JMB menace continues

the district town on September 7. **SIRAJGANJ** 

Our Sirajganj correspondent reports

that the JMB in a letter to Sirajgan

Municipality Executive Engineer Salam

his family members in a short time.

being corrupt and of taking bribes.

security for the panicked officials.

reports BDNEWS

Mia threatened to kill him along with

The sender of the letter introduced

him as a regional commander of the

banned organisation and asked the

engineer not to inform the matter to the

The letter accused the engineer of

Additional police was deployed at

the municipality office to ensure

The same militant outfit threatened to

kill Upazila Magistrate AKM Mamunur

Rashid at Kalapara in Patuakhali

of sensational cases are pending in his

Jhalakathi on November 14, Judge

Anwar Hossain demanded police

Dr Carmen Z Lamagna, vice chan-

cellor of the AIUB said in her keynote

speech that Bangladesh has only 11

nurses per one lakh people, and nurse-

patient ratio is 1: 35 against 1:5 in

In Bangladesh, nurses receive low

salary of Tk 1,975 to 3,920 per month

whereas in developed countries, they

get around Tk 1,34, 000 a month, she

pointed out presenting the keynote

are left vacant due to lack of suitable

candidates and the number of regis-

tered nurses in the country is 18,500. Of

them, 12,689 are employed in public

sector, about 5,000 in private sector and

about 1,000 are working aboard, she

Moderating the roundtable, Editor

of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam said if

the professional bodies collaborate his

naner would be willing to institute

awards such as the 'Best Nurse of the

Year' to recognise services of the nurs-

ing profession in our health care sys-

in the hospital management, he added.

Nurses should be given higher place

Participants at the roundtable

included Peter Roggeramp, manager of

Around 40 percent nursing position

developed countries.

security, news agency UNB reports.

After the killing of two judges in

with grenade attacks. The letter trig-

Addressed to the president and the

secretary of the press club the letter was

sent by post and mentioned that the

sender had received instruction from

his high command also to blow up in

seven days the police stations in North

After receiving the letter Monday

Superintendent of Police (SP) of

Tangail Mirza Abdullah-hel-Baki

visited the press club the same night

and assured the journalists that neces

sary security measures would be taken

In another letter sent to the deputy

commissioner (DC) and to the police

super of Habiganj on Monday night the

JMB threatened to blow up the judge

court and the DC office in the district if

any harm was done to JMB member

Shamim also son of former District

Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh

Maolana Saidur Rahman, reports

the sender's name was not on the letter.

produce adequate number of nursing

personnel and meet global standards.

And the government has no specific

policy and guideline on graduate

Nursing education including four-

year diploma course both in public and

private sectors and two-year BSc

courses in public sector is being greatly

affected due to lack of adequate teach

ing staff, equipment and international

standard curricula, they pointed out.

The government is vet to allow BSc

course in private sector, they men-

The roundtable was organised by

American International University

Bangladesh (AIUB) in collaboration

with The Daily Star, Switzerland-based

public health counselling firm JSI-

advisory firm Katalyst.

Bangladesh and a technology-related

State Minister for Health and Family

Welfare Mizanur Rahman Sinha, who

was the chief guest on the occasion,

said his ministry will take steps to

introduce graduate course in private

sector if it does not harm the existing

colleges in private sector have not

increased in number, Sinha noted.

Unlike private universities, medical

medical education in the sector

tioned.

nursing education, the speakers said.

SP Mili Biswas told BDNEWS that

Shamim was arrested from a com-

Graduate courses

night, journalists of Tangail held an

emergency meeting in the press club

Tangail.

for their safety.

gered panic among local journalists.

## Grand rally vows

Dal (JSD) and National Awami Party (NAP) committed to free the country including all levels of its government and administration of the extreme communal and militant

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil read out the 23-point national programme, which vowed to separate the judiciary from the executive, bring the perpetrators of all bomb and grenade blasts to book, hold direct elections to women's reserved seats in parliament and award independence to state-owned radio and television channels.

The opposition combine also promised wage for workers and introduce an

The common national programme envisages using gas and coal for national interest and ensuring national energy security. It also promises to set up a regulat-

The opposition leaders at the rally ment system and the Election

The government took every measure to turn Dhaka into a city under siege to keep opposition activists and supporters at bay The police and ruling alliance cadres intercepted people heading for the rally at different points in and outside the capital while BNP musclemen chased and assaulted scores of others in presence of law enforcers, despite the government claim of a foolproof security to ensure peaceful holding of the rally.

