EC bins complaints

Acting Secretary to the EC Secretariat Mohammad Zakoria refused to talk to the newsmen. His personal secretary said Zakoria was busy and has nothing new to say about the draft list, which was prepared ignoring the High Court directives on voter list.

The secretary at a training programme for the election officers yesterday defended the sharp increase in the electorate, sources

"Objections to the rise in the number of voters have been raised. But the upward trend in the number of people enfranchised is usual compared to the previous voter rolls," sources quoted Zakoria as

He also referred to the appeal pending with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court against the High Court's January 4 directives for revising the existing roll. Hearing on the appeal is scheduled for May 14.

The draft voter list shows at least 1.11 crore unaccounted for voters if one goes by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) census report, 2001.

The EC came up with 9.13 crore voters on its draft list, but the BBS report shows the number of people 18 years and above should not exceed 8.02 crore if no death had occurred during the period and if every person eligible to be a voter is listed.

After publication of the draft list, electoral experts and demographers questioned the sharp rise in the number of voters while newspapers reported about anomalies in voter-listing in many areas.

But CEC MAAziz stayed mum for the last few days. "I am busy and I can't talk to the media now," Aziz told reporters through his personal

Zakaria too refused to speak. " The commission has decided that other than the chief election commissioner and the secretary, none of the election commissioners will talk to the media," the personal secretary to Zakaria told reporters.

Meanwhile, the FC Secretariat in a press release yesterday said of 9,13,14,592 voters on the draft list, 50. 290 female.

ELECTION OFFICER

The EC Secretariat on May 2 suspended Mir Mohammad Shajahan, Lalmonirhat district election officer. as he questioned the secretariat's shady role in preparing the voter list sources said.

In a letter to the secretary this month, he complained that the secretariat had forwarded to them letters that did not have signature of any designated officers. Besides the work of preparing the draft list was being hampered due to constraints of money, the sources said, citing from Shahjahan's letter.

tary suspended the district election officer without even issuing a showcause notice.

taken against some other district election officers as well, added the

Heroin smuggling

He said the accused prepared fake documents in connivance with some officials of the Foreign Exchange Corporate Branch of Sonali Bank in Motijheel and the appraisers concerned of Chittagong customs. They also opened a clearing and forwarding agency named AR Haq Trade Corporation Ltd at Agrabad in Chittagong to carry out their activities, Gupta added.

Bashar, arrested early Saturday in Jessore, before the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM), Dhaka with a prayer for a 10-day remand. The court granted a remand of seven days.

another heroin smuggling case filed recently with the Motijheel Police them--finding evidence of their involvement in the heroin smug-

accused five Bangladeshi business firms of smuggling heroin to that country in the guise of food, toiletries, cosmetics and floor tiles.

An investigation by the National Board of Revenue last year confirmed the validity of the allegations and involvement of BD Foods Ltd, Emdad Traders, Jamil International. MM Enterprise, and Green Haven Enterprise in the dirty racket.

The five companies sent apparently legitimate consignments containing heroin to Ocean Line Foods and Bengal Bay and Coastal

A four-member team comprising members of the CID, Special Branch of Police Rapid Action Battalion and Bangladesh Bank is investigating the smugglings at the

Ships' calling at Ctg

from 15 days earlier.

given a letter to the shipping agents association asking not to bring in more ships at the port, sparking strong opposition from the shipping agents who categorically denied reducing the number of ships.

capacity and expand the space in now piled up on the port yard.

hand, observe that the port situation would not improve unless stuffing of

is stuffed inside the port," said an

The feeder service operators. however, rejected any restrictions on the ships' calling. "The allegation of ships coming with lower capacity is baseless," said Jamal Uddin Qader Chowdhury, managing director of QC Container Ltd, a

leading feeder operator. 'The north bound ships carrying import items never come with lower capacity," he said. But many ships sail from Chittagong with less number of containers due to lack of adequate export items as the country's export and import ratio is 30 and 70 per cent.

"If the port authority imposes any such restrictions, the ships will avoid Chittagong port and it will have a negative impact on the country's image," he said.

