## Crossfire is a new pretext

FROM PAGE 12
what the government is doing now is
nothing but gross violations of
lights " said the AL chief adding, "Crossfire is a new pretext forkilling people."
"Some four lakh false cases have

been filed against the Awami League activists throughout the country since the present government took office in 2001.

The Rab men would soon start killing our people and the slayings would be justified by these false cases," she said.

Amid tight security measures taken by the government, yesterday's rally was held peacefully. Thousands of people from different parts of the capital, adjacent districts and elsewhere in the country joined the rally. They carried banners, placards and posters inscribed with various antigovernment slo-

Referring to the capital punish-ment of notorious Ershad Sikder, Hasina claimed that her government ensured punishment of the criminals through justice and with the help of regular law enforcing forces like police and BDR.

She said the prime minister does not have any confidence in armed forces and different other law enforcing agencies and that is why she resorts to the special force.

The Rab has already killed over 200 people in the name of crossfire. But the force remains mysteriously silent to armed cadres loyal to Jamaat-e-Islami," she added.

Referring to the August 21 grenade attack, she asked the prime minister why has not any of the culprits behind the attack been arrested even after over four months of the incident.

Hasina spoke on various other issues including price hike of essentials, 'politicisation of the administration and the judiciary', food crisis, and 'corruption by the prime minister's family

Accusing the government of December 24.

Bangabandhu she said BNP-Jaamat-led regime had even issued a backdated passport for Colonel

Urging the people to join the ongoing movement to oust the government, the leader of the opposition in parliament said, "There is hardly any sense of security among the people and they no longer want the coalition government to be in

(retired) Noor so that he could stay

abroad without any hassle.

Hasina also congratulated the members of Bangladesh Cricket team on winning their maiden Test

Amir Hossain Amu, Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Abdul Jalil, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Obaidul Quader, Mohammad Hanif and Abdul Mannan, among others,

#### Death threat

demanded a toll of Tk 4 lakh and said if he refuses to comply with the demand, they would kill him.

Bhuiyan informed RU proctor, register and Motiher Police Station of the incident. The same callers threatened Prof Anwarul Islam of pharmacy department and demanded Tk 4 lakh from him as well.

Besides, the men claiming to be JMJB men phoned at the residence of late Prof Khondokar Azizul Haque. They asked Azizul's wife to take Tk 2 lakh from her daughter Proma Khondokar, a pharmacy department teacher and nephew Zia Uddin, a psychology department teacher, and get it ready for them (JMJB men).

Meanwhile, RU register Abdus Salam has filed a complaint with Motihar Police Station about the threats received since the killing of RU teacher Muhammad Yunus on

vehicle Kashem Sharif, a top official

of Canadian company Niko's

Bangladesh office, and placed seven

Sharif left the area after promis-

ing initiatives to meet the demands

that include proper investigation

into the devastating fire, steps to

ensure public safety, relief and warm

three large diesel containers from

the area and setting up of temporary

in front of the gas field's gate chant-

ing slogans that Niko's irresponsible

operation has endangered their

Tengrabazar with Laxmipur Union

Parishad Chairman Amirul Haque

presiding. A 10-member committee

headed by the chairman was formed

at the rally to realise compensation

officials, the local lawmaker, the

UNO and affected people in the

evening decided to pay Tk 5,000

each to some 500 displaced families

will be given compensation after an

estimate made within a day or two,

said local lawmaker Kolimuddin

that probably an internal landslide

in the well had slowed down the fire.

Petrobangla hold Niko's faulty

drilling responsible for the blow out.

the morning (yesterday) and saw the

flames suddenly started leaping and

spreading. Then we ran for cover,"

Jafar Siddiqui, deputy commis-

All trees in the nearby villages of

sioner of Sunamganj said.

Geological experts earlier said

The experts and technical staff of

"I went to the spot at around 10 in

The rest of the affected families

A meeting attended by Niko

from Niko and the government.

as immediate assistance.

Milon.

They also held a rally at

Some 300 villagers demonstrated

s for the affected, removal of

demands to him.

police camps.

# Fire starts to spread

and suffocating with gas while the fire is spreading through eight cracks in the soil, including two new ones developed yesterday.

Fresh cracks appeared in the nearby villages and gas was seen spewing out at more than at least 30 points in the area. Bubbles of gas were also seen in the local water

The raging flames that had leapt 300 feet on Saturday and subsided to 10 to 30 feet on Sunday again leapt 60 to 100 feet yesterday evening.

