Border tension wilts land trade Khulna bigots

Witnesses say BSF members yesterday were patrolling with heavy arms along the border at Petrapole opposite to Benapole. Panic has gripped the people in the bordering villages in Benapole area

apprehending possible encounters between BDR and BSF. Our Jessore correspondent writes: Export of some goods including jute and jute-made ones to India remains normal.

Sources say, in line with a new order made effective from Monday BSF barred helpers of Indian trucks from entering Benapole but allowed drivers to drive their trucks into Bangladesh. This angered the drivers and they refused to drive on

without their helpers. The BSF also withdrew its permission to C&F agents to move in and

out of Indian territory.

A BDR source terms the prevailing tension between BSF and BDR unprecedented.

Our Brahmanbaria correspondent reports: The uneasy situation in the bordering areas of Akhaura has started to relax gradually.

About 90 percent of the villagers who fled home following the encounter between BDR and BSF about 400 yards inside Bangladesh last Saturday leaving a Bangladeshi child and a BSF officer killed have returned to their houses.

According to BDR sources, the Bangladeshi border guards are kept on high alert along the 5-km border at

People have started travelling through Akhaura Land Port but export-import is yet to begin, says BDR 7 battalion commander Lt Col Sayed Quamruzzaman.

If trade through Akhaura Land Port remains snapped until next Friday, Bangladesh would loss about Tk 60 lakh in foreign currency, reckons a customs official at the port.

Earlier on Monday, BDR jawans recovered a rifle, 18 bullets and a radio set left behind by the intruding BSF men. In a flag meeting the same evening BDR handed those over to

Our Satkhira correspondent reports: A tense situation is prevailing at Sultanpur- Chanduria border in Kalaroa upazila as BSF has continued threatening with dire consequences to the people of bordering villages after a Bangladeshi allegedly

stolen in a cow from India on April 16. People of the area were virtually besieged by BSF troops over the incident. Apprehending sudden BSF attack farmers dare not go to their

on February 1 and declared emer-

Deuba's personal assistant said

"The commission is looking into

the sacked premier had refused to

receive a summons letter from the

the charges that Deuba in his

capacity as the prime minister had

committed irregularities by award-

ing the Melamchi subsidiary (water)

project to a private construction

company," commission spokesman

Sharma and Lama Construction

Company was awarded the contract

for 960 million rupees (13.6 million

dollars) even though a South

Korean firm was ready to undertake

the job of constructing a subway and

explain why some 4.1 million rupees

FROM PAGE 16 charge US\$1,150 as return fare for

each ticket, which he claimed as

"very competitive" and "reasonable"

the Chittagong-Chiangmai-

Bangkok route will continue to

operate offering more attractive

packages for the people in

Chittagong-Chiangmai-Bangkok

route will be US\$ 162 only that

would cover hotel accommodation.

complimentary breakfast and

transportation between airport and

hotel," said sales promotion officer

"The package tariff for

Chittagong, he said.

Sheldon S DeCosta.

Meanwhile, the existing flight on

in comparison to other operators.

Thai Airways

The commission wants Deuba to

gency rule.

commission.

Prem Rai Karki said.

tunnel at half the cost.

Anti-graft body

INDIA PROTESTS

Our New Delhi correspondent writes: The external affairs ministry of India yesterday summoned Bangladesh's Acting High Commissioner Masud bin Momen and lodged a strong protest against the killing of BSF AC eewan Kumar

The entire incident appears to be premeditated and pre-planned, Joint Secretary at the ministry Neelam Singh Deo told Momen. adding the repercussions of the incident cannot be ignored, a ministry spokesman said yesterday.

Describing the incident as "unfor-Indian State Minister for Home Affairs Sriprakash Jaiswal expressed the hope that Bangladesh would take action against those responsible for the death of the BSF

"This action of BDR was very unfortunate. We have registered our strong protest and Bangaldesh has also expressed regret for it. We hope they will now take action against the guilty parties," he told reporters in

However, he admitted that the assistant commandant should not have gone alone to an area where he could be attacked.

