Daily Star Wednesday during her stay in Dhaka on a family visit.

She strongly criticised the Bangladesh government for failure to check rampant corruption and human rights abuses in different spheres of the society, and for failure to form a human rights commission, an independent judiciary, and an accountable administration.

Irene discussed in detail her points on political crisis, rise of militancy, human rights condition, government's attitude to global human rights bodies' recommendations, repression on the minorities, extra-judicial killings, and trial of war criminals.

"Private sector is doing well and there are some positive trends. Bangladesh came out of WTO not with a good record and there was quite a lot criticism that Bangladesh actually did not negotiate well," she said.

The AI chief observed that the coming year is significant because some tensions with fundamentalist trends are emerging and clashing with the traditional secular and tolerant tendencies in the country.

POLITICAL CRISIS

In the political field, the big test is going to be the election, she said. Many are saying whether the election will be held at all and if held, whether it'll be free and fair and what will be the consequences if it is not free and fair."

A sense of uncertainty and unease is widespread over holding of the election, she noted.

She said she fears there will be an increase in human rights violation in the build-up to the next election over the opposition's threat not to take part in the polls without reforms in electoral and caretaker government systems, and the apprehension about coming of a third force.

"People will take to the streets, there will be more demonstrations, more violence, one party against the other or other elements coming in that case. So, the risk of violence and human rights abuses will be high in this process," she said.

For human rights to thrive, a good strong democracy is a must and free and fair elections are a prerequisite to the democracy, she said. "You need simultaneously an independent judiciary, a dynamic civil society, free media and an accountable administration, none of which are existing in a perfect state here in Bangladesh.

Continues she: "Election process is being challenged for various reasons. Independence of the judiciary has been a big issue. ...We're in a situation of a democracy that is emerging and at risk."

"I still hope our political leaders, in power and seeking power, will show political maturity. They will give us the leadership so that we can hope 2007 will give us a

believe and hold themselves accountable to the people, she said, adding: "Accountability doesn't come just by dropping a paper in the ballot box once in five years. It's a process. Where is justice of attack on rights activists, politicians and political leaders, murder of people like Kibria and Ivy Rahman, attacks on common people and journalists?

"There should be trial and just trial for injustices and the government has to be open to the people and there should be parliamentary scrutiny, which is also missing in our system.

parties, international community and the government will sit together and work out a solution that'll respect human rights.

Asked about the possibility of a third force emerging if the situation worsens, she said, "I don't think people of Bangladesh will accept any situation where their rights are going to be trampled again, the political rights for example. I think the leaders know it. Whatever third force they might

"But what happens if the political process itself is corrupted? If a government comes through an election not held in a free and fair manner and if it's not able to govern the country properly? That'll be even more dangerous,' the AI boss said.

"I think this government could have done many things, they came with a very powerful mandate. This is time for this government to put in place some lasting institutions. Another significance is how this government wants to be

Irene identified people's growing awareness about human rights and mobilisation for themselves at different levels, flourishing civil society organisations and performance of private enterprises as positive trends.

"The great concern for human rights situation is impunity, absence of trial of injustice. The poison of impunity is deep-rooted in Bangladesh, right from the beginning. Many injustices have taken place since 1971 and trial of none of these has been made.'

On coming to power, political parties think they got the people's mandate to rule without scrutiny, which simply cannot be acceptable in a democracy, she said.

"There is barely any parliamentary scrutiny or accountability to people, and corruption is rife. This sort of bad governance makes it very difficult for people to exercise their human rights. Misgovernance is ruining the hopes of ordinary people," she said, stressing the need for proper institutions of governance and human

The administration is getting worse in terms of governance and this has been consistently the pattern, she said, adding, "And this is where private enterprise and actors are stepping in to fill that vacuum.'

The AI and international community will keep a close watch on the minority issue in the coming

"The government has taken an ambivalent view on the Ahmadiyya issue, sometimes we see them stopping the anti-Ahmadiyya activists but in other times they turn a blind eye. Our position is very clear, the government is bound to protect everyone within its territory from human rights violations.

