Blasts, clashes

committee to ensure fair counting of the votes cast by some 2,300 councillors, he added

Candidates and their supporters were in front of the AL chief's residence as of filing this report at 10:35pm.

Sources said president and general secretary might come out from Kamrul Hasan Ripon, president of Jagannath University BCL, Mahmuduzzaman Ripon, Mahfuzul Haider Roton, SM Salehin Reza, and Hasibul Islam Mithu Kotowal.

The number of president candidates came down to 14 and general secretary to 24 following announcement that those who would not poll at least 20 percent of the votes would be 'kicked out' of the organi-

Before the polling, SSC certificates and the dates of birth were checked to make sure no one of the contenders has exceeded the age of 29 years.

Earlier in the day, as AL Joint Secretary Obaidul Quader, who is also in charge of the party's student affairs, reached the council venue at the Institute of Engineers Bangladesh (IEB), several hundred activists led by the resentful old guard burst out chanting slogans demanding cancellation of what they said was 'illegal council'.

They damaged chairs, tables and windowpanes in and around the IEB auditorium. They damaged at least two vehicles and burned banners and posters. Rampages on the busy street in front of the IEB went on for about an hour.

Witnesses said instigated by Obaidul Quader, pro-council junior leaders and activists chased the senior leaders and beat up at least 10 of them.

Chase and counter-chase panicked the councillors into taking refuge at nearby Suhrawardy Udyan and Ramna Park.

In the face of chase by groups of pro-council activists, senior leaders eft the IEB area.

At about 12:30pm, three shots were fired outside the IEB auditorium when the representatives from across the country were asked to show their ID cards. Besides, three crackers were exploded at that time, adding to the confusion and disorder at the venue.

At one stage of the melee, police chased the BCL men and took the situation under control.

Outgoing BCL President Liagat Sikdar told The Daily Star that after an investigation actions would be taken against the persons responsible for the acts of vandalism.

Referring to the gunshots and

bands of crackers he said the ruling party men did those to mar the BCL council.
Obaidul Quader accompanied

by former and present BCL leaders supervised the council.

Leader of the opposition and AL president Sheikh Hasina instructed that only those who passed SSC examinations in 1995 or later could vie for the top posts of the organisa-

tion.
Later she relaxed the age limit by

found lying in the veranda during the

drive and technician of the institute

Mohammad Ali said the fluid is kept

hundred four-litre and five-litre jars

and huge quantity of blood sugar

tubes kept at the store of the insti-

Mohammad Ali for his alleged

involvement in irregularities in

kidney dialysis, eyewitnesses said.

But the duty officer of Tejgaon Police

Station told The Daily Star at 9:10

last night that nobody was arrested

average 30 patients undergo kidney

dialysis every day with 12

irregularities. Director of the institute

Dr Jahangir Kabir said it was an act

of 'sabotage' to tarnish the reputa-

tubes come from the Health

involved in the sabotage, he said a

case under the Special Powers Act

against the authorities when this

Twelve mobile courts yesterday

report was being filed last night.

Officials were preparing to file a

probe will be conducted to know it.

Institute officials said on an

Denying his responsibility for the

He, however, said the fluid and

or picked up from the institute.

machines.

Directorate.

tion of the institute.

Law enforcers picked up

The mobile court found several

there in that way.

two years considering the student body's council not being held on

Hasina, leader of the opposition, inaugurated the two-day reunion and national council of at Dhanmondi Club Ground on

US trains Asian experts on counter terrorism

AFP, Colombo

Counter terrorism and anti-money laundering experts from South Asian nations began training with US experts in Colombo yesterday, the US embassy said.

Some 40 South Asian regulators and lawmen from Pakistan. Bangladesh, Maldives and Sri Lanka were attending the study sessions organised by the US department of justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The studies were also supported by Australia's Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering and Britain's Charities Commission, the embassy said in a statement.

The three day meeting would provide a forum for regional law enforcement professionals and fiscal authorities to share experience and tactics in combating the abuse of charities for terrorism, it

Lightning

FROM PAGE 1 Sources said the three were struck by lightning while working on their croplands at noon. They died

The injured, identified as Shamsul Haque and Abdul Haque of Burichang upazila, are undergo-

In Brahmanbaria, three people were killed as lightning struck them during rain in Banchharampur upazila at about 11:00am.

