C'wealth aims

omies they might look at the idea of accepting temporary migrants." The Commonwealth, a club of

mainly former British colonies which include rich countries like G8 members Britain and Canada as well as some of the world's poorest, like Bangladesh and Malawi.

migrants," said Frendo.

Leaders issued a 17-point statement that called on the European Union to make more concessions to cut agriculture subsidies and on rich countries to provide aid to nations that loose trade privileges such as sugar producers under a recent EU

there but I don't believe that anyone believes they are unreasonable demands. These are the kinds of things that agriculture producers around the world have been waiting for 20 years," said Common-wealth Secretary General Don McKinnon after agreement was reached

for a change to help combat poverty.

"We are not accepting the status quo," McKinnon told a news conference.

tors in Hong Kong including reaching "time-bound commitments for substantial reductions in trade-

Leaders said they were committed to injecting "urgency into the work of negotiators at the WTO". adding that delegations would be instructed to "be flexible" and "place priority on a genuinely development-oriented round for the collec-

distorting domestic support and

significant improvements in market

They also called for a WTO agreement on "the elimination of all forms of export subsidies by 2010" -- a deadline that Commonwealth officials said underscored the commitment to levelling the playing

The talks in Hong Kong are aimed at forging a new global trade agreement, which could lift millions out of poverty, largely by getting rich countries to lower their tariff barriers blocking developing countries from their markets.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair, whose country currently holds the presidency of the European Union and also chairs the Group of Eight club of wealthy nations, heard appeals here from Caribbean and other leaders to take up their case at the EU and in other fora, sources

"There is a high expectation that the EU will do more than the EU is currently saying they will do," said

The Commonwealth push for fairer trade came as WTO chief Pascal Lamy released a draft text in Geneva on Saturday that was to launch a series of consultations on

CEC's new rule

A former CEC termed it unprece-

dented in the history of EC. "The election commission is a centre point of all activities relating to holding elections. There should be

transparency in all its activities. There is nothing to play hide and seek with," the former CEC told The Daily Star, on condition of anonymity. Following the new instructions of the CEC, a number of journalists submitted a total of 12 questions at

about 12:30pm and the CEC started giving replies to those at about 5:00pm. Replying to one of the written

queries, CEC MA Aziz claimed that it

with the Electoral Ordinance 1982," said Aziz who was appointed the CEC $\,$

on May 23 this year. But Election Commissioner AK Mohammad Ali yesterday said the decision was taken unilaterally by the CEC. "The Election Commission has not taken any such decision," he told

Election Commissioner M

Munsef Ali echoed the view of Mohammad Ali.

The two election commissioners have not approved the recruitment of some 3 lakh people considered necessary to prepare a new voter roll, saying that they have yet to decide whether to go for a fresh roll.

But Secretary to the EC Secretariat SM Zakaria told journalists that the two election commissioners are not

Responding to another written question, the CEC said he is in favour of electoral reforms. "The electoral reforms can be brought about by amending the electoral laws in parliament," he said.

returning to the commission the raise the ceiling on election expenditure from Tk 5 lakh to 10 lakh

MA Aziz denied making comments that the EC does not need an

freedom of action he is being allowed, he said, "I am discharging my duties independently. I am not facing any difficulties.

PM dubs militants

are Muslim," Khaleda said.

She said those who have taken a stand against country's advancement and social tranquility have conspired to make Bangladesh friendless in the international arena. The Imams will have to play their part so that these conspirators cannot misguide the common people and use them as pawns through misinterpretation of Islam.

"We all know that meaning of Islam is peace," she said and questioned if those who create unrest in society really

liberal democratic identity of

Bangladesh. "These derailed people have taken a Training Academy since its inception in stand against the noble teachings of 1979. All Imams in the country would be Islam. They want to prove through their provided training in phases, it was misdeeds that Islam implies terrorism. informed at the function.

Before addressing the function, the prime minister distributed awards and certificates among selected best Imams Moulana Mohammad Moslem Uddin was awarded as best Imam at national

Camel jockeys

Children's Fund (Unicef).

Meanwhile, BNWLA has already begun the reintegration process of the children with their parents, while a committee comprised of representatives of government, Unicef, the International Organisation for Migration and other NGOs was formed to plan and monitor the process.