Jaiswal said increased coordination between the border forces of the two countries was essential to void recurrence of such incidents in the future. "We are working towards TELE-TALK DIPLOMACY

UNB reports: In a major development on diplomatic front, India and Bangladesh yesterday made a serious effort to defuse tensions along the border and maintain friendly relations between the two next-door neighbours.

The tele-talk diplomacy was launched following Saturday's exchange of gunfire between the two border forces on Akhaura frontier.

Diplomatic sources told UNB that State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babor had telephonic talks with his Indian counterpart Sriprakash Jaiswal yesterday after-

The sources said the two ministers discussed the overall border situation and "the urgency of restoring peace and tranquillity on the frontier". Babar could not be reached for comment.

another quick development amid the face-off between their forces, BSF chief SR Mooshahary yesterday made a phone call to BDR chief Maj Gen Jahangir Alam

Choudhury said Mooshahary

SATKHIRA

thanked him for the excellent cordial-

ity and hospitality extended to them

during the border conference in

Dhaka that concluded on the day the

"He rang me up and we exchanged pleasantries," the BDR

Akhaura did not crop up during the conversation, claiming there is no tense situation prevailing along the

He said the BDR-BSF gunfight at

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister M

Morshed Khan had a meeting with

the chiefs of key law-enforcement

agencies at his office reviewing the

border situation. Foreign Affairs

Adviser Reaz Rahman, State

Minister Lutfozzaman Babar, home

secretary and the chiefs of law-

enforcement and intelligence agen-

The home ministry yesterday formed

a four-member committee headed by

Joint Secretary (Police) Anwarul

Karim to investigate the Akhaura

incident and submit a report within

mittee are the deputy commissioner and police super of Brahmanbaria

and a Lt Col of BDR, said a home

already got down to conducting the

inquiry.

At least three Bangladeshis

including a girl were killed in a fierce

encounter between BSF and BDR on

entered Fakirmura village of Akhaura

upazila and opened fire on the BDR,

The firefight ensued as BSF men

Akhaura border on April 16.

who had resisted the intruders

2 boys appear

daughters had "bad reputation".

member of the Union Parishad.

house on March 4 this year.

this connection

notice on the plaintiff.

following a land dispute.

FROM PAGE 16

of the RTTR said

children.

shown 30 while that of Swapan 18.

Police recently arrested Abdu

As three-vear-old Halim

appeared at the court on his mother's

lap, Magistrate Ahmed-ullah got

surprised and granted bail immedi-

ately. He also issued a showcause

man, Samir, in Chittagong, filed a

case against 11 members of a family,

including a dead person and four

The plaintiff accused his neigh

bour, Chittaranjan, and his family of

ransacking and looting his house

Later, four policemen were sus-

pended for their negligence of duty in

connections. If this situation contin-

ues BTTB's service will virtually

collapse, a senior BTTB official said.

new telephone connections is going

up fast. Worse still, we cannot attend to

complaints because of the agitation,

telephone numbers a day on an

average from the exchanges capa-

tinue. Time has come to take a

decision on it," a divisional engineer

When contacted, CBA President

Feroz Miah said they would con-

tinue the agitation until the govern-

ble of providing new connections.

he said seeking anonymity.

"The backlog of commissioning of

The BTTB allocates about 40

This situation must not con-

connection with the criminal case

BTTB service

Earlier in February 6 this year, a

Razzak Bhutro and Shah Jamal in

village in Dhunot upazila and settle

somewhere else, as Sumi and her

villagers to give Akkas Tk 2,500 in

compensation so that they could relocate. The villagers then collected

the money and gave it to Bhutro, a

500 from Bhutro and was reluctant to

shift her house. Then Bhutro returned

the remaining money to the villagers.

Being angered by Bhutro's action,

Sumi was learnt to have taken Tk

The Parishad also requested the

The other members of the com-

Sources said the committee

cies were present.

INTO CLASH

ministry official.

Akhaura flare-up took place.