Diverting some ships to Mongla seaport would increase the freight of the goods, he said, adding that the exporters and importers normally designate Chittagong as the port of entry and exit in their L/C and so, the ship operators can not divert the

ship to any other port at will. With only three berthing spaces for container handling, the Mongla port is not capable of handling more

than three ships at a time, he said. As the Mongla port is located more than 100 kilometre inside and ships have to wait at least 12 hours for high tide before starting journey of entry from the estuary, it will also

Even while speaking at the training programme yesterday, he refrained from making any comment about the controversial increase the numbers of voters, sources said.

Election Commissioner SM

4, 68, 64, 302 are male and 4, 44

SUSPENDED

Annoyed by the letter, the secre-

Superintendent of Police Dipak Chandra Gupta mentioned that Bashar and Zafar smuggled 54kg heroin to the UK in a consignment of TAZARO Floor Tiles.

Bashar and Zafar exported 330 cartons of TAZARO Floor Tiles to the UK, but the UK customs at the Southampton port found 54kg heroin in 108 cartons of the consign-

The CID yesterday produced

Zafar is also on remand in

Punitive actions are likely to be

The law enforcers meantime arrested four others--a former BD Foods official and an associate of a detained BD Foods staff, among

The UK customs in May 2005

Spices in the UK several times.

directive of the home ministry.

Consequently, the turn around time with Singapore increased to 25 days Earlier the port authority had

They urged the port authority to

increase the container handling the yard but the authority failed Several thousand containers are Shipping experts, on the other

containers inside the port is stopped.
"Nowhere in the world, container

claimed that improvement has been achieved in tackling car theft incidents. "It has reduced a lot and we're about to identify the whole racket. On robbery incidents, Babar men-

tioned the robbery committed by the security guards at a city market (Eastern Plus at Shantinagar) and said that it is very frustrating if the security guards

Replying to how the arson took place at the residence of former president and Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh chief AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury despite the presence of police, he said a high-powered police team and another Fire Brigade team are investigating the incident. "Everything will be clear after we get their reports.'

The state minister also asked the law enforcers to sit with shop-owners and leaders of the BGMEA to work out a ay to stop mugging and silent extor-

the law enforcers to investigate whether there is any extortion during transportation of essentials from wholesale markets to retail markets as differences in prices between wholesale markets and retail markets are pretty huge.

On involvement of Rab men in extortion, Babar said action has been taken after an inquiry. "We're showing zero tolerance for any Rab man's

Babar also directed police to be patient and tactful during people's movement for water and power

Upazila election

upazila have been left out of the draft

They also demanded immediate removal of the Upazila Election Officer Mohammad Zakaria for excluding local lawmaker Ekabbar Hossain and former lawmaker from Mirzapur Fazlur Rahman Faruque from the list.

Advocate Badsha Miah, vicepresident of district AL, Mosharraf Hossain Moni, chairman of Mirzapur pourasabha, Meer Sharif Mahmud, general secretary of Mirzapur upazila unit of AL, Shahadat Hossain Sumon, organising secretary of Mirzapur upazila unit of AL, local AL leaders SM Monir Hossain, Toufiqur Rahman and Talukdar Razib addressed the rally among others.

Later, the leaders and activists of AL marched in procession to Ashakbar Bhaban near Mirzapur bus stand and held a rally, which was addressed by incumbent and former lawmakers from Mirzapur, Ekabbar Hossain and Fazlur Rahman Faruque.

When contacted on Saturday. Ekabbar Hossain told The Daily Star, "I filled in the voter form and submitted it to the local election office myself, but did not find my name on the draft voter list." The names of a large number of Al leaders, activists and supporters in Mirzapur have been dropped from the draft voter list, he alleged

Contacted, Mirzapur upazila election officer Mohammad Zakaria yesterday admitted that the local awmaker filled in the voter form and himself (lawmaker) submitted it to him.

"The name of Ekabbar Hossain was dropped from the draft voter list due to a mistake by the supervisor and assistant registration officer. We are very sorry for it." he added.

