Army quizzes

about his whereabouts in Dhaka Cantonment until yesterday morning, but then lost his trace. "I talked with him over telephone this morning at around 10:30am. After that I have not been able to reach him until now," Rousan told The Daily Star at 8:00pm.

She said Moin returned to the country from Canada on August 20 on the occasion of his daughter's marriage on September 16.

Rousan expressed surprise at her husband's arrest, saying, "When they [Rab] came to arrest him, saying you are Major Mozaffar, he [Moin] gave them his identity. But they nabbed him ignoring his claim."

The nameplate in front of their Mohammadpur home also bears his name, she said, asking why did then Rab arrested him even after noticing

There was no report that Moin was involved in Zia killing, while Rousan claimed he was not even in Chittagong when Zia was killed.

"Moin, while working as an instructor at the Infantry School of Tactics in Slyhet in 1981, took a onemonth leave and travelled to Dhaka, Barisal and some other districts with his family," she added

Asked about the reason for his deserting the army, Rousan said it was because Moin feared he might fall prey to the then ongoing 'wholesale trials of freedom fighters' in court martial. Moin also sent a resignation letter to his office and left the country for the USA and later shifted to Canada in 1989.

Retired Major General Mohammad Ainuddin, who was then a colonel, and one of the officers defending the accusees in the court martial confirmed to The Daily Star that Moin was not tried in the court martial. "He was not even a charge-sheeted for the mutiny," Ainuddin added

Major Mozaffar Hossain, Friday's target of Rab, is one of the 10 accused in the Zia killing case. Major General Manjoor, the prime accused in the case, was killed in Chittagong Cantonment soon after Zia's assassination. Four other accusees -- Col Delwar Hossain, Lt. Col Shah Mohammad Fazle Hossain, Capt Rafiq and Capt Jamil were awarded capital punishment.

The rest -- Major Rezaul Karim Capt Ilias, Major Dost Mohammad and Manir -- were sacked from the army and awarded imprisonment of different terms, with Major Mozaffar absconding since 1981.

The police after investigations submitted a final report in the Zia killing case in 2001, which the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Chittagong accepted. The court acquitted the rest of the living accusees in the case from the

Since Major Mozaffar had been on the run since the killing, he was not tried at the court martial for mutiny, Ainuddin said.

Thirteen army men were sentenced to death for mutiny by the court martial. Of them 12 were executed. Only Major Abdul Qayyum Khan escaped death as the then chief martial law administrator HM Ershad pardoned him for ambiguous reasons. Sources said Qavvum left the country soon after his release. However, he is now working in a French organisation in

The Bepza move prompted the

BJMC-awarded buyers to go to the

High Court on August 16 and the

court issued a rule nisi, asking the

Talking to The Daily Star yester-

claimed, "We were waiting for the

PMO directive, which we have

received only today. But, now the

parties have to go back to the court

so that the rule issued upon us is

vacated and we can deliver the

meet the second deadline,

November, for getting the AEPZ

site ready, Zakir Hossain said, "We

can still catch up, if we can hand

over the machinery early next

month and if the parties can vacate

Hossain said, "We are in a hurry

When asked why did the

Authority avoided the BJMC-

awarded buyers for permanent

disposal of the machinery, instead

of floating a fresh tender, Hossain

said they did it just to clear the

meeting the second deadline, too.

Leaflets circulated

Khulna city and started combing

operations to nab those involved

in circulation of anonymous leaf-

lets on Thursday midnight, reports

our staff correspondent from

created panic among the city peo-

The sensational incident has

Meanwhile, to get definite infor-

This initiative has been taken to

Our Satkhira correspondent

reports: Police may announce a

bounty of Tk 50,000 for the arrest of

Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh

divisional commander Fakhruddin

Raji, a resident of Patherghata

village in Sadar upazila, who coordi-

nated bomb attacks in Khulna

trate court yesterday awarded an

eight-day remand to Mamunur

Rahman, Alamgir Hossain and

Mahbubur Rahman Liton, who were

arrested on Wednesday for their

suspected involvement in August 17

Dhaka at about 3:30pm yester-

day under escort for being

quizzed at Joint Interrogation

The detainees were sent to

Meanwhile, the Satkhira magis-

division, sources said.

bomb attacks.

