project. The LCs will receive annual grants ranging from Tk 25,000 each

for class one to three and about Tk 31,000 for class four to five. Students passing class five from

the LCs or non fomal schools will be eligible for admission to class six in high schools.

Record unapproved

FROM PAGE 1 all true," the Perc member said preferring not to be named.

The government will not spend on them on the basis of national priorities, but based on the strength of the lobbyists behind those projects," he added.

A planning ministry report in May also echoes the Perc member, "We are faced with different types of lobbying and pressure to spend money for unapproved projects. As a result, the normal pace of develop-ment is disturbed and the planning order is swaved."

A look into the ADP exposes how an irrelevant unapproved project can make the nation pay years after years. For instance, a project to set up a

research centre for spices was added in the 1994 ADP as an unapproved project with a financial requirement of Tk 47 crore. Until December last, the country paid Tk 23 crore and the new budget allocated another Tk 5.5 crore for it. But, at the current rate of implementation, it will not be completed before 2014.

Another is the soil research and testing centre construction that required Tk 64.66 crore and was incorporated as an unapproved project in the 1998 ADP. So far Tk 19 crore has been spent for it and Tk 15 crore has been allocated this fiscal. Another striking example is inclu-

sion of Tk327-crore Bangladesh Land Administration Reforms Project in 2002. The government so far spent only Tk 9 lakh for this costly project and this year has allocated only Tk 10 lakh for it. ATk 37-crore unapproved project to build a bridge across the Garai

River in Kushtia was added in the

ADP in 1996 and so far the govern-

ment has spent Tk 11 crore. This year the government allocated only Tk 26 There are many similar construc-

tion oriented projects being carried over for many years, leading to wastage and hike in project implementation costs.

These spending shows a tendency not to complete the tasks but to keep the projects hanging for years. Actually the sums were spent as per the strength of the lobbyists -contractors, politicians and other people who squeeze out the cash in anyway they can," said a planning ministry source.

"If these projects are important, why don't the government approve them even after so many years?" he asked.

The Perc had recommended forming an expert committee to review the projects conceived by different ministries to see if these have national priority and poverty alleviation elements. But presently, a cell of the Prime

Minister's Office (PMO) which looks after priority projects are reported to basically respond to requests and pressures of ruling party lawmakers and businessmen who want implementation of certain projects for their personal or local political benefits, sources said. The PMO cell sends these projects

to line ministries and the ministries then send these projects to the planning ministry for incorporation in the ADP as unapproved 'priority projects'. Thus this year the lobbyists have succeeded in incorporating the record number of 330 new unapproved schemes in the ADP, the anning ministry source explained.

Rescue team' heads | Launch victim

the Meghna a year ago. The Jote demanded strict enforcement of all laws on the plying of river vessels, setting up a fund for assisting family members of victims and their proper rehabilitation.

Mahfuzur Rahman, A F M rezaul Karim and Aminur Rasul spoke at the press conference.

The Jote will organise a roundtable at the National Press Club today on the occasion of first anniversary of MV Nasreen disaster.

Shipping Minister Askbar Hossain, former shipping minister A S M Abdur Rob and G M Seraj, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on shipping ministry, are likely to attend the roundtable, Jote leaders said.

MV Nasreen--1 sank with around 1,000 people on board.

Official estimates put the number of dead at 402, the Jote said a survey conducted by it showed around 825 people drowned in the disaster.

About 4,000 people died in 255 major launch disasters in the country since 1976, it said.

Fatema of lalmohan, who lost her nusband and daughter in Nasreen-1 disaster, yesterday told this correspondent, "I am in dire distress with my two sons and one daughter as I have no source of income." government gave her only Tk 15,000 as compensation, which was spent for meeting loans and other urgent needs, a sobbing Fatema said.

Shakhahwat, the only surviving member of a victim family and a student of class two, narrated similar

Meanwhile, Rodoshi, a cultural

organisation, will hold discussions and hold rallies and bring out mourning procession from Dhaka University to mark the launch disaster this day last year. Man shown

FROM PAGE 12

Inspector Mohiuddin, who is investigating the case as part of a three-member DB team, said Selim, Babul and Nasir Khan, arrested suspects in Balu murder case, provided some mportant clues about the killing.

The acting police commissioner, Khulna said Balu's murderers were identified and they would nab the culprits soon.

22 soldiers,

FROM PAGE 1 remote district of Salyan, officials "We have some of our men miss-

ng after the battle," army spokesman Rajendra Thapa told the Reuters news agency.