Fire at Ctg oil depot

UNB, Chittagong

A fire broke out at Meghna petroleum depot in Guptakhal in Patenga on Saturday night, burning oil worth Tk 10

Fire brigade sources said an abandoned oil pipeline of the pump house at the depot caught fire following an explosion in an electric transformer.

Firefighters rushed to the snot and brought the fire under control at 1:30

Fire brigade sources estimated the loss at about Tk 2 lakh. But the denot authorities claimed the damage could be up to Tk 10 lakh

Meghna petroleum formed a threemember probe body to enquire the incident.

Two killed

under Kalihati upazila in Tangail.

Police said a Dhaka bound passenger bus of Keya Paribahan from North-Bengal ran over the motorcycle at Pathailkandi area at about 3:30pm. Motorcycle rider Masud, a poultry farm owner, died on the spot while another unidentified rider was severely injured. He was admitted to l'angail General Hospital.

After the accident, local residents barricaded the highway and damaged 17 motor vehicles.

Later, they removed the barricade at the request of the police. In another incident, a day labourer

was killed in a road accident on the Dhaka-Tangail highway yesterday The victim is Shohrab Hossain, 63,

of Kodaliar Char village under Chouhali upazila in Sirajganj. Police said a North-Bengal bound

bus from Dhaka ran over Shohrab at Beerpushia area under Basail upazila in the district at about 12:00pm. Basail police recovered the body

and sent it to Tangail General Hospital for autopsy. The driver of the bus managed to

escape with the vehicle

Kamrul killing FROM PAGE 16

CID sources said Jafor admitted to his involvement in the killing. Shah Alam, one of the major accused who orchestrated the murder, engaged in the assassination, Jafor admitted. Shah Alam was later arrested and killed in

'crossfire' with Rapid Action Battalion. Police have so far arrested 17 persons in this connection out of 26 FIRlisted accused, including the key suspect Rafigul Islam, who is now in

Jafor, however, could not say anything about Rafiq's involvement in the killing, but he acknowledged the feud the family had with the former OC.

Momin, who was gunned down in front of his house at Kafrul, named lafor and four others as his murderers before dying at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital.

Hannan

the remand. He was wearing a helmet and a bullet proof vest.

The forwarding report placed before the court by the investigation officer (IO) said Hannan gave important information about the countrywide bomb blasts on August 17, including the Jatrabari area. He needs to be quizzed further to find out more about his involvement and whereabouts of his accomplices, the report said, seeking for a further fiveday remand.

After the hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate Quamrunnahar granted the remand prayer.

Mufti Hannan, who escaped arrest for several years, was already shown arrested in four other blast cases filed with the Teigaon, Ramna. $Motijheel \, and \, Demra \, police \, stations.$

Dhaka's proposal

Communique and Valetta Statement on multilateral trade behind closed

Intensive deliberations were made on the forthcoming ministerial of the WTO, governance, human rights, terrorism and the bridging of the digital divide. The WTO meeting will be held in Hong Kong in December.

2 bullet-hit

FROM PAGE 1

Witnesses and party sources said some 8-10 armed cadres, loyal to former minister Mir Nasiruddin, went to the fair venue at the Chittagong Outer Stadium in an apparent bid to establish their control over the fair, which is now being controlled by the Noman group.

The cadres of Noman group tried to foil the attempt and chase-counter chase and exchange of 10 rounds of fire ensued, forcing the attackers to leave the scene

Nazrul and Taher received bullets

In the other incident, Shibir and chanted slogans against Shibir, blaming it for the abduction.

Change of govt

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), a leading independent think-tank, organised the dialogue on 'Implementing the PRSP: Civil Society's Perspective on Choices and Challenges' with former finance minister and member of CPD Board of Trustees M Syeduzzaman in

Speaking as its chief guest, Saifur said the political situation in the country now is not good and may turn more adverse in the near future, adding no significant economic development would be possible in the absence of good politics and governance. To implement the PRSP properly, he

said, "We have to improve governance, reduce corruption and strengthen the monitoring and evaluation system.'