They are Wahed Miah, 25, Moslem Miah, 40, and Mohan Das. An Army man was killed by lightning at Dhaka Cantonment

esterday evening. He was identified as Sepoy Monir Hossain, 22, son of Abdul

Police said Monir, posted at ST Battalion, was struck by lightning while playing at COD Parade Ground near ZIA Colony at about

His body was sent to the Combined Military Hospital.

6 joint secys promoted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

secretary level is on the cards, sources said.

The officials who got promotion

are Ashraful Maqbul, divisional commissioner of Chittagong, Habibullah Majumdar, joint secretary, water resources ministry, Syed Hasinur Rahman, joint secretary, land ministry, Mokhlesur Rahman, director general (DG) of Women's Affairs Department, Khondakar Rashedul Hoque, DG of Environment Directorate, and Illiyas Ahmed, joint secretary, commerce

The Superior Selection Board sits this morning at the secretariat to take decision on the promotion of other officials, the sources added.

Opposition

FROM PAGE 16

"They (opposition) wanted to fish in troubled waters by sponsoring the bombers," she said, adding that bombings started during the tenure of the previous government but they did not take any preventive mea-

ber KM Obaidur Rahman, Communications Minister Nazmul Huda, Social Welfare Minister Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid State Minister for Liberation War Affairs M Rezaul Karim and Prime Minister's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury also spoke on the occasion. Local MP Ali Newaj Mohammad Khaiyam presided.

The prime minister said the people of Bangladesh want a government that can give peace, devel-

BNP-led alliance in the next general elections to continue the trend of development and build a prosperous and self-reliant Bangladesh.

About Padma bridge, which will connect country's southwest with the capital through this district, the prime minister said: "I also want Padma bridge so that the people of the region can move over the bridge. But the big project costs a lot of money.'

She assured that the bridge Doulatdia points.

Earlier, the prime minister inaugurated a memorial plaque for the martyred freedom fighters of Rajbari, a 100-bed girls' hostel of Rajbari Government College and a pure water-supply project in Rajbari municipality.

FROM PAGE 1

and children in South Asia region.

Official sources told The Daily Star yesterday that the ministerial meeting would be preceded by the Saarc home secretaries meeting on

Shamim, 23, Zakaria alias Jewel, 21. Nur Azam Siddique alias Yeasir 27, Belal Hossain alias Tamim, 21 Aleya Ferdousi, 27, and Akramul Islam, 23. They were produced before the court yesterday.

arrested five of the accused at a house in East Bashabo, which was rented by Sunny to coordinate the August 17 countrywide serial blasts. The law enforcers believe he narrowly escaped arrest at that time.

chief Shaekh Abdur Rahman, was captured by Rab in Dhaka on November 13 last year. Acting on his information, the elite force recovered huge arms and ammunition from South Manda in the city.

Motijheel Tk 30,000 for selling date expired soft drinks while another court fined Sohan Restaurant in Motijheel and Hazi Sweets in Gulistan Tk 30,000 each.

14-party

FROM PAGE 1

criminals and those who have meeting sources said.

"As we can not sit with the members of Jamaat-e-Islami who have connection with militancy, we have decided that the discussion on the proposed reforms could be held between Awami League and BNP," one of the members of the 7-

nave AL the mandate to carry on the dialogue on their behalf including even a dialogue with Jamaat if deemed necessary.

electoral reforms through dialogue with our counter part," AL presidium member also one of the members of the committee Suranjit Sengupta told The Daily Star last night.

The other members of the committee are AL general secretary Abdul Jalil, Tofail Ahmed, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon, Gono Forum leader Pankai Bhattacharya and National Awami Party leader Enamul Haque.

The government yesterday promoted six joint secretaries to the rank of additional secretary.

More promotion at the deputy

BNP Standing Committee mem-

opment and public security.

