Bomb-making

The police also seized from his possession a book titled 'Shibirer Karma Paddhati' (Strategy of Shibir - the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami) and a hand-written note stating "You have been directed to follow honest path and kill the enemies of Allah.'

Meantime, law enforcers arrested six people including an alleged regional commander of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) in Gaibandha and two imams in Barisal in the last two days suspecting their link to the banned İslamist outfit.

Besides, a lawyer of Satkhira was expelled yesterday from the district bar association for life for threatening five local lawyers with death. The accused lawver sent letters to them on December 13 in the name of JMB and threatened to

Our correspondent in Kushtia reports: Security guards of local daily Andolaner Bazar at Madanpur in the town challenged 16-year-old Sohel Rana around 5:30pm yesterday when he was roaming around the newspaper office suspiciously.

"As I attempted to search his body, the youth asked me not to search his body and was claiming himself innocent," said security quard Shvamal Chakrabortv.

Being informed, editor of the daily rushed to the scene and ordered to search Sohel. The bombmaking materials were found in a bag he was carrying and in the pocket of his panjabi. He was later handed over to police.

Son of Ameer Ali of West Abdalpur village in Sadar upazila of Kushtia. Sohel claimed himself a class-X student of Bishnudia Hafezia Madrasa in Sadar upazila. He said he was admitted in the madrasa around one and a half years ago

"I am a worker of Islami Chhatra Shibir and my leader is Tofazzal Hossain of Islamic University who has been assigned to recruit youths to Shibir in Bishnudia area," Sohel told local journalists including The Daily Star correspondent.

A police team from Kushtia Sadar Police Station was conducting a drive to arrest Tofazzal who is a student of Al Quran department of Islamic University.

Our Gaibandha correspondent says: Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested Abdul Jalil, a regional commander of JMB and alleged matchmaker of JMB's operations commander Siddigul Islam alias Bangla Bhai, in Shaghata upazila

A teacher of Munshirhat High School in Shaghata, Jalil was arrested earlier in connection with the August 17 serial blasts, but was released later on bail.

Our Dinajpur correspondent adds: Police arrested Moinul Islam, general secretary of regional unit of JMB, on Wednesday with some books on Islamic jihad, leaflets and bomb-making circuits. The arrestee was placed on a five-day remand yesterday for interrogation.

Meanwhile, Thakurgaon police arrested two JMB trainers -- Ferazul Islam and Raju -- in the district on Wednesday. They were also taken on a five-day remand vesterday.

Barisal police vesterday arrested two Imams in Barisal following information extracted from Mamun who carried out bomb attack in Jhalakathi killing two judges, reports

The arrestees are Hafez Mohammad Siraiul Islam, imam of Rupatali Jame Mosque and Mohammad Abul Khayer, imam of Mridhabari Jame Mosque, in the

Injured Mamun was captured from the spot of the bomb attack in Jhalakathi and sent to Dhaka for treatment. He was brought to Barisal for interrogation on

Our correspondent in Satkhira reports: In an emergency meeting yesterday Satkhira Bar Association expelled its member advocate BD Zaman for life for sending letters to five lawvers of Satkhira Bar in the name of JMB threatening to kill

Meanwhile, Khulna district commander of banned JMB Ruhul Kuddus who was arrested on December 14 gave confessional statement before a Satkhira magistrate yesterday, confessing to his involvement in the August 17 serial blasts on Khulna Court premises.

Our Netrakona correspondent savs: JMB suicide squad member Alamgir Fakir alias Alam was taken on a fresh four-day remand yester-

Meanwhile, a court in Chittagong sent two JMB activists -- Milan Islam alias Mithu and Akash-- to jail yesterday, on completion of their 10-