The minister also emphasised strengthening of local government bodies for a successful PRSP implementation. Otherwise, he said it would be impossible to empower people. He said, without power, local gover-

already in the process of strengthening the local governments." The finance minister felt the assistance of development partners needs to be more harmonised, where there is a major lacking. He criticised the donors for still maintaining a "driving" attitude

nance is meaningless, adding, "We are

and for often making contradictory prescriptions. For instance, he cited the International Monetary Fund once asking to cut interest rates on loans and

Turning to the employment situation, Saifur said the perception of a stagnated job generation is incorrect.

then for increasing the same.

At the dialogue, former finance minister AMA Muhith highlighted corruption as a major issue of the time and said it has not been properly addressed in the PRSP. He also alleged that many official

documents are statistically inaccurate. Muhith, also a member of Awami

League's central advisory council, said there was much improvement from the first to the fourth phase of PRSP designing. but, he regretted that the opposition political parties had not been involved in the process at all.

"You need to have a proper investment policy, but there is no policy indicated in this document on improving the roles of district and upazila councils," he maintained.

In his turn, the special guest of the conference, Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Kamal Uddin Siddiqui said there must be a strong and independent monitoring mechanism in place for implementing the PRSP and the prime minister should lead the coordination and implementation process. He sharply reacted to Muhith's

allegation of inaccurate official documents, saying the leaders of the present government do not ask the bureaucrats to do so, who are allowed to work in an entirely professional manner.

"I'm not aware of any figure being doctored in any official document. We don't do that. None of our political masters -- neither the prime minister nor the finance minister -- told us to do that "he asserted

Siddiqui pointed out that three of the eight priority issues in the PRSP are about governance, adding, "It's a moving document and will continue to At the dialogue, CPD Executive

Director Debapriya Bhattacharya

2 dozen MPs

FROM PAGE 1 and BNP lawmakers' position in those

as well as potential substitutes for them, if required. The survey has made many BNP

legislators worried over their fate in the coming days. A number of MPs from Rajshahi and Khulna region said they are uncertain about getting party nomination again.

About two dozen MPs including some ministers have not performed well and their popularity in their respective constituencies has nosedived, sources said quoting the survey.

Intra-party conflicts and rise of Islamic militancy, particularly in the northern and south-western regions of the country, have weakened the party's prospect in the next elections in around a dozen constituencies, the survey found.

The expulsion of party leader Abu Hena, MP, has also created mixed reaction within the party. A number of party lawmakers were seen in the chambers of senior ministers to have an idea about what is going to happen in the party. One lawmaker was heard telling a minister it is the longstanding grievances among many MPs and leaders that 'created Abu Hena'. "Those who want to split the party

should be dealt with a heavy hand. But leaders who are devoted to the cause of the party should be properly evaluated," he said. Another lawmaker regretted that

they do not get any opportunity to speak their minds. "Over the last four years, only six parliamentary party meetings were held. Since we do not have access to the prime minister, to whom could we express our grievances?" he said

FROM PAGE 1 Court of Second Class Magistrate, Dhaka dismissed the case saying that there were no elements for taking it into cognisance.

Court orders

Judge Mohammad Rafigul Islam in

his October 20 order cancelled the lower

court's order following a criminal appeal

by the prosecution lawyers and said the

case would continue according to the

Fazlur Rahman Foundation and a

consultant of Beximco, filed the case

with the Court of First Class Magistrate,

The complainant said Nazmul Huda

his brother Kamrul Huda and their

accomplices on September 9 entered

Fazlur Rahman Foundation in Dohar

under Dhaka district with firearms

lakh, and threatened officials saying that

they would not be allowed to run the

foundation's activities during the BNP

and Iativatabadi Chhatra Dal activists to

take possession of the foundation office.

which was still occupied by them, the

Salman F Rahman on March 1 rented

The foundation, which works for the

welfare of the destitute, had given her Tk

6 lakh in three instalments as per a

Station to file a case after the robbery but

The house owner is also accused of

Advocate Mohammad Firoz Alam

moved the case on behalf of the com-

of Unesco earlier inscribed the Mosque

of Bagerhat in Khulna and the Ruins of

the Baudhha Bihar (Buddhist

Monastery) at Paharpur on the World

Heritage List in 1985 and declared the

Sundarbans, the world's largest man-

grove forest, as a site of World Heritage

Unesco also organised two folk

This was Unesco's third proclama-

tion of Masterpieces of the Oral and

Intangible Heritage, an international

distinction aimed at raising public

awareness about the value of such

heritages. This includes popular and

traditional oral forms of expression

music and dance, rituals and mytholo-

gies, knowledge and practices concern-

traditional crafts and cultural spaces.