First the government launched the Operation Clean Heart and then introduced the Rab. "This is not the way. The guilty people also have human rights and have to be tried justly. When you bring the army in and people get killed, people do not get justice. The army was given indemnity. This is not the way to administer law and

"The government has to work within the law to improve law and order. How can it expect the people to have confidence in the rule of law when the government itself has no confidence in the rule of law?" she observed.

The AI chief said it is worrying that the government is not paying heed to the concern of the AI and other rights organisations. "We had requested the present and past governments to put in place human rights institutions, national human rights commission. Both the last government and present government had promised to do it, but they didn't.

"Governments generally tend to believe that they need to control when there is any security problem and the global tendency is to reduce liberty and restrict human rights to increase security," she said, talking about newly intro-

duced tele-tapping law. "There is provision of restriction in human rights system in the cases of emergency and other situation as well. The way teletapping is being done is a matter of concern to me. There is no proper scrutiny, no debate in the parliament, whose phone is being tapped, and there is no system of redress. There is no protection of the individual," she added.

"There is a civil society and notso-civil society and that's why we've seen the militancy. The vacuum that has been created because there is no governance

elements to indulge in violence," Irene said. Government first ignored the issue, then did nothing, and then is doing something half-heartedly, she noted. "Although these elements are few, their influence appears much because of the way the government is dealing it. I think the government needs to take it very seriously and

get to the roots of the problem. So far their tendency is only to deal with the symptoms. "The whole world is watching how the government deals with the militants because so far it was in a state of denial. The test will be in 2006 of what action the government takes and how effective

those steps would be." "The militants are trying to restrict tolerance and diversity. They are trying to restrict the space for liberal and alternative thinking," she said.

But Irene sees no success for the militants. "I don't think any kind of extremist ideology will succeed. Because people of Bangladesh are tolerant, there is diversity here. The militants can't destroy everything and take us back 500 years. What can happen is an increase in fear, insecurity and instability.

On international link, she said, "I don't know if there is an international link or not, but we should solve the problems inside the country. If our own house is in order, no foreign power can do anything to us.'

Asked to comment on government reaction of expelling Abu Hena MP for his statement about militant network, she said, "Instead of being transparent, the government goes after whistleblowers like Abu Hena.'

TRIAL OF WAR CRIMINALS

Irene finds it 'very important' to deal with the issue of war crime because international human rights trends are now towards

justice and ending impunity.

"The wounds need to be healed, not to divide the country but to bring people together and provide them justice, so that people can forgive and move on,' she said.

bodies that have experience and seek their advice, she said. **GOVT'S IMAGE CRISIS**

The government has to be aware that others cannot create its image. "It is the government who has the power to create its image or destroy it; others simply reflect and expose it. So, the responsibil-

ment," she observed. A ruling government cannot use others as an excuse not to discharge its own responsibility. "If it does so, it admits its own failure. If it accuses others of doing something that means the government is not capable of running its affairs," she said, adding that what the government is doing is putting pressure on the media not to expose the situation as it sees.

GLOBAL HUMAN

RIGHTS CONDITION Irene finds 2005 a mixed year. But the trend is in favour of Human Rights in the long run. "Even the most powerful country in the world was put on the docks of global conscience. Bangladesh cannot buck the trend, because the government will face the same pressures." "We're not in a hopeless situation in Bangladesh. I've found a growing awareness and maturity among the cross section of people here. The question is whether our leaders will show the same political maturity.'

Outlaw lynched

son of Lutfor Rahman of Trimohoni area of the town.

Critically injured police informer Sahin was rushed to Kushtia General Hospital and later shifted to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital.

In Chuadanga, armed outlawed cadres kidnapped trader Yunus Ali from his house and threatened his family members to kill him if Tk 3 lakh is not given within two days.

Family members went to the police station to file a case but police recorded a GD (general

2 Ctg cops

Official sources said Suchi and Hanif demanded Tk 300 in bribe from a truck driver near the city's Bahaddarhat police box Thursday The truck was carrying timbers from Bandarban.

As the driver refused to give them bribe, sergeant Suchi and constable Hanif started beating

When the locals chased the policemen, they took shelter at a nearby police box. The cops then fired four blank shots, prompting the locals to cordon off the police box and barricade Arakan road for about two hours from 9:30pm.