Hasina hits out at PM roads leading to it. Several hundred

megaphones were installed to enable

people to hear speeches of the 14-

Unprecedented security arrange-

ments were made around the rally

venue while five hundred AL volun-

teers were specially assigned to assist

Intelligence officials of Rab and the

The rally was also addressed by

police swept the entire venue repeat-

edly with metal detectors and bomb

among others. Gono Forum President

Dr Kamal Hossain, AL General

Secretary Abdul Jalil, party leaders

Abdur Razzak, Suraniit Sengupta

Motia Chowdhury, Tofail Ahmed,

Obaidul Kader and Mohammod

Nasim, Workers Party President

Rashed Khan Menon, General

Secretary Bimol Biswas, Jatiya

Samajtantrik Dal (Inu) chief Hasanul

Hug Inu, General Secretary of

Shammyabadi Dal Dilip Barua and

Gano Azadi League leader Nurul

Dr Kamal Hossain, meanwhile,

"Irresponsibility of this government

He also said it is not fair that the

ruling BNP resorted to criticism of the

Sramik League

rally with former AL lawmaker Latif

Salam and stabbed him indiscrimi-

nately when he was waiting for a vehicle in front of Shaheed Police

Smriti School and College in Kafrul at

and back, Salam was rushed to

Cantonment General Hospital and

upazila under Tangail district, from

where Salam competed in the last

general election, staged demonstra-

upazila for today to protest the attack.

tion and called a half-day hartal in the

Kafrul police said they knew noth-

Jatiya Sramik League President

Abdul Matin Master and General Secretary Roy Ramesh Chandra condemned the attack on Abdus

Salam and demanded immediate

of Labour Studies (BILS) Mohammad

Ashraf Hossain, MP, and Secretary

General Mohammad Zafrul Hasar

condemned the attack on Salam Khan, who is a member of the BILS advisory

nmittee, reports BDNEWS.

Chairman of Bangladesh Institute

later shifted to a clinic in Dhanmondi.

With stab wounds in his hands, leas

Awami League unit of Basail

A gang of seven to eight waylaid

Siddiquy, family sources said.

4:20am, witnesses said.

ing about the incident

arrest of the culprits.

nade attacks and militancy.

FROM PAGE 1

asked the government to find out who

were prompting the prime minister to

police in maintaining law and order.

party leaders

disposal units.

Hasina blamed the BNP-Jamaat coalition for attempt on her life in the August 21 grenade attacks last year.

She alleged former president Ziaur Rahman granted indemnity to Bangabandhu Sheikh Muiibur Rahman's killers while she (PM) offered blessings and promotions to

"You have came to politics through murders and you have come to power over people's blood, and the trend continues. You can kill me any moment...You killed 26,000 people including Shah AMS Kibria, Prof Mohammad Younus (of Rajshahi University) and Mamtaz Uddin (ex-MP from Bogra). You can kill anyone. People will bring you to justice".

"If I have to die like my father, mother and brothers for establishing rights of the people, I am ready to die. You (PM) cannot resist people's movement by issuing threats ... Threats will not work in case of those who are not afraid of death," the AL chief went on.

The former prime minister accused the government of harbouring Islamist militants and their godfathers in the cabinet in a bid to cling to power with the help of anti-liberation forces.

Describing the militant outfit JMB make 'reckless remarks'. as Jamaat-er-Moddhe BNP (BNP inside Jamaat). Hasina said that the has climaxed, and that is why they are ruling alliance is now killing people by calling patriots as traitors. Those inside using militant suicide squads after the the government, who harbour militants murder of people in the name of for going to power, are behind making Operation Clean Heart and with the reckless comments", the eminent help of party cadres and Rab memjurist said

Turning to other issues, Hasina said this government does not want reforms in the caretaker system as it fears people's verdict following spiralling terrorism and corruption, prices of essentials and politicisation

But the people will compel the government to quit through movement, she added. There is no other alternative but to force the government of the four-party alliance to step down, and save the country from being an abode of Islamist extremists, Hasina

stressed. She called upon the people and 14party leaders and workers to visit villages and form committees to track down militants and make public

corruption and irregularities of the BNP-Jamaat government. If voted to power, AL will root out

militancy, bring down prices of essentials within the reach of general people, establish food security, open all closed industries and supply natural gas to Rajshahi, she promised. **HUMAN SEA**

t was a human sea at the Madrasa Maidan, the rally venue, while the city wore a different look with streams of people walking along all the streets, braving day-long winter drizzles.