ing the universe, know-how linked to

An 18-member jury, chaired by

Princess Basma Bint Talal of Iordan

proposed the 43 new masterpieces to

the Director-General. The jury met

from November 20 to 24 to examine the

64 national and multinational candi-

proclaimed in 2001 and 2003. Twenty-

seven of them have already benefited

from Unesco's support, particularly

from safeguarding operations, which

received financial assistance from

Japan, Unesco officials said. They also

hinted that this third proclamation

would probably be the last of the series.

said Gates is likely to be visiting

Microsoft officially started their opera-

tions in Bangladesh. In cooperation

with their market development part-

ner, Square InformatiX, they have

focused on building good relation-

locally during the past few months.

ships with their certified partners

Microsoft also launched their

'Unlimited Potential' programme on

June 13, one of many projects planned

The source on condition of ano-

nymity said Bill Gates, the richest man

is expected to be in Dhaka on

December 9 or 10 for a day's visit on

He is likely to assess Microsoft's

activities in Bangladesh and may

announce some expansion plans, the

national interest of Bangladesh

because his visit would give a new

impetus to Bangladesh's nascent IT

good number of bright IT profession-

als, including software engineers,

software developers and a data-entry

Gates might call on Prime Minister

Khaleda Zia during his brief stay in

Dhaka, and is likely to discuss how

Bangladesh could collaborate with

 $Microsoft\ in\ bridging\ the\ digital\ divide$

Bangladesh has already produced a

industry," the source added.

"His visit is very important for the

board a chartered aircraft.

in the world and a great philanthropist

It's been about eight months since

Bangladesh after his tour in India.

Bill Gates

FROM PAGE 1

for Bangladesh.

source said.

workforce.

in the country.

A total of 47 masternieces were

festivals in 2004 and 2005, with a view

to promote and safeguard traditional

 $folk\,songs\,and\,forms\,of\,Bangladesh.$

the duty officer refused to register it.

aiding the minister and his men

Baul songs

FROM PAGE 1

a house from Meher Nigar at Joypara

Bazar in Dohar for the foundation

named after his father in 2001.

contract, the complainant said.

complainant added.

Mohammad Abdur Rouf, secretary of

presented an analysis of the PRSF

implementation challenges. He felt ownership of PRSP acquires a new dimension as the country moves towards another round of parliamentarvelections.

According to his paper, the fate of PRSP will be defined by two factors -- the depth of its political ownership and the strength of the partnership commitments of the donors.

Debapriya said the poverty reduc tion strategy suffers from some inadequacies, but they are not binding constraints for realising its potentials, up to a certain degree. In this connection, he mentioned that the entire cabinet has not discussed the document, neither was it formally tabled at parliament for general discussion.

He also observed that, though the development partners want to remain involved in the country's progress on a long-term basis, they feel frustrated by the slow progress in institutional and policy reforms. In this context, he stressed mitigating the frustration that may affect the PRSP implementation.

and the civil society is ready for it, stated the CPD executive director, "But are the political masters ready for the PRSP? We are not quite sure of it.' Taking part in the discussion, Asian

The PRSP is ready for the civil society

Development Bank (ADB) Country Director Hua Du underscored the need for mobilising domestic resources and attracting foreign direct investment. She said the ADB would double its assistance to Bangladesh over the next

Du also emphasised implementation capacity building of government institutions and said it is necessary to make public sector procurement procedure transparent so that foreign assistance can be released quickly.

Former secretary Mujibul Haque

identified conflicting political culture as a major barrier to implementing the PRSP and called on the ruling alliance and the opposition political parties to jointly address the issue. He also recommended setting up

sectoral advisory committees with civil

society's representation on all processes

of PRSP implementation. Bangladesh Economic Association President Qazi Kholiguzzaman Ahmad pointed out that it would be very difficult to implement the PRSP if corruption and the law and order downslide are not checked.