Panic gripped the villagers prompting hundreds more to flee their houses for safety. More than 10,000 people had left homes on Saturday. Thugs meanwhile are looting valuables from the vacated

Local leaders have urged the government to send medical teams and relief for the displaced people, now staying in different schools in Kandagaon, Mollapara, Alipur, Laxmipur, Vogla and Mohammadpur areas.

#### Abbas

FROM PAGE 12 Israeli leaders welcomed Abbas' victory but said they will closely watch how hard he tries to subdue militants. Abbas could easily lose his political capital over a major bombing or shooting attack, and while most militant groups signaled they are willing to give him a chance, not all have signed on to a truce with

Still, Abbas' victory held out the promise of a new era after four decades of chaotic and corruptionriddled rule by Arafat, who died Nov. 11. Abbas, who has spoken out against violence and has the support of the international community, promises to reform the government and the unwieldy security services.

Tengratila, Tilagaon and Azobpur Many Palestinians had high were burnt. The flames were slowly expectations. The election is our weapon to

whose house was demolished in an

Israeli raid. "We are sick of the (Is-

raeli) occupation and this troubled

electoral districts, Abbas won 65

said Monday. Final results were

Based on results from 10 of 16

engulfing the area. Locals have urged the governchange our life," said Souad ment to inform them clearly about Radwan, a 46-year-old teacher from the dangers in such a situation. the Gaza refugee camp of Jebaliya,

A team from the environment ministry yesterday visited the spot. Director General of the Department of Environment Khan Mohammad Ibrahim told journalists they will conduct a environmental study percent of the vote, election officials

Members of the BDR and police have been deployed around the gas field. But their number seems inade-

The Jalalabad Gas Transmission and Distribution Systems Limited (SGFL) restored gas transmission to Sunamganj district at 4:00pm yesterday. It was suspended since Friday.

About the blaze raging anew, State Minister for Energy AKM Mosharraf Hossain said, "May be there was some gas on the sides of the well. The fire will continue till the gas is exhausted. I think this may continue for three to four weeks."

"We will try to stop the gas flow from this well by drilling a bydirectional well."

The government probe committee has started work and will submit its report by January 20, he added. Meanwhile, the state minister

Abbas' ruling Fatah movement, and the Petrobangla chairman who is a member of the committee, leave for Myanmar today to attend a regional energy co-operation meet on January 12-13.

#### 3-NATION ENERGY MEET Mosharraf leaves for

Yangon today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Energy AKM Mosharraf Hossain leaves for Yangon today to attend January 12--13 meeting on regional energy cooperation, including the proposal of a transnational gas pipeline that will carry gas from Myanmar to India's Tripura and then to West Bengal through Bangladesh.

The energy ministers of India and Myanmar will also join the

Petrobangla Chairman SR Osmani and a foreign ministry official will accompany Mosharraf.

The prime minister (PM) has formed a secretary level committee to scrutinise various aspects of the proposed transnational gas pipe-

The secretary level committee will submit a set of recommendations to be discussed by finance, energy and foreign affairs ministers,

Then they will discuss the matter with the PM. The government wants to finalise its position on the issue before the upcoming Saarc summit in Dkaka.

Earlier Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman said instead of pursuing the pipeline proposal with India as an independent issue, Bangladesh will try to settle, along with this matter, other outstanding issues like Bangladesh-Nepal transit through India and removal of tariff barrier for Bangladeshi exporters to India. Myanmar government's invita-

tion to Bangladesh and India to the Yangon meeting on energy cooperation this month came as a sequel of Myanmar's recent hammering at the eight year old pipeline issue.

The cabinet committee earlier shelved a transnational gas pipeline project proposal submitted by a private company on the grounds that such a scheme needs political decision at the tri-national level and the governments concerned need to be involved in it.

#### \$13m aid for police reforms

Bangladesh will get \$13 million for a three-year project to modernise its

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) will provide the financial assistance for the An agreement to this effect will

be signed between the Bangladesh government and the representatives of the UNDP and the DFID in the Economic Relations Division (ERD) conference room at the Planning Commission at 3:00pm today, said a

It said the UNDP and the DFID will provide the financial assistance on the basis of an assessment of police needs carried out by the Ministry of Home Affairs in cooperation with the UNDP last year.