Thousands of people started to enter the city on buses also from Sirajganj, Pabna, Natore, Chapainawabganj, Naogaon, Bogra and Joypurhat districts from 10:00am.

By 2:00pm, there was no space at the Maidan that can accommodate around one lakh people, and on the

Microsoft faces FROM PAGE 20

The EU said it was "left with no alternative" after giving Microsoft every chance to comply with its ruling. In a landmark ruling in March 2004, the world's biggest software

to open up its systems. Microsoft was also ordered "to disclose complete and accurate interface documentation which would allow non-Microsoft work group servers to achieve full interoperability with Windows PCs and servers".

firm was found guilty of abusing its

position, hit with a record fine and told

Govt to import

decided to import sugar to control the local market as its price has recently increased

But the ministry has not yet taken the decision about how the imported sugar will be distributed in the local market. he added.

The adviser also said the government will take stern action against the unscrupulous traders who have stockpiled sugar to create an artifi-

Sugar is now selling at Tk 50 to Tk 54 a kg in the local market

Ahmadiyyas

FROM PAGE 1 north gate to drum up support for today's siege aimed at pressuring the government to declare the Ahmadiyyas non-Muslims.

Simultaneously, another faction of the anti-Ahmadiyya fanatcs under the banner of International Khatme Nabuwat Movement, Bangladesh (IKNMB) will hold a morning-to-Asr rally in the city's Muktangan today demanding enactment of a law declaring the Ahmadiyyas non-Muslims. After the Asr prayers, the religious zealots will march towards Dhaka Central Jail for voluntary imprisonment'.

The IKNMB last year announced a one-year programme to force the government to declare Ahmadiyyas non-Muslims.

The panicky Ahmadiyyas, who have been suffering a hate campaign for about two and a half years, said at a press conference on Monday such 'gherao' programmes are nothing but pretexts for attacking them, their mosques and homes. They sought protection from the gov-Dhaka Metropolitan Police

Commissioner SM Mizanur Rahman said they have already deployed forces at the Ahmadiyya base and will take adequate security measures to check any violence today.

A number of rights watchdogs and civil society organisations also have vowed to stop any fanatic attack on the minority Muslim sect

The activists of Manobadhikar Bastobayan Parishad. Naripakkha and Ain-O-Salish Kendra will take position at the Ahmadiyya headquarters in the morning to stop any attack. The South Asian Peoples' Union against Fundamentalism and Communalism, and the Ekatturer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee have declared solidarity with them. The activists of the organisations will gather at the Central Shaheed Minar at 10:30am and then will march to Bakshibazar.

The IKNMB expelled Noor Hossain Nurani, who was then the Navebe Amir, on September 9 last, after he had suspended the anti-Ahmadiyya programme due to the prevailing situation in the country. IKNMB President Mahmudul Hasan Mamtazi and Secretary General Nazmul Haq alleged Noor took bribe from the Ahmadiyyas for suspending the

action programme against them. Noor formed the KNMB in the third week of November.

opposition without resolving vita FROM PAGE 1 issues including the August 21 grejournalists got a hand-written letter

9 journalists

posted to the Jhenidah Press Club that was sent by "Three-party Communist-Leftists", an alleged alliance of outlaws.

"You the nine still play the role of police's `dalal' [informer] and when the police kill innocent people, you describe them as crossfire," the etter reads.

"We have already received nstructions from the party high command to kill you immediately", says the letter. The letter also termed the OC of

Sadar Police Station and six ruling BNP leaders (names not mentioned) as "class enemies" and vowed to kill them immediately to avenge the killings in "crossfire".