Cell in Dhaka.

place immediately.

industrial plots.

FROM PAGE 16

the mill zones within 15 to 45 days.'

On the apprehended failure to

machinery soon."

Adamjee EPZ tangled

process of readying the site.

Upon the buyers' repeated pleas for early delivery of the machinery and spare parts worth over Tk 40 crore and fearing legal backlash from them, BJMC Chairman AFM Solaiman Chowdhury on July 17 sought immediate intervention from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in the matter.

Ten days later PMO Director AHM Ahsan wrote to Bepza Executive Chairman Brigadier General (Retd) M Zakir Hossain. directing him to hand over the machinery to the purchasers immediately. Accordingly, the Bepza gave them notice to receive and remove the machines and vacate the mill premises within the two-

week time from August 16 to 30. But, in practice, they were denied the goods, as the Bepza in the meantime had floated a fresh tender and issued work orders to new parties to shift the machinery from a particular shed of the mills to

The Bepza claimed it had rushed for the second tender to vacate the shed immediately in order to get 29 plots ready by

Bid to douse **DEPZ** fire still on

November for a foreign investor.

JU CORRESPONDENT

Firefighters were trying to douse the smouldering fire by removing burnt materials from the Kung King Textile (BD) Co Ltd factory in Dhaka Export Processing Zone (DEPZ) even late

in the evening vesterday "We hope the work will be over by tonight," Dhaka Fire Brigade and Civil Defence Deputy Director Selim

Newaz Bhuiyan said. Meanwhile, the factory authorities have planned to begin reconstruction work on their own without taking any assistance from insurance companies concerned to avoid

"Now we are trying to rebuild the factory considering our employees' joblessness," said Tapan Kumar Majumder, chief of administration

and import of the factory He speculated that the loss

would be around Tk 200 crore. mation about the city dwellers As the entire plant is burnt down. including their profession, authoriconstruction of the factory building ties have printed forms that will be and installation of equipment will be distributed among residents from required, sources said.

Wednesday. But the factory authorities can not begin the work until the fire is improve law and order situation. completely extinguished. Besides. Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) approvals of Customs Bond Commissioner Khan Sayeed Hasan Commissioner (CBC) and DEPZ authorities are required to remove **SATKHIRA**

the burnt materials and begin the "We got approval from DEPZ authorities and will meet CBC

tomorrow [Sunday] to get their permission," Tapan Kumar Majumder said, adding that the chairman of Kung King International Development, mother organisation of Kung King Textile (BD) Co Ltd from Taiwan gave direction to take immediate steps for the factory's operation.

Meanwhile, the factory employees were seen waiting outside the factory in mild rain at around noon yesterday but the on-duty security guards could not tell them anything about the future plan of the factory.

No probe body was learnt to have been formed to investigate the

Nat'l convention

FROM PAGE 16 climate of impunity', Prof Ajay Roy on 'State terrorism vs rule of law' and Wahidul Haq on 'Bangladesh minorities: intolerance and denial

Advocate Sultana Kamal will present a keynote on 'Repression on woman', Abul Momen on 'Freedom of expression under attack' and Dr Abul Barakat on 'Extremism and fanaticism: response' on the concluding day.

Dr Kamal Hossain, Rashed Khan Menon, Hasanul Haq Inu, Amir Hossain Amu and Abdul Jalil will take part in the concluding session of the convention to be chaired by Awami League leader Zillur Rahman

The convention will end with the 'Dhaka Declaration' to fight against

A video presentation and a photo exhibition on the victims of different terrorist attacks will also be arranged on the sidelines of the

India's river

FROM PAGE 16 in terms of water sharing, land mass loss and rehabilitation and displacement of people around Jhansi.

The link will submerge several areas in both the states including a portion of the Panna National Park in Madhya Pradesh.

Officials, however, said the DPR would give concrete shape to the Ken-Betwa project taking into account in minute details environmental and rehabilitation issues, after which the two states have to agree and funding has to be arranged.

Concerns of Uttar Pradesh regarding environment and rehabilitation and riparian zone near Jhansi will be addressed while preparing the DPR, Indian Water Resources Minister Priyaranjan Dasmunshi said, adding that four more river linking projects were in the pipeline.

Mulayam Singh Yadav said the "historic" MoU with Madhya Pradesh could be a role model for other Indian states to resolve their water-sharing disputes.