#### Tk 4.41 lakh

FROM PAGE 12 gang of about 20 entered the bazaar at midnight and tied up the night guard and the lone bank guard at gunpoint.

They stormed into the bank and looted Tk 4.41 lakh, breaking open the iron safe. The robbers then attacked several shops and took away cash and valuables.

A case was filed with Kasiani Police Station. No one was arrested in connection with the robbery till yesterday evening.

#### Baghdad

FROM PAGE 12 Hussein said. Witnesses said the explosion happened as policemen were changing shifts. An Associated Press photographer saw a number of bodies inside the courtyard that was cordoned off by police.

The killings were the latest in a series of attacks against ranking Iraqi security force officials and policemen on the eve of a landmark Jan. 30 election that insurgents are trying to disrupt. Last week, gunmen killed the governor of Baghdad, Ali al-Haidari, and six of his bodyguards.

Meanwhile, two US soldiers were killed and four wounded yesterday when a bomb blast ripped through an Abrams tank in southwestern Baghdad, the US army said.

'A patrol reported striking an improvised explosive device, destroying an Abrams tank. The wounded were evacuated to a military medical treatment facility," the 1st Cavalry Division said in a statement in Baghdad. Another US Marine was killed in

action on Sunday while conducting security and stability operations in the restive Al-Anbar province in western Iraq, the army said in a statement. The US army statement, released

Monday, gave no details of the deceased "pending next of kin notification'

The Ukrainian troop toll from an accidental bomb explosion in Iraq climbed to eight yesterday, after the defense ministry said one of the men wounded in the blast died in hospital.

In other violence Sunday, a US soldier assigned to Task Force Baghdad was killed by a roadside bomb, and a Marine was killed in action in the volatile Anbar province.

# Saifur blushes

Bangladesh's second largest apparel market after the European Union, he mentioned.

Bangladesh's apparel export to US is declining over the last few years As there is no quota facility now, garment exporters feel that duty-free access to US market could help Bangladesh greatly increase its ready-made garment export to the world's largest economy.

The BGMEA delegation brought to Saifur's notice issues like 'derogatory' GSP (generalised system of preference), services at Chittagong port and customs. The minister assured them of all cooperation from the government side, delegation Annisul recalled that it was Saifur

Rahman whose decision in 1991 (finance minister also then) to lift investment embargo on garment sector had led to a boom in the industry, eventually turning the sector into the highest export earner. In 1989-1990, an embargo on new investment in garment sector was imposed.

Meanwhile, Annisul yesterday filed an appeal with the District and Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka, against a lower court order on anuary 3 regarding appointment of an administrator to the BGMEA. Judge Mohammad Rafigul Islam

fixed today for hearing on the acceptability of the appeal.

The commerce ministry on Thursday appointed an administra-tor to the country's largest trade body following the lower court ruling. The High Court on Sunday stayed

#### Extortionist

FROM PAGE 12 Police rescued and admitted him with serious burns to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) where he was declared dead at 11:30am.

Accomplices of Pichchi Hannan have been extorting money from the traders of Hadir arat at Karwan Bazar for a few months, said the traders, adding that they burnt the criminal as a warning to the extortionists.

In Khilgaon, Anwar Hossain, 32, a CNG-run three-wheeler driver, and his three aides snatched Tk 30,000 from rickshaw passenger Azhar Hossain in Malibagh Chowdhuripara.

As Azhar cried for help, locals chased the four, caught Anwar and

beathimup. Laundry employee Tajul Islam was injured as Anwar's accomplices threw hand bombs while fleeing by the three-wheeler.

Tajul with splinters in the legs and hands, and alleged mugger Anwar were admitted to the DMCH.

Police seized four hand bombs

# 'Look East' policy

FROM PAGE 1 with these countries, China in particular. It blasted the ministry's handling of the Taiwan issue.

The parliamentary body observed that the government policy on Taiwan has affected relations with China, a 'trusted friend' of Bangladesh. It asked the ministry to make good the damage through boosting relations with that country.