Deputy minister's FROM PAGE 16

He was residing at Talgharia police camp since 2001 on "security

He, among others, led the Rajshahi march of Bangla Bhai group on May 23 last year. He also threatened journalists for writing against Bangla Bhai while addressing rallies in front of law enforcement agencies.

Locals blame him for harbouring outlaws. He developed rivalry with outlaws following a dispute with their leader Fartul in 1998. The rivalry resulted in murder of his two brothers -- Mostafa Ali Khamaru in 1998 and Mamtaz Ali Khamaru in 2001.

Since then, he took shelter at the police camp and joined hands with Bangla Bhai allegedly with assistance from a ruling party lawmaker.

Rickshaw-free

FROM PAGE 1

consultation with the home ministry, meeting sources said.

DIG Sajjad Hossain said the BRTA should simplify the driving licence giving process. About 90 per cent drivers carry fake licence, mainly due to hassles in getting a genuine one.

The inspector general of police, divisional commissioners, BRTA and BRTC chairmen, high officials of RHD and other officials concerned were present at the meeting presided over by Communications Minister Nazmul Huda.

The wrong mileage measurements of different routes by the RHD have caused problems for the transport owners and workers following the recent transport fare hike, the meeting was told. To investigate the matter, the

meeting formed a seven-member enquiry committee comprising representatives from the RHD, BRTA, BRTC, transport owners and workers. The meeting also expressed dissatisfaction over slow progress of the construction of Dhaka bypass alleg-

edly due to inefficiency of the con-

Nosimon and Korimon.

Nandan Park in Savar.

struction firm owned by a ruling party He may meet key government MP. The communications minister officials, academicians and IT industry asked the RHD officials to look into leaders and is likely to interact with the the matter and take steps for rapid progress of the work. Microsoft had revenues of The meeting was told that 1013 US\$36.84 billion for the fiscal year

village markets and illegal installaending June 2004, and employs more $tions\,on\,the\,high ways\,were\,evicted.$ than 55,000 people in 85 countries. The transport owners demanded Born on Oct. 28, 1955, Gates grew complete ban on plying of different up in Seattle with his two sisters. Their

father, William H. Gates II, is a Seattle locally made unsafe vehicles like attorney. Their late mother, Mary The meeting also decided to put Gates, was a schoolteacher, University ban on parking of vehicles in front of of Washington regent, and chair $woman \, of \, United \, Way \, International.$

JMB threat

corrupt and BNP men can become a

udge at present.' It also said those who did not have proper educational certificate but could bribe have been made judges on political consideration. "Do you think that they can be protected by providing gunmen?" the letter posed the question, also answering, "No"

Six SC judges and 75 percent HC judges take bribe, the letter claimed, adding that the assistant judges give 40 nercent of their bribe-money to the judges of the judges' courts after appeals against their judgements are filed with

"The High Court and Supreme Court snatched valuables worth about Tk 85 do not know what justice is. They just uphold the judgements of the lower courts. So, these judges do not have any right to live," the letter said.

Moreover, the accused asked BNP The JMB vesterday in separate letters to

> Banaripara correspondent of the Daily Samakal Al Mamun Laskar, special correspondent of the local daily Ajker Barta Mizanul Islam and correspondent of Ajker Paribartan SM Mainul Islam Sabuj threatened with death. Mainul told the BDNEWS that the

> handwritten letter, which mentioned the name of IMB at the bottom, threatened him to leave journalism or else he will have to die.

The journalists filed a general diary He said he went to Dohar Police (GD) with the Banaripara PS in this connection. Earlier, the JMB also threatened to

blow up the Banaripara office of the Land Department. COMILLA

Anonymous callers identifying them-

selves as IMB members have been threatening to blow up the office of the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD) here for the last few days if the centre does not stop "anti-Islamic training", sources said. Last Wednesday, the militants had sent a letter with a piece of shroud by

Mannan. Security measures have been tightened at the BARD office and some important places in the town. The police searched the bags and identity cards of the BARD officers and employees at the

post to BARD Assistant Director Abdul

entrance. Earlier, the JMB had allegedly threatened to blow up Comilla Victoria Government College and Comilla Government College. FAKEBOMBIN

handwritten letters, lying in a corner of the guardians' waiting room at around

time bombs were planted at different places in the school, including the office of the assistant headmistress. Soon the teachers rushed to the

