

anarchistic situation.

extremists

alleged.

political purposes.

the litigants.

said the repeated attacks indicate that a

certain quarter within the government

has strong link with the bombers and the

They said the lawyers hoped that the

government would take effective steps

to root out the patrons of the bombers

after the August 17 serial bomb blasts,

the attacks on courts in Chittagong,

Chandpur and Laxmipur on October 3

failed to fulfil the expectation, they

the terrorists were carrying out the

deadly bomb attacks without any

hindrance since the government has

made the law enforcement agencies

inactive by using them to serve their

They urged the chief justice to take

necessary steps without waiting for the

government measures to ensure the

security of the judges, the lawyers and

Humayun, advocate Rahmat Ali MP,

Former SCBA presidents Abdul Baset

But the government has absolutely

The SCBA leaders also alleged that

and the attack on a judge in Sylhet.

Police arrested two people including a

madrasa student as suspected JMB

cadres in Mathbaria and Barisal in the

Mathbaria police in Pirojpur

The arrestee identified himself as

Police are investigating his real

In Barisal, Kotwali police detained

The arrestee said he is a student of

Mizanur claimed he came to

Another suspected JMB cadre was

ludge's Court premises vesterday.

against the assassination of two

The protesters chanted slogans

against militants and slammed failure

AL leaders to call off the programme.

Jhalakathi police arrested Sultan

Hossain, 38, on Tuesday night for

helping the assassin, Mamun, who

claimed to be a member of the JMB

suicide squad, rent a house in the

ARRESTEES REMANDED

village in Uzirpur upazila, Barisal.

arrested a boarder from Bismillah

Boarding on Tuesday, suspecting his

Sahiahan of Fulihuri in Barguna, but

later said he is Ilias alias Sah Alam of

last two days.

links to the IMB.

Kaliganj in Satkhira.

# PDB ignores review

compliant bidder CMEC, China to conclude a contract. "The negotiations have to be completed within two weeks for issuance of a Letter of Intent," the panel said, adding that the PDB might take another two weeks for final signing of the contract.

But highly placed sources divulged to The Daily Star yesterday that instead of complying with the panel's decision, the PDB is now questioning the very authority of the panel to dictate decisions to the procuring entity, in this case the PDB, and said that the panel can only 'recommend' or 'Advise', and it cannot take any decision.

The PDB, using the services of a prominent lawyer, has taken a stand with the intention of invalidating the panel decision. It is ignoring that Regulation 53 of the Public Procurement Regulations of 2003 clearly states, "The Decision of the Review Panel shall be final and the Procuring Entity shall act upon its findings," the sources mentioned.

Interestingly, in the case of Chandpur Power Project, the PDB violate the tender rules and is using its lawyer to get an adverse opinion against the findings of the Review Panel. Four weeks given by the Review

Panel to the PDB to complete signing of the contract with CMEC expired on November 15 with no step taken by the PDB, and it also paid no heed to CMEC's October 23 written reminder to the PDB chairman for implementing the panel decision.

Industry sources feared that this would greatly harm the fragile power by discouraging others from lodging complaints in future, paying a hefty registration fee of Tk 5 lakh.

In a way it explains the World

Union to give some examples of the law

and order deterioration he had seen he

no instance of attack on any foreign

investor in Bangladesh, but in many

developing countries including India

such incidents did take place. He,

however, admitted that the local inves-

tors have suffered to some extent due to

was the guest of honour of the day's first

session titled 'Implementing the PRSP:

Agenda for the Next Three Years' and

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul

Mannan Bhuiyan of the second session

on 'Social Development, Empowering

the Poor and the Vulnerable'. Health

Minister Khandker Mosharraf Hossain

was the guest of the third session, which

dealt with 'Enhancing Competitiveness

for Promoting Trade, Investment and

In every session a government high

official presented a keynote depicting

the government's position on the

session's theme. The government

representatives repeatedly wanted to

know what assistance is likely to come

from the development partners. In

Private Sector Development'

Education Minister M Osman Farruk

The minister claimed there has been

could make but a vague reply.

breach of law and order.