Earlier, officials of local election office had claimed that their men went to lawmaker Ekabbar Hossain several times, but he (lawmaker) did not enter his name in the draft voter list.

The draft list contains names of 2,79,176 in Mirzapur, which was 2,32,196 on the list prepared in 2001, showing an increase of 47,000 voters in the constituency.

30 killed

Baghdad, killing one civilian and wounding five. The target was not

Interior Ministry sources said 42 bodies had been found in the last 24 hours in the capital alone, including eight found dumped near Kindi hospital in central Baghdad. The figure is in line with levels of violence seen in recent months.

PM reaches

FROM PAGE 1

After the guard-of-honor ceremony, the two prime ministers introduced each other to the respective presentation lines, first by the host-country

Later. Prime Minister Khaleda was taken on a ceremonial motorcade to Bayan Palace where she will be staying during her tour of the oil-rich Gulf State.

Foreign Minister Morshed Khan, Principal Secretary to PM Dr Kamal Siddiqui and Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin are accompanying

the prime minister. Bilateral talks between the two governments were scheduled to start late last night.

On the second day, Prime Minister Khaleda is scheduled to call on Kuwaiti Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at the place of the

HC stays

FROM PAGE 16 BTRC on March 23 issued two tender notices inviting local, foreign

and joint-venture companies to bid for the 'central zone' that is comprised of metropolitan Dhaka, the municipal areas of Narayanganj, Gazipur, Tongi, Savar and Jinjira. The regulator will issue four licenses among the top four successful bidders

Counsels for the petitioner argued that the regulator explicitly and repeatedly expressed its preference for specific type of bidders nstead of open competition.

Mentioning the criteria of the bid invitations counsels pointed out that the highest mark will be given to the bidder who has already built the longest microwave backbone network for its services. The lowest mark will be given to the bidder who has built the shortest backbone and others will be marked accordingly.

It means only four companies -Rangs Tel. National Telecom. Tele Barta and Dhaka Telecom -- who have activated their fixed telephone networks in four zones, will remain in the race for winning four licenses in the central zone. Rest of the local and foreign bidders will be disqualified in this bid, they argued.

Counsels termed the criteria as discriminatory. They also said microwave is a conventional technology to build transmission backbones while optical fibre is a far more efficient and modern replacement of microwave.

Respondents to the rule are -telecommunication secretary, ndustry secretary, finance secretary and the chairman of BTRC. Advocate Abdul Baset

Mojumder, Barrister Shafik Ahmed and Aminuddin represented the petitioner.

Govt now turns

The government has miserably failed in the power sector. So much so that the country will be far behind its goal of reaching power for all by 2020, the official said.

In 2020, the demand for power is projected to be around 17,000 MW. This requires the country to increase power generation by 950 MW a year. But the alliance government in its five-year term will be able to increase it by only around 550

The updated plan for 26 power

plants, which includes four underimplementation projects, needs an investment of Tk 33,710 crore with Tk 13,108 crore earmarked as foreign funding. Some of the projects now in

tender process are going to incom-

petent and novice builders. For instance, the government is awarding the 450 MW Meghnaghat-2 power project to a consortium of Orion and Belhasa because the chief of Bangladeshi company Orion is close to ruling BNP top leaders. Neither Orion nor the UAEbased Belhasa has ever built a

Moreover, under this plan the government has awarded three contracts for 150 MW skid-mount power plants to novice builders. The power ministry itself is doubtful whether these plants would ever add power to the national grid. The plan says a total of 450 MW power will be generated by skid-mount

The under-implementation projects meanwhile are showing unhealthy signs because of poor selection of power plant developers.

The four such projects include two Baghabari Westmont plants (130 MW), Barapukuria coal-fired plant (250 MW) and Mymensingh-3 plant (70 MW). The Baghabari plants were supposed to be commissioned in phases from April while the two others were supposed to launch operation by March. But these are actually producing a maximum of 125 MW to 130 MW.

