NEWS

striving to reach a diplomatic solu-

obligation that it's got to fulfill," he

Blair told the British parliament's

The Europeans want Iran to

liaison committee as Iranian and EU

diplomats met in Geneva to discuss

totally dismantle its uranium enrich-

ment programme to ensure that it

cannot make weapons-grade

under international treaties, to work

suspended all uranium enrichment-

related activities to fulfill its part of a

deal clinched in November with the

Europeans, in hopes of getting

trade, security and technology

Police yesterday arrested nine more

people in connection with the killing

of a constable during the hartal at

The arrestees are Sajib Alam

The constable, Ashraf Siddique,

Jahangir, Golam Mowla, Biplob,

Ruman, Golam Noor, Johnny, Ruhul

40, was injured by pro-hartal activ-

ists. He succumbed to his injuries on

way to Mymensingh Medical

Awami League (AL) leaders and

workers, and 20 unidentified people

in connection with the attack on the

and AL upazila unit President Abdul

Halim and General Secretary

Muksedur Rahman Lebu and BCL

leaders Jahangir Alam and Tariqul

Islam are also the accused in the

police raided the houses of their

leaders and activists on Monday

3 outlaw leaders

had confessed to hatching a plan to

kill politicians, businessmen and

people 'responsible for eliminating

Bagmara Police Station had filed a

murder case in this connection

the dead claimed that the three were

not involved with PBCP and police

Talking to the local journalists,

they also said that the three were

not arrested at Ektara Bazar, rather

in different areas of Atrai upazila in

Naogaon. Abdur Razzak was

arrested at Batila Bazar while Idrish

at Katila Bazar, and Abdur Rashid at

Boalipara olive orchard and shot

dead, alleged the family members.

they heard only three gunshots.

They were later taken to

Locals told the journalists that

Sub Inspector Omar Faruk of

Meanwhile, family members of

the outlaws from Bagmara'.

against 22 unknown people.

killed them cold-bloodedly.

Ibrahimnagar.

Local AL leaders alleged that

Nalitabari Municipality Chairman

Two cases were filed against 20

9 more held

Iran counters that it has the right,

For the time being, Iran has

added. "I hope they fulfill it."

ran's nuclear programme.

on the nuclear fuel cycle.

"Iran has now been given a set of

tion with Tehran.

material

concessions

for cop

murder

Nalitabari on Sunday.

College and Hospital.

police

cases

niaht.

FROM PAGE 1

Amin and Manik.

UNB, Sherpur

Hasina demands

ROM PAGE 12

BNP-Jamaat alliance has reached an extreme level. People have become fed up with the political terrorism, killing, price hike of essentials, unemployment, corruption and deteriorating aw and order," she said.

"Resign immediately to hold early elections," the opposition leader asked the 4-party alliance government. She called upon the people to join the ongoing united movement to force the

government to stand down. The AL chief said the killing of Shah AMS Kibria once again proved her party's apprehension that the ruling coalition wants to consolidate its power by killing the popular and promising leaders and candidates of the opposition.

They are fearing a defeat because the Awami League in the last election got the highest 41 percent votes as a single party." she added.

Hasina alleged that BNP cadres on Monday attacked former AL lawmaker Dr Mizanul Haq in Karimganj of

Kishoreganj district in a bid to kill him. She referred to the August 21 grenade attacks, grenade attack on the British high commissioner, killings of Ahsanullah Master MP, ex-MP Momtaz Uddin of Natore, Manzurul Imam in Khulna, Surui in Lalmonirhat grenade attacks on AL leader Suranii Sengupta, Sylhet Mayor Badruddin Kamran and ex-MP Jebunnesa.

"This government has designed the killing of SAMS Kibria and it knows who the killers are. All information will

Ulfa formally offers peace talks to Delhi

AFP, Guwahati

A leading separatist group in India's northeastern state of Assam has made a formal offer of peace talks with New Delhi aimed at ending more than 26 years of insurgency in the region, a mediator said yesterday.