Ken-Betwa link was chosen to be Bepza to show cause why its tenthe first link project because these der floating should not declared are shorter rivers and involve fewer states, officials said. Thirty years ago, the then day, the Bepza executive chairman

Congress government first thought of the river inter-linking project. Put on the back burner for long, the BJP-led government headed by Atal Bihari Vaipavee revived the

High imports

project proposal in 2003.

FROM PAGE 16

policy since FY03-04. The banks reduced their interest rates due to the government and BB pressure. while at the same time the credit grew in the private sector.

to get at least 29 industrial plots In FY03-04, disbursement of the ready by November, as a single industrial term loan rose by 68 Hong Kong party wants them all to percent while in the last fiscal it rose set up a textile mill with \$25 million. by 36 percent. At the same time, in The venture will create 10.000 FY03-04, the agriculture credit also increased by 23 percent, while the Apart from Hong Kong, the Adamiee EPZ has also received rise was recorded 21 percent last fiscal. These are actually affecting investment offers from Canada. the import growth. Australia and Japan, he added.

Since March 2004, the letter of credit (LC) opening has surpassed \$1 billion every month. But in comparison to the rise in import, export growth has significantly fallen. In FY03-04 the rise in export was 16 percent while it came down to 13.83 percent in the last fiscal.

AEPZ Project Director Shamsul Haq said as they are getting very However, a BB source said a good responses from foreign large portion of the increased FDI investors to set up industries at the was not in cash from outside but new EPZ, their priority now is to was actually reinvested locally. That vacate the area and prepare the is why, the current account balance is now in deficit after showing sur-But the guarters concerned are plus in the previous two consecutive scentic about their success in vears, he said.

1 billion

FROM PAGE 16 submit its report in 30 days.

But the committee is going to submit its report today after taking two time extensions

The members of the committee include Kazi Shahidur Rahman. senior managing director of Petrobangla, Nuruzzaman, deputy chief of energy ministry, Shahabuddin, Bapex representative and Rudy Stalker of Niko.

2 cops

FROM PAGE 16

to show up at the court.

The punishment of the fugitives will be effective from the day of their arrest or surrender, the court said. The court gave the verdict after the cross-examination of 13 prose-

cution witnesses. The convicts confined Bakul Talukder and Kamrul Hossain to a room at Hotel Shimla at Nawabpur Road in the city on June 29, 1995. They extorted Tk 41.000 and \$2.500 at gunpoint. They also demanded

Tk 70,000 from them. Bakul filed an extortion case with Kotwali Police Station against them on the same day. The investigation officer pressed charges against them on September 23, 1996.

Assistant Public Prosecutor Ali Haider Kiron appeared for the state while Advocates Sheikh Hemayet Uddin defended the accused.

Another Dhaka court on August 24 sentenced Sergeant Julfiker Ali to five years rigorous imprisonment (RI). Julfiker was convicted of robbing a businessman of Tk 14.47 lakh in local and foreign currencies in June this year in Dhaka

36 submit nomination

FROM PAGE 16

to import of duty-free cars," ruling BNP candidate Shahana Rahman Rani told reporters at the EC Secretariat.

Another candidate, Sultana Ahmed, demanded cancellation of the government order. "Why should we be deprived of this privilege when all the lawmakers in this parliament were allowed to import duty-free cars?" she asked in an angry voice.

Selima Rahman, state minister for cultural affairs, filed her nomination, but said she is not very much interested in importing cars

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) on August 22 in an order said all the new MPs will be allowed to import one duty-free car, but the tenure of parliament must be at least two years from the day of their oath.

The current parliament, which began its journey on October 28, 2001, has only 14 months left of its

Some of the candidates, however, are not aware whether it is a government order or party decision. "We are bound to obey it as the party took the decision." Tasmin Rana told reporters after filing nomination, while Helen Zerin Khan said she would protest the order if it is injustice to them.

All the ruling BNP candidates after getting party tickets donated Tk 3 lakh each to the party coffers on Friday as they had promised in black and white. The aspirants to parliament had to spend Tk 30,000 each to appear before the BNP Parliamentary Board seeking party

Meantime, Kazi Hena, who was replaced despite having party ticket told the reporters she relinquished her government service on August

With an attested copy of her resignation letter, she said, "The EC officials told me I can file nomination attaching the photocopy and I must submit the main copy before scru-

"But my party leaders prevented me from filing the nomination," Hena told reporters weeping.