FROM PAGE 1

### Bank's insistence that the Public Procurement Regulations-2003 have to ensure that defaulting agencies

cannot resort to mischievous means to bypass such a Review Panel's decision, meant to be final and binding on the procuring entities. In his opening remarks during the

three-day PRS Forum, now being held in the city, World Bank Vice President Praful C Patel categorically emphasised following the Public Procurement Regulations in all procurements for power generation. Sources noted that in the worst

case, the PDB would have it retendered since that has become more of a norm for it than exception until its chosen bidder is awarded the contract for a project. In case of Fenchuganj power project, it was retendered more than five times until Harbin was awarded the contract and all other bidders withdrew protesting the PDB's siding with Harbin.

However, the Review Panel in its report has prohibited any re-tender as there is no guarantee that a re-tender would bring down project cost in the wake of rising global prices of oil steel, copper and other raw materials for building the Gas Turbine Plant.

Implementation of the decision of the 1st Review Panel has now become a test case for the government's commitment to play fair and transparent in such international procure-

ment. PDB Chairman ANM Akhtar Hossain could not be reached over phone yesterday as he was attending a prolonged board meeting last night. When contacted, Secretary of the

unwarranted imposition of conditions

by the donors, the WB vice president

told newsmen, "Donors don't impose

conditions. Rather, the government

itself commits to some specific

programmes or reforms and we wait to

an ombudsman can be instituted, the

Anti-Corruption Commission has to be

made effective, a public procurement

law has to be enacted and enforced, and

the oversight bodies has to be strength-

update said. "Integrated value-chain

analyses have now been able to quantify

the extent and costs of corruption or

bribes can raise the cost of knitwea

equipment import by 6 to 10 percent.

"Bribes typically amount to 2 to 5 per-

export goods." For example, it said,

WB ECONOMIC UPDATE

cant barriers to investment.

nditionality.'

ened.

Power Division Nazrul Islam declined to say anything on the issue

## Extortionist FROM PAGE 1

According to Joi's June 26 confession before Metropolitan Magistrate Jahangir Alam, top criminals Subrata Bain, Khondoker Tanvir Islam Joy and Molla Masud, and Mukul, Robin, Rana, Shafiqul Islam, Zahidur Rahman and Jesan alias Monti were involved in the attack.

Acting on Joj's statement, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) arrested Rana in Moituli village of Rupganj, Narayanganj, on November 5.

Rana in his confessional statement said Robin asked him and Shafiq over cell phone to come to one "Iiboner mess" at Bata Goli in Moghbazar 10-12 days before August 21. "I saw Anu, Ioi, Bokul, Lincoln and Zahid at the place," Rana said.

Robin asked the criminals to throw grenades at the AL rally as per the order of Mukul, Rana's confession said

Robin also showed them how to release the pin of a grenade and throw t. "But he strongly forbade us to throw any grenade on the dais," Rana said.

On August 20, Rana met Robin and Zahid near a water tank in front of the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, where Robin pulled out a layout of the area detailing the points of attack and deployment of all the operatives.

"Robin brought out four grenades from a sweetmeat box and handed me, Shafiq and Joj a grenade each and kent one for him. He also gave us Tk 5,000 each," Rana said in the statement.

On August 21, Robin asked the three to wait on the eastern side of the Bangabandhu Avenue at 4:00pm. "He instructed us to mingle with the crowd after receiving phone call from him,' Donors for anti-poverty

Rana said. After doing his part, Rana caught a bus for Rupganj and the next day learnt from the newspapers that many people died in the incident.

According to Rana's statement, Mukul was present at the rally during the attack.

After the attack, Subrata, Joy, see those have been carried out. This Molla Masud, Mukul, Robin and gives rise to the mistaken perception of Zahid sneaked into India and Shafiq met them in Kolkata last August, Rana When asked how corruption can be curbed, Patel said, among other things,

Earlier. Joi Mia also confessed that the Seven Star Group, led by most wanted criminal Subrata Bain, ran the August 21 attack.