He did not say how many. The army says 11 rebels were also

killed in the fighting which took place in an area that is a rebel stronghold. On Tuesday, Nepal's new Deputy Prime Minister Bharat Mohan

Adhikary promised renewed peace efforts to end the insurgency. He told reporters in Kathmandu that the government was ready for maximum flexibility and was willing to resume peace talks with an open

Peace negotiations with the Maoists have failed twice over a key rebel demand for elections to an assembly that would draw up a new

Burnt housewife

FROM PAGE 12

mother-in-law, and Keya Begum, wife of Harun's elder brother, poured a bucket full of hot water on Asma following an altercation over the disputed issue.

"Farkunnessa was demanding a dowry of Tk 50,000 since Asma's marriage to her son six years back. As we didn't give them the sum, she arranged a second marriage for her son two and a half years later," Asma's mother said, adding, she also wanted her son to divorce

Shiddhirganj police arrested Farkunnessa after Lata filed a case under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

Bikalpa men

FROM PAGE 1 held a rally at the HC entrance and later lay down there for five minutes in a symbolic protest against the government violation of the High Court order to deploy army at each polling centre.

Leaders and activists of the BDB, Chhatra Dhara, its student wing, Jubo Dhara, the youth wing, and Sramik Dhara, the labour wing, took partin the programme.

Mahi said the constitution

ensures people's right to elect their representatives to parliament, people of Ramna-Tejgaon constituency could not exercise the right. Strangely though, people from different others areas exercised their franchise in the seat.

"Ramna-Tejgaon people do not have a representative in parlia-ment," he said. He asked if the government does not trust the army referring to its non-deployment of troops in the polling centres.

BDB leader Feroz M Hasan said the BDB would soon form its district and upazila committees. The BDB supporters carried

HC premises.

Kula-shaped (winnowing fan, its election symbol) placards with slogans like 'The government is a vote robber' and 'Step down alliance government'. The members of Sramik Dhara tied their hands mimicking the helpless BDB polling agents in the Dhaka-10 polls. Police resisted the BDB men from staging demonstration and rally on the road. Some people, who

Pakistani's bail cancelled

could not receive the order.

until 5:00pm the same day as he

legal as the metropolitan sessions

judge remained busy in jail killing

case yesterday and on Tuesday," he

On Tuesday, the lawyer appealed to the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's

The cancellation order is not

lawyer appealed twice to Judge Matiur Rahman to transfer the case to another court from the Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court and was rejected. The judge, however, took up the case on June 9 following a petition for transferring the case.

Matiur bailed AlekJan, the

Pakistani citizen, on Monday upon a Court seeking permission to deposit bond of Tk 3 lakh in cash with two the cash security, but the judge did guarantors -- the first secretary of not give him permission for his Pakistan High Commission and a engagement in the jail killing case. lawyer, who is conducting the case. A senior lawyer seeking anonym-

I've cancelled the bail order as ity said there is no precedence of the bail bond on behalf of the granting bail to any accused in accused was not furnished and the peroin haul case of this gravity. bond in cash was not deposited as Directorate of Narcotics Control per the court order," said Matiur in arrested three Pakistani nationals --

Ibrahim, Rais Khan and Alekjan --However, Advocate Atiur from a room of hotel Rajmoni Isha Rahman, lawyer of Alekjan, filed Khan in the city with 24-kilogram another bail petition yesterday with heroin on September 20, 1999. another Sessions Judge's Court. In the petition he said Judge in an open

The investigation officer pressed charges against Alekjan and seven others on November 24,2000.

Blast shatters

the cancellation order.

was not granted. People from ministerial security followed her and these officials took her into the police station. While they tried to search her she exploded herself," said police spokesman Rienzie Perera.

court pronounced the bail order at

4:30pm, but he (Atiur) could not

"It is obvious Douglas was the target," he said. The bomber was among the five

dead, police said. Peace talks to end Sri Lanka's decades-long civil war have been on hold for more than a year but both sides have been observing a Norwegian-brokered truce signed in February 2002 that put an end to fighting that had killed 64,000.

No one claimed responsibility

comment on the blast, which hap-

pened on Colombo's main thoroughfare, near the prime minister's official residence and across the road from the US and British embassies. But police and army officials said they believed the Tigers, who began fighting for a separate state for the island's minority Tamils in 1983, were

"It is a total violation of the ceasefire agreement. There is not doubt this is the work of the LTTE but we do not yet have proof," Defense Secretary Cyril Herath told Reuters.

But he said the army would con-

tinue to observe the truce. "The Sri Lankan government has over and over again assured that despite all these provocations they will maintain the cease-fire from their side," Herath said.