She urged people to vote for the

would be built and, if necessary, it would be built both at Mawa and

Saarc

terrorism and trafficking of women

Charge framing

The Rab on September 8 last year

Sunny, younger brother of JMB

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) on October 10 last vear submitted the charge sheets of two cases to the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka. All of the accused, except Sunny, gave confessional statements to magistrates on different

Amini asked FROM PAGE 16

had said Faruque and other staffs of Proshika would be killed on that very

The Daily Bhorer Kagoj ran the news on April 20. Later, the news was published in other newspapers but Amini did not contradict the news.

Faruque filed the case with the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate against Amini on May 14 2000. Following the hearing, the court issued summons against the accused to appear before it but Amini failed to appear before the

The court issued an arrest warrant against Amini on July 2, 2000. Amini appeared before the court on July 3 and obtained bail. Advocate Sheikh Rezaul Karim moved for the

Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 1 Sheikh Hasina

Time writer Alex Perry's cover report is published under the title "Rebuilding Bangladesh" -- "A nation long plagued by natural disasters, poverty, corruption and violence may finally be on the verge of a happier future.

For detailed coverage of Time magazine on Bangladesh, please see page-11.

Shootout shrouded

where the incident took place and policemen were probably late in

reaching there, he said. But in a blatant contradiction to the cop version the victim's family insisted that the police beat Amzad

Narrating the story to journalists after deposition, a tearful Sabuj said Sub-Inspector (SI) Wahed started to beat up his father savagely after the arrest at 4:00pm Monday.

The SI asked them to come to police camp (at Koshba in Gangni unazila) and meet him. Sabuj along with his mother went to the police camp at 7:30pm, only to find his father hanging upside down from a branch of a tree on the compound. "They (police) demanded Tk 1

us my father was not alive at that Expressing their inability to pay such a huge amount of money they returned home and came to know in the morning vesterday that Amzad

was taken to hospital where he died

at 4:00am.

lakh if we were to get back my father

alive", Sabuj said. "But it seemed to

But the police have a different tale to tell. Amzad was interrogated at the camp and taken out by a police team to recover firearms.

Criminals belonging to Amzad's group ambushed them when they reached the Bhatapara primary school at about 12 midnight, police said. A gunbattle soon ensued as the police team returned fire, and Amzad was caught in the 'shootout' while trying to escape. Police rushed Amzad to the

Meherpur Sadar Hospital at about

A member of the outlawed party Janajuddho, Amzad was accused in several cases including four mur-

ders, police said. Amzad came out of jail in 1999 serving out a life term in an arms

JP divided

FROM PAGE 16

the party today to discuss the issue. The JP chairman was convicted of corruption and barred from contesting the last general election. According to the law, someone sentenced to more than two years' imprisonment following conviction for moral turpitude cannot take part in any election within five years of serving out the sentence.

The restriction in the case of Ershad has expired recently. The Gaibandha-4 parliamentary seat fell vacant after ruling BNP lawmaker Abdul Mottaleb died of a heart attack on March 11, 2006

April 9 has been set as the last date for filing nominations.

Certain senior leaders of the second largest opposition in parliament said the JP might have to clarify its stance on joining electoral alliance much before the next parliamentary election. To win the Gaibandha election, it will need support either from the ruling alliance or the main opposition Awami League, said a JP high-up.

Oli speaks out against

Referring to the killing of Jamal

Uddin, he said anyone could find out the "new nationalists" responsible for the killing if it could be known how Shahid [prime accused of the murder] elected chairman of his He alleged that two local law-

makers and a state minister from outside Chittagong persuaded the state minister for home to get the killers relieved of charges. Oli said the government in a bid to get him sidelined made eight ministers from greater Chittagong,

but they failed to fulfil their commit-

ment to Chittagong people, causing a serious damage to the party Jativatabadi Ainjibi Forum Chittagong city unit President Advocate Md Kabir Chowdhury presided over the rally organised by Jamal Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury

Mourning Rally Observation Committee Advocate Shahadat Hossain Chowdhury, Jalal Ahmed Chowdhury, Fauzul Amin Chowdhury and the sons of the slain BNP leader Jamal Uddin spoke at

the rally. Jamal Uddin's eldest son

his allegation that local MP Sarwar Jamal Nizam and his brother Maruf Nizam were involved in his father's killing and demanded bringing them