## Jalil, Maya

In the economic update presented a FROM PAGE 16 the Forum yesterday, the WB termed with Maya in the chair. They quescorruption, burdensome regulations tioned how the general secretary and law and order breakdown as signifipresides over a meeting when the vice president is present. Quoting various WB surveys, the

They stormed out of the meeting as they failed to make the City Committee Vice President Omar Ali the chairperson of the meeting. The Hanif followers hurled abusive words at Maya in presence of Omar Ali and Sayed Khokan, organisation secretary of the city committee and

# Panicked judges

situation," Jalal Ahmed, chief metropolitan magistrate, Dhaka, said.

He pointed out that the government has not allocated quarters for all his colleagues who have to stay in rented houses at different places of the city.

The judges of the Special Courts for Prevention of Women and Children Repression, who are equivalent to district judges, have no vehicles and are exposed to attack, he said.

The meeting held at the judges conference room at the Dhaka Judge Court was addressed, among others, by Metropolitan Sessions Judge Momin Ullah, District PP Mohsin Miah and Dhaka Bar Association General Secretary Khorshed Alam.

Dhaka Deputy Commissioner Abdul Bari also attended the meeting.

Two senior assistant judges -- Sohel Ahmed and Jagannath Pandey -- of Jhalakathi were killed and a court employee and two pedestrians were injured in a bomb attack by a member of the Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh suicide squad on Monday

### LAWYERS BOYCOTT

As part of their protest against the killing of two judges, the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) will boycott the Supreme Court and all other courts across the country today. The lawyers will wear black badges, hoist black flags and stage demonstrations.

The SCBA leaders yesterday urged all lawyers, irrespective of opinion and party affiliation, to make the programme

Haque Shah Zahirul Alam MA Mannan The SCBA leaders at a press confer-Bashir Ahmed, Sheikh Akhterul Islam, ence said the chief justice is the guardian of the constitution, the judges and the Mainul Islam Chowdhury and Shahidul lawyers. So the lawyers and the judges Islam were present at the press conferexpect that he would play a courageous ence

## Failure to try attackers

militants has reached an alarming level," Babar said, despite all the militant attacks, including the August 17 countrywide serial blasts, attacks on courts in three districts and the recent killing of two judges in Jhalakathi on November 14.

Howells mentioned that Babar assured him of all-out efforts to track the culprits. He also assured of the UK government's cooperation to work with Bangladesh on militant issues.

Democracy is not secured where the judges are attacked, the British minister said

"We're certainly very keen to exchange what information we have," he said, referring to evidences like the fingerprints of bomb makers on bombs or the technology of bomb making.

Misguided people are killing the innocent ones in the name of religion. and those who preach Islam need to be engaged to motivate people against this, he noted

Babar's denial of the strong network and large number of the Islamist militants came in continuation of the government's earlier denials although the countrymen as well as the world community have witnessed countrywide stronghold of the militants.

Bangladesh (JMJB) launched self-

people in Naogaon-Rajshahi-Natore

The intelligence agencies submitreports to the

## Govt warned FROM PAGE 1

in front of his residence in Sylhet on role to uphold the rule of law, the consti-October 18. After analysing residues tution and the judicial system against from the explosions and the unex-

the backdrop of a 'deteriorating and ploded bomb recovered from the scene the experts warned the govern-SCBA President advocate Mahbubey ment about the possibility of suicide Alam and Secretary advocate M bomb attacks in the future. Enavetur Rahim in a written statement

The spate of bomb attacks has made the experts believe that the terrorist outfit responsible for the attacks possesses a stockpile of explosives.

Sources quoted from the report that said, "It is a clear alarm for every one that the terrorists have a plan for suicide bomb attacks.'