The Tigers terrorized the capital with numerous suicide bomb attacks during the war and on Monday they observed "Black Tiger Day," which commemorates their suicide bomb-While they have mostly respected

the Norwegian-brokered truce, human rights groups accuse them of targeting rival Tamil politicians, mostly in the island's east, where a split within the LTTE has complicated the peace bid. Since the split, local media have

with Karuna, the commander of the renegade rebel faction. The Tigers also accused the army of helping Karuna and his renegades The army repeatedly denied the LTTE accusation but a government spokesman said recently elements of the military had indeed helped

said, Devananda had been in contact

Police said apart from the bomber, all four dead were police officers, including two women. Broken glass and blood covered the floor of the police station, which was under heavy guard. "I saw many people being pulled out with injuries, including one with

Karuna.

no arm," said one witness. Hector Weerasinghe, the director of Colombo's National Hospital, said 13 people had been brought in, of whom four had died. He said most of the wounded were police officers, and their conditions were not critical.

Witnesses said those in hospital were crying and in shock, surrounded by grieving police officers trying to offer comfort. In Colombo, attention turned to the fate of the cease-fire, which has

brought the island peace of mind, a

rebounding economy and a capital

largely free of checkpoints and road-

past week, accusing it of helping the breakaway faction to foment violence in the east, where gun attacks killed one Tiger member and ounded three on Monday. Analysts said the truce would

Monitors overseeing the truce and a Norwegian official said they

had had no comment from the Tigers

But the rebels have stepped up their rhetoric against the army in the

regarding the truce.

likely hold, but the Tigers were clearly unhappy with over the help for "I don't think this should be read as a signal the cease-fire agreement is going to be torn up and thrown away," said Paikiasothy and the Tigers offered no immediate Saravanamuttu, who heads the

> Alternatives. "But it should be seen in the context of the accusations and counter-accusations over Karuna. They are saying, 'We cannot be hit with impunity'," he said. The Colombo Stock Exchange,

independent Center for Policy

which closed about one hour after the blast, ended down 1.51 percent at 1,339.70, while the Sri Lankan rupee weakened about 15 cents to 102.70. "I am worried to think what this might mean," said Janaka Dias, a 44-

worsen and we will have war again." Khaleda doubts

year-old shopkeeper. "I want peace.

And I don't know if the situation will

From page 1 measure to protect them.

She said she even could not escape the attack. But we don't believe in the politics of vengeance."

AL officials said Hasina received

near-simultaneous threats to her life in Istanbul and Dhaka during her Turkey visit on Monday. The AL has been boycotting prime minister's question time

alleging the speaker's bias against accepting opposition lawmakers' questions to Khaleda. Replying to a question from BNP lawmaker Muhammad Giasuddin, Khaleda said immediately after taking office her government took various steps to root out violence, killing, rape and other criminal

Referring to Operation Clean Heart involving the armed forces, special police drive across the country and Operation Spider Web in the southwestern districts, she claimed large numbers of firearms and ammunition were seized and criminals arrested during the drives.

activities and improve law and

She told the House that the government formed the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) bringing efficient officers from the army, police, Ansar and other forces and constituted 'Cobra' with police intelligence agents to cut crimes.

Khaleda claimed Rab achieved success and earned people's confidence after the its launch on April 14 Taking another question, she

said 6,857 people were arrested

under the Speedy Trial Act.

Cairn plans increase

contract (PSC). But the British com-

A significant part of Block 16 and the entire Block 15 have been relinquished as the company did not find anything there in seven years of exploration. However, Cairn says this does not mean these blocks do

"There had been underinvestment in the sector by us and others. There was no investment in Sangu itself for the last three years because of well availability of gas in the country," Halstead noted, adding, "Now there is a sudden rise of demand for gas and we believe the Bangladesh market is now very prospective."

working in blocks 10 and 5. In Block 10, where Shahbazpur gas field in seismic survey. The company projects, the task will be completed by In Block 10, which encompasses the Sundarbans, it will soon begin

seismic survey. But this survey will take place well outside the conserved forest area and its buffer zone, Halstead assured. He also ruled out a press report on selling Sangu gas field to ONGC, an Indian company, "We are proud to be back as operator in Bangladesh. We are not in talks with

that company on selling Sangu but

have been talking about a deal with

it over our concerns in Eastern

While Sangu provides about 12 percent of the total gas supply of and 16 to Shell Oil in 1998.

FROM PAGE 1 Cairn under a production sharing Bhola is located, Cairn has completed 40 percent of its targeted

pany did not strike any other commercial gas field in this block and

not have gas prospects. "We are now talking with the government to take back some parts of Block 16 for further explorations," the Cairn executive said.

Other than Sangu, Cairn is also

attended the programme, alleged police barred them from going to the

Bangladesh, Cairn and its joint venture partners -- Haliburton Brown and Roots, and Shell Oil -have invested over \$550 million since 1994. Cairn had sold its operatorship of Sangu and blocks 15

FROM PAGE 1 masterplan by world famous archi-tect Louis I Kahn. In his master plan,