Hafiz said they also discussed the price hike of food items and recommended measures for the

A code of conduct for the politibetween the government and

"It would help to put politics in order after the polls and also ensure that parliament is the centre of everything," Hafiz said, adding that people must not be held hostage to the whims of political parties resorting to programmes like hartal and blockade.

Replying to a query, Lt Gen (retd) Mahbubur Rahman said since elections cannot be held under the state of emergency, they have demanded its withdrawal as

Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman said the BNP leaders have and those will help the formal dialogue to succeed.

"They have demanded implementation of the electoral roadmap while we have assured them that both the government and the Election Commission are working towards a meaningful and credible election," he said, adding that the discussants have agreed on the need for a qualitative change in

Referring to the proposal for a code of conduct, he said, "It is indeed a good suggestion and would be discussed in details

The adviser said the BNP delegation agreed with the government's idea of holding dialogue with people alongside the political

The leaders believe a code of conduct drawn up through talks

will have the potential to be

According to Hossain Zillur, the BNP leaders will support whatever decision the government would take regarding timing of the local government elections.

"They even said the government can hold upazila election at any time," the adviser added.

Before going to the state guesthouse, the faction leaders met at acting chairman M Saifur Rahman's Gulshan residence.

A meeting of party leaders and former lawmakers will be held at a Gulshan community centre today to decide on the next course of action.

PRO-KHALEDA LEADERS' REACTION

On the news of unofficial talks between advisers and Saifur-led faction, the leaders loyal to the now detained former prime minister Khaleda Zia held an emergency meeting at Khandaker Delwar's Nam flat.

During the four-hour long meeting from 11:00am, they decided they would take part in the placed some specific proposals talks if the interim government allows them to consult the detained chairperson.

Standing committee members RA Gani and Tanveer Ahmed Siddique, chairperson's Advisers Brig Gen (retd) Hannan Shah and Mushfigur Rahman, vicepresidents MK Anwar and Sarwari Rahman, joint secretaries general Goyeshwar Chandra Roy, Selima Rahman and MA Mannan, among others, attended the meeting.

The leaders also decided to take up programmes to press home the demand for Khaleda's release. They might also send a letter to the EC asking it not to invite anyone except Khandaker Delwar to represent BNP in the electoral reforms talks.

"The government is actually staging a drama by holding talks with a BNP manufactured in the government factory. It's unfortunate," Delwar told newsmen.

Scores killed in DR Congo

Scores of people were killed when a passenger plane crashed and burst into flames just after take-off yesterday at Goma in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo,

An official working in the control tower at Kinshasa airport said he had received information from Goma that of about "100 people on board, there were six survivors including the pilot and co-pilot."

The DC-9 jet, chartered by the private Hewa Bora Airline, was leaving to fly west to the capital Kinshasa when it crashed in Goma's Birere market area at around 2:30 pm (1230 GMT), trapping people inside the burning wreckage, officials at the two airports said.

FROM PAGE 1 Police recovered five Arges grenades, one sub-machine carbine (SMC), two of its magazines, and 68 bullets, including 30 SMC bullets, at North Damuddya of Damuddya upazila in Shariatpur Monday, our Madaripur correspondent reports.

The grenades, firearms and the ammunition were found in sack dumped into Siddya canal. Police said the sack was pulled on to the bank around 3:00pm by

Police later recovered the weapons but could not arrest anyone as of 8:30 last night.

Superintendent of Police (SP) of Shariatpur Shahriar Rahman told The Daily Star that even though the grenades were under water, they were still alive.

another clean sweep. Everybody however will look forward to see whether Mohammad Ashraful's boys can carry their fighting spirit in this match also.

The day-night game begins a 4pm Bangladesh time with TEN Sports and state-run Bangladesh Television (BTV) beaming live coverage from the 30,000-capacity The bounty of paddy and corn offered a spectacular sight as the

The vulnerable Bangladesh train seemed to cut through them batting, which showed some character before losing the third match by 23 runs chasing a mammoth 308 runs, however is all set to face a test of Mohammad Asif who is making

comeback after a five-month lay-off. The fit-again right-arm paceman, who has swing and seam expertise, may pose real trouble for the

change in their batting line-up as left-handed opener Shahriar Nafees, who is struggling to keep his spot, could be replaced by either Zunaed Siddiqui or Nazimuddin.