Later, the CMP assistant commissioner (Panchlish zone) rushed to the spot and assured the locals of taking action against the cops. The CMP authorities yesterday closed the policemen.

Meanwhile, a probe committee has been formed to investigate the

Judicial probe FROM PAGE 16

The authorities withdrew the general manager (GM) of Chapainawabganj Palli Bidyut Samity and formed a one-member body to investigate the police

At a press conference yesterday, District AL Convenor and former chairman of Reb (Rural Electrification Board) Brig (Rtd) Enamul Huq said despite fivepoint demand placed by the subscribers, the local authorities did not take any initiative to resolve the ongoing power crisis.

He alleged that police opened fire on the subscribers while they were demonstrating in front of the Palli Bidyut Samity office on January 4 demanding uninterrupted power supply in the area.

Huq demanded judicial inquiry into the incident and punishment to those responsible for the killing. He also demanded adequate compensation for the victims' families. treatment for those who were injured in police firing and withdrawal of 'false' cases.

Chapainawabganj AL also formed a five-member committee to inquire into the incident.

Nomination

FROM PAGE 16

Colombia, Poland and the State Department's Consular Affairs

The post of US envoy remained vacant since Ambassador Harry K Thomas was made executive secretary in the office of the secretary at the State Department. He left Dhaka on July 2, 2005.

Blackmail of ships

remain anchored at the port.

Its ordeal started with the three merchants, who imported the cement clinker, demanding Tk 5 crore from Prominent Shipping Services in compensation for a delay in unloading their cargo. When the ship's operator refused to meet the demand, one of the importers, Premier Cement Ltd. filed a lawsuit with the High Court in November last, claiming a Tk 3.17 crore compensation and requesting for an arrest of the ship.

After hearing the case, the court granted a Tk 80 lakh compensation and ordered immediate unloading of the cargo. As Prominent Shipping submitted a bank guarantee of the amount, the court on December 18 ordered the release of

But, disregarding the ruling, the importers, shipping agents and stevedores concerned refused to receive 679 tonnes of clinker from the ship and asked for at least Tk 55 lakh of the compensation before they would let the ship go, the sources said.

Dragonis Captain M Azharul Islam in a letter requested the secretary of the shipping ministry to issue the necessary directives for the release of his ship. The ministry is yet to take any decision in this

However, Zahur Ahmed, a director of Sicom Shipping, the local agent of the MV Dragonis, denied the allegation of deliberately harassing the ship's owners. Rather, he claimed, "The ship was dysfunctional and so made an unacceptably long delay in unloading the goods, causing much damage to the importers.'

He said the matter has already been settled and the entire cargo unloaded, and the ship can sail anytime. According to Zahur, the Dragonis has stayed at the port for the last half year to do some urgent

brushed off the allegation against importers of detaining ships in collusion with shipping agents. He said ships are arrested only when contracts are violated or goods are damaged.

On the other hand, Director General of Shipping Shafiqullah admitted that incidents of such detainment are not uncommon. But, he said, "Such arrests are commercial affairs, where the importers take advantage of the country's legal instruments and system. The government has noth-

Shafiqullah said an arrest convention is in operation across the world, which warrants one to deposit a certain amount of money before filing any case demanding the arrest of a ship. But, Bangladesh is yet to sign the convention, which would significantly reduce the scope of such malpractice, he added.

coming in with bulk items like cement clinker, oil, wheat and salt are the prime victims of such coer-

For instance, they said recently a foreign ship brought 10,000 sacks of cement to the port. The importer found some of the sacks rotten in the cargo hold and demanded the total price of the consignment as compensation from the ship own-

The ship owners turned down the demand and, instead, arranged for a survey of the cargo. They eventually settled the dispute and got the vessel released by paying the price of some 60 tonnes of cement that had actually been damaged.

Sources said the racketeers are most active in wheat import. A section of local importers with

connivance of suppliers in India load rotten wheat onto chartered

ships. When the vessels reach Chittagong, the importers themselves tip off the local testing authorities to secure the proof of the wheat being rotten. They then claim compensation from the ship owners for the alleged damage to the grains.