Led reportedly by local leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami, a key component of the ruling Four-Party alliance, Khatme Nabuwat men looted six Ahmadiyya houses in Harinagar area of Shyamnagar at about 9:30pm on Monday, reports our Satkhira correspondent.

The houses that were looted belong to Ahmadiyya leaders Ahmad Ali Mollah, Sheikh Wadood, Ayub Ali, Abu Bakar Siddik, Abu

Daud Morol and Sheikh Mannan. "Before leaving, they threatened that they would not stop until the Ahmadiyyas are driven out of the area." said a witness.

Some 20 IKMNB operatives led by Abdul Alim and Kamrul waylaid schoolteachers Nawsher Ali and Abdus Sadeq and another Ahmadiyya named Arafat at Harinagarbazar and beat them up.

Besides, seven other Ahmadiyyas who got out of their homes for grocers shopping were battered badly. After filling their bags with bricks and blocks of concrete, the bigots forced the seven to return

The local Khatme Nabuwat men are guarding the neighbourhood round the clock so that Ahmadiyyas cannot come out of their houses. said a local source adding that even the injured are not being allowed to seek treatment at hospitals.

"If the situation remains the same, many Ahmadiyyas would starve to death," said the source.

Meantime, police yesterday foiled an IKMNB rally at Haricharan High School. The meeting was called to drum up support for its anti-Ahmadiyya campaign.

Although police were posted at different points in Shyamnagar, the bigots are continuing attacks on the

Meanwhile, the police claim to arrest six bigots for attacking the Ahmadiyyas in Shyamnagar Monday was learnt vesterday to be false. **AHMADIÝYA APPÉAL**

'Save us from the wrath of the fanatics, ensure our freedom of religion," Ahmadiyya Nayeb e Amir Prof Meer Mobashwer Ali pleaded

Machine-readable

FROM PAGE 1

system as guest of honour.

Aftab said Bangladesh should introduce a safe and modern pass-Sumi on April 14 filed a case against 16 villagers, including Bhutro, threeport in view of the changed global year-old boy Halim, son of Munnat situation since refusal to give visa --Ali, and Swapan, 11, son of Bachchu especially a US visa -- is very com-Miah on charges of ransacking her mon nowadays. An AmCham member said he In the case, the age of Halim was

had to switch his business to the United Kingdom mainly due to the stringent UŠ visa rules. Citing an example, he said, "One

of my junior colleagues could not attend a training programme on time as the US embassy took a long time to issue visa. When he got the visa, the training programme was over." Gourlay admitted that the situa-

tion has changed since the September 11 incident and now it takes longer to get a US visa. The reason is that the visa section checks different information about the applicants with the US law Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), she explained.

She advised them to apply for a US visa as early as possible. In case of an emergency, the applicant needs to convince the consular section why he or she requires the visa urgently.

Over an AmCham member's concern about the way people are often treated at different US airports, Gourlay said her own experiences also had not been any better. She advised them to report it to the

returned to poor mother "We are not demanding any

favour. As law-abiding and peace

loving citizens of the country, we

have every reason to stand up for

our rights enshrined in the constitu-

tion," Prof Mobashwer said at a

The bigots attacked Ahmadiyyas

press conference at Ahmadiyya

right before the eyes of magistrate,

police, Rab (Rapid Action Battalion)

and Bangladesh Rifles. They went

on a looting spree in Shyamnagar

but the law enforcers did not try to

supposed to stop the bigots, they

hung the signboard at our complex

Nayeb e Amir of Ahmadiyya also

for them (IKNMB)," Mobashwer said.

said. "When the world community is

expressing concern at the rise of

religious extremism in Bangladesh

the ruling parties are claiming to

against Fundamentalism and

Communalism and Ekatturer

Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee

yesterday condemned the attack on

Ahmadiyyas in Satkhira. The

organisations also expressed

concern over renewed threats on

society leaders asked the govern-

ment to immediately arrest the

culprits of Sunday's attack.

Hunt on for

will turn 65 on April 30.