Besides the countrywide transport strike imposed by the BNP-backed transport leaders obstructing people from coming to the city, the river routes were also blocked and BNP cadres reportedly led by Keraniganj police barred boats and other vessels from plying towards

But, braving the strike, blockages and rally in recent time chaired by Leader of the city almost came to a standstill as people joined the rally in waves of processions

SPEECH OF HASINA

In her speech Hasina asked the government to immediately step down, admitting its failures. She accused the ruling BNP and

The AL chief asked her party workers and supporters to identify and resist the militants in their localities.

She blasted the sporadic attacks launched on her party workers in different places to thwart people from coming to the rally. "The government has used the entire state mechanism to obstruct people from joining the rally, but failed," she said, adding, "People of Bangladesh once again proved that they don't know how to bow down to any dictator.

combine have been arrested. The government also instructed certain transport

accused the government of using Rapid Action Battallion (Rab) to persecute opposition workers.

The AL chief described in detail how the alliance government crippled the economy, made parliament dysfunctional politicised administration, ruined the judiciary, patronised criminals and their godfathers, and amassed ill-gain wealth.

The government has proved its  $in ability to govern the country \dots there is no\\$ security of public life and people don't want such failed rulers to continue any more," Hasina claimed. She said, "Under this damned regime, people are living in perpetual panic."

Minister Khaleda Zia, Hasina said, "Your time is running out... step down right away." The former prime minister accused her arch political rival of harbouring criminals and indulging in nepotism,

She alleged 26,000 people have been killed in the last four years of coalition rule Even children, women, journalists or the indigenous people have not been spared of

"People will not tolerate this anymore... The days are not far when people will resist the hands dealing blows to opposition leaders and workers," she rned amid cheering of opposition workers and supporters carrying banners and festoons and shouting slogans anding resignation of the Khaleda Zia's government.

tration, police, Rab and others not to fall prey to the wrath of people by trying to protect what she termed the failed and orist government.

asked people to be on alert, "Protect your right to vote as the present government is plotting to come back to power through another rigged election." She alleged the ongoing move to prepare a fresh voter list is a part of the ruling coalition's election doctoring scheme aimed at scrapping opposition supporters from the list.

Painting a gloomy picture of law and order, the opposition leader posed a question to the prime minister, "What had your special forces been doing when 500 bombs were exploded across the country simultaneously or when militants were

She categorically accused Khaleda Zia, her son Tarique Rahman, Jamaat Ameer and Industries Minister Matiur Rahman Nizami and State Minister for Home Lutfozzaman Babar of being involved in the bomb attacks. "Bomb blasts will end if the police arrest and interrogate these

Speaking on the price spiral of essen $tials, Hasina\,alleged\,ruling\,alliance\,loyalists$ earn fast money when people suffer due to price hike. She also wondered how the prime minister's family has become one of the richest families of the country over only a few years, especially when it was told that Ziaur Rahman had left nothing behind for

The AL president alleged the family members of Khaleda Zia have amassed huge illegal wealth through corruption and have smuggled that abroad. But, she declared, "Wherever you deposit that money, we will bring it back."

Describing the success of her 1996 2001 government, Hasina said, "We brought peace and prosperity to the country... It achieved food autarky in our

The former prime minister was also critical of the huge expenditures for holding the 13th Saarc Summit and said. "The

bureaucrats disclose the accounts of

their assets. Their accounts will be

monitored in order to ensure that

corruption is rooted out from all spheres

of the state and the society. The Anti

Corruption Commission will be made

effective. Those found guilty of corrup-

tion, and the loan defaulters will be dealt

rice, pulse and oil, will be brought back

within the people's reach. A price

regulating authority will be established.

Rationing system will be introduced for

the poor and the low-income group.

Tariff for utility services will be kept

stable. The famine in the northern

region and food crisis in other parts of

the country will be dealt with. Food

security will be ensured for all. Water

logging, a long-standing problem in the

south-western part of the country, will

be reopened. Pragmatic measures will

industries. A national minimum wage

will be announced for workers, irrespec-

tive of the sector, and an environment

conducive to more local and foreign

initiated for removing poverty. There

will be specific allocation in the national

budget for poverty alleviation. Slum

9. A national programme will be

investment will be ensured.