Hena claimed she was confined in a room at the EC Secretariat so she could not submit her nomination

The ruling BNP picked up Zahan Panna instead, who filed her nomination in time.

The returning officer (RO) today scrutinises the nominations, of which the BNP filed 30, Jamaat three, Jatiya Party (Ershad) two, and Bangladesh Jativa Party (Matin) filed one with the support of the Islami Oikya Jote. The last day of withdrawing

candidature is September 1, and the RO is likely to declare the candidates elected uncontested. After declared elected, the women lawmakers will join the

parliament session slated for

September 8. On the nine seats allocated in favour of the main opposition AL. RO Mohammad Zakaria said after publication of official result of the 36 seats, the EC will declare a fresh schedule in 21 workdays.

The election to these nine seats will be open for all political parties,

CMCH conducts

board headed by him to conduct the forensic test beginning at 11:00am

The other three members are assistant professors Dr Muhib Ullah and Dr Anisul Haq and Lecturer Dr Pradip Kumar Chowdhury. The skeleton episode, however,

may take at least another week to

unravel the mystery of its real identity and provide some solace to the shattered family. Hasanuzzaman said they need maximum one week to perform the

forensic test. After the test the skeleton would be sent to Dhaka for DNA testing. He however doubts whether accurate DNA testing is possible in

ation the existing facilities' available Absence of family profiles may create a problem to extract perfect result from the DNA testing, he

Bangladesh, 'taking into consider-

He said, "We've never heard a DNA test has been done in Bangladesh, although some efforts and facilities have recently been made and process is underway in Dhaka to conduct such tests.'

"Moreover, we need some profiles of Jamal such as nail, teeth or hair to match those with the skeleton. If those things are not available. I think we may not get 100 percent perfect result from the DNA test. Hasanuzzaman told The Daily Star.

The Rab on August 24 exhumed the skeleton from a remote forest hill in Fatikchhari upazila following statements of the arrestees in the abduction case

Meantime, Kala Mahbub, one of the accused in the case, may give his confessional statement under section 164 today, sources said. Top Rab officials yesterday held

a meeting with CID Inspector Anwar

Hossain, also investigation officer in the case, at Rab-7 headquarters in Patenga. They also interrogated Kala Mahbub and Shahid Chairman, one

of the prime suspects. At the meeting, the Rab officials emphasised taking Mahbub's confession under section 164 as his three-day remand ended yesterday. The Rab would also try to take the same from Shahid, whose remand ends on Tuesday, the sources

Fake medicine

added

One Tarun Kumar owned the factory, the owner of the house, Moniur Alam, said, The owner, who could not be found, runs the factory on the ground floor and first floor of a five storied building. The court arrested two of the factory workers,

Kalu and Zakir, from the spot. Earlier the court raided Dhaka Food Products and Asraf Food Industries Ltd., also on Tipu Sultan road. Md. Ashrafuzzaman has been running the medicine factory without any permission of the drug directorate, a source present with the mobile court said.

The factory has been producing different products like Tasty Oral Saline, Real Tasty and Tasty Chatni, as well as a brand of glucose powder. All the items were packaged without maintaining safety standards and proper ingredients. The court arrested Delowar Hossain, the manager of the fac-

The court ordered the Sutrapur police station to file a case under the Special Power Act-1974 against the fake drug items produc-

Another two mobile courts raided the Tejgaon and Gulshan areas, filing eight cases and fining TK 152,000 against restaurants, bakeries and other food traders for failing to maintain proper safety

Our Sylhet correspondent adds: The manager of an unauthorized factory was taken into custody and materials worth about TK 7 lakh were seized by a mobile court. The court was denied entry into the same factory yesterday afternoon. The mobile court also fined the factory Tk two lakh and threw 21 barrels of contaminated items down the drain. Moreover, the court fined the manager Tk 21,000. However, the owner managed to escape the scene.