"The terrorists can attack at their desired time with desired devastation as it is evident in preparation of the bombs that they possess the expertise." sources quoted from the report that was submitted to the home ministry on October 20.

Among the three bombs used in the attack on Goshwami, two exploded while one was recovered unexploded. The first exploded bomb was aimed at the judge and the second one was used to make way for escape.

After examining the unexploded bomb the experts apprehended that it had been most likely reserved for committing suicide.

They also found that the unexploded bomb did not have a delay Majumder and barrister Shafique mechanism with an electric detona-Ahmed, advocate Yusuf Hossain tor, it was 'most likely a suicide weapon', which the attacker, identi-Khondaker Mahbub Hossain, Sirajul fied as Akhtar Hossain, did not get the opportunity to explode, said the sources.

The report also pointed out that except for electric detonators and power gel (explosive) all other bomb making materials are available on local market.

Detonators used in the Sylhet bomb attack were similar to the ones used in the August 17 countrywide blasts. The type of detonators used in the attacks is usually used for military and industrial (oil exploration, mining etc) purposes and is not available on local market. Experts however could not identify the country of origin of the detonators.

The power gel used in the Sylhet attack was identical to the one used in the bombs that were exploded on court premises in Chittagong, Chandpur and Laxmipur on October 3. The bombs law enforcers recovered from Kishoreganj, Rajshahi, Munshiganj and from the capital's Goran area also carried the same variety of power gel

Experts observed that the country they will be killed of origin of this particular type of power gel is 'most likely India' and is Islam or resign and leave Rajshahi. If used in seismic surveys by mining companies in Bangladesh.

the officer-in-charge of Rajpara Police A highly placed source in a law Station guoted from the letters. enforcement agency said in the wake of the suicide bomb attack in awyers as the news spread. Jhalakathi on November 14 that killed Authorities have mobilised additional two judges, the government has now forces in the court areas. issued a special order to take necessary measures to prevent furthe

# JMB vows to keep

Enayet Kabir in Rajshahi

AC (Land) Ananda Kumar Biswas and UNO Satendra Kumar Sarkar also received the death threats in Bhola vesterday.

PABNA The JMB yesterday sent a 'warning letter' to Sub Judge Karim, threatening to blow him to bits if he does not conduct his court proceedings according to shariah, reports Our Pabna Correspondent

The handwritten letter jointly sent identify. by IMB and outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party's (PBCB) Mizanur Rahman, 18, at a residential Janajuddha faction termed the judges boarding hotel, Galib, yesterday. Islam's enemy'

It reads, "If you do not deliver your Faizul Ulum Dharmadi Madrasa in the verdict according to Islamic shariah, Sadar upazila and hailed from Goria you and your court will be blown up with a remote control bomb.

A black shroud was tagged with the Barisal for some personal purpose and etter sent by the government postal had to book in the hotel as he failed to department.

reach his destination on Tuesday Panicked, the judge informed the matter to the local administration and night. the superintendent of police through Sheikh Zillur Rahman, officer-incharge of Kotwali Police Station, said the district judge. they are interrogating him and investi-

Ignoring the situation, two judges in the district however gave their verdicts yesterday, handing down life picked up on Kurigram District term imprisonment on 11 people in separate cases. KĤULNA

Kurigram police arrested Noor In a separate letter, the JMB threat-Hossain, student of Rangpur Dhap ened Speedy Trial Tribunal Judge Hazipara Madrasa and son of Bashir Samad to terminate him Uddin of North Sarkarpar village in Begumganj, Ulipur upazila.

judges.

district.

gating his claims.

The judge received the handwritten letter on November 9, but did not **HARTALOBSERVED** disclose it. He vesterday informed the Jhalakathi unit Awami League and its matter to the police commissioner in front organisations vesterday the wake of the killings of the judges. enforced a half-day hartal and brought This letter says: "The JMB does not out processions in the town to protest

believe in laws formulated by humans: those who conduct court proceedings by these laws would be killed for the sake of Islam.