Shakib Al Hasan's gutsy 75 in the However, police dispersed the third game after Tamim Iqbal's welldemonstrators and cleared the composed half-century gave the tourists some confidence and the they can enjoy another day in Multan

encouraging for the Tigers as Pakistan haven't enjoyed major home advantage at this ground -winning three matches and losing as witness the maiden run. The stufar the team batting second has won dents from Darshana Girls' School, on three occasions. clad in colourful dresses, welcomed

There is however uncertainty over the passengers of both the trains full action today as it rained in with New Year's greetings. also forecast for the match day. **TEAMS**

was preparing to return to India with the train that arrived from Dhaka.

front of the train.

sides near the border, Bangladesh is yet to start work on it. As the passengers got off to be

thoroughly checked, they found themselves in a waiting lounge after the customs and security personnel led them through small doors for checking

almost two and a half hours. on its inaugural run meant to its way from Gede, it was 9:30pm(BDT) when it reached its destination, Chitpurstation.

The exhausted passengers were not in a mood for a big welcome after the long journey and there were no such arrangements. Only a her son, Harunur Rashid, said single dancer was performing on a podium built there on the occasion of the train service launching. Still, it had the sincerity that touched the

> Additional Communications Secretary ATKM Ismail is the head of the 28-member government delegation, which travelled on the inaugural Maitree Express.

> Pinak Ranjan Chakravarti, who also travelled to Kolkata aboard the train. talked with the passengers about

their feelings. "The main objective of the service is to merge it with the Trans-Asian Railway," he said during the

Hasina falls sick

FROM PAGE 1

Hossain with one of their colleagues. Mokbul had forced a journalist to get up from a seat in the courtroom, since there is no seat designated for journalists there.

The protesting journalists also made a six-point charter of demand including a demand for an apology from Mokbul, and his withdrawal from the security detail of the case hearings. The demands also include withdrawal of the deputy commissioner of police for the prosecution, and Additional Commissioner of Police of Tejgaon Zone Abdul Mannan, designating of seats for journalists in the courtroom, and permission for them to carry cellphones in the courtroom since currently everybody else other than them are allowed to do so.

As Hasina, clad in a traditional Baishakhi sari, reached the courtroom at 9:50am, she exchanged Bangla New Year greetings with her counsels while complaining about her deteriorating physical condition.

Expressing discontent about the treatment she is 'receiving, Hasina also complained, even her relatives are not being allowed to meet her in "I am going blind. I can't see with

my left eye and can't hear in my left ear. I'm suffering from an unbearable pain in my injured ear and from terrible headaches resulting from that pain," said Hasina.

Defence lawyer Advocate Toufique Newaz made a submission focusing on the government's rules of business and the parliamentary system in relation to the process of awarding the contract for setting up the power plant. He also focused on laws and the constitution showing that there is no legal ground for indicting their client.

As Toufique continued with his submission, the judge asked him to argue on points relevant to the case. Earlier, Hasina tried to draw the judge's attention several times without any success.

At one point Hasina told the judge, "The case will not move forward if you lose patience. You must listen to everyone. Does independence of the judiciary exist only in papers?

She also said the lawyers must be allowed to argue their points of view and the judge should afford them full hearings.

"The people can right now see how separate the judiciary and the executive branches really are! If there is a great deal of pressure on you, you may deliver the verdict right at this moment," Hasina quipped at the

"Now the question is, do you enjoy enough independence to deliver justice?" Hasina threw a question at the judge. She then went on to explain that

the contract for setting up the bargemount power plant was awarded during the tenure of an elected government, and that there were a number of committees and subcommittees to ensure transparency said.

integral part of the Bangalee culture

and tradition and has been consid-

ered as the spirit of a non-communal

festival as people irrespective of

and other parts of the country.

Women in soothing white saris with

red border and men in panjabee--the

dresses decorated with Baishakhi

motifs--welcomed the new year.