The outlawed United Liberation Front of Asom (Ulfa) wants the talks to be held in Assam rather than in a neutral country as proposed by the Indian government, said Assamese writer Mamoni Raisom Goswami sought by the outfit to mediate in the talkš with New Delhi

Goswami said an Ulfa emissary had late Monday handed over a letter from the group's chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa to her for delivery to the Indian government.

Political leaders FROM PAGE 12

rally on the press club premises. Speaking at the rally, Matiur Rahman, editor of the Prothom Alo, said Bangladesh has become the most dangerous country in Asia, especially for journalists.

Thirteen newsmen were killed in the southwestern region in the last few years but the killers could not be brought to book due to flawed investigation of the cases, he said.

He alleged that the criminals cannot be punished due to their connection with a section of corrupt policemen.

Khulna City BNP President M Nurul Islam, MP, said the killers of journalists cannot go unpunished. All political parties should forge unity to face the situation, he suggested **District Awami League President** Shaikh Harun-ar-Rashid called upon the people to launch a movement against the bomb and gun attacks on journalists and political leaders BFUJ President Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury and Secretary General of its another faction Ruhul Amin Gazi called upon the journalists to fight all evils unitedly, sinking all differences. They criticised the failure of the police to track down the killers of journalists in the southwestern region. Presided over by KPC President Sheikh Abu Hasan, the rally was also addressed by Nayeb-e-Amir of city Jamaat Shafiqul Alam, Alhaj Abul Hossain of Jatiya Party, Dainik Purbanchal Editor Liaguat Ali and leaders of various professional organisations.

be revealed if Prime Minister's Politica Secretary Harris Chowdhury is taken on police remand," Hasina said.

The people have no trust in the present government bringing the criminals to justice. The resignation of the government and the establishment of a democratically elected government can only ensure the trial of

Giving way to the powerful

live in bogies, leaving

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,

Rajshahi City Corporation has

reserved the rest house for BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Zia and other leaders to board until tomorrow.

The nine BR Western Zone officials including the general manager, chief engineer, chief traffic manager, chief medical officer and chief personnel officer have been living at the 12-room rest house on payment for several years after their official residences became unusable due to lack of repairs.

Following the reservation of the rest house, five railway bogies including two saloon cars were brought to Rajshahi station from Iswardi junction on February 5 to be used as temporary living quarters of the railways officials. The bogies are furnished with adequate residential

facilities including telephone and power connections, sources said. General Manager Saifur Rahman confirmed their shifting to the bogies from the rest house. But he claimed it did not make them uncomfortable in the least. "The rest house is meant for VIPs and we can live there only when it is vacant," he pointed out.

told The Daily Star that some of them have taken leave to avoid living in the bogies.

the killers.'

Railways top brasses

rest house for BNP leaders

Nine top officials of Bangladesh Railways (BR) have been living in bogies for a week now as the rest house they used to reside in has been booked exclusively for BNP high-ups attending the partv's union level conference here today.

However, a few of the officials

ACC to meet FROM PAGE 12 rough an office order.

Sources said the commission will sit today to discuss the matter and other issues that have thrown the anticorruption watchdog into a delicate situation and prompted Miah to tell the press that he was considering resignation.

ACC Chairman Justice Sultan ossain Khan on February 3 issued the order to strip Miah of his responsibilities. The order says the chairman himself will supervise and control all administrative and establishment related iobs.

The order aggrieved Miah, a former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, who said on Monday that ne would duit "If the situation does not improve." Today's meeting may also finalise a draft organogram of the commission after examining two drafts prepared by commissioners Miah and Maniruddin Ahmed. Miah submitted a draft suggesting 950 staff to run the commission while Maniruddin recommended 1,800 staff, the source added. Miah met the prime minister (PM) on Sunday, sources said, adding that it was nothing official but the PM was informed about the prevailing situation in the ACC. Habiganj attack FROM PAGE 12 brought to the Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC) in the capital for quizzing yesterday. Police and officials of different intelligence agencies, who had been interrogating the five, remained mum about the findings and denied even to disclose their location. Sources said the investi-Tk 20 lakh mobile gating agencies brought them to the capital to learn more information. FROM PAGE 12 Members of the Rapid Action

Bid to snatch FROM PAGE 12 front of Shyamoli X-ray and Pathological Laboratory on Road No

> Constable Ashraf Ali Sheikh, 45, of Dhaka Central Jail received two bullets in his head and right chest.