Four policemen have been of the government to ensure safety and deployed at the judge's residence and security of the people. four others are on hand for his per-Earlier, the district and police sonal security. administration failed to convince the

Besides, police forces have been deployed for the judges of the Court of District and Sessions Judge and Women and Children Repression Prevention Court. But the judges did not get special gunmen.

RAJSHAHI The Islamist outfit yesterday asked two judges in the district -- Senior Assistant Judge Tarik and Assistant

local police and the administration.

"Join our group and help establish

vou don't, make ready vour shroud,"

Panic gripped the judges and other

The letter sent to Judge Kabir says:

Sadar upazila Magistrate Sultan Ahmed of Jhalakathi yesterday gave Judge Kabir -- to resign if they want to remanded him for seven days. Eleven escape death others arrested on Tuesday were The judges yesterday received the placed on a one-day remand. threat letters by post and informed the

CONDOLENCES Separate condolence and protest Each of the letters asked the recipient to resign in 15 days; otherwise,

meetings were held at the Jhalakathi and Barisal District Judge's Court offices, where the district judges, officials and other staff of the judiciary attended.

Speakers expressed deep concern condemned the killing and demanded special security for other judges. They also demanded compensations for the families of the slain judges.

Meanwhile, Md Fazlul Karim, registrar, and Md Dalil Uddin, deputy registrar, of the Supreme Court. met the families of the slain judges in

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), army

and Criminal Investigation

Department (CID) teams are continu-

ing gathering evidence and clues, but

could not make major headway in the

Police recovered two fake bombs and

four JMB leaflets from the Paikgachha

Superintendent of Police Mainul

Islam and Officer-in-Charge of

Paikgachha Police Station GM Enamul

Hug said the fake bombs were planted

Security measures were beefed up

Experts also are testing a poultry

birds in the province were ordered

vaccinated early this month, said Fu

Jingwu, deputy director of the provin-

cial Animal Health Supervision and

He said the effort covered 320

Also Wednesday, the State

million birds. The province also has

destroyed more than 15 million

Council, which is China's Cabinet,

discussed enacting regulations on

bird flu prevention, epidemic moni-

toring and emergency contingency

plans, state television said.

chickens, ducks and other birds.

Management Bureau.

Upazila Parishad premises yesterday.

BOMB HOAX IN KHULNA

investigation

Muiahideen Bangladesh (JMB), gave interview to newspapers, admitting to their action, the government said Bangla Bhai is the "creation" of the media Meanwhile, the JMB grew larger and equipped itself with a strong network and launched the nearly-simultaneous

bomb attacks in 63 districts on August 17, killing three people.

The government under international pressure then banned the JMB but took no major step to arrest him or

Rahman, chief of Jama'atul

However, determined to establish Islamic rule in the country, in total opposition to democracy and judicial system, in the second phase of their attacks, the militants blasted bombs on courts in Chittagong, Chandpur and

Ôn October 18, a JMB activist hurled bomb on a Sylhet judge and in the recent attack on Monday, a member of the JMB suicide squad killed two judges

in Jhalakathi. Babar, who is now at the helm of the nome ministry, however, refused to be complacent over the situation. "We cannot neglect the matter. The action against militants is a continuous process and we'll have to stick to the

militant cadres.

Laxmipur on October 3, killing two people

response, a delegate of Denmark said Danish parliament has already approved a \$1 billion aid for Bangladesh for the next three years. But, he said, to avail of the aid, Bangladesh has to end all sorts of leakage of development funds.

The donors, on their turns, wanted to know the government's initiatives in those areas. Corruption, law and order situation, infrastructure bottleneck and the government's project implementation capacity were the most frequent topics discussed on the day of the firstever PRS Forum

At the Forum, Gene V George of the USAID presented a joint statement of the Bangladesh Local Consultative Group (LCG). The WB also placed an economic update on recent developments and future perspectives.