The journalists mentioned in the letter are: Mizanur Rahman of the Jugantar, M Raihan of the Sangbad, Abdul Hai of the Bhorer Dak, Asif Iqbal Kajal of the Dinkal, Saiful Mabud of the Janakantha. Azad Rahman of the Prothom Alo. Mithu Sikder of the Gramer Kagoj, Azizur Rahman Salam of the Janata, Alauddin-al-Azad of the

Naya Diganta. Jhenidha Sadar OC Md Azizul Huq said over cell phone that necessary security measures would be taken for the journalists'

Doctor's negligence

Gulshan-2 where they consulted Dr M A Mobin Talukder, who is a medicine consultant and diabetologist, and also trained in cardiology. Immediately an ECG was performed under his supervision. As the chest pain was severe, he administered nitroglycerine spray and the natient felt a little better

The family alleged that they did not get a proper and detailed reply when the anxious old parents asked the doctor about their son's condition. The doctor just said that there was some problem in the patient's heart and he advised to perform an exercise tolerance test (ETT) later to get a better idea of the condition of the patient's heart. Family sources said the doctor nsisted that they deposit money for ETT though the centre did not have facility for such a test. The center authorities said they would get it done at their Kalabagan branch.

Meanwhile, the patient again developed chest pain following the ECG. As Mrs Mahbuba asked the doctor how an ETT could be performed on his son in such a critical condition, the doctor still demanded depositing the money, saying that it would be done the following day

Meantime, blood was drawn for a test following which the patient's condition worsened. Then the doctor asked Abi's parents to shift him to any specialised cardiac centre as the centre did not have facilities to manage such a critical patient. He also suggested buying a nitroglycerine spray from a dispensary on the way to hospital. Abi's parents took him to National Heart Foundation and Research Institute at Mirpur, where he was declared as "brought dead".

The patient had to climb down the stairs from the first floor, unaided by the attending doctor and his staff at Saleh Memorial, the parents alleged. The doctor even did not explain

Asked about the incident. Dr M A Mobin said the condition of the patient was all right following the ECG when

fully the real situation of Abi, they

he was administered nitroglycerine When the patient subsequently developed chest pain he advised immediate transfer to a specialised cardiac centre. He claimed that he took all necessary steps to relieve the patient at his centre. When the patient's condition deteriorated, he referred the patient accordingly. In answer to the question why he allowed the patient to walk down the stairs in such a critical condition, Dr Mobin pointed to the limitations of the centre.

In case of inadequate support to attend to a critical cardiac patient. doctors should refer serious cases to a specialised cardiac centre immediately after the initial treatment, an eminent cardiologist of National Institute of Cardiovascular Institute (NICVD) said. Chances of survival in a cardiac

arrest are reduced by 7 to 10 percent with every minute passing without defibrillation (correcting an irregular heartbeat by using an electric impulse) and any stressful condition in such a critical cardiac condition can be life threatening, he added A doctor's responsibility, sincerity,

humanity, and above all proper knowledge and skill are vital to save a patient's life, said the lamenting parents who would never get back their They said they want that people

should be aware about the general condition of clinics so that no patient dies in the future like their son. Valuable time was lost when the

doctor was insisting on the ETT test, which was to be done at another location, the parents said, adding that in case of serious conditions of patients, doctors should also assist in finding alternative treatment facilities and not just say, "Take the patient

Wonder onion

FROM PAGE 20

"I spent Tk 2,000 for cultivating the new variety of onion on a small piece of land and sold the output at Tk 8,000, said Abdul Hamid of Baraharishpur village in Natore district.

He however said seeds of the new variety are not available in the market. Mayezuddin of Ishwardi said he cultivated this onion on 5.6 hectares of land, spending around Tk 90,000 and earned Tk 1.5 lakh from the output per

To popularise cultivation of the new type of onion, the NCDP project organised 333 field demonstrations in 16 districts of the region and distributed 300kg seeds last year. As the farmers have started grow-

ing the crop, they would develop its seeds at their own initiative, and those would be distributed among other farmers gradually, said Arun Kumar Saha, agriculture project implementation officer of the ADB. "It is an important breakthrough in the agriculture sector of Bangladesh

and I think import of onion would stop within three to four years," said Dr Shaharuk Ahmed, an expert in the government's Department of Agriculture Extension. This variety could be produ

about four lakh hectares of high land, which normally remain out of production after the harvesting of Amon

Meanwhile, 'apple kul' is another

variety popularised among the farmers by the NCDP project. The variety is bigger in size and more tasteful than the other varities of kul.