The attackers, numbering four, then took Idul on board a microbus and attempted to make off. But. braving gunshots, locals and a police patrol team on duty nearby chased and stopped the bus. They caught Idul but the assailants managed to

A Daily Star investigation found indications that, apart from Idul's associates, jail officials and staff of Orthopaedic Hospital might have been involved in the escape plot.

The prison guards brought Idul to the laboratory to take x-ray by a CNG-run autorickshaw, which is quite unusual, considering the notoriety of the arrestee. At the hospital, a doctor said their

x-ray unit was out of order and referred them to the private diagnostic centre

But the Daily Star investigation found that the x-ray machine at the nospital does work and the hospital authorities refer patients to diagnostic centres outside only when a digital x-ray is needed. Shyamoli X-ray and Pathological Laboratory does not have any digital x-ray machine either.

'It seems to me that some dishonest jail officials and even some doctors and staff at the Orthopaedic Hospital are involved in the diabolical olot," said a top official of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), seeking

anonymity. "We will investigate how and why such a notorious criminal was sent to Orthopaedic Hospital by an autorickshaw escorted by only two unarmed guards, and how he was referred to such a diagnostic centre. After investigation, we will report the findings to the higher authorities," said DMP Deputy Commissioner

(West Division) Mazharul Hoque. A three-member committee comprising Dhaka Central Jail doctor, jailer and deputy jailer has been formed to investigate the incident.

The brave heart FROM PAGE 1

personnel, watched how he was greeted with jubilation by the terriied WASA employees. One by one Mostafa helped all the men on the third floor descend to the roof of an adjacent one-storey shop. housands clapped in appreciation

as the men touched the ground. On the sixth floor a dozen men and women waved and cried for help

from the corridor as thick black smoke almost engulfed them from behind. One of the women collapsed in fear. Mostafa shouted at the men on the sixth floor to throw a rope. Within minutes one was thrown towards the third floor. Thousands clapped again when the brave young Samaritan started climbing back towards the sixth floor, this time carrying with him a thick and strong rope provided by the fire service. To the thunderous applause of the onlookers on the road, Mostafa led several people one by one down the rope to the ground. The fire brigade later rescued the terrified female

employees from the sixth floor, many of them unconscious. The brave young

of helping them at any cost.'

four months ago in search of a job.

throughout the day and sleep on my

basket on the pavement," the frail

looking young man said. He showed

how he had bruised his hands and

The AL, 11-party and JSD will hold

separate mass rallies on February

19 at the city's Paltan Maidan, Paltan intersection and Muktangon.

Opposition Sheikh Hasina

announced her party programme at a

press colnference at its office after a

four-hour meeting of the party central

As part of its anti-government

movement, the AL will start exchang-

ing of views with professional bodies

on February 11 and hold demonstra-

tions at upazila and district headquar

ters across the country on February

13. The party will also join the silent

protest programme announced by

Asma Kibria, widow of Kibria, on

programmes at a press conference

The 11-party declared its

Mujahidul Islam Selim, general

secretary of the Communist Party of

of Kibria and others are punished.

involved in previous grenade and

bomb attacks, an end to repression

on opposition leaders and workers

and resignation of the alliance

working committee yesterday.

AL President and Leader of the

"I am glad no one is dead," he

legs in the process of climbing.

36-hr hartal

said smilingly.

FROM PAGE 1

February 12.

at its office.

government

killers.

Fire at Wasa office

us.

before us.

hospitals.

reporters

face a fire

casualty.