Youths had their cheeks painted with

the country's map and other

emblems that gave the celebration a

Braving scorching heat, thou-

sands of revellers started pouring

into streets, parks and open spaces

from early in the morning to cele-

brate the biggest festival of the

Bangalees. The crowd turned into a

human sea in the afternoon when

the mercury came down slightly.

Many were seen returning homes

Many foreigners clad in tradi-

Colourful rallies, musical

Varieties of handicrafts were

The celebration began with

Rabindranath Tagore's song "Esho

hey Baishakh esho esho" performed

by the artistes of Chhayanaut at the

city's Ramna Batamul at dawn.

Thousands of men, women and

children welcomed the new year

Chhayanaut has been organising

Shobhajatra--around 9:30am from

The Shobhajatra featuring giant

replicas of tiger, cat, owl, tortoise and

huge colourful masks seeks well-

being of all. It was attended by tens of

soaked in water) with fried Hilsha,

lentil, green chilli and onion at home

restaurants and at fairs to celebrate

different parks were, however, seen

charging high prices for the delica-

cultural functions that kept the

Makeshift restaurants set up in

Different organisations held

Many ate "panta bhat" (rice

with the tune of the song.

the national anthem.

their institute premises.

thousands of people.

Pahela Baishakh.

programmes, fairs and cake festivals

displayed and sold at the Baishakhi

fairs in different parts of the capital

tional Bangalee dresses were also

seen at and around the main venue.

added colour to the celebration.

special tone.

even at midnight.

A festive spirit gripped the capital

religion and caste celebrate the day.

FROM PAGE 1

And moreover, she said 'the power plant deal was struck at a time when the constitution, parliament and the judiciary were governing the

in the process.

talk," she said.

"But the government brought false allegations against me and brought the case under Emergency Power Rules (EPR), while constitutional rights of the people are restricted and the parliament does not exist. It can't be called justice,' Hasina added. "For the sake of justice you [the judge] must listen to the defence lawyers' arguments and allow me to

resumed their arguments and continued. Around 12:45pm Hasina informed the court that she was not able to stay in the dock any longer as she was having severe pain in her ear, prompting the court to adjourn the

At that point the defence lawyers

Hasina once before became il during the arraignment hearing on

Anti-corruption Commission Deputy Director Sabbir Hasan filed the case with Tejgaon police station complaining that Hasina and six others, in collusion and abusing power, helped a foreign company and its local partners win a deal for setting up a 100MW barge-mount power plant in Khulna, depriving the lowest bidder.

The curator of Bangabandhu Memorial Trust was also later indicted in the case.

Tagore to be

the passenger train service is a "historic occasion" for both India and Bangladesh.

Indian Railway Minister Lalu Prasad said "this historic day will be written in golden letters in the histories of India and Bangladesh. Though the geography of the two countries is divided, the soul of their peoples not"

"Through the rail network, we intend to strengthen our friendship and the cultural bonds that tie the people across the borders", Prasad

The first journey of the Dhakabound Moitree Express has been almost smooth barring a 13-minute hold-up at a place in Nadia district where refugees from Bangladesh took up position on the track demanding proper rehabilitation.

Meanwhile, The Indian Express said in its editorial that the restart of the rail link between Kolkata and Dhaka "is hope that various parts of South Asia are finding comfortable measures of each other".

Moitree Express carried the message that sought to break the "terrible stereotypes of the other that gain in the absence of popular and cultural interactions", the editorial

Job project

are related to rural infrastructure development like development of water supply system in cyclone hit areas, rural infrastructure development in Khulna, Bagerhat, Satkhira and greater Noakhali, roads development projects at union levels in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur, Narsingdi, Manikganj, Patuakhali, Barguna, and development of rural roads and markets in greater Sylhet.

The rest three projects were approved for renovation and maintenance of urea fertiliser factories.

The Ecnec yesterday sent back a project for establishing at least one wholesale market of agriculture products in each union across the country so that farmers can get fair price of their products.

The Local Government Division had placed the proposal saying the government would set up only shades for the markets, but the Ecnec members asked the Local Government Division to include options like mechanism so that farmers can get information about the prices of products in other markets.