In the third week of December, an ocean-liner named Gudermes laden with soybean oil arrived at the port. It was declared arrested on December 26 on the allegation that water had been mixed with the sovbean oil on board. The ship's crew does not know how many days it will remain captive at Chittagong.

Another ship named Stevens Pearl was arrested on August 14 and had been for over a month. The ship Angelic was detained on August 18 and obtained release after over two weeks of confine-

Shah, was arrested recently and held up for several days. The sources said the racket is so owerful that it often dares to

ocean-going vessel, the Amanat

Even a Bangladeshi flag-carrier

disregard even High Court orders to release ships from the port. With such arm-twisting becoming a regular phenomenon, the image of Chittagong Port abroad has started to sink low. The captain of a foreign ship put it this way, "It's pure blackmailing of foreign ships

by a bunch of local crooks.' Previously, a similar racket was active at the country's second seaport, Mongla, where over 100 foreign ships had been detained in the two decades since the early 1980s, destroying the port's image completely. Now, Mongla Port often remains empty of ships, as the ship operators are too reluctant to send their vessels to this infamous port.

One must wonder whether Chittagong Port is heading for the

4 murdered

Dhanu's brother Abdul Jalil filed a case with Shyampur Police Station mentioning that four unidentified criminals killed his brother as a sequel to a previous enmity, police

"My brother has enmity with some people as he used to arbitrate when he was a UP member," the Duty Officer of Shyampur Police Station quoted complainant of the case Jalil as saying.

Police could not arrest anyone by

In Mirpur, criminals strangled 38ear-old Jashim Uddin, manager of a timber shop at Farashganj in Sutrapur sometime on Thursday On information, Mirpur police

recovered Jashim's body from a first floor room of a house on Mazar Road at Mirpur yesterday morning with his hands tied behind and nose and mouth taped up. The throat also bore strangulation mark. Iamiruddin Ratan, owner of the

shop, told reporters at the DMCH that Jashim went out of his shop Chittagong Timber at around 3:00pm to collect Tk 4 lakh outstanding bill from a customer at Mohammadpur.

Police could not arrest anyone by last evening.

Earlier on Thursday night, criminals shot dead Nazrul Islam Babu, a student of Government Titumir College at East Tejturi Bazar.

Police are yet to have any lead to the murder.

Kafrul police recovered the slaughtered body of an unidentified youth around 25 from Baishtek area early yesterday.

The body also bore marks of stabbing and the man was killed only a few hours earlier, police and hospi-

Manufacturing

towards the end. But, this year things are quite different. As the first quarter has seen a remarkable growth, the BBC source said they hope to see a double-digit growth this year in the manufacturing

sector. A Bangladesh Bank source said a huge amount of loan has been disbursed in the last two years in the industrial sector, which by now has gone into production. In FY04 the industrial credit increased by 41 percent from the previous fiscal year's and in FY05 it rose by 37 percent, bankers and economists said. On an average, it takes 12 to 18 months for a newly set up industrial unit to go into operation.

Explaining the boom in the manufacturing sector, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) Research Director Zaid Bakht said a good amount of fresh investment has gone into the textile sector to meet the post-MFA challenges. This has resulted in a significant production growth.

Investments have also been made in the small industries that produce garments accessories, Bakht said, generating a production boom.

Besides, the BIDS research director said, the quality of local products that are largely consumed locally has been much improved. For example, previously many plastic products used to be imported from India. But now,

with improved quality the local plastic products have replaced the ndian goods, as consumers are using them more and more.

Pubali Bank Managing Director Khandkar Ibrahim Khaled confirmed Bakht's explanation, saying the local entrepreneurs are now producing quality products, resulting in an increased demand for these both in the domestic and foreign markets. So, besides garments, he said, the exports of Bangladesh-made plastic items, ceramics and leather goods have also climbed much.

Khaled sounded a note of caution, saying if the interest rates increase due to the present tight monetary policy, the tempo of industrial growth may lose much steam. Already, the industrial term loans dropped by 1.13 percent in the first quarter of FY06 from that in the corresponding quarter of FY05, they pointed out.