FIRE FIGHTING

attempted to jump out of the win-dows, but luckily I could prevent

them from doing so telling that

firemen had already come to rescue

"I thought I was going to die," said Mahbub, a Class Three

employee of Wasa. "When I saw

smoke gushing towards us, I almost

fainted. But thanks to some of us

who braved the smoke and pushed

one another, we eventually made it

to the heated staircase, where many

shoes and sandals were littered all

around, left by people fleeing the fire

man, when asked to give his iden-

tity. He suffered serious suffocation

trapped in thick smoke for about

forty minutes on the seventh floor,

be my last day," said the man, one of

the 11 found unconscious by the

firemen. They were sent to various

probably on the basement," Selim

Newaz Bhuiyan, assistant director

Wasa Managing Director ANH Akhtar Hossain, who was present at

and regretted that the building has

no fire exit or any hydrate system to

"I started to pray assuming it to

before rescued by fire fighters.

FROM PAGE 1

The fire is guessed to have originated from one of the numerous electric stoves used by Wasa staff for cooking on the fifth and sixth floors. It broke out at around 12:50pm when most of the employees had already gone out on lunch break and for Johr prayers or were

preparing to go. Dhaka Wasa Superintending Engineer Nurul Hug said a tea stall on the fifth floor might have caused the fire. "The risk of fire was always there with so many electric stoves running on most of the floors," he noted.

"I am alright, but please don't ask me any question," said an elderly Ironically, none of the fire fighting equipment including hose pipes kept on every floor of the building was put to use, as the Wasa management allegedly had never arranged any fire fighting drill.

"There are fire extinguishers on most of the floors. It's a pity that there is no staff trained or know who to operate the gears in case of emergency," said a Wasa official, asking not to be named.

ATN ŠTOPPAGE

ATN Bangla suspended airing its scheduled programmes for over five hours after the fire broke out at the adjacent Wasa Bhaban. It resumed the transmission temporarily at around 2:00pm via its up-link centre in Thailand with stock footage.

his second floor office during the accident, said, "An electric short circuit on the sixth floor is most likely It ran movie songs for several hours. In the afternoon, it started transmitting pre-recorded programmes including a travel to have caused the blaze.' He said about 3,000 staff of show. Wasa alone work in the building,

"We will start transmitting scheduled programmes including news as soon as engineers can put the system in place," said an ATN Bangla official without elaborating. The channel, which transmits

news every hour, aired its first newscast after the fire incident at 6:10pm

THE PANIC

As the fire broke out, staff on the first to fifth floors, rushed in panic to the central staircase shouting 'fire! fire!', while about a hundred people remained trapped on the sixth and seventh floors. Frightened by the gushing smoke, people swarmed the central staircase, the only fire exit, shoving and fighting one another to escape, eye witnesses described.

"There was a mad rush at the staircase to escape the fire, although we never saw any flame. But we were so swamped by dense smoke that we became virtually blind," said Nargis, a Wasa employee

"About 10 of us including the chief engineer were resting in our office on the top floor when we heard people shouting 'fire! fire'. As we hurried outside, we found black smoke drifting upwards preventing us from using the staircase, described Nurul Huq.

Narrating the panic inside, Huq said, "After searching for a safe exit for about 15 minutes without success, we decided to seek help from outside. As smoke filled the hallway of our floor, some of the womer

Volatile politics

FROM PAGE 1 and urged all parties to

Bikalpa Dhara to ioin non-violent movement FROM PAGE 12

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) yesterday declared non-violent and peaceful programmes for February 10-22 to express solidarity with Asma Kibria's call to protest the killing of former finance minister SAMS Kibria.

BDB's Organising Secretary Mahi B Chowdhury at a press constate sponsor of terrorism on ference in BDB central office at Segunbagicha announced the programmes.