According to the LCG statement. "The LCG members would like to highlight the significance of the need to effectively address extremism, to strengthen democratic practices and institutions, overcome political gridlock and to create a favourable environment for investments."

Stressing a clear-cut action plan, the statement said. "If the PRSP is really to shape our day-to-day business, we particularly need to agree on clear steps for the next twelve months, not least so that we have a basis for reviewing collective progress when we reassemble for PIFM [PRSP Implementation Forum Meeting] 2006.'

The LCG also asked the government to take precautions so that the upcoming election campaigning does not hamper PRSP implementation in anyway. The group members also wanted to know whether the PRSP enjoys the support of the opposition political parties.

At the second session, WB VP Patel presented a statement suggesting specific actions to be taken until October 2006 in the areas of millenium development goals, local governance, education, labour markets, social protection and gender. He recommended for the government to increase UP block grants and to introduce transparency in UP budgeting. The donors suggestion was for raising the cash allocation for the UPs from the present Tk 120 crore to Tk 1,000 crore.

Patel's statement also suggested that "by next October, Bangladesh and its development partners seek to work together to... start a systematic program against seasonal and localized poverty (especially Monga)."

Brushing aside the allegation of

cent of import value, and someti much as 10 percent, according to pro-

According to the WB report, all export and potential export products have suffered from the disadvantage implicit in the cost-raising effect of corruption at various stages along the value chain. By systematically reducing the price competitiveness of Bangladeshi exports, corruption has become a heavy tax on society as a

ing both the pace and scope of banking reform, because, it said, at present the high costs of borrowing affect export

## FROM PAGE 16

government organisations at the registration officers.

sioners.

Earlier, election commissioners M Munsef Ali and AK Mohammad Ali gave note of dissent in the four files that came to them for their opinion on recruiting officials for preparing the fresh voter list.

the work.

The CEC has taken the decision of recruiting officials for preparing the fresh voter list on his own, ignoring the opinion of the two election comissioners.

In 2000, Tk 95 crore was spent for preparing the list of 7.48 crore voters. This time, the EC has estimated a budget of Tk 146 crore and already sent it to the finance ministry.

Meanwhile, as the rift between the dential election there.

ducers and exporters," it added.

whole, it concluded. The WB also advocated for increas

competitiveness across all sectors.

## EC high-ups

officers and 83 registration officers. Teachers of different schools and

colleges and employees of different district and upazila levels will be appointed enumerators (information collectors), supervisors and assistant registration officers. Besides, the district election officials will work as

EC secretariat officials gave the indication that the enumerators will begin working across the country in January amid the dispute among the CEC and the two election commis-

The CEC neither initiated any step

to reduce the difference of opinion among themselves, nor did he convene any meeting in the last three and half months to review the progress of

CEC and the two election commissioners is not resolved yet, CEC MA Aziz did not give charge of his office to anyone before leaving for Sri Lanka on November 9 to observe the presi-

son of Hanif.

Abdul Jalil came to the spot and tried to calm them down. Agitated leaders and activists laid a siege around Jalil's car for a while but he managed to leave the scene after other leaders of the party intervened.

## Charmonai Pir FROM PAGE 16

Jamaat leaders and activists by the intelligence and law enforcement agencies

"Using the name of Islam, Jamaat wants to retain power. They are engaged in anti- Islamic activities" he said, adding that if Jamaat was an Islamic party it would not have supported the anti-Islamic political parties. He also criticised the ruling BNP and the main opposition Awami League (AL) for harbouring terrorists.

The BNP-Jamaat led four-party coalition government has no right to remain in power as it completely failed to protect the lives and property of the people of the country.

Al Mokhtar Hossain, Abdul Hadi, Prof Shafiqur Rahman, Syed Nesar uddin, Mostafa Al Mamun and TM Mafiz addressed the meeting, among others, with Maulana Abul Bashar in the chair.