The Barapukuria plant constructed under Chinese Supplier's Credit was supposed to start operation last year. This corruptionplagued project over-priced by at least \$70 million, which mainly went

to a particular BNP man, is stumbling again and again. According to the latest schedule, the plant was supposed to start full operation in February-March but till date it is only partially functioning

The 70 MW phase-3 Mymensingh plant under Rural Power Company, over-priced by nearly \$80 million, was also supposed to come into operation in December last. Its updated schedule fixed April as the latest deadline but it also failed to keep this sched-

The government has awarded 90 MW Fenchuganj power plant and 150 MW Chandpur plant to Harbin. In both the cases, the government violated rules to favour Harbin, the same Chinese company that built the alliance government's only power plant -- 80 MW Tongi plant. The plant tripped 75 times in a year and is still malfunctioning due to poor machinery. "The future of Fenchugani and Chandpur plants is therefore doubtful," observed an

Interestingly, the Sirajganj 450 MW project, which was supposed to go into operation early next year had the government not cancelled it at its final stage in 2004, is now scheduled to start production in 2009.

Other projects in this plan, conceived by the previous Awami League government but yet to be implemented because of inaction or wrong action of the present government, include Sylhet 150 MW project, Siddhirganj 240 MW, Sikalbaha 150 MW, Siddhirganj 300 MW, Siddhirganj 210 MW and Bheramara 450 MW project in the public sector. In this category, the government added a 150 MW Bogra

In the private sector, the plan includes Sirajganj phase- 2 and Meghnaghat-3 and 4 projects.

The updated government plan envisages 3,350 MW power from the public sector and 2.940 MW from the private sector.

such discussion at the highest level

"I do not think the two leaders should

sit together for discussion at this

Asked if he will sit with AL

General Secretary Abdul Jalil to

discuss electoral reforms, Bhuiyan

said if the opposition comes up with

a formal proposal for direct talks

between them, he would consider it

after discussing it in his party forum.

elections would be free from the

influence of any party government.

Rejecting any possibility of early

elections, he said BNP would not

hand over power even a day before

Regarding opposition's allega-

completion of their term.

Bhuiyan predicted that the next

Black money holders

'No political party should nominate the black money holders," the BNP policymaker said replying to a question at a 'meet the reporters' programme of Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) at the DRU auditorium in the capital

Bhuiyan, also LGRD and cooperatives minister, said when election expenses of a candidate reach up to Tk five to ten crore, the black money holders are encouraged and the honest and competent persons are discouraged in taking part in the election.

The minister said some reforms are needed to make the elections free from black money and terrorism, and make those free, fair and acceptable. "It can be done through discussion." he said speaking on the topic "Next election and present situation."

Regarding the possibilities of a dialogue between the government and the opposition, the BNP leader said he is hopeful that discussion will be held finally and they would reach a consensus over the electoral reforms.

On the opposition's demand for excluding Jamaat from the government panel to discuss the electoral reform proposals, Bhuiyan said the opposition's stance is illogical. "Jamaat is a partner of the ruling alliance, it is difficult to hold discus-

sion without them." "As we did not dictate them (opposition) in naming their representatives, they should not dictate us in naming ours," said the minis-

Asked about the chance of a

direct talk between Khaleda Zia and

Sheikh Hasina, he said a congenial

atmosphere is first needed to have

tion on the new voter lists. Bhuivan said there is time to rectify the lists, if there is any fault. "There is scope to include those who are not listed and to exclude those who have been included twice," he said. Asked about the controversy

over the current chief election commissioner (CEC) and a free and fair election under his jurisdiction Bhuiyan said the previous CEC, who hails from Gopalganj, was also a controversial one. "If he could arrange a free and fair election, why this chief election commissioner should not do?"

Bhuiyan also spoke on the existing power, gas, water crises. price hike of essentials, investment proposal of Tata, donors' aid and

Replying to a query, Bhuiyan said there are some problems in power, water and gas sectors and prices of essentials. He however termed the price hike "temporary."