The programmes will begin at 3:00pm tomorrow with a silent procession from BDB central office. Members of BDB's front organisations, Bikalpo Jubo Dhara, Bikalpa Sramik Dhara, and Bikalpa Chhatra Dhara, will march in procession to Asma Kibria's residence at Dhanmondi and sit in a token hunger strike.

They will also submit a memorandum to Asma Kibria, wife of the slain lawmaker, said Mahi.

"The fire might have originated from strong electric jerks, most BDB leaders and activists will participate in the 30-minute sit-in programme called by Asma Kibria in of Dhaka district fire brigade, told all the districts across the country on February 12.

JIC to quiz **Bangla Bhai** operative

OUR CORRESPONDENT. Bogra

The Jagarata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) operative, who had admitted his party's involve-Eyewitnesses said it was thanks to the quick intervention of the fire ment with several bomb attacks fighters that there was no human across the country, was taken on a seven-day remand vesterday.

The firemen, first from Gabtali police the same day sent Mohammadpur fire station, arrived Shafiqullah to the Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC) in the capital.

Yesterday's remand was granted

Meanwhile, a top official of the

district police told The Daily Star that

the local police do not have enough

manpower and expertise to investi

gate the case properly. Criminal

Investigation Department (CID) should deal with the case, he added.

Sharon, Abbas

FROM PAGE 1 Mubarak, and Jordan's King

Abdullah added their weight to a

under Explosives Substance Act.

at the spot at 1:09pm to find a huge crowd surrounding the square Shafiqullah had been quizzed building that houses two commertwice by the JIC. He was arrested cial banks, a post office, ATN Bangla with explosives and bomb making materials at another JMJB cadre administrative office, a canteen, real estate office and many other small Joynal's house on January 16. He stands accused in two cases

offices filed in connection with bomb As smoke spewed out from attacks on jatra (folk play) shows in different floors, the crowd of onlooktwo villages of Bogra. The blasts killed two and injured at least 70. ers created traffic jam on the busy Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue for a while

An abandoned water reservoir just opposite the Wasa Bhavan was of great help in dousing the flames lasted at least an hour and a that half. Two water tankers of Wasa also came at the scene to back up

water supply. Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and State Minister Ziaul Huq Zia of local government and rural development ministry visited the Wasa office after about two and a-half-

nours of the incident, A five-member committee headed by Shahidur Rahman Pradhan, chief of operations and maintenance of Wasa, has been formed to investigate the incident and submit report within three days.

summit that could prepare the ground for the revival of a US-backed "road map" toward a Palestinian state beside a secure Israel. The United States has emphasized its new commitment to pursu-

ing peace after the death of iconic leader Yasser Arafat, who was seen by Washington and Israel as an "Optimism is certainly justified at

the moment as far as the ivid

Bush seeks

most of the other cases, because

we know from the public opinion

polls conducted by the mullahs

themselves that more than 70

percent of people hate this regime

and want it changed, they want to be

free," said Michael Ledeen, of the

Meanwhile, British Prime

Minister Tony Blair called Iran a

Tuesday, and urged the Islamic

republic to meet EU demands to

renounce its suspected pursuit of

ism. There's no doubt about that at

all," Blair told a parliamentary com-

mittee, agreeing with US President

George W. Bush's view of Iran as a

make progress in the Middle East.

that Iran realises that it's got an

obligation to help that, not hinder it.

he said, referring to Iran's support

Blair said it was a "good sign"

that the United States and Europe

were "working together" to convince

Iran to abandon its feared pursuit of

It was also a "good sign" that

France and Germany -- which

opposed the US and British invasion

of Irag -- were, together with Britain,

Two persons died and five others

were injured as two launches col-

lided head on in the river Sonai at

Police quoting passengers said Barisal bound MV Saikat-16 from

Dhaka hit MV Tipu-6 from Barisal

near the confluence of the Padma at

Police Station yesterday morning.