"It is unfortunate that relations with China have deteriorated over the Taiwan issue," said a ruling party lawmaker at the meeting, referring to the move to open an office of Taiwan in Dhaka last year which was

In the face of sharp criticism by both the ruling and opposition party lawmakers at the meeting, the foreign ministry officials put the blame on the Board of Investment, which gave permission to open a Taiwanese trade office in About the Look East policy,

members of the committee said there was no real progress in the government's move to strengthen relations with the far-east countries. "We have to strengthen ties with these countries, specially China and

Japan, We have asked the foreign ministry to initiate steps in this regard," Ziaur Rahman Khan, chairman of the committee, told reporters after the meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

The parliamentary body observed China had shown interest connecting Bangladesh with Kunming in China through Myanmar and Thailand, but virtually there was no response from Bangladesh.

We have asked the ministry to submit a report on the proposed highway explaining its present status," the committee chairman Former army chief and member

of the committee Mahbubur Rahman suggested strengthening relations with China in the defence sector in line with the military cooperation treaty signed in 2002. We are not making optimum use

of the treaty. We should do it," Mahbub, also defence adviser to the prime minister, told reporters after About the Saarc Summit, which was postponed after the December

26 Asian tsunami, Reaz Rahman, adviser to the foreign ministry, said if India is agreed, then the sevennation summit would be held next While discussing the poor performance of Bangladesh's 21 foreign

missions in achieving their export target, the committee members blamed 'inefficient' mission officials selected by the commerce The parliamentary body also

discussed the government's Hajj preparation and management and opposed the initiative to privatise Hajj management.

# Rab seizes grenade

Rab-4 arrested three others including a woman in this connection. Mohammad Hossain, the alleged carrier, hailed from Jhenaigati upazila of Sherpur.

Saber Sharif, commanding officer of Rab-4, said the grenade is an anti-personnel bomb manufac-

tured by Arges group. He told The Daily Star that the seized grenade is identical to those used in the August 21 grenade attack on Awami League rally on Bangabandhu Avenue last year. It could not be known in which country it was manufactured.

He said primary investigation suggests the arrestees do not have any political link. "It needs time to know the details of the arrestees." Other sources said that the

arrestees could be mere carriers employed by an arms cartel. Rab sources said after a tip-off

that smuggled grenades would pass thorough Amin Bazar, a team of Rab's intelligence unit went there and lay in wait. As Mohammad Hossain approached Amin Bazar, the Rab men caught him. They searched through the bag that Hossain was carrying and found the grenade and the ivory.

Following Hossain's statement the Rab members raided a slum at Amin Bazar and held Abdur Rahim and Mohammad Mamun. The Rab however did not disclose the identity of the female arrestee.

A Rab team has already been sent to Hossain's village home in Sherpur while members from National Security Intelligence (NSI), Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), Special Branch (SB) and Criminal Investigation Department (CID) too have been called in to probe the matter.

"It seems an arms syndicate was smuggling in the grenade from India through the Sherpur border," a top Rab official seeking anonymity said. He said insurgents in Indian State of Asam usually use such grenades.

The authorities had directed to seal off the borders so that any person involved with the grenade smuggling cannot slip out of the

A Rab press release said the seized grenade, which contains 4,000 to 5,000 steel balls, can wreak extensive damage within a 20-metre radius around the spot of the blast. It also contains about 95 grams of high explosive PETN. Made in 2001, the grenade's body was inscribed with GREN A PERS, 2001, 02/01, 7. The body of the grenade is olive green while the safety clip is blackish green. It explodes four to five seconds after the clip is pulled out.

# Tk 31 lakh robbed

Anjuman Islam, 40, accounts officer of Alltex Industries Limited, died on the spot.

Nine employees of the company were carrying the monthly salary of the industry's staff to Rupganj in Narayanganj from their head office at 139 Motijheel in an office microbus.

Five robbers in a white car and two more on a motorbike shadowed the Alltex microbus and intersected it at Shanir Akhra near the Dhaka-Narayangani link road at around 3:00pm, said Akhtarul Islam, director of the industry. The robbers, armed with a cut-

rifle, pistols and hand-bombs, smashed the windscreen and side windows of the microbus to get at the passengers. "Our staff had three bags of money and they quickly handed one

to the robbers," said Akhtarul. "But

the robbers became angry and

asked for the rest. Accounts officer Anjuman was clutching at one of the bags which made the robbers mad. They shot him in the chest and took away all the money."