Sylhet bomber

FROM PAGE 16 Akhtar Hossain, another IMB operative, who was caught red handed just after the bomb attack in the evening on October 18, police said. He also claimed that he had never been to Sylhet before. But he admitted that his brother-in-law is from Sarishabari of Jamalpur, the same place where

Akhtar is from. Obayed's arrest however was based on the confessional statement of Akhtar. Akhtar claimed that Obayed gave him the bombs in a lunch box to throw at the judge.

Kotwali police will submit charge sheets soon in the two cases filed in connection with the attack, accusing four persons including Akhtar as the prime accused, said the police official. The other prospective accused are Moulana Saifuddin, Imam of the city's Bhangatikor mosque, Delwar

Hossain and Obayed. Saifuddin is in detention while Delwar is still at large. The judge came under attack in front of his residence at the city's Kumarpara area, as he was returning from office.

process," he said. militant organisations and their activities a few years ago and many were arrested with firearms and explosives in

satisfaction on the steps taken by the government, he said different parts of the country, but the On government steps, Babar said, authorities kept on denying their

"We've taken short-, mid- and longterm policies and the progress is quite After Siddiqul Islam alias Bangla good. Immediate trial of the arrested Bhai and his Jagrata Muslim Janata militants and completing the trial in the shortest possible time is the most styled vigilante operation, killing 27 important. Besides, we are conducting motivation programme." region last year, the government and

British High Commissioner Anway the state minister denied his existence. Choudhury was present at the meeting. Even when Bangla Bhai and Abdur

# 5 killed in Rab, cop

existence.

gunrunners and members of outlawed New Biplobi Communist Party, They were wanted in several criminal cases for murders, abduction and extortion in Batiaghata and Dumuria upazilas.

The Rab also seized one foreignmade revolver with five bullets, one LG, one locally made gun and 12 bullets of .303 rifle from a brick field in Phultala upazila following confessional statement of Kamruzzaman Jamal, 38, president of Khulna district unit Jubo League. He was arrested along with the other two on Tuesday.

The Rab was interrogating Jamal at the Khalishpur Headquarters at 7:30 last night HARTAL

### Meantime, Awami League and its youth wing Jubo League jointly enforced a half-day hartal in city yesterday in protest against the arrests. The traffic was normal in the city, but shops were closed during the hartal hours.

The AL, Jubo League and Bangladesh Chhatra League, AL's student wing, jointly brought out a procession at 11:00am and a rally

Speakers warned the government of severe consequence for using the Rab in extra-judicial killings. They demanded immediate release of the third Jubo League leader FARIDPUR 'CROSSFIRE'

The Rab arrested BNP activist Selim alias Lengra Selim in Shantinagar in the capital on Monday and handed him over to the Rab-8 in Faridpur.

Following his confession, a Rab team took him to Alinagar in the Sadar upazila to seize firearms and came under fire around 3:30am yesterday.

The Rab said Selim tried to escape and died in 'crossfire' during the shootout. The elite force seized two shutter guns, one light gun and 22 bullets.

attacks by suicide bombers. The British minister expressed

## Howells for free FROM PAGE 16

"We want to see Bangladesh as a vibrant country with strong economy and democracy," Howells said. "The democratic process should be an universal one in Bangladesh."

Asked about the matters discussed with Hasina, he said that they had discussion on how Bangladesh can progress economically and politically.

"I understand from Sheikh Hasina that they would be competing in the next election, which is a very good news for us. The election should be conducted fairly and there has to be security for everybody taking part in it," he said.

"There is no room for anybody to be threatened. They must be allowed to compete in the election freely and safely," the UK minister said. He stressed that all the political candidates are protected properly in the election.

The Awami League chief's Political Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury told the newsmen that they had conveyed to the British minister that without electoral reforms, it is impossible to hold free and neutral election in Bangladesh.

"The objective of the reform is not to provide facilities for one political party. It is the expectation of the countrymen," he said, adding that those who are the friends of Bangladesh want electoral reforms to ensure accountability and good governance.