Police sent the bodies to Mitford

"We believe that this is a legitimate

obligation of the international com-

munity under the charter of the

United Nations to uphold fundamen-

tal human rights and democracy

even under the conditions of a

legitimate "state of emergency,"

constitute a 'violation of the human

rights' guaranteed by the Nepalese

Constitution and those enshrined in

the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights, the International Convenant

growing number of political prison-

"We are deeply concerned by the

They said that the king's actions,

among all member states of UN."

Nepalese HR

A case was filed with Keraniganj

The dead are Mahmud, 13, and

Shariatpur early yesterday.

Two die as

launches

collide

UNB, Keraniganj

Nurunnabi, 14.

about 1:00am.

FROM PAGE 12

Hospital for autopsy.

for Palestinian militant groups.

"I hope very much that if we can

"It certainly does sponsor terror-

American Enterprise Institute,

neo-conservative think tank.

nuclear weapons.

top sponsor of terrorism.

nuclear weapons.

team led by Deputy Director Mohammad Motiur Rahman challenged a Sylhet-bound transit passenger at the transit lounge at 10:35pm. They slit open the luggage of Motiur Rahman, the passenger, and found 298 pieces of phone sets, said customs sources.

Motiur who earlier arrived in Dhaka in a Bangladesh Biman flight from Singapore, disowned the goods and told the customs officials that a person had requested him to carry the luggage for him.

Customs officials seized the goods that were brought without paying the duties, the customs officials added.

AL enforces FROM PAGE 12

including Gujadia Bazar, where police had opened fire to disperse the warring BNP and AL activists on the day.

The AL also enforced a dawn-todusk hartal in the upazila yesterday to protest the killing of its activist Nabi Hossain in police firing. During the shutdown, police did not allow any processions or demonstrations on the streets.

Police handed over the body of Nabi Hossain to his family at Namapara village at 7:00pm yesterday.

Karimganj BNP President Rafiqur Rahman has blamed former AL MP Mizanul Haq for the death of Nabi.

Police filed a case against Mizanul Hag and 700 others for attack on the on-duty magistrate and the police during the AL-BNP clash.

Battalion (Rab) and intelligence agencies picked up Quiyum from his Dhaka residence in the early hours Saturday and took him to Habiganj for quizzing. They later showed him arrested

on Sunday under section No. 54 of Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) and brought him in for an eight-day remand. Police, meanwhile, arrested five

other BNP activists Shah Alam, Joynal Abedin Jalal, Joynal Abdin omin, Jamir Ali and Abdul Wahed Sohel from Habiganj. Alam, Jalal, Momin and Ali were brought in for remand, while Sohel was sent to jail.

All the high officials of police and different investigating agencies including Rab, who rushed to Habiganj after January 27 to probe the matter, left Habiganj yesterday, said sources.

Khaleda, Hasina FROMPAGE 12

of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia would attain further success. Shinawatra hoped that the

friendship between the peoples of Bangladesh and Thailand would further strengthen in the future. In a felicitation message to the

Thai prime minister. Sheikh Hasina hoped that the bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Thailand would strengthen under his dynamic leadership.

She also wished him good health the silent protest led by Asma Kibria, and long life as well as continued progress of the people of Thailand. and bring out processions and hold allies in all districts on February 13.

Mohammad Mostafa, later told this restrain themselves from actions to correspondent, "When I saw the men avoid further deterioration of the and women crving for help. I thought situation.

After enforcing a series of hartals Born to a poor family, Mostafa since January 29, the AL and its allies yesterday announced yet comes from Sripur village under another 36-hour shutdown from Shahrasti police station of Chadpur February 14 and rallies in Dhaka on district. The third of two sisters and February 19 with the BNP declaring five brothers, Mostafa came to Dhaka to face the opposition programmes on the street. "Sometimes I work as a porter

Top leaders of the four-party alliance at a meeting with Prime Minister and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia on Thursday decided to counter the opposition movement by holding public rallies across the country.

The first showdown of the alliance partners on Monday was marked by attack on the opposition procession and police firing that left an AL activist dead in Kishoregani.