Chowdhury Farman Reza reiterated

Additional charge

FROM PAGE 16 Bhai and JMB military commander Ataur Rahman Sunny

submit supplementary charge sheets to include a few other After fresh enquiry, IO Munshi Atique submitted the supplemen-

But the court ordered the IO to

tary charge sheets on March 2 before the magistrate of the Cognisance Court that included three more accused. The trial court again sent the bomb blasts cases to the CID on March 21 and asked it to submit

the faults in them. The IO yesterday submitted before the magistrate of the Cognisance Court the supplementary charge sheets that excluded the name of an accused in one of the previous charge sheets.

fresh charge sheets after rectifying

Commodity price

Daily essential price monitoring report prepared by the state-run trading agency is sent to the Prime Minister's Office, all the ministries concerned and to other important

government offices regularly. Prices of some essential commodities including, lentil, powdered milk, soybean and some other commodities are still volatile because their supply depend on imports. And the cost of import has gone up as the taka lost its value by over six percent against the US

dollar in the last two months. According to traders, while some companies have already adjusted the prices of their powdered milk, some others are mulling to increase

The price of a popular brand milk powder, Dano, rose by Tk 30 per kg in just one week. The price of 500 gram plastic pack milk powder ranged between Tk 185 and Tk 190 on the retail market yesterday, which was between Tk 170 and Tk

175 a week back. "It has become very difficult to budget the household expenditure as prices of almost everything are rising but my income is not," said Anjumanara Begum, a banker who livés in Mirpur.

"I need at least 4kg of sugar a month for my five-member family but I will buy only 2kg for this month as the price has abnormally gone up," she added According to the TCB report, the price of potato was between Tk 10 to

Tk 12 a kg yesterday, the price of which ranged between Tk 6 to Tk 7 a kg during the same period last year, a 70 percent rise. Onion price was Tk 10 a kg just a month ago, which is now selling at Tk 17 a kg. The price of a quarter dozen eggs was Tk 15 a month back, which is now selling at Tk 17.

Lentil was selling at Tk 58 a kg

yesterday but the price was Tk 48 a

week back. Garlic was selling at Tk

80 a kg, the price of which was Tk 70

a week ago. "People consume more when things are cheaper but they tend to buy less when prices go up," said Abdul Matin, a retailer at the Mirpur-6 kitchen market. He also said sales of some essential items like sugar. lentil, and moog dal have gone down substantially after the price

Meanwhile, the government yesterday could not launch open market sale (OMS) of sugar properly at Tk 41 a kg as announced by In a bid to stabilise the market.

to expand the OMS and sell a ton of sugar in each of all the 90 wards in the capital daily from Tuesday.

TCB officials said they could not

the government on Sunday decided

send sugar till 3:30pm yesterday. When asked, a top official could not mention the number of a single ward where the OMS took place though he claimed that sugar was sent to some of the wards in the afternoon. Sugar price is still on the rise and

it might go up further as its supply on the wholesale market is not adequate and the price is still fluctuatng, wholesalers said. According to Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB),

cost of living rose about 10 percent in 2005 as prices of essential items saw a sharp rise during the last year. Prices of essential items on an average rose 6.32 percent last year. CAB said adding that the trend is still

71 killed

FROM PAGE 16

opposition leaders, activists and supporters and pedestrians in Dhaka and elsewhere in the country on the occasion of 14-party long march

towards Dhaka on February 5

Meantime, one was killed, 96 injured, 19 arrested, one abducted and three went missing in rights violation incidents in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the report said. In three months, 27 journalists were injured, six were harassed,

death threats, one was arrested and cases were filed against 17. The report also reveals that 192 females, including 45 children, were raped since January. Of them, 30 were killed after rape while seven committed suicide due to this. In addition, 10 children, 26 women and seven men fell victim to acid throw-

four were attacked, 22 received

Besides, 79 women fell victim to dowry-related repression. Of them. 60 were killed, two committed suicide and two were divorced for this reason, the Odhikar report said. During the period, 69 children

ing during the period.

were killed, 25 injured, 45 raped, 27 abducted, three arrested, 10 received acid burns, 30 went missing and seven committed suicide,

Smuggled chickens destroyed

UNB, Khulna

Some 4,000 out of 13,180 broiler chickens smuggled from India were burned here yesterday on suspicion that they might have been affected

by bird flu. Police seized the chickens from a house at East Link Road in the city

on Saturday. Local administration took the decision to burn the smuggled at a meeting on Monday at the

conference room of the deputy commissioner (DC). Poultry traders here alleged that the local administration was not giving satisfactory information about the remaining 9000 chickens place instead of burning

Dhaka to focus

FROM PAGE 16

and the upcoming visit will further cement the relationship. "We will request the Turkish government to buy more products from Bangladesh and invest in Bangladesh," he added.