1:15pm, cautioning that a number of

office of Aloka Ghosh and found the device under her table. "If Islamic education as per the

Qur'an and the Hadith is not introduced in the school within two days, the bombs would be detonated by remote control, read the notes sent by the Khilgaon unit of the banned Islamist outfit Harkatul

Witnesses said the incident sent a wave of panic among the students, gurdians and teachers on the campus during the rush of two shifts of examina-

The police conducted a hectic search but found nothing else. Headmaster Jasimuddin Bhuiyan

told newsmen that someone did it "to create panic". The day shift examinations were

neld under tight security.

GAIBANDHĂ Our Gaibandha correspondent reports: Gaibandha police vesterday attached movable properties of Matin Mehdi. second-in-command of Allahr Dal, a brigade of the banned JMB, from his Bridge Road residence in the town

Mehdi, an accused in several cases of oomb blast and militant activities in Jhenidah, Comilla, Bogra, Sherpur and Pabna, has been absconding.

following a Jhenidah court order.

Recently Jhenidah police submitted a charge sheet against Babul Ansari. chief of Allahr Dal, and Matin Mehdi in connection with the August 17 bomb

RANGPUR Our correspondent in Rangpur reports:

Police have remained silent regarding the activities of Islamist militants in the district allegedly at the instruction of high-ups following the busting of the outfit's den at Noorpur, Rangpur. Superintendent of Police Mahbub

Mohshin refused to say anything but

that he is unable to disclose any informa-

tion about the recent operation at the

Rangpur den for the sake of investiga-Officer-in-Charge of the Kotwali hana Bazlur Rashid has been trusted

with the investigation, he said. Meanwhile, a reliable police source preferring anonymity said they had been warned by the high-ups not to disclose anything about the findings of A guardian discovered the bunch of the operation to the media.

Saddam trial judge

FROM PAGE 16 udge) Raed al-Juhi this week."

Juhi is the chief investigative judge on the Iraqi High Tribunal which is tasked with judging former regime officials, including Saddam, for crimes against humanity, war crimes and geno-

Kader said all the suspects were Sunni Arabs from Kirkuk, from Saddam's hometown of Tikrit or from the restive western The suspects also confessed to helping

to carry out suicide attacks in the Kurdish

city of Sulaimaniyah in October in which 10 people were killed, he said. Security will be a top priority when the trial of Saddam and seven former henchmen resumes Monday in Baghdad on charges of killing 148 men and youths from the Shia town of Dujail, north of the capital, after the former leader escaped an

assassination attempt there in 1982. Saddam, 68, who refuses to recognize the court, and his former aides have pleaded not guilty to the charges. They face the death penalty if convicted. On Monday, the court is expected to

call the first witnesses for the prosecution. who may testify from behind screens or with faces masked to protect their ano-Saddam is likely to face a raft of other charges, ranging from the massacre of

Shias in 1991 and crimes committed during the wars against Iran and Kuwait. Abdul Aziz Hakim, the leader of Irag's most powerful Shia political party, on Sunday accused the judiciary of "weakness" because of the delay in bringing

Kurds in 1988, a brutal crackdown against

Saddam to trial, almost two years after his Hakim, who heads the Shia-based Supreme Council for the Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), blamed "the intervention of the Americans in the choice of judges, the presence of Baathists in the judicial system and the fear among judges

because of the insecurity. "This government wants to see

Niko threatens

FROM PAGE 16

He also mentioned that Petrobangla at that time had assured Niko that the price will be determined and a gas purchase and sale agreement (GPSA) signed on time for gas supply from Feni. "But it has not been done in one Country's present gas demand is

1,600 million cubic feet per day (MMCFD) and Petrobangla can ensure from its own and foreign companies' fields 1,557 MMCFD. The Niko supplies 30 MMCFD from Feni. Niko officials said its arrears from Petrobangla for gas supply from Feni

in one year stood at about \$50 million. The Niko wants the price be determined at \$2.35 per thousand cubic feet while government proposes \$2.10. However, no progress took place in

bargaining in last 10 months. Officials said Niko received \$ 4.0

million in two instalments from the government.