The ruling alliance will stage similar rallies on February 14, the first day of the 36-hour hartal, that may lead to further clashes, political sources apprehend.

The rival workers of the government and opposition have already locked in clashes at many places across the country including the Old Dhaka during the last hartal sending a bad signal to the members of the public and businesses.

Opposition sources said they are determined to further intensify the ongoing movement enforcing tougher programmes aiming to force the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition to resign by next month.

Political observers say the upcoming antigovernment movement may take a violent turn as the opposition activists would retaliate the strict action of police who were in a marauding mood during the last spells of hartal.

Bangladesh, told the press confer-On Monday, Prime Minister ence they will continue the antigovernment agitation until the killers Khaleda Zia discussed with the senior ministers the prevailing Announcing its programmes at a political situation in the country and press conference at its office, the planned a tough action against the JSD said it demands trial of the opposition's demonstration. killers of Kibria and all those

Sources said government strategies to defuse opposition movement include -- mass arrest of AL leaders and workers at grassroots level charging them with violence, arson and ransacking of property.

Party chief Hasanul Hag Inu said The law-enforcers have already the government is blaming the AL for been asked to take strict vigilance the killing of Kibria only to save the on the opposition men in streets specially on hartal days by not allowing any procession or rallies.

The JSD programmes include a meeting with leaders of different women's bodies and social organi-The government high-ups also decided to make the donors undersations on February 11 at the party stood that the opposition parties are office. The party will also take part in creating anarchic situation in the country through calling hartal in the name of antigovernment move-

"We will not give any chance to the opposition to take control of the streets... We will face them both politically and with state machinery." said a senior leader of BNP seeking

anonymity. BNP and its allies have directed all of its units to take preparations to hold rallies, processions and other political programmes across the country to take control of the streets. Party insiders said the BNP

adherents have been instructed to tackle any violent opposition move. After Monday's killing in Kishoreganj, the police yesterday

filed a case against former AL lawmaker Dr Mizanul Haq and about 700 others for 'attacking the on-duty magistrate and the police.'

Awami League has called for a davlong hartal today and another half-day shutdown for tomorrow in Karimoani after enforcing a dawn to-dusk shutdown yesterday.

Besides, a murder case has been filed against local leaders of AL and its front organisations at Nalitabari in Sherpur district after a police constable was killed there during Sunday's hartal.

Meanwhile, leaders of Jatiya Party (Ershad) yesterday threat-ened to enforce hartal if the killers of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria are not arrested and punished.

Bangla Bhai's men circulate leaflets

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

Four Bangla Bhai's men, traveling together on Monday morning, circulated over one thousand leaf lets to the public throughout Durgapur border village under

Aditmari upazila. The leaflet states that Bangla Bhai wants to establish Muslim law, insisting that development in the country will not be possible without it. The leaflet goes on to describe Bandla Bhai as a great Muslim leader who, while fighting along with his colleagues against outlaws and the enemies of Islam, works to help the poor.

The Bangla Bhai men, after taking shelter at the Satkani mosque of Durgapur, circulated the leaflets at eight mosques within two hours at Durgapur, Daikhowa, Singimari, Chandropur and other frontier villages in the district of Lalmonirhat.

is concerned," Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told Italian state television after a brief visit to the region on which she met Abbas and Sharon.

"...I saw that these leaders have understood that it is time to move ahead." she said.

However, Islamic militant factions have so far agreed only to a conditional cease-fire, while neither side shows signs of budging on key obstacles like borders, and whether Palestinian refugees get a "right to return" to land in what is now Israel.

Israeli and Palestinian flags flew side by side in the sunshine at the Red Sea resort. Hundreds of Egyptian police, some with sniffer dogs, were deployed to ensure security.

Violence broke out in September 2000 after the collapse of talks for a Palestinian state on land captured by Israel in the 1967 war. Some 3,350 Palestinians and 970 Israelis have been killed.

But despite Tuesday's announcements, doubt remains over the vital agreement of militant groups behind suicide bombings, rocket and shooting attacks, though they have gone along with a defacto truce.