Bail under EPR

FROM PAGE 1 under the EPR, concerning supply of adulterated oil.

On the night of March 21 last year, the government issued a gazette notification relating to bail under the EPR with retrospective

effect from February 13. According to the amended rule, an accused in such a case is stripped of the right to file bail petition during investigation or

Moreover, they cannot seek redress from 'any higher courts against any order given by any court or tribunal before or during the trial--until the delivery of the final verdict, 'it says.

But the HC granted bail to Maijuddin, which the SC stayed later following the government appeal.

During hearing of the appeal, defence counsel Abdul Matin Khasru yesterday argued that the executive wing of the state has no jurisdiction to restrict anyone from seeking bail in any court.

Left parties

FROM PAGE 16

trial of the case.

They accused the government of having a dual policy. "The government is trying to suppress the demand of the people in the name of state of emergency while sponsoring meetings of communal groups with their anti-people demands," they

Coordinator of the alliance Zonaed Saki read out a statement at the press briefing and Tipu Biswas, Saiful Haque, Bazlur Rashid Firoz and advocate Abdus Salam spoke to

Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal also condemned the police intervention | ignoring objections from the facduring the alliance's peaceful human chain programme and the police threat to file cases against

Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal Convener Khaliguzzaman in a statement also said, "The government is not allowing the Democratic Left Alliance hold peaceful programmes with pro-people demands but it remained silent during violent programmes of fundamentalists with their anti-people demands."

AL demands

FROM PAGE 1 central office at Bangabandhu

Avenue in the city. Awami Sainik League organised the token strike to press demands for release of Hasina, announcement of election schedule, with drawal of the state of emergency and bringing down prices of essen-

The hunger strike started at 10:30am and ended at 5:30pm with Razzak offering fruit juice to the fasting activists.

The AL leader alleged that contrary to its claims, the government has totally failed to run the country. People now understand well how the country is running, he said. He criticised the government for what he termed its double standard,

saying that politicians are being kept indoors under the state of emergency but militants are bringing out processions violating it. "A country can't run this way. Another presidium member of the party, Suranjit Sengupta, mentioned that at the meeting with

holding parliamentary election by December 31. AL Organising Secretary Mahmudur Rahman Manna said as the government has failed to run the country; it should hand over power to an elected government.

them, advisers assured them of

Party leader Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury and Sainik League President Bazlur Rahman also spoke at the programme.

FROM PAGE 16 being sidelined by the peace deal.

Even parties seen as slightly sympathetic to keeping a monarch are lagging behind the ultrarepublican Maoists in the vote count.

A total 208 seats have already been allocated, with the Maoists taking 114. Their nearest rival, the centrist Nepali Congress, has won 32 seats, the election commission said.

Officials said counting for the 335 seats to be awarded by proportional representation had also begun, with the results -- based on roughly eight percent of returns among the main parties.

15yrs in jail

running Bombay High Court case during the British era, Justice Rabbani said the learned judges of the court quashed the proceedings of the case for its unreasonable delay.

should be quashed immediately without considering any merit on grounds of inordinate delay," he

Another eminent jurist Dr Shahdeen Malik told The Daily Star, "Bail is a discretion of the court. However, it's very unusual that bail wasn't granted over such a long

The four accused spent 15 years in jail and their punishment is most likely to be less than the time they have already spent, Dr Malik said adding, "This could be a good instance for seeking compensation from the state for such a long imprisonment without conviction.

Referring to a Supreme Court order, the experts said since the disposal of the case became prolonged, the four confined accused could have been awarded bail as was awarded to

The Supreme Court in a rule in 1991 said undue delay in holding a trial due to the procrastination of the prosecution will be valid ground for granting bail and the issue of granting bail in such a case need to be considered with care. Furthermore, notice of application by prosecution for cancellation of the bail is to be served on the accused well in advance.

During the hearing on the case, the

for the disposal of the case following framing of the charge and the counsels of the four detainees applied for bail almost every day.

The last time their bail petition was

EC wont' invite FROM PAGE 1

their unification. He however said he did not see any positive signal in this regard.