8. All closed mills and factories will

initiated for protecting garment

7. Prices of essentials, including of

with an iron hand.

also be dealt with.

the name of Saarc Summit when people have been dying from starvation." She claimed, "It wanted to hide the country's dismal situation under an artificial make-

WHAT OTHER LEADERS SAID

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain said people want to see a change in the country's present miserable situation and the opposition parties have united to do

"We have united to bring the sick politics to an end," he said amid huge claps from the audience, adding, "Now is the time to say good by eto this government."

"You have failed to deliver in every sector and you should quit immediately, e told the ruling coalition.

Dr Kamal expressed the hope of forming an active parliament and a pro-people government led by the 14-party line-up.

He said the very presence of hundreds of thousands of people in Paltan Maidan proves that the government could not foil the rally despite using all its machinery. "Holding rally is a democratic and constitutional right of people. But you have obstructed people from gathering at the  $rally, "he said\ accusing\ the\ government.$ 

On the opposition's common minimum programme, Kamal Hossain said, "We have issued this with a view to build a nation in line of the spirit of Liberation War and for the welfare of people.

The eminent jurist also came down heavily on the BNP-led alliance government for its various failures and crimes, including unbridled price hike of essentials, politicisation of the administration corruption in all sectors, sheltering Islamis militants and extra-judicial killings.

Terming the participants of the rally representatives of the country's 14 crore people, Dr Kamal said, "This huge gathering proves that people of Bangladesh can unite against all kinds of repression to realise their just rights."

"Make this unity a force to oust this tyrant government," he urged.

He dedicated the unique programme of the 14-party to Bangabandhu, the four national leaders and the millions of Liberation Warmartyrs.

In his turn, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon announced that the opposition alliance would not allow any election without reform in the caretaker government and the Election Commission.

He alleged the present government has taken all preparations to return to power through another rigged ballot. "But, people are united and this time they will not give you any chance," he told the ruling coali-The left alliance leader pledged to carry

out the common minimum programme spelled out from vesterday's rally if the opposition combine goes to power. Addressing the rally, JSD President

 $Has anul\, Haq\, Inu\, urged\, people\, to\, join\, in\, the$ upcoming all-out opposition movement to force the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition to step

"This autocrat, communal and repressive government has no right to cling to power anymore," he said.

He called on the opposition leaders to turn the present opposition line-up into an electoral alliance to form a national gov-

 $ernment\,through\,the\,next\,election.$ Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed and Suranjit Sengupta of AL, Saifuddin Ahmed Manik of Gono Forum, Nurul Islam of Gonotantri Party, Dilip Barua of Samyabadi Dal and Amena Ahmed of NAP,

### industry and rural service division of A total of 1,305 nurses are produced Katalyst, Dr Ahmed Al Kabir, chief by 39 government Nurse Training Institutes (NTI) and 245 nurses by eight executive JSI Bangladesh and represenprivate NTIs every year, he said,

General Secretary Advocate Khorshed Alam told the court that his client was implicated in the case as part of the conspiracy to harass him falsely. Moreover, his client's name was not mentioned in the first information

The prosecution opposed saying the sensational case is still under investiga-

Following the hearing the court passed the order upon a bond of Tk 50,000 with two guarantors.

Dicon, also the prime suspect in the Indian rice trader Majid Alam murder case, was shown arrested in the August 21 grenade attacks case on September 22 and placed on remand on several occasions. Dicon was shown arrested in the case following the confessional

statement of 'Joj' Mia on June 26. Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in the forwarding report filed before the court said Dicon is a close associate of Tanvir Islam Joy who is wanted in the case. After the attack Dicon stayed at Zahidur Rahman's (another accused) village home of Paikgachha in Khulna. Moreover, the investigation officer (IO) gathered

Saibal Saha Partha, Abdur Rahman

Ayub Ali, Joj Mia, Moklesur Rahman grenade attack case filed by the police on August 22.

were granted bail from the High Court. In the attack, 22 AL leaders and activists were killed and more than 200

## Drive for Aman

procuring two lakh tons of rice and paddy in the coming Aman season. At present, the food ministry has a food stock of about seven and a half lakh

programmes including blockade siege on deputy commissioners' (DC) offices, demonstrations, long marches and sit-in programmes across the country to press home their demands that include reforms in the caretaker government and election commission for a free, fair and neutral election.