FROM PAGE 1

A statement signed by 48 civil

"Several senior ministers have

a source about the cabinet decision.

policymakers are still pushing for

the extension as they think appoint-

ing a new BB governor will be risky

for the government, tenure of which

Fakhruddin's performance as the

BB governor had been commend-

able. "From introducing the floating

exchange rate to maintaining a

healthy foreign exchange market

he played a strong role," said an

official explaining why the ministry

posal had also sought similar exten-

sion of the retirement age of the

chairman, Securities and Exchange

Commission (SEC) from 65 years to

considering several retired bureau-

crats including ex-planning secre-

tary Fazlur Rahman to appoint as

president and general secretary

group yesterday brought out pro-cession on the campus and

demanded punishment of their

rivals, JCD activists from Banga-

In the Monday evening meeting

bandhu Sheikh Muiib (BSM) Hall.

that was held without any represen

tatives of the JCD activists of BSM

hall. JCD leaders asked the univer-

sity authorities to arrest some JCL

students of BSM hall have remained

confined to their dormitory as rival

armed cadres were searching for

students of the hall throughout the

campus and threatened to kill if any

student, 15 to 20 JCD men started

beating me with hockey sticks and

rods behind auditorium," said

Saeedur, a student of the hall,

adding, "We could not even attend

"Knowing that I am a BSM hall

of them is found outside the hall.

Meanwhile, about 800 resident

activists from BSM hall.

classes today.

JU campus

BB governor.

FROM PAGE 16

Sources said the government is

67 years. This was also rejected.

The finance ministry in its pro-

sought to extend his tenure.

Finance ministry sources said

is nearing an end, sources said.

However, a number of

South Asian People's Union

have a religious harmony."

"Whereas the law enforcers are

. headquarters in Dhaka.

stop them, he said.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Sold baby

The poverty-stricken mother who sold her 29-day old baby on April 17, got it back yesterday.

Moina, 28, whose husband died in a road accident nearly six months before the baby's birth, sold it to one Mofizul for Tk 800 as she could not afford to feed it.

Learning about the news from newspaper, Kushkhali Union Parishad (UP) Chairman Abdul Gaffar called Mofizul, the baby and the mother to the UP office where Mofizul returned the baby to its mother under pressure

CHHATAK BLAST

Petition filed against ex-AL MP's bail

The government yesterday filed a petition with the Supreme Court (SC), seeking stay on Monday's High Court (HC) order that had granted bail to the jailed former Awami League lawmaker, Mohibur Rahman Manik, in connection with the 1999 Chhatak explosion case.

The application is likely to come up for hearing today, attorney general office sources said

A HC division bench comprising justices AK Badrul Huq and M expressed reservations about Fazlur Rahman, despite attorney's extending the retirement age," said objection, had granted bail to Mank who was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for the incident

The explosion took place at the residence of Manik in Chhatak of Sunamganj district on March 15, 1999 that left two people killed.

The Speedy Trial Tribunal Sylhet, convicted Manik and others under Explosive Substance Act and sentenced each of them to 10 years rigorous imprisonment on October 9 last year. Advocate Subrata Chowdhury

appeared for Manik while Deputy Attorney General Golam Kibria stood for the government

Job of finance secy extended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday extended the service period of Secretary of the Finance Division Zakir Ahmed Khan, who has already been named the next alternate executive director of the World Bank in Washington DC, for two years and eight months. The extension was given much

ahead of November 30 this year, the expiry of his current contract ser-

According to sources, the government has also extended the service of incumbent alternate Executive Director of the World Bank Akbar Ali Khan for three months till July 31.

The service of former cabinet secretary Akbar Ali Khan was extended, as the government wants Zakir Ahmed to stay in the country till the upcoming national budget.

"The government is not confident enough to appoint a new secretary in the finance ministry, who will prepare the budget and thus decided to keep Zakir Ahmed until the budget session. He is a very efficient bureaucrat and has greatly contributed to the nation as a finance secretary," said a high official at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

A number of officials highly appreciated the government decision to place Zakir Ahmed Khan at the World Bank. They consider him as the "most suitable person" for this vital post.