"We will wait one or two more days to see their unification. Then we will take decision on talks with BNP since we can't wait for long," **Hudasaid**

The CEC once again expressed his desire to have a united BNP at the EC's electoral reform talks. "We will be happy if they (BNP factions) resolve their differences and join the talks with us together. We hope they will reach an understanding. It is better for them and for us as well if they come together," said Huda.

Earlier in November last year, the EC had invited Saifur-led BNP faction to electoral reforms talks tion led by Delwar, who was appointed secretary general of the party by its detained Chairperson Khaleda Zia. This triggered a con-

Finally, Khaleda filed a writ petition with the High Court (HC) challenging the EC's invitation to Saifur-led faction. The HC on April 10 discharged the writ.

Against this backdrop, the EC is vet to hold talks with BNP.

Following discharge of the writ petition, Huda told reporters on the day the EC might informally talk to both factions of BNP so that they could join reform talks it

together. Asked yesterday if he would initiate any informal move now, the CEC said he does not feel encouraged after reading statements of both factions' leaders in newspa-

BENAZIR KILLING

Pak lawmakers press for UN probe

AP, Islamabad

Lawmakers from Pakistan's newly elected parliament have passed a resolution seeking a UN probe into the assassination of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto, officials from her party said yesterday.

The National Assembly, the lower house of Pakistan's parliament, unanimously adopted the resolution late Monday, said Izhar Amrohvi, secretary for parliamentary affairs for the Pakistan People's Party.

Benazir Bhutto died last December in a gun and suicide bombing attack as she was leaving a campaign rally in Rawalpindi. President Pervez Musharraf has blamed a Taliban militant leader, Baitullah Mehsud, for the attack.

Mehsud has reportedly denied nvolvement.

Law Minister Farooq Naek, who introduced the resolution, said Monday that it sought a UN mandated international commission to "identify culprits, perpetrators, organisers and financiers behind the heinous crime and bring them to justice," state-run Radio Pakistan quoted him as saying.

the foreign ministry, Amrohvi said. Musharraf has opposed a UN probe but allowed British police to look into what caused Benazir Bhutto's death.

The resolution will be forwarded to

The Scotland Yard probe concluded that Benazir Bhutto died after slamming her head against the roof of her bulletproof sports utility vehicle during the attack. Benazir Bhutto party officials claimed that she died from an assassin's bullet.

parliament are dominated by a coalition of anti-Musharraf groups led by Benazir Bhutto's party.

denied by the court was on March 19 CRÓNOLOGYOFTHECASE The forceful entry and robbery case

(number 44) was filed on April 22, 1993 by Ulfat Rana alias Rafigul Alam from Dhanmondi with Dhanmondi Police Station accusing three to four unknown individuals.

Following the filing of the case, police arrested 22 suspects and four of them gave confessional statements under section 164. Following their confessional statements, the police recovered some of the stolen goods.

Detective Branch of police, pressed charge on September 9, 1993 accusing On July 2, 2000, the case was sent to

First Assistant Metropolitan Sessions Judges' Court for trial. Charge was framed against the

Till March 19, 2008, six prosecution witnesses gave their depositions to the court.

Rice prices

Tk60 to Tk80 per maund.

A maund of Minikate, a higher grade of fine rice, was selling for Tk 1,570 to Tk 1,620 yesterday. A maund of this variety sold for Tk

kg each) of BR-28, a variety of Boro, from Phulpur of Mymensingh reached Babubazar Wholesale Market in old Dhaka early hours yesterday. Nizam Uddin, general secretary of Badamtoli and Babubazar Rice

Wholesalers' Association, told The Daily Star, "As far as I know, this is the first [consignment] of Boro that reached the market this season." The quality of this coarse variety is also superior, he added.

been witnessing a smaller crowd over the last three days.

FROM PAGE 16 Breaking the door of the room, her roommates and some other girls of the hall rushed her to the Dhaka Medical

Dumuria in Khulna district, Chhanda was the daughter of Binoy Krishna Sarkar, an employee of Bangladesh Krishi Bankin Khulna. The reason why an extrovert on

Sumi. However, Mili and Faisal denied their involvement in the crime, said Gulshan police.