They warned of indefinite hartals. blockades and other tougher programmes if the BNP-Jamaat alliance government does not meet their demands and tries to continue their misrules.

They will stage demonstrations in the capital and every district on November 30, demanding reduction of price of essentials, stoppage of toll collection from transportations, launching of rationing system for the poor and middle class people, food and works for the people of mongaaffected northern region and waterlogged south-west areas of the coun-

On December 9 and 22, the opposition alliance will hold rallies in Khulna and Rajshahi divisional headquarters and different upazilas under the divisions.

They will lay siege on the DC offices across the country on December 11 demanding stoppage of the militants' activities, and stern action against ministers, MPs, leaders and officials sheltering the extremists and militants, rooting out of the camps of Jamaat-Shibir and militants, stoppage

of national and international financial support to militants and ban on publicity of their political activities.

The opposition combine will lay siege on the DC offices again on December 27 demanding price reduction and availability of agriculture related materials including electricity, fertiliser, seeds, diesel and kerosene and ensuring fair price of rice and  $other a gricultural \, products.$ 

The combine will hold processions and rallies and stage demonstrations in the districts on January 5 demanding impartial investigations into and punishment of the culprits behind grenade attacks including that on an Awami League rally on 21 August in 2004, countrywide serial blasts on August 17 this year, attack on the British high commissioner, and killings of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria, AL lawmaker Ahsanullah Master, and others including judges and journalists.

They will hold a long march towards the capital on January 22 demanding reforms in the caretaker government and Election Commission, and a free, fair and

The opposition combine will also hold sit-in programmes across the country demanding resignation of the BNP-Jamaat alliance government that they termed as "autocratic, corrupt

## Savar criminal killed in Rab 'shootout'

A listed criminal was killed in a shootou between the members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and his cohorts at Mograkanda village under Savar Police

He was identified as Rubel, 36, son of Obaidul Huq Bhuiyan of Kunda village under the police station. Rab-4 members arrested Rubel at

Amin Bazar on Sunday night and took him to their office for interrogation.

According to his statement, the members of the elite force set out for Mograkanda at about 1:30am vesterday to recover illegal arms, taking Rubel with

When they reached near poultry farm, Rubel's accomplices opened fire, forcing the law enforcers to retaliate.

Meanwhile, Chittagong Rab sources said Rubel was caught in Metropolitan Sessions Judge AKM the crossfire as tried to flee from Rab Anwar Hossain was provided with custody and died on the spot. police security vesterday as a number

## Rally rides

FROM PAGE 1 They had cheers written all over their

faces. Probably excitement too. They squatted in circles, munching peanuts There were musical bands with trumpets and drums, they played earlier in the day, but stopped as the rally began.

Such spontaneity in reaching a rally has not been seen in recent past. It also arguably turned out to be one of the  $largest \, rallies \, in \, recent \, memory.$ 

Nearly one-kilometre area around the Paltan Maidan, including Bijoynagar, Phulbaria, Gulistan and Motijheel, was crowded with the rally goers. Many said the gathering would have been much larger if the police had not caused all the harassment. People started gathering at the

Paltan Maidan early in the morning although the rally was scheduled at 3:00nm, passing their time enjoying the cultural programme arranged by the organisers.

Those, who came from different districts by launch and train, had to walk the way from the Sadarghat launch terminal and Kamalapur Railway Station up to the rally venue as buses and other forms of transport were not available due to the strike.

"We came here early direct from Kamalapur as it would not be possible to reach the venue in the afternoon," said Md Arif, who came to Dhaka by train to Hundreds of plainclothes police

men were patrolling around the Paltan venue. The presence of so many police members, however, discouraged many interested ones to go to the Paltan Maidan area, said some people. "I did not enter the Paltan Maidan as

anything might happen anytime. Even the police may pick up anybody from the street, so I just had a look of the gathering and am now going back home," said Saiful Alam, who came to Paltan from Azimpur.