Khaleda will hold exclusive talks with her Turkish counterpart. Later talks will be held at the delegation level in a large format on April 13.

More bilateral trade, increased import of Bangladeshi products, strengthening the existing relationship between the two countries and wider cooperation in various areas will come up in discussions.

The Turkish prime minister will host an official banquet in honour of Khaleda on April 13.

Khaleda will travel to Istanbul from Ankara on April 14 to pay a courtesy visit to President of Turkey Ahmed Necdet Sezer. The governor of Istanbul will also call on her. The governor will host a banquet in honour of the Bangladesh prime minister on April 14.

The prime minister will also visit Indonesia in mid May to attend the D-8 summit in Bali, Indonesia. Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey are members of D-8 group which aims to expand trade among the member countries.

Official sources said the Indonesian president personally requested the Bangladesh prime minister to attend the upcoming

Future depends FROM PAGE 16 Expressing hope that the new

organisation will give a new dimension to IT education, he said it is the only sector that can bring the young people to the world even when they stay at home.

The policy makers should play a

pivotal role in this regard as the

country is remaining behind only the policy, ue to problems in The chief guest at the ceremony, Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Choudhury said, "Information and communication technology has opened up the possibility of improved communication and decision making within the government, enabling greater efficiency in services, and ensuring a greater

degree of transparency and accountability." IT is a new tool for solving the

problems of poverty and sluggish economic growth, Altaf said. "The country has immense potential and we should not miss any further train of development, DGITEL Managing Director Sabur Khan said, adding, "We are lagging behind in IT sector due to lack of an

up-to-date education system. DGITEL Chairman Faizur Razzaque also addressed the inaugural ceremony.

Conditions

Wallich said though Saifur agreed to the WB rationale, he did not say whether the government would

raise the petroleum prices or not. But, coming out of the meeting Saifur said there was no discussion about fuel prices. The WB mission just specified what the government has to do to get the DSC-4, he told the reporters. The minister also admitted to having a detailed dis-

cussion about the power sector. According to Saifur, the government is far from being anxious to carry out the WB prescription. In it will now decide whether it wants to take the loan in the first **DSC CONDITIONS**

Sources said with the next general

elections around the corner the

World Bank may not insist on more than five to six conditions for releasing the DSC-4. Among these, one is to develop specific terms of reference and tenure for the chief executive officers of the nationalised commercial banks, keeping in view their pro-

spective corporatisation. Besides, the government has to complete the privatisation of Rupali Bank by the agreed deadline. It is also required to constitute a new board and senior management structure at the National Board of Revenue in line with a strategic development plan. As part of trade liberalisation, the

WB wants the government to

reduce supplementary duties on

imports by at least 2 percentage Finally, the government will have to implement the macroeconomic framework agreed under the Poverty Reduction Growth Facilities of the bank

More shipments

are planning to file general diaries in

this connection, the sources added. According to a primary investigation report, a leading private food company of the country, BD Foods Limited, and its sister concern King & Co manipulated the entire export process of the drug smuggling.

The investigation found Badrul Haider Chowdhury, chairman of both BD Foods Ltd and King & Co, and King & Co employees Nazmul Haider Bhuivan and Mainuddin involved in the smuggling. The UK customs filed a case with its London head office mentioning the three as suspected international drug smugalers, sources said.