During the holdup, a long tail-

back developed on the Dhaka-Chittagong Ĥighway and people were watching the whole incident. But no-one dared to intervene. As the robbers sped towards Narayanganj, the Alltex microbus

driver also rushed in the same direc-

where doctors found him dead.

several places, but could not arrest

anyone as of 7:40pm last night.

service to pull the bus out of the 15tion to take Anjuman to a hospital. foot deep canal, as hundreds of Seeing the microbus behind their people from surrounding villages car, the robbers threw a hand-bomb gathered at the accident site, about on the street. 60 km from the district headquarters Anjuman was taken to of Bijapur. Shuvechcha Clinic at Narayanganj

Rescuers had to break the window panes of the bus to take out the vic-Alltex authorities informed the tims after two cranes could not pull Rapid Action Battalion and local the bus out of the river, prompting police of the robbery, who reached them to press two more cranes into the spot immediately and raided the relief work.

The bus has now been pulled out of the canal, they said.

#### Court to decide Lawyers demand charge framing

Supreme Court lawyer Dr Kamal Hossain and demanded the resig-nation of Attorney General AF Hassan Ariff for performing his professional duties.

against Tarique

A Dhaka court will decide on January

29 about framing charges against

Tarique Rahman, son of former

president Ziaur Rahman and a direc

tor of Dandy Dyeing Limited, and

Judge Rezaul Karim Khan of the

other accused are Dandy

Special Court for Dhaka Division set

the date after hearing of the dis-

charge petition filed by the accused.

Dyeing Managing Director Maj (retd) Syed Iskander Mirza, MP, Director

Giausuddin Al Mamun, former

managing director of Sonali Bank M

Ehsanul Haq and Abdul Khaleq

harass and humiliate the accused.

against the accused on the grounds

that the charges were primarily

Now-defunct Bureau of Anti-

Corruption (Bac) filed a case with the

Motijheel Police Station accusing

Tarique and four others on

September 14, 1996 and the investi-

gation officer pressed charges against them on May 22, 1997. In the name of M/s Dandy Dyeing

Ltd., the accused sought loans of Tk

15.30 crore for setting up a textile

dyeing factory on February 15, 1993.

But the equity was fixed in collusion with the bank authorities at only Tk 1

crore, instead of Tk 5.60 crore, the

amount proportionate to the loan,

Moreover, the value of the mort-

gaged land was shown to be worth Tk

18 lakh, whereas the real value was

present in the court during the hear-

Anwar Zahid Bhuiyan and Assistant

PP Ruhul Amin appeared for the state, while Barrister Mahbubuddin

Khokan and advocates Nitai Roy

Chowdhury, Faisal Hossain Arif, Sanaullah Miah and Masud Ahmed

Khulna outlaw

leader killed in

Rab 'crossfire'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A leader of outlawed Purbo Banglar

Communist Party's (PBCP) M-L faction was killed in 'crossfire'

between the Rapid Action Battalion

(Rab) and his accomplices in Jessore

Abdul Hye, 45, a divisional level

Rab sources said Hye was taken

to Taj brickfield area in Buna

Ramnagar village in Abhoynagar to

His operatives opened fire on the

Rab team that retaliated, the sources

claimed, adding that Hye was killed

during the 'shootout' at 2:10am. Two

Rab members were also hurt, said a

A foreign-made gun, a pipe-gun,

Hye was accused of 11 criminal

charges including six murders, the

Meantime, a cadre of the PBCP's

Janajuddha faction arrested on

Sunday was admitted to Khulna

Medical College and Hospital. He

fell sick during interrogation, police

A Rab-police joint team nabbed

ahidul alias Saiful, 30, son of Shah

Ali Molla of Alaipur village in Rupsha

upazila, from Rupsha bridge area in

Rupsha in Khulna with a gun and

Fifty-seven people, including 18

women and two children, were killed

when a state Road Transport

Corporation bus fell into the Almatti dam canal at Nidugundi in

Karnataka's Bijapur district early

ill-fated bus, bound for Chitapur district in Gulbarga district from

Hubli, have been recovered, district

Nine passengers of the jam-

Among the victims were 18

women and two children, they said.

Seven members of a family bound for

Jewargi in Gulbarga district also died

Four cranes were pressed into

and police authorities said.

packed bus swam to safety.

in the accident, they said.

The bodies of all the victims of the

57 killed in

India bus

plunge

PTI, Bangalore

five bullets and three used car-

tridges were seized from the spot.

leader of the PBCP faction, was

arrested from Banipur village in

Abhoynagar upazila Sunday.

seize his firearms

Rab press release.

Rab press release said

sources said.

Talukder defended the accused.

ing, while Ehsanul Haq was absent.