The police were examining everyone before entering the venue, which made the progress of the gathering slow.

## 5 hurt

FROM PAGE 16

house, Bharoti Khatun of Bairagirchar, Ziaur Rahman and Sarwar Hossain of Sardarpara and Alam of the same village. They had been making the bombs, it was

Police could not arrest any of the injured, as they left the house hurriedly after the incident. The blasts blew up a portion of the roof of the tin-shed house, police said. Splinters were recovered from the spot. A local source said Ikhtiar Hossain

owner of the house, was a close relative of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) leader Shamsul Haq, who is at present in police custody on charge of August 17 blasts

## Bomb found

A roadside vendor witnessing the incident informed the locals, police said.

"The incident might be a rehearsal for an attack and we are beefing up security measures around the city", said Rajshahi Metropolitan Police commis-

The incident occurred as the 14party alliance rally was proceeding with the City Awami League President Maksudul Haque Dulu in the chair.

## Bihar votes

FROM PAGE 16 Steel Minister Ramvilas Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), which played the spoilsport in February necessitating fresh elections, could pick up only 14 seats - far

## $short\,of\,the\,29\,it\,bagged\,eight\,months\,ago$ Police halt

at Shahbag, Matsya Bhaban, High Court and Paltan to delay the opposition leader's motorcade coming from

Hasina asked the on duty police officer about the reason for putting barricade The officer replied that he had orders

he removed the barricade, said Azad.

## ME leaders

cerned and anxious to see Syria cooperate and to see the issue leading to another Iraq situation."

## Transport strike

bid to foil the opposition rally, Huda vesterday said the transport strike was nothing but an arranged game of the opposition.

He said the opposition parties had arranged the transport strike fearing poor response from the people to their rally at Paltan Maidan. "Awami League, being rejected by

the people, arranged the 'strike game' to save its face. The game was designed to shift the blame on the government if the opposition rally flopped," the minister told parliament in a statement.

Contradicting Huda, Jatiya Party lawmaker Moshiur Rahman Ranga, also a transport owner, said the transport owners and workers had called the strike to realise their demands including release of workers' leader Mujibur. After Mujibur, a leader of North

Bengal Transport Workers Federation, was arrested on Sunday night, some federation leaders led by its Secretary Habibur Rahman Khan, who happens to be father of a minister, called the nationwide strike from Monday morning apparently to prevent people from converging into the opposition rally. A first class magistrate at Dinajpur

yesterday morning rejected the bail petition of Mujibur in one case and granted him bail in the other two cases, our Dinajpur correspondent reports. But he was released dramatically

after the Court of Additional Sessions Judge SM Rezanur Rahman sat at 6:00pm and granted him bail in the third

The lawyers in the district were surprised to see the prompt attempt to grant Mujibur bail after normal working hours of the court. They termed it 'unprecedented'.

When thousands of commuters office-goers and students experienced unbearable sufferings for the last two days due to the strike, the communications minister showed reluctance to resolve the crisis and blamed the opposition for the strike. He had a marathon meeting with the

residence Monday night but he did not give any assurance. At last he assured the transport leaders of releasing Mujibur when the adjourned meeting resumed vesterday afternoon. Habibur Rahman Khan represented

pro-government transport leaders at his

the pro-government transport leaders in the meeting.

district yesterday declared Habibur Rahman Khan and his son Lutfar Rahman Khan, also state minister for NGO affairs, persone non grata in The decision was announced during

a demonstration of the 14-party in Tangail in protest against the government's alleged move to foil the opposition rally. Meanwhile, thousands of people

other faced tremendous sufferings due to the strike for the second day yester-The absence of public buses includ-

waiting for transports at the city's main bus terminals -- Gabtoli, Sayedabad, Mohakhali and Jatrabari. Most of them had to reach their destinations on foot.

buses, they were compelled to hire a taxicab at Tk 160 for each passenger to

any means -- be it a truck or a tempo.' Md Aslam, 20, of Keranigani was to

go to Sirajganj as his sister-in-law died, but he found not a single vehicle that could carry him. "So far there is no indication that the strike is being called off. I fear I would not be able to see the

Haque, a day labourer hailing from Rangpur, sitting on the footpath in front of Parbat Cinema with bag and baggage He said he was to go to Rangpur for his mother's sickness, but he found no Jahangirnagar University student

vesterday noon said human hauliers charged high fare to carry passengers to the capital. Alauddin Hossain along with his

family members came to Zia International Airport by a taxicab from Savar to see off his brother who left for Kuwait yesterday. Alauddin said he had

geant at Savar for coming to the city.