During his long career in civil administration, Khan held many

vital posts, including the chairman of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) and achieved acclamation for his efficiency.

Rescue wind-up FROM PAGE 1

Relatives of the victims, however

refused to go home. "How could I leave for home while I still do not know my son's whereabouts, even though the operation is over," said a helpless Chand Mian, standing in front of the removed debris. "How can I explain how a mother

feels after not receiving her child's dead body, when she knows her child was working here before the collapse," said a sobbing Maleka, the mother of Robin, who has been waiting here for four days. Another relativé, Monsur,

expressed disbelief that the bodies of his cousin and uncle, Iman Hossain and Anwar Hossain respectively, both working the night of the collapse, remained untraced.

"My uncle and cousin have remained missing until now. I can not understand what I can do now and what I can say to my aunty, as I am returning home without them either alive or dead." said Monsur.

According to the final list of the army control room, the total of reported missing stands at 254 while the rescuers rescued 84 alive and retrieved 73 dead bodies.

Nizam Ahmad suggested that waiting relatives contact the thana as unidentified dead bodies were buried there. "They might not have identified the decomposed dead bodies of their near and dear ones," he said.

Savar search wrapped

"There were some repetitions of names as several relatives of the same victim used different names on the missing list, increasing the total," said Nizam. "Even many relatives did not inform us that their missing relatives returned home."

"The Savar Police Station counted every body while handing them over to their relatives, and according to them, the figure was 59 and we heard one more died at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital and another in Gazipur." he added.

Army chief Hasan Mashud Chowdhury and General Officer Commanding of Savar Cantonment Aminul Karim Chowdhury visited the site vesterday to inspect the rescue operation. Police were deployed around the scene yesterday to look after the factory and its recovered

The Army, Fire Brigade and Civil Defence and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) launched rescue works immediately after the building crumbled 'like a house of cards'.

Until the third day of the rescue efforts, 85 people were pulled out alive from the ruins and it was initially believed that scores of bodies would be retrieved on the last day of the operations. But bodies were pulled out from the heap of rubble for the last time on Sunday and those were too mutilated to be identified. Some 1,500 rescuers from the

army and fire service completed the rescue operation. Medical teams from Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Gonoshasthya, the Savar Health Surgeon's Office, the Savar and Dhamrai health complexes, and the district administration provided first aid during the operation. The BGMEA and the deputy commissioner of Dhaka gave Tk 4,000 and Tk 2,000 to the families of the dead.

Nazrul Islam, the office-in-charge (OC) of Savar Police Station, filed a case against Mohammed Shariar and Abul Hashem, the owners of the collapsed garment factory on April 11. The next day, the case was transferred to the Detective Branch of

Khorshed Alam, the investigating officer of the case, informed The Daily Star that a lower court magistrate on April 17 issued an warrant for the arrest of Shariar by the Gulshan Police Station, as he has gone into hiding since the incident. Savar police took over the site

immediately after the rescuers wound up their operations vesterday "We will seal the place and guard

the site until further direction. We have been seeking a magistrate who will make a list of the equipment and garments and other things remaining there." said Nazrul Islam.

"People came and told us about lapse but when they found them they

figure of missing people rose so much. But we had the entire site checked by sniffer dogs and found no more bodies," Brigadier Genera Nizam said.

The deadliest building collapse in the country's accident-prone garment industry took place at Palashbari in Savar on April 12 due to the factory's faulty construction on filled-in low-lands, trapping nearly 200 workers who were doing the

Police drove the crowd of relatives away from the site, telling them that the rescue operation was over and that there was no chance of retrieving more bodies. But relatives of at least five missing persons were still standing near the scene with blood-shot, swollen eyes, hoping against hope that the bodies of the near and dear ones would be found.