Yesterday afternoon, a mobile court headed by 2 magistrates --Muiibur Rahman and ANM Faizur Rahman and accompanied by BSTI men was barred from entering Preeti Food Products at the city's Lechubagan area. The manager and employees remained inside, locking the main gate to

avoid the mobile court's visit. They told the court that without permission from their owner, it would not be possible to open the gate. On information the local Ward Commissioner, Koyes Lodi, and other leading people reached the factory and managed the magistrate's visit. The factory, with no license or approval from the BSTI or any other authority, had been running its business and marketing a variety of items such as pickles and fruit juices. It had also been using fake BSTI seals. Moreover. contaminated chemicals of different types were also being used. The owner of the factory, Syed Sarwar Reza, managed to escape while the Manager, Mostafizur Rahman, was arrested

Govt mulls FROM PAGE 1

austerity in economic activities to face the on-going economic crisis. He had also informally discussed this with the prime minister but it is the cabinet which will take the final decision, Saifur told the journalists.

The price hike of petroleum in the global market, shrinking foreign exchange reserve, depreciation of taka and sharp rise in import were among the issues that featured at vesterday's meeting. The energy secretary informed the

meeting the BPC had to borrow Tk 7,000 crore -- Tk 5,000 crore from local banks and Tk 2,000 crore from Islamic Development Bank-- a meeting A committee headed by

Mohammad A (Rumi) Ali, deputy governor of the BB, was formed at the meeting to look into if money is being smuggled out of the country through fake LCs. The National Board of Revenue (NBR) and NCB will have their representatives on the commit-Saifur said the committee will

scrutinise LC documents to see if there have been any manipulations in invoicing and if the item for which a particular LC was opened was really brought. "They (committee) will examine if foreign currencies are being smuggled out of the country." The BB governor, finance secre-

at the meeting.

tary, NBR chairman and planning secretary were among those present

2 Dhaka Central Jail inmates die

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two detainees of Dhaka Central Jail died 'from illness' yesterday.

Sultan Uddin, 40, and Yaruddin Sardar, 35, were declared dead after they were taken to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) from the iail. A jail guard took Sultan to the

DMCH at around 5:30am while Yaruddin was taken to the hospital at about 11:00am. Both were suffering from diseases, jail sources said.

DMCH sources said Sultan's body had a bandage for skin disease, but bore no marks of torture. None had come to receive the bodies

Autopsies on the bodies will be performed today.

Court orders arrest of Shamsur Rahman's widow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A Khulna court vesterday ordered arrest of Selina Akhter Lucky, widow of slain journalist Shamsur Rahman

The court gave the order as Lucky, the complainant of journalist Shamsur Rahman murder case. failed to appear before the Khulna Speedy Trial Tribunal for her statement in the trial.

Lucky filed a petition to the judge yesterday requesting him to transfer the case back to a Jessore court for security reasons The judge had asked her earlier

higher court in this regard and submit it on August 21. Lucky failed to com-The trial of the case began yesterday registering the statement of

this month to secure an order from

Hossain Twelve out of 14 accused were present in court. Among them ten are on bail while Pagla Selim and Zahir

August 31 has been set for the

prosecution witness Alamgir

Crackdown

FROM PAGE 1

Badsha are in jail.

to check smuggling and hundi

The meeting was informed that law enforcement agencies conducted 36,000 anti-smuggling drives in six divisions of the country during May, June and July, and arrested 1,472 people besides recovering 551 firearms.

Babar directed the law enforcers

to strengthen intelligence activities

to recover illegal firearms and

explosives and to stop smuggling of those through borders. The meeting decided to set up six more scanning machines, including one at Internal Container Depot (ICD) at Kamalapur in Dhaka and one at Benapole land port while the rest four at the container depot

of Chittagong sea port to run the port activities effectively. It is alleged that the foreign trucks, which enter the Bangladesh territory in the name of carrying goods, are being sold out. Due to this, the government is being deprived of a huge amount of reve-

Two separate committees have been formed to fix the limit of access of the foreign trucks to the Bangladesh territory.

Safta agenda

FROM PAGE 1 The representatives from the customs departments of the member countries are also discussing the rules of origin issue on the sidelines of the COE meetings. There are certain disagreements on the criteria for origin of goods eligible for import under Safta.

However, in the previous meeting of the COE, all members showed flexibility and there is a chance of a consensus during the next meeting, sources said.