There were allegations that besides preventing people from coming to the city to attend the opposition rally, the olice and BNP activists harassed hundreds of commoners who were to come to the city for regular activities.

### Media mauled

Denying the allegation, he said the incident was "a drama staged ahead of the opposition's grand rally to undermine the government"

Criticising the daily Janakantha bitterly, he said, "The newspaper is acting against the country and is engaged in character assassination of the honest, patriotic and principled politicians. It is in favour of the criminals, and dishones and irresponsible persons." He pointed his finger to Awami

League General Secretary Abdul Jalil and said he is one of those who did not have wealth but has now become the owner of a bank. "The Janakantha supports this kind of criminal politicians," Kabir said. State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Ziaul Haque Zia on a point

of order said some newspapers that have

started during this BNP government are

now acting against the BNP through vellow journalism. BNP lawmaker Manzur Quader demanded enacting of law against the media, saying, "There is no strong mechanism to rein in the yellow journalism.'

enough power to compel any newspaper to obey its decision," he added. BNP lawmaker Wadud Bhuiyan on a point of order said some newspapers, including the Janakantha, are engaged in

conspiracy against the government and

the country. "We are being repressed by

them, so enact a law against them," h

"The press council does not have

Replying to the lawmakers' points of order, the speaker suggested them going to the press council and filing of defamation case for justice.

### London

community, Ina Humes from the Chittagong Hill Tracts and Prof Salim Malik from the Ahmadiyya community. Giving examples of violent persecu

tions against their own communities and inaction about the perpetrators the speakers demanded immediate action from the Bangladesh government, the press release read.

At the conference, Bangladesh government delegation lead by Bangladesh High Commissioner to UK Sabi Uddin Ahmed and lawmaker Khandakar Mahbubuddin Ahmed, also the chairman of Law and Parliamentary Committee of Bangladesh Parliament, denied all the charges and accused the organisers of acting against the interest

of Bangladesh. The accusing speakers did not substantiate their claim, rather, they tried to intimidate the government spokesmen when they were speaking Bangladesh Press Information

Department said. Robert Evans, member of European Parliament (MEP), Brad Adams of Human Rights Watch, Abbas Faiz of Amnesty International, Maggie Bowden of Liberation, Prof Werner Menski, Jeremy Corbyn MP and Awami League leader Saber Hussain

Chowdhury also spoke in the Prof Menski said, 'to say persecution doesn't exist itself is terrorism', and disappointed to hear of denial from the

Bangladesh Govt representatives'. There is ample evidence of persecution and harassment and he would raise the matter at House of Commons Jeremy Corbyn MP said.

We must keep an eve on Bangladesh due to growing extremism," Charles Tannock MEP said. Extremists showed their muscles

again in August when nearly 500 bombs exploded simultaneously throughout Bangladesh and again in October when there were attempts on the life of udges, Lord Avebury said.

He added that the newly formed Bangladesh International Foundation may conduct an analysis of the political environment in which the 2006 elections will be held by looking at the security of candidates and election

workers and the freedom of assembly. He also suggested that it might send

a delegation to Bangladesh. The foundation will take up the matter with UN Anti Terrorism Committee [formed in pursuance to Security Council (SC) Resolution 1373 in 2001] to get involved as SC Resolution 1373 addresses a number of terrorism related issues that are relevant to the recent developments and the current

## Talks with airlines

carry any pilgrim from Dhaka to Jeddah at less than \$1,150.

The Biman management is now desperately trying to charter two Boeing 747 to fly at least 30,000 out of more than 45,000 intending pilgrims.

Acting Managing Director of Biman Mahmudur Rahman late last night held a meeting with representatives of eight private airlines authorised by the Civil Aviation authority -- Best Aviation Ltd, South Asian Airlines Ltd, Sky Bangla Airways Ltd. ASTUT International. Air Bangladesh Private Ltd, Air Parabat Ltd, Asian Travel Network and Bismillah Airlines.