"There is no sense now in talking about a truce." Hassan Youssef of Hamas told Al Jazeera television. "We have not seen any serious pressures on the Israeli side to take measures on the ground to prove its seriousness."

The factions have said Israel's promise to free 900 out of 8,000 Palestinian prisoners, to pull back troops and end assassinations are not enough.

2 US doctors FROMPAGE 12

US doctors to Bandarban from Ruma upazila overturned.

The jeep was in a convoy of eight vehicles carrying a 19-member medical team.

On receiving a wireless message from Bandarban brigade headquarters, an army helicopter brought the US doctors to Chittagong Combined Military Hospital (CMH). The rest are undergoing treatment at a local hospital.

The medical team, invited by a local NGO, Community Advancement Fund (CAF), has been rendering free treatment in the remote areas of Ruma upazial since February 5 and staying at Bandarban Parjatan Motel.

ers and the increasing insecurity of human rights defenders, journalists, and lawyers," said the statement, whose composers refrained from disclosing their identity out of fear of

on Civil and Political Rights.

repression. The statement termed as unacceptable the current surveillance. monitoring, and harassment of human rights organisations, activists, and journalists, as well as the obstacles set in place to interrupt the work of the National Human

In April last year, Abdur Rashid was kidnapped and tortured by Bangla Bhai's men. He was arrested in December last year but was released later.

Bill to ban tobacco ad

FROM PAGE 12 Two other bills were also placed in

Rights Commission

the House yesterday. Health and Family Welfare Minister Khandakar Mosharraf Hossain tabled a bill titled 'Smoking and Tobacco Usage (control) Act

2005' that proposed prohibiting

advertisements on tobacco prod-

ucts in newspapers, books and

magazines and through radio,

Putting up billboards and printing

leaflets and handbills or any other

documents containing advertise-

ments on tobacco should also be

Education Minister Osman

Farruk placed the Computer and

Technical Education Academy Bill

2005 and State Minister for Home

Lutfuzzaman Babar tabled the

Battalion Ansar (Amendment) Bill

House session, party sources said

of joining parliament session to

protest misdeeds and misrule of the

ruling coalition," said an AL law-

maker referring to yesterday's

meeting of the Awami League

Central Working Committee

(ALCWC) with party chief Sheikh

ALPP would take the final decision

on joining the parliament session.

Later, Hasina told reporters the

The AL lawmakers have kept off

the House since January 31 when

"Party policymakers are in favour

2005 in parliament yesterday.

cerned for scrutiny

Hasina in the chair.

vesterday.

television and cinema.

banned, the bill proposes.

first sitting of parliament's first session this year after adopting a condolence motion on former finance minister and party lawmaker Shah AMS Kibria, and defer the presidential address by one day.

they boycotted the president's

address to parliament. They had

asked the speaker to adjourn the

In the House, discussion on thanks giving motion on the presi-

dential address began yesterday. BNP lawmaker Nazimuddin Alam and Jamaat-e-Islami lawmaker Shah Mohammad Ruhul Quddus took part in the discussion. They accused the AL of conspiring to destabilise the country and trying to create anarchy.

Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain placed the motion in parliament.

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar sent If the anti-smoking bill is passed, all the three bills to the parliamenno company will be allowed to tary standing committees condistribute tobacco free of cost arrange any competition and offer Meanwhile, the AL scholarships or donations to make Parliamentary Party (ALPP) will

publicity of tobacco products. meet within a couple a days to take a The bill proposes three months' decision on participation in the

imprisonment or a fine of Tk 1,000 or both for violation of its provisions.

It also proposes a fine of Tk 50 for smoking in public places and in any mode of transport.

The authorities or caretaker of any public place or transport can however make special arrangements for smokers, the bill says.

Considering the adverse effect of the ban on tobacco farmers, the bill proposes to the government to provide soft-loans to them to switch over to other crops in the next five vears