Asma Begum was waiting there rith a photograph of her son-in-law Abdul Kadir and asking around whether anyone had seen him. A few feet from Asma, Maleka Begum and Chan Mia. parents of Rubel, were not willing to speak to anybody but were pacing to and fro, as they did not find

Rezaul, nephew of Lovelu, Farukh, son of Anawar Hossain, and Rabin, son of Uzir Ali, were still missing. Relatives of Anwar Hossain and Iman Hossain also found no trace of

"We have handed over six unclaimed bodies to the Anjuman Mofidul Islam. Those may be relatives of them." said the Savar police

The inquiry team of Rajuk, composed of teachers from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), yesterday visited the snot to investigate the reason for the collapse. Md Nasir Uddin, member, planning of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) told The Daily Star at the site that none of the owners met Raiuk officials with papers on the building approval although authorities had asked them to do so

The building was overweight by at least 72 tons," said one of the members of the inquiry team, requesting anonymity.

'The design of households and industry should be different. [The owners] should have conducted a soil test before putting up the structure," said DrAFM Saiful Amin, a Buet teacher who has been working with the expert team.

Babul Hossain, who has been working with the Spectrum Sweaters Ltd. since it was built one and a half years ago, told The Daily Star that the factory building used to vibrate when machines were on. He believed the heavy machinery installed on each floor of the building could have made the building collapse by their sheer

Savar building

in Tongi have been approving plans civil constructions in its jurisdiction,

authorities submitted an application for permission to construct a fourstorey building in 2003 to the Cantonment Board, not Rajuk, according to Cantonment Board sources

designs for the proposed four-

existing law, said that after the approval of the designs, the owners are required to take back six copies of the design for the engineers.

architects and others to use during the construction. "But Spectrum authorities never

showed up for the copies and we have no idea how they constructed such a building without consulting the designs," said a source from the Savar cantonment.

When the building was being constructed, there was no monitoring or inspection by the cantonment authorities, which were apparently unaware of the rapid construction of the building.

It was remains uncertain how the construction continued in proximity to the Savar cantonment without detection by the authorities.

Some sources have said the owner of the ill-fated building is so influential that "he hardly cared" for any sort of "official or technical procedure" involved in the construction of the nine-storey building.

Although sources in the Cantonment Board said they would soon decide what action to take against the offenders, the Detective Branch, which is investigating the case, has yet to nab the alleged

rather than at each other".

emerge as huge winners."

as a chance to watch a one-day international between India and Pakistan. But it turned into a fullblown effort to advance a 14-month peace process and end the row over divided Kashmir.

Along with praising the desirability of an end to the Kashmir dispute, newspapers said the economic spinoffs from the peace process could be

established Joint Business Council and India's demand for Islamabad to grant it most favoured nation status is to increase bilateral trade tenfold from half a billion dollars now to five billion dollars by 2006, the Hindu newspaper said.

"Given the track record, this may seem a little too ambitious but if the two governments are serious enough in their endeavour, the target should editorial.

collapsed in acrimony over Kashmir and was followed a year later by a

near-war between the nations. Pakistani daily The News said that from the brink of conflict India and Pakistan had "come a very long way to creating a peaceful atmosphere

two countries come up with some institutional arrangements to ensure that the talk of 'irreversible peace'

> added. The nations' joint statement "shows just how far down the road the two countries have travelled" and highlights "a more collaborative spirit that has now begun to suffuse the India-Pakistan diplomatic discourse.

"It's the need of the hour that the

the Indian turf." added the Asian Age. Pakistan's Dawn, however, sounded a note of caution about the peace process, saying there was "no

room for complacency' "The challenges ahead are powerful. There are fanatics and chauvinists on both sides and it will take courage and statesmanship on the

Peace would ultimately depend on trade, economic and people-topeople ties rather than a sweeping settlement of the Kashmir dispute the Daily Times said in Pakistan.

has expressed optimism. We agree with that assessment.