They were asked to submit proposals within a day or two offering two wide-bodied aircraft for Biman to charter them at a competitive price on ACMI-basis, which means the parties have to provide aircraft, crew, maintenance and insurance. In the wake of refusal of the foreign

Contacted over telephone last night, Mahmudur Rahman said "We are now very busy, and in the midst of a serious meeting. I will talk to you

Haab that using the 60 flight-slots

Biman got from the Saudi govern-

Qatar Airways Area Manager in Bangladesh Shamshad Ahsan told this correspondent that the foreign airlines had made it clear to the new state minister that they would not be able to carry pilgrims at a fare of \$1,050.

"If any Bangladeshi pilgrim still intend to avail our flights at \$1,150, we must be notified by tomorrow (Wednesday). Otherwise, it would be difficult to confirm booking of seats,'

### dwellers, vendors and rickshaw-pullers will not be evicted without proper will be followed for reducing the trade rehabilitation. Government land will be gap, checking cross-border terrorism distributed among the real landless and bringing peace along the border. 23. 'Friendship with all, malice to eliminated. 10. All able citizens of urban and none" will be the motto of the foreign 3. People are the owners of all rural areas will be registered in order to resources and power based on this remove unemployment, a pragmatic Reading out the common minimum principle supremacy of the constitution

"employment guarantee scheme". 11. Prices of agri-inputs will be lowered and fair prices for agroproducts will be ensured. There will be also subsidies in agriculture, employment for agri-workers, effective mea sures for agri-rehabilitation and land

12. State, social and financial honour

steps will be taken so that at least one

youth from every family comes under

13. Gender disparity will be eradicated. The national women development policy of 1997 will be reinstated Direct elections will be held for reserved women's seats in the parliament, while representation of women at all levels will

14. Demands of teachers, engineers

for the freedom fighters will be ensured.

physicians, journalists, lawyers and other professionals will be imple-15. The "unified" education system will be cancelled and steps will be taken to implement science-based identical

In an oblique reference to Prime

corruption and politicisation.

e repression, she added.

Hasina also called upon the adminis-

On the next general elections, Hasina

government has expended crores of taka in among others, also spoke at the rally

> violence and politicisation of educational institutions will be brought to an 16. Healthcare for all will be ensured.

Community healthcare centres will be

introduced 17. The radio and television will be freed from control of the government while a free flow of information will be ensured. Non-communal cultural practice will be encouraged to flourish while vulgarism will be checked.

18. The Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace

Accord signed during Awami League

rule in 1997 will be executed. Establish rights of indigenous people (adivasis) on the plain land and the scrapping of all discriminatory laws. Enact tough laws  $\stackrel{\cdot}{\operatorname{against}} \operatorname{communal violence}.$ 19. Ensure best use of gas, coal and other natural resources of the country. Domestic and foreign investment will be

encouraged through transparent

policies. National energy security will be ensured. Chittagong and Mongla ports will be developed as south Asian ports. 20. Emphasis will be given on regional cooperation for sharing the water of international rivers, water management, flood control and hydro

peoples' participation. 22. A policy of regional cooperation

21. Formulate and execute a national

defence policy through discussion with

work to establish the country, its administration and society on the basis of the common minimum programme. "We are committing that we will continue our united effort for overall welfare of the country and we will be firm to realise the commitments made before the people," It declares.

The common minimum nation

programme also detailed the failures of

the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition govern-

national programme, the opposition

leaders pledged that they would begin

ment that include rise of extremist groups under government patronisation, price spiral of essentials rise of unemployment, bomb and grenade attacks, making the parliament nactive, destroy of the administration and judiciary through politicisation and nepotism. It also accused the government of extra judicial killings, unabated corruption by the prime minister, her cabinet members and Hawa Bhaban men. It says government closed most of the state-owned mills and factories leaving thousands of people jobless.

Dikon first accused involvement in the grenade attacks, the report said. Two others gave confes-

sional statements to magistrates. Habib alias Hannan, Waliullah, Hasan Zahid Tushar, Zahir Hossain, Akhter, liten, Monir, Mohammad Hossain. Badsha Mia, Monzur Hossain, Shafiqul Islam, Abul Hashem Rana and Shah Alam were arrested in the August 21

Among them Partha and six others

price of Aman is more because of its higher production cost than that of the The cabinet also set a target of

# Hartal called

neutral election.

and militants' patroniser".