The government and socio-cultural

organisations have chalked out

elaborate programmess to celebrate

Cultural affairs ministry has drawn

up a three-day national programme

that includes book fair, cultural show

and discussions on his life and literary

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy

Rabindranath's birth anniversary

will organise the main function today at

Shilaidaha in Kushtia where the poet

will be celebrated also at Shahzadpur

in Sirajganj, Patisar in Naogaon and

Dakkhin Dihi in Khulna, the places

A three-day book fair on

Rabindranath Tagore will be begin

today at the Central Public Library.

The fair will remain open to all from

A discussion meeting and cul-

tural function will be held at Bangla

carrying the poet's memory.

10:00am to 5:00pm.

stayed occasionally in his lifetime.

is rare in the world history.

the birthday of Rabindranath.

Tagore's birth anniversary

first Asian to be awarded with the

prestigious Nobel Prize. His poems, novels, short stories, dramas, articles, essays, paintings and especially his songs "Rabindra Sangeet" have an eternal appeal in the heart of the Bangalees.

Rabindranath, born in 1861,

established Viswabharati University in

1921 and donated all his money from

Nobel Prize and royalty from his books to this university On his birth anniversary, President laiuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia have issued separate messages paving rich tributes to the Nobel laureate poet.

Rabindranath, having multifaceted and extraordinary intelligence, is not only an immortal personality in Bengali literature but also in world literature. The president expressed his hope that the creative working life of Rabindranath Tagore could be the

source of creativity among the new

generation.

President lajuddin said

The prime minister in her message said the national anthems of two countries -- Bangladesh and India -are composed by Rabindranath which Academy tomorrow.

from March 1. The Bangladesh Fruits. Vegetables and Allied Products

March 1.

items at Biman's increased rate. rule nisi after hearing a writ petition filed by the exporters' association on

perishable items between January 24 and April 23. cargo charges nine times since

freight charges for vegetables to Dammam from \$1.12 to \$2.12 per kilogram, to the UK, Italy, France and Germany from \$1.55 to \$2, and to Dubai and Maskat from \$0.75 to The HC directed Biman and

commodities of the petitioners.

Business leaders

Police said employees of the REB

office were abused by the angry take action against the offenders," said the commerce minister, who mob. "We reached there just on time when they were attempting to storm also holds the portfolio of water resources ministry. into the Palli Biddut office." said He also blamed mismanageofficer-in-charge of Fakirhaat police ment of power sector and devaluation of taka against dollar and price

The office was provided with adequate security amid tension running high there.

REB office

A large number of people brought out a protest march at 10:00am yesterday in Fakirhaat demanding steady power sup-

Meanwhile, discontent is also brewing among the residents of Khulna city due to frequent power

Batiaghata upazila in protest against load shedding. The Khulna power station and all sub-stations in the city have been put on high alert and security forces have been deployed there fearing

attack from the people. Security

measures have also been taken for

On Friday night, an angry mob

attacked the REB office at

all water pump houses in the city. Khulna Citizens' Forum will hold an emergency meeting tomorrow to announce a programme for a movement against load shedding and water crisis

Nagorik Committee FROM PAGE 16

Committee delegation will also talk about how NBR can directly assist the Election Commission (EC) in this regard.

Co-convenor of the Nagorik Committee 2006 and former finance minister M Syeduzzaman, Coconvenor and former president of MCCI Laila Rahman Kabir, former attorney general Mahmudul Islam, former chairman of Transparency International Bangladesh Samson H Chowdhury, former adviser of the caretaker government ASM Shahjahan and member secretary of the Committee and Executive Director of Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya will attend the meet ing scheduled to be held at the NBR chairman's office at 4:00pm.

Transport workers

The transport workers also damaged the tempo carrying the patrol police team and put up barricade on the Madar Bari DT Road disrupting vehicular movement for an hour. Witnesses said. Constable

Mahbub charged truck helper Sattar with theft of motor parts while patrolling the area at around 3:30pm as the latter was fixing his truck at Madar Bari DT Road near the shrine of Tong Fakir. The cop also allegedly demanded bribe from the truck helper for a let-off. As Sattar produced the purchase

and refused to pay any money Constable Mahbub started beating him. He also beat up truck driver Yasin who tried to save his helper. At one point, all the truck drive and helpers of that area, along with local people. caught the cop and

receipt of the spare he was using

gave him a good beating. Later, Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Double Mooring Police Station Kutubur Rahman rushed to the spot and made apology for the misconduct of the cop. He also assured the mob of taking action against the constable.