(AFP, PTI)

'Criminal' killed

Golam Ahmed Babul, the owner of the land. Jahangir was caught while fleeing from the scene. When

the Kafrul Police Station. Anu. Tai. Mintu and others - at various places in Mirpur on Monday. Three teams of Kafrul police, following his statement, reached near the lake at 12:30am, said Jane Alam,

right leg, Jane Alam said, adding the police returned fire in defence.

shootout." Jane Alam said. Jahangir's mates fled the scene

in the dark, after which police recovered a local-made pistol, five bullets, two shells and a mobile phone from the spot.

ward commissioners.

leaders during the Hindu festival of Dashain last October. So far the commission has served notice to 21 people it claims received the government money to

was allegedly siphoned from the

Prime Minister's Relief Fund to

private individuals and political

pay for personal and political party Six former ministers in the sacked government have already

has powers equivalent to a court of law, on charges of embezzlement. They have been freed on bail and are due to appear before the com-

appeared before the panel, which

mission again on March 31 Gyanendra dismissed the Deuba government for what he said was its failure to deal with a Maoist insurgency and to hold general elections

in the Himalayan kingdom. More than 11,000 people have died since the rebels launched their insurgency in 1996 to overthrow the monarchy and establish a commu-

FROM PAGE 16

Two mayoral candidates, lqbal Bin Yeakub of Islami Oikya Jote (Amini) and Moulana Abul Hashem Zehadi of Jagrata Muslim Ummah Oikya Parishad, 79 out of 387 candidates for ward commissioner and three out of 86 candidates for the reserved seats for women withdrew

of Ibrahimpur, in a bid to extort

quizzed in police custody, Jahangir disclosed his plan to meet his mates near a lake in the Bhasantek area of Police then went on a hunt with Jahangir to nab his accomplices -

Officer-in-Charge of the Kafrul Police Station. Jahangir's mates opened fire on the police teams, injuring police constable Mashiur Rahman in the

"Jahangir tried to flee when he found Mashiur injured but received bullets in the head and chest, shot by his accomplices during the

Injured Jahangir and Constable Mashiur were rushed to the Dhaka

Medical College and Hospital where doctors declared Jahangir dead Mashiur was shifted to Rajarbagh Police Lines Hospital. Jahangir's body was sent to the DMCH morque.

Maksuda Akhtar Chobi, wife of Jahangir and the mother of a threeyear old, said the police 'deliberately' killed him.

Éarlier the police had taken Jahangir to his Mirpur section 14 residence at around 4:30pm to confirm his identity. Maksuda said. "As I did not disclose his real name." the police picked me up along with my brother Mizanur Rahman and my daughter," she told The Daily Star vesterday at the DMCH

Police held Maksuda and her daughter in custody for the night and released them in the morning.

Meanwhile, police rescued an unidentified youth, aged around 15, clad in a white vest and black trousers, from a road in front of the Motijheel Ideal Government Primary School at 1:15am yesterday.
Doctors at the DMCH declared

him dead. The youth was unconscious when police recovered him. His mouth and body were tied with tape and he had marks of bruises on his neck and right ear, said a police report.

among 308 candidates for the posts of 41ward commissioner and 12 symbols among 83 candidates for the 14 reserved seats of woman

EC allots symbols

ment meets their demand. Meanwhile, the rush for Teletalk their candidature on April 18. mobile service is increasing despite an uncertainty over it due to a writ petition filed with the High Court (HC). Many people, who collected subscription forms of Teletalk over a fortnight ago, are now facing prob-

> identification module) card because of continued rush for it A section of brokers are now taking advantage of this situation to make quick money. They charge between Tk 500 and Tk 1,000 in addition to the SIM card price of Tk

lems in getting SIM (subscriber

1,800 for quick collection of it, instead of standing in long gueues. Teletalk launched its commercial operation on March 31 and sold over 9,000 connections so far. It suspended distribution of subscription form on April 2 due to its incapability to handle the huge rush for it.

Govt mulls fresh

FROM PAGE 1 Representative Christine I Wallich recently wrote a letter to the finance minister reminding him about the fuel price hike Both the finance minister and the

energy minister refrained from commenting on the issue, in reply to media quieries. The finance minister, however, said his ministry will ask all minis-

tries to convert government vehicles into CNG to reduce the consumption of imported fuel. The finance ministry will provide funds for the conversion, the minister added.