"The land in northwest Bangladesh

is high and free from seasonal flood. This land is very fertile and suitable for producing high value crops and fruits round the year," said Hua Du, ADB country director. She visited different areas and was

impressed to see the enthusiasm among the farmers about cultivating new high yielding varieties.

The NCDP covers 61 upazilas of 16 districts in the region. Under the project, farmers are

cultivating high yielding vegetables and spices, including cabbage, garlic, ginger, tomato, potato, bean, papaya and cauliflower. Many women are also engaged in

production of high value crop. "I cultivated cauliflower on one bigha, spending about Tk 5,000 and already earned Tk 8,000," said Sandhya Rani in a Bogra village. The crop would bring her at least another Tk 5,000, she hoped.

Launched in 2001, the NCDP will be completed in 2008 at a cost of Tk 341 crore. Of this, the ADB provided Tk 236 crore and the rest came from the government fund

Polls on time

to make Bangladesh a failed state Pointing finger at the 14-party opposition combine, she said: "They have joined hands to turn Bangladesh into a vassal state and put the country into the hands of terrorists and bomb-

She said the four-party coalition

wants to make Bangladesh a selfsufficient country and steer ahead the development programmes for the welfare of the countrymen. Referring to the opposition's

demand for ousting Jamaat-e-Islami from the coalition. Khaleda said: "You cannot split the four-party. The coalition is there and it will be there.

BNP leaders, activists and supporters from Jessore and its neighbouring districts Narail, Sathkhira, Jhenidah and Magura attended the meeting They were carrying portraits of late president Ziaur Rahman, Khaleda Zia and Tarique Rahman.

The BNP activists chanted slogans against the opposition and the mili-

The prime minister announced that work would start very soon to establish a science and technology university in Jessore. She also promised to solve the waterlogging problem in Bhabodaho area of the south-western district town.

Khaleda also urged the people to help the BNP-led coalition government to nab the bombers and directed the police to arrest the absconding

Tarigul Islam said Awami League did not bring the culprits to book who were behind the bomb blasts including that at Ramna in Dhaka and Udichi gathering in Jessore, rather falsely implicated many BNP leaders and activists in the cases "But the present BNP government

has not compromised with any one concerning the bomb attacks," the environment minister said. Social Welfare Minister Ali Ahsan

Muhammad Mujahid, BNP Vice President Sarwari Rahman, lawmakers Kazi Alauddin, MAM Aminuddin and Muhaddis Abu Sayeed, Political Secretary to the PM Harris Chowdhury, party central leader Mafiqul Hasan Tripti and local leaders TS Aiyub, Kazi Manirul Huda, Syed Saberul Haq Sabu spoke, among

others, at the meeting presided by Chowdhury Shahidul Islam, president

district BNP.

Our correspondent reports from Jessore: Earlier in the morning the prime minister inspected the Winter Graduation Parade-2005 of Bandladesh Air Force Academy marking the commissioning of 52nd Flight Cadet and Special Engineering Course of BAF at Birshreshtho Matiur Rahman Airbase in Jessore and took

She also distributed trophies among 52 flight cadets and special engineering course officers.

Ministers, lawmaker, Army Chief Lt Gen Moin UAhmed. Air Force Chief Air Vice Marshal Fakhrul Azam, and high official of the army, air force and navy were present at the function.

Later, the prime minister inaugurated Shishu Hospital Bhaban, Shishu Sadan Bhaban and a coronary care unit at Jessore General Hospital.

Depression

FROM PAGE 1

disrupted.

with 14.6 degrees.

The depression was centred at 1,280 kilometres southwest of Chittagong Port and 1,170 kilometres off Mongla Port at 6:00pm yesterday.