Constable Mahbub was later suspended for illegal practice and 'excess," sources said.

Biman

why its "arbitrary" and "mala fide' increase of cargo rate and fuel surcharge over the fruits, vegetables and betel leaves should not be declared "to have been made and issued without lawful authority and of no legal effects".

Biman increased the shipment charges of vegetable products by 25 per cent on an average effective

Exporters' Association went into a strike the same day, saying it is not economically viable to export these An HC division bench issued the

tions of Biman's previous six increases of cargo charges for The Biman has increased its

The court also stayed the opera-

January this year. The airline last increased its

others to frame guideline criteria for fixation of charges--rates, tariffs, freights and others--for carrying Meanwhile, exporters' association leaders at a meeting yesterday

decided to resume exporting vegetables tomorrow, said association President Md Farid Uddin Ahmed.

factors for price spiral. The commerce ministry alone cannot curb price spiral, he said, adding, "It is a team work. The home ministry needs to stop extortion in market and trucks carrying goods, agriculture ministry needs to increase production and finance

and pólicy support to curb price He said the prices of essentials have already reduced and the situation will improve further in the near future.

ministry needs to set tariff structure

hike of imported essentials in inter-

national market as other major

main opposition Awami League to shun negative politics in order to improve the overall economy of the He assured the FBCCI leaders of

The minister called upon the

nelp to set up the federation's own Addressing the meeting, FBCCI president Mir Nasir Hossain suggested that the government take effective steps against the syndicates if found guilty of manipulating

orices of commodities The other suggestions made by the FBCCI include expanding export market, product diversification, ensuring quality of products through mutual recognition of certification with other countries. increasing efficiency of ports, and

law and order. FBCCI first vice-president Mohammad Ali, vice-president Dewan Sultan Ahmed, directors, Commerce Secretary Md Abdul Karim, Vice-Chairman of the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) Mir

Meanwhile, LGRD Minister and BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said the price hike of essentials is 'temporary' and the government is trying to bring down

Price of essentials will go high as the economy flourishes, the minister said while addressing 'meet the reporters' programme on 'Next election and present situation organised by Dhaka Reporters Unity at its auditorium in the capital.

Regarding syndicated business

Poll symbols

FROM PAGE 1

The petitioner said boat, the election symbol of Awami League, is

symbol for political parties as their election symbols has damaged the image of different institutions of the Advocate Md Tajul Islam moved

for the petitioner. Another writ petition was filed on May 2 that challenged the operation of Rule 9 (1) of the Conduct of Election Rules 1972 in respect of

inclusion of scales as election

Five lawyers of the Supreme Court -- Barrister Moksadul Islam, advocates SM Fazlul Hoque, Asaduzzaman Siddique, Shamsul Alam and Mustafa Zaman Islam filed the petition that was also heard in the HC yesterday.

Counsel for the petitioners

Advocate Manzill Murshid told the

court that scales have been used in

the monogram of the Supreme Court

since the establishment of the East

Bengal High Court in 1947. The citizens Bangladesh consider the monogram as a symbol of justice. He noted that if some others use scales as their symbol, confusion might be created among people,

he apex court. Attorney General AJ Mohammad Ali submitted yesterday that two writ petitions challenging some election symbols are not maintainable, as these do not fulfil criteria of PIL Additional Attorney General Fida M

AL walks out of JS

Mannan Bhuiyan that "why the opposition can't demand govern-

Soon after the opposition's walkout, Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain took the floor and requested the speaker to reconsider the opposition's expunged words, saying that such remarks are usual in parliamentary democracy. "While in the opposition, we also

demanded government's resigna-

Earlier, the AL lawmakers slated

The speaker's ruling to expunge

Before walking out of the House,

Deputy Leader of the Opposition

Abdul Hamid said it is a usual prac-

tice in parliamentary democracy

"It seems that you are here to save the government from the opposition criticism even when the treasury bench is quiet," he said.

withdrawal of the speaker's deci-

opposition protested it and left the House in protest against the speaker's "undemocratic" way of

House proceedings. LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan taking part in the unscheduled

the new draft list.

power and gas sector and improving

Shahabuddin Mohammad and

other senior government officials were present at the meeting.

the price to a tolerable level.