Meanwhile, the directors and high officials of both the firms are remaining absent from their offices, both located at 9 DIT Avenue, Motijheel, Dhaka. When asked, an accountant of BD Foods Ltd, Syful Islam, confirmed that the directors have not been coming to the office

regularly. The sources said the UK customs also mentioned six Bangladeshi business houses--BD Foods Ltd, King and Co, Messrs Emdad Traders, Messrs Jamil International, Messrs MM Enterprise and Green Heaven Enterprise--as suspected international drug traffickers.

A three-member UK customs team is likely to arrive in Dhaka next week to further investigate the racketeering and also to provide the Bangladesh government with technological support to probe into such a high-level international drug smuggling

The UK Customs and Excise Department in a letter sent through the British deputy high commissioner in Mumbai on May 20, 2005 first asked the Customs Intelligence and Investigation Department of Bangladesh to probe into the drug trafficking. According to the letter, signed by

Simon Sutcliffe, an official of the UK

Mumbai mission, Green Heaven

Enterprise of 64, BK Dash Road Sutrapur, Emdad Trading of 195/1 Fakirerpool and Jamil International of 190 Fakirerpool, Dhaka, sent heroin to the UK by three manifested shipments of floor tiles, beauty products and foodstuff. The shipments reached Britain on

February 14, March 3, and April 17 last year. The news of Bangladeshi business houses being involved in heroin smuggling in the guise of exporting legitimate goods gave rise to serious concerns among garment exporters of the country. In a press release yesterday Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA)

condemned the criminal acts. If the allegations turn out to be true then it would harm the image of Bangladeshi exporters abroad, observed the BGMEA. It urged the authorities to find the offenders and take punitive measures against

In a separate press release Bangladesh Agro Processors Association (Bapa) also condemned the drug smuggling and asked the government to punish the

CMCH FROM PAGE 16

But the interns of CMCH are yet to receive the increased allowance, the statement said adding that they didn't even get their allowances of last month. The association leaders further said they were to go on strike in

the pressure of patients at the hospital following the KTS factory They demanded immediate payment of the increased allow-

March, but postponed it considering

ances as well as the pending allowances to the interns. The signatories included association convener Dr Md Moniruzzaman and Member

were disqualified over irregularities

confirm a new prime minister until all

500 seats are filled, promising

Democracy, which led two months

of anti-Thaksin protests, rejected

his claim of victory and a compro-

mise offer under which he would

step down if an independent panel

Thaksin called the election three

years early after two months of

street protests against his rule

However the opposition boycott

undermined the credibility of the

polls and ensured a huge protest

cloud over one of the region's most

dynamic economies. The govern-

d crisis

vote against the premier.

Parliament cannot convene to

The People's Alliance for

in the nomination process.

weeks of further uncertainty.

told him to do so.

Secretary Dr Md Ruhul Amin.

Thai PM to step

The three parties that boycotted Sunday's election said that new elections should be organized without Thaksin and again called on him to quit. "It's too late for national reconcili-

ation," Democrat party head Abhisit

Vejjajiva said after a meeting between the parties. "We would join new elections, but Mr. Thaksin has

to resign first." Thaksin's party had taken 54 percent of the vote in the latest returns, with more than two thirds of constituencies counted, election officials said, warning that a complete count might not be released

until the end of the week Thaksin says his party won with 57 percent of the vote despite a strong protest vote, especially in Bangkok and the South But the more than 16 million

votes he claimed fell a long way

short of the 19 million people who

gave him a landslide election win

to win the required 20 percent of the

Another by-election will be held

in a district where all the candidates

just one year earlier. Even if the final count confirms Thaksin's victory, election officials said by-elections will be held on April 23 in 38 constituencies where the only candidate in the race failed

ment has already adjusted economic growth forecasts and the stock market has taken a hit. Protests demanding Thaksin's resignation began in February after his family sold 1.9 billion dollars of

shares, without paying taxes, in the telecoms firm he founded before entering politics. Tens of thousands protested against the sale, alleging corruption

and abuse of power, in near-daily

demonstrations.

9 more US soldiers

vote.

rising tensions between Shia and Sunni Muslims. At least 1,038 Iraqi civilians died last month in warrelated violence, according to an Associated Press count.