Met office sources said the cold weather will be fizzled out by the weakening of the depression. The temperature will then increase by one or two degree Celsius. The maritime ports of Chittagong Cox's Bazar and Mongla have been

asked to hoist local distant cautionary signal number 1. All fishing boats and trawlers have been advised to stay close to the coast and proceed with caution. Met office forecast that light to

moderate fog may occur over the river basins of the country during early Due to fog the planes were seen flying with their lights on while the runways were lit up yesterday but airport sources said no flight was

Country's highest temperature 25.8 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chittagong and Cox's Bazar, while Jessore had the lowest

Rivals kill 3

killed in Meherpur are Swapan Sheikh, 30, and Momin Uddin, 39, while the other Janajuddha cadre. Tomcher Ali, 50, was killed in Chuadanga.

Meherpur police said PBCP-Communist War members around 11:00pm on Wednesday picked up Swapan and Momin from their homes at Chadpur in Gangni upazila. They took them to a nearby field and slaughtered them around 2:00am yesterday. The police recovered the bodies

and sent them to Meherpur Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

In Chuadanga, PBCP-Communist War at 11:00pm on Wednesday called Tomcher Ali. 50. to the crossroads of Soagh over the cellphone and ambushed him. They killed Ali there around 3:30am vesterday

Ali of village Bhogaibogali in Alamdanga upazila was a convict for six years.

Police recovered the body and sent it to Chuadanga Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

Rony Biswas, introducing himself as a regional leader of PBCP-Communist War, called Gangni police, Alamdanga police and local journalists over the phone and claimed responsibility for the three

Two cases were filed with Alamdanga Police Station and Gangni Police Station against Rony and his accomplices for the murders. Police officials said special drives have started to capture the

Warid Telecom licence, the secretary of the coun-

try's telecom watchdog, Abdul Hakim, said. "We formally handed over the licence after they deposited the

licence fee of 50 million dollars and

taka 200 million (three million dol-

lars) as bank guarantee fees," he In September, the group signed a one-billion-dollar deal with the Bangladesh government. It singled out the country's fast-growing

mobile phones as the main sector into which it would put funds. More than half of the amount will be invested in GSM or Global System for Mobile Communication technology, the group's chief executive Bashir Ahmad Tahir said, adding they want to make the invest-

ment "as soon as possible". Saifur sees

FROM PAGE 20 plastic fair as chief guest at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre.

"These birds grow up in the country by eating our crops and then leave," he told the audience from the plastic industry that is facing criticisms from the environmentalists, as plastic products of certain grades are not biodegradable.

In defence of his remark the minister said that indigenous birds at different wetlands in the country, including the Hakaluki and the Chalan Bill could not be found in winter due to the disturbance caused by the foreign birds. He said these migratory birds

come from i Siberia to Bandladesh in search of food and they gobble up frogs, paddy, and different types of insects and crops. They are also potential carriers of bird flu, he added. Criticising the Dhaka-based environmentalists, Saifur said they (envi-

ronmentalists) always carried away by their sentiment and suggest people not to hunt or eat the birds. "But it is not a matter of sentiment; we have to be more realistic in this

Finance, agri

regard," he opined

Ruling BNP legislator Shafi Ahmed Chowdhury, a member of the standing committee on agriculture ministry and also vice chairman of the BFA, submitted a paper to committee chairman Abdul Mannan, alleging that some dishonest fertiliser traders overinvoiced their imports and imported the entire requirement of the year at one go thereby putting pressures on the dollar

Another RNP lawmaker Motahar Hossain, told The Daily Star last night that he and Jatiya Party lawmaker GM Kader also co-signed the paper prepared by Shafi, and asked the agriculture ministry to present a detailed picture of fertiliser subsidy at the next meeting of the committee, billed for January 22.

Kader however denied having signed the paper. He said there were discussions at the committee meeting that the finance and agriculture ministers should meet soon and resolve the crisis arising out of non-release of fertiliser subsidy.

Due to illness, committee chairman Abdul Mannan did not respond to any query, and no one picked up telephone at his residence yesterday. Committee members - Agriculture Minister MK Anwar and former state minister for agriculture and now State Minister for Civil Aviation Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir declined to say anything on the meeting's outcome.