Saddam dead, it wants him to face the

death penalty, because that is the will of the people," he said. Iraqi officials said they chose to start with the Dujail case because it is relatively

straightforward and well-documented. Saddam's habit of videotaping all his orders to ensure they were carried out has back-fired against him, said a source close

to the investigation. "It's up to the individual witnesses whether their identity is disguised in some otherway," he said. The trial opened on October 19, but

immediately recessed to give lawyers time

to prepare. The murder of two defence lawyers and the wounding of a third led however to the threat of a boycott by defence counsels. US officials and lawyers said the threat was lifted after the lawyers were provided

promised to assist in the investigation of the murder of the lawyers. Some have accused Shia-led militias, bent on retribution, for the murders, while others suspect Sunni Arab insurgents of

with security and after the United States

Court sources said some lawyers have been allowed to recruit their own security detail, which will be paid for by the tribu-

targeting the lawyers in a bid to derail the

Flu fears

EDOM DAGE 16

killed 68 people in Asia, could trigger a pandemic and kill millions once it mutates into a form that is easily transmissible among people. The World Health Organisation

says there are more than 120 docu-

mented cases of people contracting

bird flu, most of whom were infected directly from poultry. While acknowledging the risk of the lethal H5N1 virus, experts attending the meeting said there was no need to

panic and adopt draconian measures

"It's a very complex virus. In order

such as killing migratory birds. "I think bird flu fear has been overemphasised," said Leslie Dierauf, director of the National Wildlife Health Centre in Wisconsin, the United States.

to be highly pathogenic you have to mix and match with other viruses and mutate. There is no predictability to that. We don't know when it's going to mix, when it's going to match, or when it's going to mutate, or where," she said Rather than discouraging bird

poultry industry. "Concentrating on wild birds as the main suspect is wrong and dangerous," said Marco Lamber-tini of

watching or calls for culling wild birds,

it is more efficient to reduce contact

between domestic fowls and wild birds

and to improve biosecurity in the

BirdLife International, based in Britain. "The cull of wild birds in order to

prevent the disease is unreasonable and impractical," Lambertini said.

point of view that within their econ-

"They say they can identify gaps in their economy where they would be in a position to accept temporary

The summit on Saturday produced a tough-worded statement on the need to redouble efforts at the upcoming World Trade Organisation talks in Hong Kong from December 13.

"There's some heavy demands

With a third of the WTO as its members and representing a fifth of global trade, the Common-wealth sent a clear message that it was ready

The Commonwealth statement set out a list of demands for negotia-

were also present at that time.

was the EC that took the decision to prepare a fresh voter list. "The Election Commission has taken the decision in accordance

remained on the path of Islam. The prime minister urged all to strengthen the motivation and campaign alongside administrative and legal measures against the isolated small group which wants to tarnish the

bombings and killings. They seek to equate Islam with barbarism.' She also requested all political parties, social institutions and cultural organisations to become more active on

this issue.

religious leaders with common people and having more responsibility to provide proper guidance on the correct path, Khaleda told the Imams that they get the opportunity to exchange views regularly with huge number of people on various occasions, including Juma "I am hopeful you would play an

Mentioning direct interaction of the

effective role in improving people's behaviour and values by utilising these opportunities," she told the Imams. State Minister for Religious Affairs

He said he will submit a set of proposals to the government for authority to cancel the candidature,

independent secretariat. On the question of how much

There are more than four lakh Imams and Muezzins in over two lakh mosques in Bangladesh, who lead prayers as well as deal with some social and religious affairs.

National Imam Conference on

Human Resource Development is par

of a UNFPA-funded project being

implemented by the Islamic

31,000 Imams from the country's 64

Under the project, in last few years

Foundation Bangladesh.

Mosharef Hossain Shahjahan and

UNFPA country representative Suneeta

Mukheriee also addressed the function.

districts have been imparted training on wide variety of health and social issues such as reproductive health, family planning, domestic violence, gender concern and HIV/AIDS. And nearly 55,000 imams have been provided training from the Imam

in their legs and were admitted to Chittagong Medical College and Hospital. ICD activists locked in clash at around

11:30am when the latter brought out a procession, protesting the "alleged" kidnap of its leader Ruhul Hakim Saturday night. The JCD activists