Regarding a revenue compensation mechanism, commerce ministry officials said the difference of opinions between the members of LDCs and non-LDCs of Safta is still very wide. There is, however, a possibility that the mechanism could be evolved before the 13th Saarc summit to be held in

Dhaka on November 12-13. The areas of technical assistance for the LDCs of Saarc have been identified and a mechanism to provide this assistance is being deliberated

The Safta agreement, which is due to come into force on January 1, 2006 will reduce the tariffs within the member states through a Trade Liberalisation Programme (TLP) which will be implemented in two phases.

India would reduce tariffs from 0 to 5 percent within seven years (by 2013) and Sri Lanka and the other four LDCs within eight years (by 2016). Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka, however, will complete their TLP for

In the first phase, Pakistan and

the four LDCs -- Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives -- within three years (by 2009). Under the Safta arrangements each member state shall maintain two

sensitive lists, one for the non-LDCs of

Saarc, Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka

and the other for the LDCs of Saarc. The officials said that Safta has generated considerable interest internationally and the key players in the international trade had been monitoring the progress. Various studies have also been conducted to examine the pitfalls, problems and prospects of this regional initiative

US frees 1,000 Iragis from Abu Ghraib

Charter talks go on

REUTERS, Baghdad

The US military said yesterday it had freed 1,000 detainees from Iraq's notorious Abu Ghraib prison at the Baghdad government's request, in the

largest release to date. It was not clear if the decision was linked to a demand by Arab Sunnis opposed to a draft constitution that authorities release Sunni prisoners so they can participate in a referendum on the text and elections later this year

"I know this is a big one, but I can't say if it is related to anything that is going on," said US military spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Steven Boylan.

Whether or not it was part of negotiations on the charter, the release is likely to ease concerns over the estimated 10,000 Iraqi prisoners held in US detention centres in the country.

"This is a good move that we definitely welcome," said Hussein al-Falluii, one of 15 Sunnis on the panel drafting the constitution. The plight of prisoners in the USrun Abu Ghraib, once one of Saddam

Hussein's most feared prisons, has been one the most emotional issues for Iraqis since a US-led invasion toppled the former Iraqi president in A scandal broke in the facility west Baghdad last year when leaked

abusing prisoners and forcing them to simulate sexual acts provoked an international outcry. This major release, the largest to date, marks a significant event in Iraq's progress toward democratic governance and the rule of law." said a US

photographs of US military guards

military statement. US military officials say detainees sent to Abu Ghraib typically spend six months to a year in custody before a decision is made in Iraqi courts on

whether to prosecute them.

have estimated that 80 to 85 percent of those arrested by US forces are eleased without being convicted. Leaders of the Sunni community, the seat of the insurgency, have complained that lengthy detentions without charge, during which prison-

US military lawyers in Baghdad

ers have no access to lawyers or family, are unfair. The military said the released prisoners were not guilty of serious crimes such as bombings, murder

Dhaka sees

FROM PAGE 16 expand and deepen ties with the neighbours in the east.

"I firmly believe that we can draw upon the dynamics and synergies of our relations for the benefit of our two countries and two peoples," she said in her written interview, which the paper published on August 25. In the two-page extensive inter-

view which the paper titled 'Bangla-

desh Looks East', she also said that

the UN is the only global body representing the world community. Khaleda said she was optimistic that her visit to Beijing would provide a wonderful opportunity to exchange views with the Chinese leadership, reinforce the constructive partnership, and further deepen the trust and understanding that mark relations between the two

friendly countries. The prime minister referred to the celebrations of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with China this year. which, she said, had flourished by leaps and bounds over the past

three decades.

"The occasion is being celebrated as China-Bangladesh Friendship Year. During the year, we have had some very important visits at the political level---the visit of Premier Wen to Dhaka and my visit to Beijing. The visits have been undertaken to mark the 30th anniversary celebrations," she said.

Khaleda said the depth of relationship is quite evident in the frequent exchange of high-level visits between the two countries.

"Prime Minister Wen visited Bangladesh in April and I am in China within four months of that visit. In fact, this is my third trip to China since I assumed office in October 2001. This is a testimony to the importance that we both attach to our ties," she said. Sharing her views on Sino-

Bangladeshi relations and international affairs with the Beijing Review, the prime minister described China as "not only a very close friend, but also a very important partner in our national development endeavour.'