In his paper, Shafi said it would be better if the government provides cash incentives directly to the farmers, instead of providing 25 percent subsidy to fertiliser importers. BFA Chairman Kofiluddin Ahmed

told this correspondent yesterday that unless their dues were paid by this month, the importers would have to pay high bank interests against their loans. "We don't mind if the government

chooses to go for direct cash incentives to farmers. Then we'll go back to our previous open market policy where selling prices of imported feretilisers will be determined by market forces," he

United move

secure the highest possible advantages from the trade packages like Aid for Trade, Non-Agriculture Market Access (Nama) and Trade-Related Investment Measures (Trims).

Business leaders, government officials, economists and trade experts participated in the meeting chaired by ICC Bangladesh President Mahbubur Rahman at the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) auditorium in the city. In his opening remarks, Mahbubur

Rahman said the developed countries have sacrificed but a little in the December 12-18 Hong Kong talks, as they agreed to shed only 3.5 percent of their export subsidy by 2013 and remained rigid on continuing with the \$300 billion domestic subsidy. He emphasised a comprehensive

all-out, preparation for negotiation in the upcoming meetings to ensure gains in the areas like agriculture and non-agriculture market access, service sector and free movement of natural persons. Commerce Secretary Faruk

Ahmed Siddique said, "Our major worry is that the developed nations, especially the USA, may keep all Bangladeshi apparel products out of the duty-free list." However, he said, Bangladesh still

has some chances for inserting some of its textile items on their duty-free lists, as the Hong Kong Declaration allows the least developed countries (LDCs) to identify their products to get the benefit through negotiations. Faruk urged all concerned including the chamber leaders to work hard

Washington, where the products for the negative list will be identified. Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) President Tipu Munshi urged the government and others concerned to lobby for the enactment of the US Trade Act Bill 2005, which proposes duty- and quota-free market access for

to avail of the maximum gain from the

next negations in Geneva and

Bangladesh's apparels. Former BGMEA president Annisul Huq asked the government to take measures that would scale down the production cost of readymade garments and thus increase their market competitiveness.

Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) President Fazlul Haque criticised the Bandladesh delegation to the Hong Kong Ministerial for having no benchmark for what it wanted to gain from the negotiations. But, Bangladesh still has some opportunities to redress its failure in Hong Kong, he added. Criticising Pakistan and Sri Lanka

for their roles detrimental to

Bangladesh's interests in the

Ministerial, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Sayeeful Islam remarked, "It's now proven that there is no permanent friend or foe in the world trade." He regretted that "The country [Bangladesh] had no empirical study on the WTO members and what

there for development." Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Executive Director Debapriya Bhattacharva expressed the apprehension of a possible political inaction n the WTO process in 2006, when the country will undergo a political transition. "We saw a political numbness in 2001 and are afraid of a similar experience during the crucial WTO negotiations in the next year," he said.

alternative courses of action were

Debapriya recommended taking a political mandate by involving parliament in the WTO process, and forming a national committee to read and interpret the WTO Declaration from Bangladesh's point of view to the cabinet. He also suggested providing more resources and support to the WTO cell, appointing a separate secretary to deal with the WTO issues. strengthening the Geneva Mission

and involving the finance ministry in the WTO process for protecting local

Former adviser to caretaker government Rokia A Rahman suggested ntroduction of a separate think-tank in the government as well as coaching and training of the personnel con-

cerned to raise their negotiation skills. Rokia also urged the government to attract more foreign direct investments into the export-oriented sectors and to allocate subsidies in the agriculture and fisheries sectors for diversifying the country's export basket.

ernment and Brac Executive Director Abdul Muyeed Chowdhury suggested closing bonded warehouse and scraping cash incentives for the readymade garments and textile sectors to do away with the country's

vill disappear from the black economy if the government abolishes the bond facility and cash incentives." Former deputy prime minister Jamal Uddin criticised the government

for failing to secure the support of Pakistan and Sri Lanka to Bangladesh's interests, despite hosting the 13th Saarc Summit last Former industries secretary Hasnath Abdul Hye, Square Group Chairman Samson H Chowdhury,