The entrepreneurs have been able to digest the interest rate hikes made so far, but if the rates are increased further they may not be able to cope up with the extra burden, the Pubali Bank MD said.

Bakht and Khaled also agreed on the point that if the pace of the industrial growth is to be sustained the government has to improve the law and order as well as improve the infrastructure including port

India, Pakistan to start 2nd rail link in Feb

AFP, New Delhi

India and Pakistan will start a second rail link connecting the two countries from February 1 as part of an ongoing peace process, an Indian rail official said yesterday.

The 12 kilometer (7.5 mile) line would connect Munnabao in India's western state of Rajasthan and Khokhrapar in Pakistan's Sindh province, the official said.

"The two delegations have agreed to commence the train operations on this route from 1st February 2006," the official said at the end of two-day talks between railway officials of the two countries.

The ticket fare and frequency of the service would be decided later for the Thar Express, named after the desert located in the region. The two countries will take turns

to provide the service every six Pakistan would operate the first service on the line which was sus-

second war. A vear ago, the Samihota (Concord) Express trying peace process between the fractious South Asian neighbours to ease long-standing tensions after they almost came to blows for the fourth time in 2002.

pended 40 years ago when the two

countries became embroiled in their

Re-probe

FROM PAGE 16

Police filed two cases with the Khulna Police Station on January 17 in this connection, without naming any accused.

The first IO of the case was OC Ataur Rahman, followed by Mosharef Hossain who succeeded Ataur as the OC. Mosharef submitted charge sheet to court accusing 12 extremists of murdering Manik

The 12 are Sumon, Bulbul, Ali

Akbar Shikder, Sattar, Belal, Omar Faruque, Mitul, Shawkat Hossain, Altaf, Mafiz and Sarwar and Mithul. Fifty-four people were named as prosecution witnesses. The next OC of the Khulna Police Station, Iqbal Hossain, who

was the third IO of the case was

asked by the police commissioner

to reinvestigate the case. But he did not do so for known reasons. Of the 12 charge-sheeted accused, four were lynched and four others killed in 'crossfire' in separate incidents last year and the vear before it. Four are now in jail

Prices

FROM PAGE 16

couple of weeks. The prices of vegetables like potato, green chilli, bean, radish. cabbage, cauliflower, eggplant, bitter gourd and tomato were almost the same compared to the last week, though the prices of these vegetables are expected to

ease in the winter season. The price of powder milk has also sharply increased by Tk 10 to 30 a kg in both wholesale and retail markets. The price of powder milk has increased for the fourth time in a year, traders said.

In spite of huge supply of different kinds of fish in the kitchen markets, prices remained unchanged, even increased in some cases on the last week. The price of local chickens also increased by Tk 10 to 20 per kg.

Expressing resentment at the price hike ahead of Eid, several customers said the unscrupulous traders get the opportunity to hike the prices due to the government's indifference.

"Unless the government takes initiative to control the market at once, we the middle class people will not be able to celebrate the Eid," said emotion choked Harunur Rashid, a banker.

Cattle

FROM PAGE 16 might sell at Tk 15,000- Tk 20,000

a medium sized one at Tk 25,000 Tk35,000 this time. "We have to charge higher price from buyers as prices of fodder and other materials needed to rear cattle have increased greatly," said Sarwar, a cattle trader from Bhanga in Faridpur, who has come to

Golapbagh market. " A sack of 'bhusi' now costs Tk 500 to Tk 550 compared to Tk 250

to Tk 300 earlier," he mentioned. Besides, they had to pay much higher truck fare this time to carry cattle to Dhaka due to increase of the diesel price.

"On way to Dhaka, we had to

pay some money to police in tips.