During the meeting with the British minister, they also expressed concern over the killing of judges, journalists and members of the parliament, Saber said. A quarter inside the government has been harbouring the criminals, he added.

British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury, Head of the South Asia Group Anthoney Stokes, and the law enforcers retaliated with AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil Kazi Jafarullah MP and former Shahjahan was seriously injured ambassador Ziauddin, among during the shootout and was admitted others, were present at the meeting.

*Ne* are warning you leaders of the suicide squad of Bangla Barisal as representatives of Chief Bhai and JMB. We want Islamic rule in Justice JR Mudassir. the country. MANHUNT

"We are alerting you to leave the anti-Islamic occupation and return safely to your home in Bogra. If you don't, we will kill you at your home.' BHOLA

Anonymous callers yesterday threatened UNO Sarkar and AC Biswas in Bhola with death and blowing up their offices, writes Our Barisal Correspondent.

A person called AC Biswas at 10:49am, threatening to blow up his office by November 25. A similar caller gave the same message to UNO Sarkar at 10:53am.

to create panic. The officials held separate meetings at their offices and discussed at all key prints in the upazila following measures to ensure their security. ARRESTS MADE the incident.

# China confirms 3

### FROM PAGE 16

recovered.

with sick birds," he said. "She died in say might be spreading the virus. a hospital. She was therefore tested The fatalities were a 12-year-old adequately."

girl in Hunan and a 24-year-old China has reported 11 outbreaks female poultry worker in Anhui, said in chickens and ducks over the past Roy Wadia, a WHO spokesman in month nationwide, prompting Beijing. The third case was the girl's 9authorities to destroy millions of vear-old brother, who fell ill but birds in an effort to contain the virus. The government also announced an China initially said the girl, her ambitious effort Tuesday to vaccinate

brother and a schoolteacher who fell all the country's more than 14 billion ill at the same time were negative for farm birds. the virulent H5N1 strain of bird flu. But the government later reopened worker who fell ill in the northeastern the investigation and asked WHO for province of Liaoning, which has help suffered four outbreaks. All farm

Agency experts traveled to Hunan this week.

Wadia said China recorded the girl as a bird flu death, but WHO could not reach a conclusion because her body was cremated. He said Chinese investigators based their decision on the girl's shared background with her brother and the circumstances of her illness. There was no official word on the teacher's status.

The government had not previously disclosed there were any suspected human cases in Anhui, where an Oct. 20 outbreak in the city of Fiancheng killed about 550 birds

The council also said it would offer Wadia said the poultry worker did tax breaks and subsidies to help not live near the site of that outbreak. counter the effects of bird flu out-"She apparently had close contact breaks

Faridpur police said Selim was accused in seven cases including two

for murders KUSHITA 'CROSSFIRE' Police arrested Outlawed Gono Mukti Fouz (GMF) leader Mogreb Ali, 32, at

his house in Gopogram village in Khoksha upazila on Friday. Khoksha police took him on an operation to seize firearms when GMF

operatives opened fire on the law enforcers near the sluice gate around

in 'crossfire' while fleeing the scene. He was the GMF second-in-command and an accused in seven criminal

4:00am vesterday. The police said Mogreb was killed

COX'S BAZAR Robber Abul Kalam alias Kalaimya was

killed in 'crossfire' and his accomplice Shahjahan seriously injured yester day, Reports BDNEWS from Cox's

Bazar Police said a band of robbers stopped a microbus and snatched valuables from its passengers on Eidgaon Road in Himchhari around 12noon on Tuesday.

Four hours after the incident police arrested eight robbers -- Kalam Nurul Amin, Shahiahan, Ansarul Karim, Mozammel, Nurul Hag, Ehsan and Danu Mia -- with two country-

made guns, one machete and the looted valuables. After interrogating them, police took Kalam and Shahjahan to a deep forest at Bhaditala in Eidgaon in the

town to seize firearms around 2:30am vesterday. Other robbers hiding in the forest attacked the police around 3:00am

gunshots.

to a local hospital.