Tarique and three others were

Special Public Prosecutor (PP)

only Tk 1 lakh and 20 thousand.

the defense lawyers told the court.

January 29

COURT CORRESPONDENT

four others in a graft case.

The threat of the Islamist outfit is not only an attack on the independent profession of lawyers but also an interference in the trial, and as such counts as contempt of court, the BSCBA leaders observed.

Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud, BSCBA president, asked lawyers to prevent Khatme Nabuwat operatives from entering the High Court premises. "Since they are not a party to the Ahmadiyaa book banning case, we will not allow them to enter the court premises during its hearing," Rokan said.

"We stand for religious Muslims, but we are against those who are using Islam for creating discrimination among people in the name of religion," he said.

Charges mentioned in the first information report (FIR) are absolutely false, and the case was filed to The constitution has ensured the independent practice of lawyers, he said, adding, "If anybody interferes with the independent They prayed for discharging the accused from the charges.

Opposing the petition, the prosecution prayed for framing charges practice of our profession, we will not only protest against them but will resist.

The BSCBA leaders asked the chief justice not to allow the Khatme Nabuwat operatives to enter the court premises so as to ensure that they do not interfere with the duty of lawyers, hamper their security or influence the trial

of the Ahamadyaa book ban case. Last Friday the Khatme Nabuwat operatives declared Dr Kamal a 'murtad', or atheist, and 'prohibited' him from moving in the court for the Ahmadiyyas.

A Nabuwat leader, while addressing a hate-filled demon-stration at Nabisco intersection in Tejgaon, demanded that Dr Kamal stop 'mixing up' with the Ahmadiyyas in 15 days and asked him to 'establish himself as a true

"If you don't comply, we will stop your vehicle in Dhaka," the leader threatened.

Nabuwat leaders also demanded the resignation of the attorney general, since, in their view, he has not played the role he was supposed to against the

The Islamist zealots, who initiated the movement against

Man also differed with the chairman and Maniruddin over the issue

Mian prefers to do the commiswith about 1,746 staff.

Mian believes his organogram is good enough while the chairman and the other commissioner declined to accept Mian's proposal, that resulted in delay in formulating the

The only issue Mian and two other ACC members agreed was that the government appointment of Reza-e-Rabbi as ACC secretary was

### Tigers come

like winning an Olympic medal for the success-starved nation.

And it was fitting that Habibul Bashar proudly carried the red and green flag during an instant lap of honour with the rest converging from all corners of the stadium to

pay heed. When the cabinet secretary sat

The following day Maniruddin Ahmed sent a proposal to Mian, who is responsible for administration and

the proposal. He rather sent a letter to the government for approval of the appointment of 15 personal staff. Cabinet Secretary Saadat Hussain

violation of law. Mian pointed out on several

Mian earlier said the commission, ing Mian about it.

letter yesterday, this legal expert also told the commission that it cannot workwith the Bac staff.

Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat, Bangladeshin November 2003, had earlier threatened several civil society leaders, including Prof Kabir Chowdhury, poet Shamsur Rahman, writers Humayun Azad

punishment to operatives of such organisations, who have 'issued a fatwa against Dr Kamal and other dignitaries to attain their commu-

asked the government to play a secular role and stop the fundamentalist movement, saying it is creating instability in society, tarnishing the image of the country and trying to create havoc in the

# fishermen drift on to Port Blair

Indian Coast Guard yesterday rescued 35 Bangladeshi fishermen, who were drifted to Indian territory and landed at Narcondam Island. Coast Guard vessel CGS Akkadevi

rescued the fishermen from the

island, 475km north of Port Blair, according to Defence Public Relations Officer Salil Mehta. He said the Bangladeshis on December 28 set sail on three boats.

Upon receiving information from the local police station, Andaman and Nicobar command sent the Akkadevi, which was patrolling around, to the island. The Bangladeshi fishermen were taken to Port Blair and provided with food

This was the second such incident in a week. An Indian naval ship rescued four Indonesian sailors last

# ACC caught in rift

FROM PAGE 1.
The sources said the conflict developed among the members as Prof Mian had differed with the chairman and the other commissioner on many issues.

sion's job in line with the law cautiously, but his colleagues took a few hasty steps which, Mian thinks, do not go in conformity with the law. The chairman took many steps

without consulting Prof Mian, who came to know the decisions from newspaper reports, the sources said. They said Mian reacted angrily when he came to know about the ACC letter to 13 secretaries on the 'missing

motor vehicles' which was sent

without informing or consulting him. Mian, who joined the commission three weeks after its formation, when the two other members already locked in dispute over employing the Bac staff and the appointment of Bac director general (DG) MA Matin as

ACC's DG and acting secretary.