But we faced no other hassles," he A buyer at Golapbagh market, Rawshan, said cattle sellers are demanding excessive prices this time. A seller charged Tk 50,000 for a bull, much more than the price of

About extortion, Awal, who has brought 60 cattle to Kamalapur market from Bogra, said, " I have not faced any extortion on way to Dhaka. But he also said price of cattle

such a bull last year, he said.

would be higher this time. Security has been stepped up at the markets and the adjacent areas. Police, paramilitary BDR and

these places to ensure safety of the

buyers and sellers.

going from door-to-door as per

Eid tickets

advance tickets were sold but a broker was found selling those

for January 9 and 10 have been sold but I collected a ticket for January 10 from a broker, paying additional Tk 150 " said Farhad Hossain from

the bus terminals yesterday.

SADARGHAT LAUNCH TERMINAL

No cabin tickets were found at ticket counters but brokers in selling those at three to four times the normal fare.

ble-berth one for Tk 1,700 to Tk 2,500 on Dhaka-Barisal and Dhaka-Bhola bound launches, depending on the quality of the

Actual fare rates of ranged from

1,100 for the two types of cabins. traffic situation in the terminal

space in the vessels before they

FROM PAGE 1 Travel agents

FROM PAGE 16 the Hajj Camp and demanded

government intervention. Sweet Travels tasked Kazi Air International with buying 36 air

Police said Mostafizur of Kazi

Air claimed to be innocent and said

they could not buy the tickets as Sweet Agency did not made full payment. Osman Gani of Sweet Travels told reporters he could not send

the pilgrims to Saudi Arabia as they did not pay him enough. "We provided the amount as demanded by Sweet Travels, but they did not arrange tickets and

visas for us," a police official said

quoting the FIR. The last hajj flight left Dhaka for Jeddah at 12:30pm yesterday with The names of Sweet Travels and

Moallem Overseas are were not

found in the website of 363-

member Hajj Agencies Association

anchor at the terminal and charge Tk 50 to Tk 80 from each passenger to allow them to sit there.

Mobile courts were yet to take any steps to stop such illegal prac-

Barisal bound launches yesterday charged Tk 180-Tk 200 for a deck ticket against Tk 146.25 as

shown in a BIWTA chart. According to the BIWTA, launch fares have been raised to Tk 0.90 per km from Tk 0.85 for a distance of up to 100 km and Tk 0.75 per km from Tk 0.72 for a distance of over

100 km.

KAMALAPUR STATION Brokers were found selling advance tickets near Kamalapur railway station at double the nor-

Bangladesh Railway started sale of advance tickets on January 1 and stooped on January 5 but a large number of passenger could not collect tickets even queuing up for

six to 10 hours. Passengers alleged that brokers in the guise of passengers bought advance tickets taking advantage of the sale of four tickets to one

A mobile police booth is receiving complaints from passengers.

JMB den

arms, 300 bullets, over 15kg explosives, grenade and bullet making materials and Islami books. The same night, they raided a four-storey building at Tongi and

Kamal, owner of the house. Following Russell's information

electronic meters and devices. On yesterday's operation, Commanding Officer (CO) of Rab-1 Moniruzzaman told the press that they broke into the house at

Russell's brother-in-law Sagor rented the ground floor of the house on January 1 at Tk 3,000 per month and has been staying with his wife and two children since then, said Rab sources. The CO said sensing the raid Sagor locked the

A survey for the Yediot Aharonot

said an Olmert-led Kadima would

win 39 of the Knesset's 120 seats

against 20 for the centre-left

Labour party and 16 for Sharon's

amid rising chaos in the West Bank

25 Palestinian legislative election,

which will also have far-reaching

A White House spokesman

stressed the Palestinian elections

should go ahead as planned

despite the uncertainty caused by

Palestinian leader Mahmud

Few Israelis have left such a

Abbas on Thursday insisted the

mark on both the military and

political landscape as the contro-

versial Sharon over the past 50

While Sharon lay fighting for his

ballot would not be postponed.

consequences for the peace pro

Sharon's illness also comes

old right-wing Likud.

Sharon's illness.

Sharon back

FROM PAGE 16

irreversible brain damage. One of the doctors at the hospital told the Maariv daily that "we cannot say this with certainty, but due to the location of the problem,

extent" Another of Sharon's doctors was quoted as telling the Haaretz that the damage was likely to be "exten-

sive and irreversible' The prime minister's deteriorating health comes as he was seeking election to a third term in office as head of his new centrist

election in Israel will go ahead as planned in three months' time on March 28. Deputy Prime Minister and

cials have said a scheduled general

in accordance with the law. However in the event of Sharon dving or being permanently incapacitated, Olmert's temporary appointment will have to be

meet with former Labour prime minister Shimon Peres who is now allied with Sharon.