## Sudha Sadan in Dhanmondi.

from the government high-ups. As Hasina scolded the police officer.

FROM PAGE 16 The region's leaders "are all con-

UN Security Council wanted only "to get to the truth and ensure that the culprits are brought to justice."

At the Matsya Bhaban intersection,

settled diplomatically and not lead to a situation that destabilises possibly Syria and Lebanon," he said. "They are worried if we are Annan said he assured them the

airlines, the state minister held a meeting with the Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (Haab)

FROM PAGE 16 James Swapan Peris from the Christian

In another development, the 14party opposition combine in Tangail

who needed to travel from one district to

ing those of the state-run BRTC in and outside the city created scopes for the drivers of taxicabs, CNG-run threewheelers, microbuses and trucks to cash in on the emergencies of the passengers. Thousands of people were found

The drivers of taxicabs and threewheelers charged extra fare. Sumon, a university student, along with his family members and friends had to go to Kusthia to attend the marriage ceremony of his sister. Finding no

go to Aricha. Rajshahi University graduate Mohsin Hossain Azad came to Dhaka Monday night by a truck for a job interview. He had some emergencies to return home by yesterday, but he could not see any transport. "I have to go by

body of my sister-in-law," he said. This correspondent found Ekramul

Anwar Hossain who came to Dhaka

yesterday afternoon. He informed

situation in Bangladesh.

ment, Biman would try to ferry at least 30,000 pilgrims by chartering two aircraft while the government also appealed to the Saudi authorities for last-minute increase of at least 30 more slots so that Biman could fly the rest 15,000 too.

## education policy. The commerciali-

forces. It also pledged to try the war criminals of 1971 and impose a ban on communal politics.

councils within one year into coming to office, present accounts of assets of ministers, lawmakers and politicians, reopen closed mills and factories, set a minimum employment guarantee scheme.

ing body to keep essentials' prices within declared not to participate in any election without reforms in the caretaker govern-

Sadarghat. harassment by the police and ruling alliance cadres, hundreds of thousands of people poured into the biggest opposition Opposition in Parliament and AL President Sheikh Hasina. Traffic movement in the

its partner Jamaat-e-Islami of patronising Islamist militant groups and thereby turning Bangladesh into a failed state.

The opposition leader alleged 10,000 leaders and workers of the opposition

workers union leaders to go on strike, put every entry point to Dhaka to thwart people from rallying in the capital. She also 23pt common nat'l programme

chanting of slogans from the audience at

programme is the pledge of the 14-party

The common minimum national

the Paltan Maidan rally.

coalition on what it will do if put in power. As the programme was spelled out, jubilant supporters raised their hands, shouting slogans in support to it. Following is the detail of the common minimum national programme: 1.A secular democratic governmen will be established through free and fair elections that will be held after bringing reforms in the caretaker system of government and the Election Commission on the basis of the guidelines announced on July 15, 2005. The elections will be free from black money

violence and communalism. People will

not accept any election without reforms

in the caretaker system of government

2. The country will be freed from chauvinist communal forces and militants. Such forces will be removed from all levels of the government and administration. Trials of war criminals will be held and there will be a ban on commu nal politics. Freedom to practice religion, freedom of expression and freedom of conscience will be ensured. The verdict of the Bangabandhu murder responsible for all grenade and bomb blasts, including the one on August 21, 2004 and the one on the British high commissioner, will be brought to book. All training camps of Jamaat, Shibir and other militants will be identified and

killings, and the judiciary will be separated from the executive branch of the government. 4. The Parliament will be the centre of all activities and accountability of the government will be ensured. Elections o district and upazila councils will be held within a year of the formation of the new government. Autonomous local governments will be strengthened and empowered properly 5. Criminals and their godfathers will

be identified and will be brought to

book. They will not be accepted as

members of any political party and no

party can nominate them in the elec-

tions. A healthy political environment

will be established in running of the

country. Rule of law will be established,

all laws contrary to the fundamental

rights of the people will be scrapped,

steps will be taken to stop extra-judicial

will be ensured by stopping political corruption and criminalisation 6. A system will be introduced so that all ministers, lawmakers, politicians and