The last time anyone heard from Faruq was at 12:00 noon on Saturday when he spoke with his mother, a resident of Shyamoli in the city, on his cellphone and she became worried about her son as

On Sunday, Faruq's mother sent her son-in-law Mohammad Firoz to Faruq's apartment at Banani to

Firoz told The Daily Star that when he went to the flat on Sunday afternoon, security guard Monir told him that Faruq hasn't been in his apartment since Saturday and and jolly Chhanda committed suicide could not be known. A number of residents of the dormitory said she was very cheerful and she used to talk to all simulta-

suicide. Assistant Professor Lafifa Jamal,

a house tutor of the dormitory, said with this a total of three such incidents took place in the hall in the last two years. Khadiza Khatun and Zohra Khan Progya, two residents of the

2006 and on June 25, 2007 respec-

the apartment was locked. He then contacted Faruq's friends and relatives, but no one knew about his whereabouts, added Firoz saying that later the same day, he went to Gulshan Police Station and filed a general diary (GD) at around 11:00pm, prompting the police to

enter the flat and discover the bodies. An hour after the bodies were recovered, Faruq's wife Mili also came to the police station at around 3:00am to file a GD, raising suspi-

The Detective Branch of police, the investigator of the case, produced both Mili and Faisal before a Dhaka court yesterday, seeking 10 days' remand for each of them. The court, however, granted four days' remand for each.

since then. Earuq also came back two months ago and started to live separately as the couple's disputes deep-

cions about her, said Gulshan police.

Faruq's family members said he had been living in USA for the last 22 years and he took Mili to the US after their marriage. Mili, however, came back to Bangladesh two years ago and refused to return to her husband

judge of the Supreme Court Appellate Division Ghulam Rabbani told The Daily Starthat the incident is a proof that the legal system lacks the broader humane approach in trying a criminal

"I therefore expect that such a case

period of time."

The maximum punishment for the offence of robbery is life term imprisonment or rigorous imprisonment of 10 years plus fine, said legal

the five other accused.

plaintiff could not identify anyone as he was blindfolded during the rob-A total of 90 workdays were fixed

DU student

doctors declared her dead.

suspicion of murdering Faruq and

apartment complex. Faruq's relatives alleged that his wife Mili had been involved in an extra-marital affair with Faisal

he did not answer any phone call later on, said the relatives.

check up on him.

neously Hall authorities said police later visited Chhanda's room and primarily identified the incident as

same dormitory, committed suicide in the same way on July 28,

Man found dead FROM PAGE 16

held by this December as men-tioned in the Election qualitative change in politics," he Commission's roadmap, otherwise continued. democracy would be in grave peril.

government to arrest the upward cal parties to ensure discipline in post-election politics should be formulated through discussions

political parties, he added.

soon as possible. Terming the talks 'fruitful',

during the formal talks."

It is the customs and immigration

checking point for the passengers

from Bangladesh. There were very few who were not in law enforcers' uniforms, but the usual uneasiness at the sight of the security forces of the neighbouring country was not there. The train 'Maitree', meaning 'friendship,' was aptly named.

crossed at Darshana in Chuadanga. Here, the locomaster from the other country took charge of the other train. The engine splits and connects the bogies. Curious eyes stick to windows

gazing outside at the passing train

for familiar faces, hands waving

The trans-border train began its

through windows and bogie doors.

An exchange of gushing happi-

ness could be felt for quite a while as

the two trains, the one leaving from

Dhaka and the other from Kolkata,

inaugural run from the Cantonment Station at 8:30am Monday, one hour and 15 minutes after the train from Kolkata started rolling "This would definitely be one of my great memories," Shawkat Ali, the main driver of the maiden run

could not hide his excitement as he

was talking to the reporters at the

Cantonment Station.