375 Iraqi civilians killed in December, 608 in January and 741

in February. Most of the increase

appeared a result of a sharp rise in

The AP count showed at least

the number of civilians found dead throughout Baghdad apparent victims of sectarian reprisal killings. The alarming rise in civilian toll has put new urgency into efforts by Iraqi politicians to form a new national unity government following the December elections. That message was delivered by Secretary of State Condoleezza

Rice and British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw during a two-day visit that ended Monday. "First and foremost, the purpose of this trip is to encourage and to urge the Iraqis to do what the Iraqis must do because the Iraqi people deserve it," Rice said. "But yes, the American people, the British people need to know that everything is being done to keep progress mov-

avoided any public call for Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari to step aside as the Shia nominee for a second term a key demand of Sunni and Kurdish politicians before they will join a new government. Nevertheless, the visit clearly increased pressure on al-Jaafari

During their visit, Rice and Straw

own Shia bloc called for him to step Following the visit, al-Jaafari's supporters scrambled Monday to try to rally support for him, even as other politicians sought ways to

and for the first time officials of his

remove him if he refused to step "We're waiting to hear the final position of the other blocs," al-. Jaafari ally Ali al-Adeeb said. "Then we will study their position and decide. It is still to early for the

Jaafari's nomination should be withdrawn." Al-Jaafari's critics accuse him of failing to curb the Sunni-dominated insurgency and calm tensions between Sunnis and Shias. The Feb. 22 bombing of a Shia shrine in Samarra triggered a wave of sectarian attacks that threaten to plunge

seven people were killed and 25 wounded in a car bomb Tuesday in eastern Baghdad, an Iraqi security source said. "At least seven people were killed and around 25 wounded in the

explosion of a car bomb parked in

In the latest violence, at least

the nation into civil war.

the al-Habibivah neighborhood," the source said. The blast happened at 3:30 pm (1130 GMT). On Monday at least 12 Iraqis

capital, police reported. Ten of the victims died when a suicide driver detonated a truck filled with dates as worshippers were leaving the al-Shroofi mosque after evening prayers. Another 38 people were wounded, police and hospitals said.

were killed in three vehicle bomb-

ings in mostly Shia areas of the

Two others were killed in a car bombing in the Sadr City area, in which 10 others were wounded. The third bomb exploded in the central district of Karradah, wounding six police said. Late Sunday, four Shia civilians died when gunmen burst into their

home in the religiously mixed Dora district of southwestern Baghdad. Police said the assailants lined up a brother, two sisters and an uncle against a wall and killed them. The mother of the family was visiting relatives at the time. Police

said the father, a grocery shop owner, had been killed six months earlier by gunmen in the same (Shias) to decide whether al-

Rain

transport.

formed pools due to clogged drainage system. Hundreds of homebound people were seen standing under the sheds until late evening due to the lack of

There were also reports of storm from Sylhet and Comilla regions.

filed 90 cases, fined Tk 9,26,100 and jailed one in the city.

FROM PAGE 1 Traffic got stranded on roads and lanes in different areas including Shantinagar, Sheraton and Sonargaon intersections, Panthapath, Dhanmondi, Mirpur and old parts of the city as rainwater

Weathermen said low pressure formed in the Orissa coast caused the rain. Meteorological office recorded 96mm rainfall from 6:00pm to

The Met office forecast said rainfall accompanied by gusty wind may occur in different parts of the country including Dhaka today.

Mobile Court A mobile court fined Agora Shopping Mall at Gulshan Tk 60,000 for selling imported soap, shampoo and butter without BSTI seals and selling meat without DCC seal. Almas Shopping Mall was also fined Tk 50,000 for the same

> selling electric fan of Konka brand without BSTI seal. A court seized 100 litres of unclaimed rotten tomato sauce in Shahjadpur, fined owners of New Dimple Ice-cream Factory and Himalaya Ice-cream Factory at Khilbarirtek and Shahjadpur for

> running the business without

A court fined Noor Bakery in

The same court fined Electra

Mart at Gulshan-1 Tk 40,000 for

licence and using dye.

As the court asked him who were

charges.

The meeting also finalised the content of the letter regarding the Jamaat-e-Islami issue. There will be a clear indication in the letter that the 14-party coalition will not sit with war connections with Islamist militants,

member committee told The Daily Sources said 14-party leaders

"We want to solve the issue of