MCCI Secretary General CK Haider, Bangladesh Ceramic Industries Association Chairman Rashed Maksud Khan, Columnist Sadeq Khan, CPD Research Director Mustafizur Rahman, former chairman of Tariff Commission Mohammad Ali Taslim, Bangladesh Chamber of Industries President AK Azad and Bangladesh Textile Mills Association Chairman MA Awal also spoke at the

FROM PAGE 20

"Many of the front-ranking militant leaders have been arrested their terror network is getting shrunk by Madrasa Teachers' Council at the

Babar noted that the entire

for establishing Islamic rule in the country and interpreting Islam according to their own convenience he told the function.

declared war against the Muslims ance.

people in the name of jihad is part of conspiracy against the motherland and Islam," he said He said the conspirators are projecting Muslim youths as terror-

and madrasas. Jamaat-e-Islami lawmaker Delwar Hossain Sayeedi, also president of the Madrasa Teachers' Council, presided over the discus-

Maulana Shafaetullah, a leader of the council, fell sick after the discussion and died on way to

the Office of the Spokesman of the State Department yesterday said an outlawed Islamist terrorist organisation, Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), has claimed responsibility for a series of bombings and suicide attacks in Bangladesh since August against a

wounded nearly 200, the travel alert noted. It said JMB leaflets found at attack sites and sent to local media call for the implementation of strict Islamic law in Bangladesh, justify the use of indiscriminate suicide attacks, and condemn Western

The note also said they (JMB) identify the governments of the United States and the United Kingdom as "enemies of Islam". Newspapers and Bangladeshi nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), including several which receive funding from the United States Government have also

bombers to Bangladesh in November represented a significant escalation in its campaign of violence. It also demonstrated an ability to adapt its methods and targets to defeat police countermeasures, the note added.

US citizens planning to travel to Bangladesh have been asked to

Consular Information Sheet for Bangladesh and the most recent World-wide Caution Public Announcement. US citizens visiting or resident in Bangladesh are encouraged to register with the US Embassy, where they may obtain updated information on travel and security within Bangladesh.

consult the Department of State's

Meanwhile, the US Embassy in Dhaka urged its citizens to avoid the areas of Muktangan, Purana Paltan, Baitul Mukarram national mosque, Press Club, Tejgaon Industrial area and Bakshi Bazar today as the International Khatme Nabuat Movements Bangladesh (IKNMB) is set to stage an anti-Ahmaddiya demonstration and march towards the central mosque of Ahmaddiya community at Bakshi Bazar.

Saddam

FROM PAGE 20 table on accusers by charging that

his American jailers were beating and torturing him. The White House dismissed his allegations as "preposterous" and a

US diplomat in Baghdad suggested

Saddam was "grandstanding" to

deflect attention from charges of

torture levelled against at least one of his seven co-accused. Referring to himself in the third person, Saddam said: "Zionists and the US administration hate Saddam. They said I had ties to terrorism, but

"I had my injuries documented by three American (medical) teams," he told the Iraqi High Tribunal.

Former adviser to caretaker gov-

huge black economy. He said, "Around Tk 1,500 crore

Babar

dens and their network being

and suicide squads are running away," he said speaking at a discussion on "Terrorism and Militancy Bangladesh Perspective" organised Diploma Engineers Institute in the

nation is passing through a difficult time as some misguided people are carrying out bombings and terrorism in the name of jihad using Islam. They are killing innocent people

This misinterpretation has no relation with the teachings of Islam,' Babar said half-education about Islam is impelling them into suicidal acts. Being Muslims, they have

and took recourse to violence and killing instead of peace and toler-The state minister urged the madrasa teachers to be alert so that no madrasas can turn into a den for militants, "Handing bombs to young

ists so that common people get scared of hearing the name of Islam

Central Islami Bank Hospital.

US issues travel alert

FROM PAGE 1

variety of targets. The half-dozen attacks targeted the judicial system and local government institutions, killed approxi-

mately 30 Bangladeshis, and

social and political concepts as un-Islamic.

received threats purportedly from JMB's introduction of suicide

later acknowledged that I did not.