He, however, would also experience a deprivation. "I feel bad that I would have to return from Darshana," he regretted, his assistant Anwar Hossain also nodding to The eyes of the passengers soon tracked down a number of foreign diplomats, including British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury

who cheered with the musical bands on the platform invited to entertain the passengers of the maiden journey. Excited at the news of the launching of the service, local peo-

ple crowded at the station since

morning, many clicking away on

their cellphone cameras to capture

With the wave of the green flag,

the train of hope and friendship

the historic moments.

and ADB Country Director Hua Du,

rolled on the newly built tracks. Curious people alongside the tracks at localities and also at fields waved to the train, complete with colourful buntings and garlands and a banner at the front.

become a part of history. However, there were some people like Momena Begum, 75, from Bikrampur, who had been missing the service for a long time. "I was around 12, when I travelled with my elder sister to Kolkata," Momena, travelling with

recalling her memory. She failed to

say what year it was, but said that the

For many, travelling by the train

train was 'strong' though it ran on Her sister, Mojidon, who used to live at Park Street in Kolkata, is no more but there are some other relatives in Khidirpur whom they are going to meet, she said.

Back then, Momena used to

board the train from Goalunda

Station and get down at Sealdah

Besides, Kolkata-bound passengers also used to get on the train at Fulbaria Station in Gulistan. "The train used to go to Bahadurabad and there we had to cross the river by steamer," Roisul

Alam Moina, a 57-year old man of

Dhaka, recalled. He was a class three student in 1962 when his father took him to Kolkata through Darshana by train. "Now I am taking my family," Moina said, introducing this correspondent to his wife Dilara Alam, son Emranul Alam Tapu, 17, and daughter Zeenat Alam Tupu, 27.

Maitree's maiden sally

He is travelling just to be on the 'first trip, 'he added. The train passed through Tongi, Joydevpur and Tangail before making a 10-minute stopover at

414km in Bangladesh and 120km in The announcement in the train of approaching Darshana was an exciting moment for the passengers, as they already knew that the train from Kolkata had already arrived there, which is also the

immigration checkpoint for pas-

Earlier, the driver of the Dhaka-

bound Maitree Express was forced

to stop the train at Ghoshalpur near

sengers from both countries.

on its 534-kilometre journey

Gede station when around 500 activists of Nikhil Banga Nagarik Sangha staged demonstrations against the Indo-Bangla train ser-

tracks after 15 minutes. It took about two hours and 13 minutes for immigration checking of the passengers from Dhaka, who got there after a six-hour long jour-A huge crowd from nearby localities thronged Darshana station to

"This service should be more frequent," Chhotelal Ram, the Indian train locomaster said as he

The banner from Dhaka engine replaced the one from Kolkata at the Though the two countries agreed on putting metal fencing on both

The journey resumed after Although the train ran a bit faster on

incoming passengers.

Indian High Commissioner

Several advisers to the caretaker government including Communications Adviser Ghulam Quader were present at the inaugural ceremony at Dhaka Cantonment Station. They hoped that the service would increase trade and commerce between the two countries apart from improving relations among people.

plane crash AFP, GOMA, DR Congo

airport sources said.

14 grenades

Shafiq and his father who were fishing there with a net.

ligers

ground.

Bangladeshi batsmen to make sure that his side continue their dominance and do not give up the win-The visitors are likely to make one The visitors are likely to mak

where the pitch is usually flat. A small stat will however be many. In four day-night matches so

Multan on Monday and showers are PAKISTAN (from): Shoaib Malik (captain), Salman Butt, Mohammad Yousuf, Misbahul Haq, Shahid Afridi, Kamran Akmal, Mohammad Asif, Umar Gul, Sohail Tanveer, Rao Iftikhar, Sohail Khan, Wahab Riaz, Fawad Alam, Bazid Khan, Naumanullah and Sarfraz Ahmed. BANGLADESH (from): Mohammad Ashraful (captain), Tamim Iqbal Shahriar Nafees, Zunaed Siddiqui, Aftab Ahmed, Shakib Al Hasan

Mahmudullah, Dhiman Ghosh,

Mashrafe Mortaza, Forhad Reza,

Abdur Razzak, Shahadat Hossain Syed Rasel, Rokibul Hasan and Nazimuddin.