Mian opposed the moves saying those cannot be made before finalisation of the ACC organogram and rules and regulation. As he raised the issues several times, the chairman sought the attorney general's opinion on these. Sources said the chairman even

business that say he has to seek attorney general's opinion, if he needs any, through the Cabinet Division. The Cabinet Division pointed out several times that the Bac staff do not belong to the commission and Matin's appointment was not made properly, but the commission did not

did not comply with the rules of

with the ACC members on Saturday to discuss the issue, Justice Sultan did not comment on the interpretations of the Cabinet Division and the attorney general.

establishment of the ACC, for appointment of former Bac staff to 40 But Mian did not agree and halted

at Saturday's meeting suggested hiring some Bac officials on a temporary basis to carry out the urgent tasks. Although the chairman and Maniruddin agreed, Mian opposed the suggestion, saying a temporary hiring of some Bac staff would be a

occasions that working with the Bac staff without scrutiny would be violation of law. He said the commission may work with government officers, who worked in the Bac on deputation, so that they might go back to their office in case any problem arises.

in its first move, should have appointed a legal expert. But the chairman has appointed a part time legal expert recently without inform-After getting the law ministry

and Shahriar Kabir, as well as human rights leaders who condemned the movement against the Ahmadiyyas. The Bangladesh Bar Council, meanwhile, demanded exemplary

nal interest. Bar council leaders vesterday

# 35 Bangladeshi

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA from New

But pirates hijacked two boats and left all the fishermen and crew on

and medical care, Mehta added.

of ACC organogram. He framed an organogram outlining nearly 900 positions across the country while former Bac officials submitted to the ACC an organogram

FROM PAGE 1 against India in November 2000 is

The victory also put to rest the brewing criticism on Bangladesh's cricketing credentials.

have a feel of the heroes. Tears of joy rolled down each cricketer's cheeks as a new era had definitely started for the tenth Testplaying nation following 31 losses and only three draws. Zimbabwe, needing another 335 runs for an improbable victory, put

up a good resistance in the first hour of the day, adding 66 runs without losing any wicket. But once Enamul, who went wicket-less in the first innings, was introduced into the attack the ball behaved like a spitting cobra and the tourists succumbed swiftly, losing their last seven wickets for 42 runs. The victory was a fantastic team

effort with the youngest member of

the squad, who stood out among

other star performers, giving the

finishing touch to a job that was

began by the experienced ones who kept Bangladesh on course for a victory in five days. Captain Habibul Bashar with two half-centuries, Rajin Saleh with a strong 89, Nafees Iqbal with his second Test half-century, Khaled Mashud's useful 49, Mohammad Rafique's blistering 69 and first innings five-wicket haul, Tapash Baisya's early breaks in both innings and above all, Mashrafee-Bin-Mortuza's emergence as a quality all-rounder with an explosive 48 in the first innings and five wickets carved out Bangladesh greatest moment.

Bangladesh will go into the second and final Test in Dhaka on January 14, eyeing a series victory. The day was also special for

coach Day Whatmore, the Sri

Lankan-born Australian who has

been an immense source of inspira-

tion for cricketers since June 2003. Meanwhile, President Iajuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina congratulated the team for

much-awaited victory. (More reports on Sg ort page)

# toward a Palestinian state.

In Washington, President Bush called the election a "historic" step

expected later in the day. Abbas' main challenger, independent Mustafa Barghouti, won 21 percent, while the remaining five candidates scored in the lower single digits. In his acceptance speech, Abbas said he faces a difficult mission, but he reiterated that he would not go after militants. Instead, he said, he wants to "give our fugitives a life of dignity," referring to those wanted by Israel. "I present this victory to the soul of Yasser Arafat and present it to our

people and to our martyrs," Abbas

said, referring to Palestinians killed

dicted a sweeping Abbas victory,

cheering supporters took to the

streets of the West Bank and Gaza.

Gunmen fired in the air, motorists

honked horns and members of

After exit polls late Sunday pre-

in the conflict with Israel.

wearing checkered black-and-white headbands, danced in the streets.