Costly production \$11 million for 290-300 mmcfd of gas field. It means per unit cost of from these two fields. This has greatly reduced pressure on the

Petrobangla has paid back nearly all the investment costs of Sangu and Jalalabad fields where British oil company Cairn and US company Unocal have invested over \$400 "Cost recovery payment has the highest priority under the PSCs. When Sangu and Jalalabad started

Sources mentioned that

foreign exchange reserve.

recovery. The rest was then split with 55 percent share for Petrobangla," said a Petrobangla official.

As per the gas pricing formula under the PSCs, gas from Sangu and Jalalabad fields produced by Cairn and Unocal (now Chevron-Texaco) costs Petrobangla \$2.9 per thousand cubic feet (mcf).

Jalalabad gas field that began operation in 1999 under a PSC with Unocal initially produced 80 mmcfd of gas. The monthly payment bill for Petrobangla stood at around \$ 4 million, which included cost recoverv payment plus Unocal's 45 percent share of the profit gas.

paid up to \$175 million of this investment. Unocal's share in the gas has now gone down to 22.5 percent. It however gets another 10 percent share for continuing the operation. In total, Petrobangla now gets 65

million to develop this field. production, 55 percent of the gas

"With most of the cost recovery payment made. Petrobandla now gets most of the gas from these elds for free," he added

went to Cairn and Unocal as cost

Combining Petrobangla's share of free gas, the cost would stand at around \$ 2.2 per unit. The government sold it at \$1.2 in the domestic market and thus had to incur loss. But now the table has turned.

Unocal spent about \$192 million to develop and operate this field. Over the years, Petrobangla has

Jalalabad gas is now 98 cents for the nation. Petrobangla now takes 180 mmcfd of gas from this field with the monthly bill for it standing around \$4

Similarly, the off-shore Sangu field that monthly charged Petrobangla around \$15 million to \$17 million is now taking about \$7 million. Cairn has spent about \$220 During its peak performance about three years ago, Sangu produced up to 160 mmcfd as

against 130 mmcfd now. As it is an

off-shore field. Petrobangla has

lesser share. It now gets half of the

gas for free, making Sangu's per unit cost around \$1.45 Jalalabad field has a proven reserve of 1.6 trillion cubic feet (tcf) and Sangu about 800 billion cubic

feet (bcf) "Ġas being produced from the newly operating Moulavibazar field (of Unocal) is by far the cheapest under the PSCs because in this deal, Petrobangla gets 75 percent share of the profit gas from the beginning," a Petrobangla official pointed out. Investing \$49 million, Unocal

started operation of the field last

"Gas from Bibiyana field (ex-

pected to be supplied in 2007) will also be relatively cheap as Petrobangla holds 60 percent profit share," the official said. Unocal has committed an investment of \$230 million to develop the

"We are lucky that the PSC gas pricing formula has a ceiling for gas produced by the oil companies. The price of gas is tagged with international price. If there was no ceiling. we would have ended up paying up to \$4.5 per unit of gas," he noted.

Board in Savar and the Municipality for buildings and this has not changed despite the fact that the

Alam said. For this reason, the Spectrum

Having inspected the site and the land documents, army engineers agreed in principal that permission could be given to construct a fourstorey building. The Spectrum authorities then submitted a fee of Tk 5 for every square foot of floor space to obtain a "Technical Clearance". The owners also submitted seven copies of construction

storev building. An official source, quoting the

Indo-Pak media hail

Musharraf's visit was initially billed

The objective of the soon-to-be

be well within reach," it said in an The newspapers contrasted the visit's upbeat outcome to Musharraf's last trip four years ago for a summit in the Indian city of Agra with thenpremier Atal Behari Vajpayee. It

where they are talking to each other

does not remain empty rhetoric," it

said India's Hindustan Times. Both leaders have made it clear that they will "not allow terrorists to disrupt the peace process." hitherto largely an issue perceived "as part of

part of the two governments to stick to the peace process," it said.

But it added: "General Musharraf