Bombings FROM PAGE 16 al-Sadr, and security forces killed six people, the American military

"Coalition forces took on small

arms fire during an operation in As

Sudayrah early Tuesday," the mili-

tary said referring to an area inside

Sadr City. It added that in return fire, coalition forces killed three gunmen. Later, US troops called in air support as the clashes continued, the military said, adding in the

ensuing firefight three more "en-

Shia militiamen have been

engaged in sustained clashes with

US and Iraqi forces for more than a

emy fighters" were killed.

week in Sadr City in which around 95 people have been killed. The firefights began when US and Iraqi forces started operations in the sprawling slum to stop lethal rocket and mortar attacks from the district towards the Green Zone, the seat of the Iraqi government and site of the US embassy.

The US military claims that

between March 23 and April 12 at whole Dhaka University area throbleast 596 rockets and mortars bing with celebrating people. rounds were fired towards the Central Shaheed Minar. Green Zone, many of them missing Dhanmondi, and Jatiya Sangsad the target and killing Iraqi civilians. Bhaban areas were also seen Four Americans, including two swarmed with people throughout soldiers, were killed in the attacks.

The celebration this year, however, got gloomy as a balloon vendor at Dhanmondi died as his gas cylinder exploded around 12:15pm. The Sector Commanders Forum

State-owned Bangladesh Television, Bangladesh Betar and the private TV channels broadcast special programmes to mark Pahela Baishakh. Newspapers brought out special supplements. Bangladesh missions abroad also celebrated the event. Bangladesh

triates attended the programme. Ambassador M Humayun Kabir urged all to work together for the development and prosperity of Various other organisations including Dhaka University, Jatiya Press Club, Dhaka Reporters' Unity, Pahela Baishakh 1415 Udjapan Parishad, Guardian Forum, EastWest University, Bangladesh Small and

and Industry, and Chattagram Samity also held programmes in celebration of the day. Govt to buy

boro, so it may see some success in its procurement drive. toTk28akg.

tons is expected. It also wants to have a constant reserve of 10 lakh to 15 lakh tonnes of food grains, the current level of which is below 5 lakh tonnes.

programme at different points adjacent to Ramna Park to mobilise public support against the war criminals and anti-Liberation War forces.

a platform of the sector commanders

of the Liberation War, organised a

mass signature-collecting

Embassy in the United States organised a cultural programme and a "pitha utshab" (cake festival) on April 13 evening. A huge number of expa-

Bangladesh. Cottage Industries Corporation, Italy Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce

the event for over three decades. It set procurement price for wheat at Tk up a huge stage for its trademark 26 a kg during the immediate past cultural programme at Ramna rabi crop season, but failed to buy Batamul. The artistes of Chhayanaut the grain, as the market price was sang, recited poems and essays, around Tk 30 a kg. concluding their programme with Against the backdrop of volatil-Students of the Institute of Fine ity on the food market and the Arts of Dhaka University brought out government's failure to buy food the traditional procession--Mongol grains, it recently consulted its

> The invited delegates suggested the government to increase the boro procurement price from Tk 26 Food ministry officials said the

government set a target of procur-

ing 30 lakh tonnes of food grains in

the next fiscal year for building a

safe food bank, with a plan to pro-

deputy commissioners, rice mill-

ers, and traders in an effort to find

the right procurement price for

cure the major portion of the target this boro season, when a bumper production of 1.75 crore metric

so far showing a more equal spread

Citing the instance of a long-

Sirajul Islam, an inspector of

accused on April 29, 2001 and the trial of the case began on July 24, 2002.

Several rice wholesalers at Badamtoli, Babubazar and Mohammadpur Krishi Market said that in the last ten days, the wholesale price of coarse rice came down by over Tk 100 per maund (37.32 kg) and that of fine rice also dipped by

1,650 to Tk 1,700 a week back. Meanwhile, a total of 20 sacks (85

In the meantime, different outlets that sell subsidised rice and other essentials in the city have

College Hospital by a rickshaw but the Hailing from Rangapur village at

Police are also looking for Monir, a security guard of the

ened. Their thirteen-year-old son was staying with Faruq while three and a half-year-old daughter with

Pakistan's new government and Four days before the incident, Mili brought their son to live with her.