Opinion polls have so far shown

Strip as well as standing up to Palestinian violence. as a revered leader who was able to

lishing his political obituaries which all acknowledged his towering presence. Haaretz said he deserved the nation's gratitude for showing courage by pulling out of the Gaza

"Sharon is completing his term

stand up to enemies at home and

abroad, and only faltered on the

previous instructions of the Election

Commission and about 80 percent

enumeration has been completed in

life, the Israeli media began pub-

Kadima's support largely holding up, despite the loss of Sharon. heroic battle for health," it said

for collecting information for the

fresh voter roll

Sources said the district administration last July prepared a list of 50,525 Rohingya refugees, who are now suspected to have been included in the voter list.

that some Rohingya refugees were listed for the voter roll. Preferring anonymity, they said a huge number of refugees were drafted in the preliminary list but they would be sorted out in the 'final

Commission (EC) workers refused to consider them for the voter list. Our correspondent in Barisal reports: The enumerators across the

district continued their work yesterday as they did not receive "fresh instructions", they said. Majibor Rahman, Barisal district

election officer, said neither the EC nor its secretariat issued any fresh instructions following the HC order. "So, we continued collecting data

There is also the allegation that many female enumerators have engaged their husbands or brothers for doing the job for them.

2006 a crucial year

socially," the Bangladesh-born AI chief said in an interview with The

vear because of the uncoming elections and the Bangladesh government is aware of it, she

order.'

stronger democracy. It is possible only if the leaders which provides a space for bad

She said she hopes the political

be, is also aware of it, I suspect."

judged," she said. **HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITION**

If the Bangladesh government feels it is going to be a very tricky situation to deal with, it can invite the UN Human Rights Commission and other international

ity has to lie with the govern-

repairs and maintenance work. The Sicom director also

ing to do about it.'

However, both Bakht and

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel are maintaining vigilance at

vesterday. "Staffs of counter said all tickets

Shimultala in Kurigram. This was a common scene at all

connivance with launch staffs were Some sufferers said scalpers are selling a single-berth cabin ticket for Tk 1,200 to Tk 1,500 and a dou-

launch service.

Tk 400 to Tk 600 and Tk 700 to Tk Deployment of Rab alongside BDR and police improved the

Many brokers illegally occupy

 $made \ the \ first \ recovery \ in \ the \ same$

The recovery included 10 fire-

the Rab busted the second denon the first floor of the building at around 11:30pm and recovered ammonium nitrate, detonators, iron rods, iron sheets, batteries, gunpowder, 27 wristwatches, electric circuits,

arrested Russell and Mostafa

East Ashkona in Uttara yesterday afternoon following information revealed by Russell.

of Bangladesh.

we believe that the damage that the prime minister suffered is expected speech will be affected to a certain

Kadima party. For the moment at least, offi-

Finance Minister Ehud Olmert has been named acting prime minister

Olmert was to convene a meeting of Kadima MPs on Friday and

approved in a cabinet vote.

Rohingya refugees

Local administrations in Tekhnaf and Ukhia have admitted the fact

list'. In an incident, ruling alliance activists and some Rohingya refugees allegedly beat up at least 20

the last five days," he said. "If the Election Commission gives any new direction, we will follow it. headded. The activists of the Awami League

were also found busy with the work.

According to some enumerators

in Kawnia area of the city, around 500

voters are enrolled on average a day.

They said they faced no problems

except for the pressure for enrolling expatriates. Suchitra Dev of New Bhatikhana area of the city said all her family members have been included in the newvoterlist.

Hasina Begum of Nahar Manjil in

Gaveswar area and Mahbubul Alam

of Bepari Bari area, however, com-

plained that the enumerators came

to their houses but did not list all eligible voters of their families. Kamal Sharif, commissioner of ward No. 3 of the city, alleged that the enumerators are not sincere and