"Since the establishment of diplomatic relations three decades ago, ties between our two countries have grown from strength to strength in all spheres."

She said, "Our relationship is based on the solid foundations of a close partnership, which found expression in the comprehensive partnership of cooperation that we entered into during Premier Wen's visit to Bangladesh in April," she

She said the two countries share

common perceptions on peace, stability and development of their peoples and countries. Both have commonality of interests on regional and global issues and work very closely in the UN and other international and regional forums. Bangladesh, she said, believes

in the One-China Policy and supports the peaceful reunification of Taiwan with the mainland.

torture or kidnapping and had renounced violence Shia and Kurdish leaders dominating the government, are hoping to get Sunni leaders on board for the consti-

tution in a bid to neutralize the insur-But negotiations over the charter, described as a blueprint for democracy by Shias and Kurds, and a possi-

ble trigger for civil war by the Sunnis have been deadlocked for weeks. Sunnis are a minority sect which favors a strong central government and are fiercely opposed to federalism, fearing they would be deprived of Irag's vast oil resources near the

Kurdish north and in the Shia south. Falluji said Sunni leaders would review what Shias called a concession on federalism. But he was not optimis-

"I don't think there will be an agreement because we find federalism in principle unacceptable and that has been our position from the start." The fate of former members of

Saddam's Baath party is also a sticking point. Hardline Shia politicians say they should never be allowed back into public life. Sunnis advocate a softer approach, saying not all of them have blood on their hands. "There was a concession on Baathism but we believe this is a

political matter and we should not include it in the constitution at all," said the Sunni Falluji. Sunni leaders said if no major concessions are made, they will mobilize the community to vote "No" in an October referendum on the charter.

raising the possibility of a fierce politi-

cal battle while the insurgency rages.

Under Iraq's interim constitution, if

two thirds of voters in three of Iraq's 18 provinces vote "No." the charter is rejected and parliament dissolved before December elections. Arab Sunnis form a majority in

ree provinces, Anbar, Salaheddin and Nineveh. Iraq's top Shia cleric. Grand Avatollah Ali al-Sistani, urged all Iragis to register to vote in the referendum, a message sure to inspire the majority

Int'l forces eyeing natural resources

behind blasts Says Huda

60 percent Shias.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT The international forces that want to capture the country's natural resources might carry out the countrywide bomb attacks on August 17,

Communications Minister Nazmul

He was addressing the view exchanging meeting on "The Motive of the Simultaneous Bomb Attacks across the Country on August 17: Responsibilities of the Nationalists and Islamic Forces" organised by Swadhinata Forum Kendrio Sangsad at the National Press Club in the capital yesterday.

"The political parties who believe that they will never come to power if the four-party alliance is not broken might also carry out the August 17 attacks," he said. The minister, however, said the political parties should refrain from

making any comment that can hamper proper investigation of the August 7 bombings. "The international forces that want to make false excuse for interfering in the country's internal affairs may be behind the August 17 incident, Jamaat-e-Islami Assistant Secretary

General Mohammad

Kamaruzzaman said.

"The media remained silent when diplomat made an irresponsible comment just after the bomb blasts across the country on August 17, but when we protested it, they started writing against us," he said Those who say about the pres-

ence of 58 militant groups in the country are the real patrons of these groups and know well who are behind the August 17 bomb blasts, he "The bomb blasts across the country on August 17 might not

happen if Bangladesh handed over

Anup Chetia to India," Jubo Dal

General Secretary Moazzem Hossain Alal MP said. He also blasted the opposition leader for "irresponsible" comments

on the August 17 bomb attacks. "Through investigation it may be found that international forces and India are the creators of Jama'atul Mujahideen whom we were not familiar with before August 17," said Mufti Mohammad Wakkas MP, secretary general of Jamiyat-e-Ulama-e-Islam.

Presided over by Swadinata

Forum Kendrio Sangsad President Abu Naser Rahmatullah, the meeting was also addressed by Islami Oikva Jote Chairman (Izhar) Mufti Izharul Islam Chowdhury, Jatiya Party Presidium Member Kazi Firoj Rashid, BNP Joint Secretary General Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish Secretary General Abdur Rab Yousufi, Islami Shasantantra Andolan Joint Secretary General Syed Mosaddek Billah and Islamic Party Secretary General advocate Abdul Mobin.