Admitting that there are some problems in power, water and gas sectors, Bhuiyan said the price of sugar has increased in the country due to price hike in internationa

in hiking up price of essentials, the minister said if anyone, even if he is a minister or secretary, is found guilty, stern action will be taken.

the HC fixed today for passing order on the matters.

used in the monogram and flag of jail guards under the police department, BNP's poll symbol sheaf of paddy is used as part of the national symbol, according to article 4(3) of the constitution. Besides, Jatiya Party's election symbol plough is used in the monogram of Bangladesh Ansar Petitioner said allocating these

which might undermine the status of

symbol for a political party by the Election Commission.

The speaker's decision also created mixed reaction in the treasury bench. Law Minister Moudud Ahmed was seen telling LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul

tion in parliament," he said adding, "I don't see anything unparliamentary the government for its failure to ensure smooth supply of power, fuel and water. They referred to the incidents in Kansat and Shanir Akhra in Demra as expression of

"no-confidence" in the ruling coalithe demand for the government's resignation sparked noisy protest

among the opposition members.

around the world that the opposition would demand government's resignation. "There is nothing unparliamentary and you have no authority to expunge those words." Hamid, a former speaker, said. He demanded

In reply, Jamiruddin Sircar told the deputy opposition leader that he would give a ruling later. But, the

running the House. Later, the speaker gave an explanation about expunging opposition remarks and said the way they placed the demands were "attackng" and "unwanted." He defended himself by saying that the Rules of Procedures authorise the Chair to expunge any "attacking," "indecent" and "unfair" comments from the

debate said it is absolutely the speaker's jurisdiction to expunge any matter in the House. He said the opposition had made a lame excuse for their walkout. WHAT OPPOSITION MPS SAID

Taking floors on point of orders,

Kamal also opposed the petitions.

government to admit its failure to run the country and resign immediately to pave the way for early election. "People have taken to the streets against the government and the incidents in Kansat and Shanir Akhara [in Demra] are the expres-

o-confidence in the BNP

several AL lawmakers asked the

Suraniit Sengupta said. He said the government has failed to control public in Demra and "handed over power" to the army to quell the agitating people.

Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim

demanded a judicial inquiry commit-

Jamaat coalition." Al lawmaker

tee to probe the incidents of Kansat and Shanir Akhra Mohammad Nasim demanded discussions in the House on crucial issues like the price hike of essentials, rise of religious militancy and

the crises of power, water and fuel.

But LGRD and Cooperatives

Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan opposed the AL lawmakers' remarks and said Kansat and Shanir Akhra incidents were isolated. Bhuiyan alleged that the opposition has tried to have political gains

from Kansat and Demra incidents,

but the government resolved the

Saifur

problems quickly.

FROM PAGE 16 responded well to the treatment and is normal", a hospital spokesman said vesterday.

Saifur was admitted to the corporate hospital after he complained about breathlessness during the Asian Development Bank (ADB) meet and was being treated for urinary tract infection with spillage of infection to blood.

500 eligible voters FROM PAGE 1 of Sohrab Hossain Shaikh and Saleka

Begum, wife of Kader Shaikh.

Rabeya Begum, 36, are the only two persons from Billalua village under Narua union at Baliakandi upazila in Rajbari who were named as voters on

On the previous voter list published

n 2000, the total number of voters in

Md Panu Mallick, 47, and his wife

The new draft list of voters in Rajbari district published by the EC has raised questions about the enumeration process.

these two villages stood at 500.

When contacted. Raibari district election officer said he was not aware of the matter. It might have been a mistake made by the enumerator concerned, he said.

additional cost per day each.

Babar unhappy

improve overall law an order situation

and the major one was to improve

Babar admitted that murder and mug-

Replying to the reporters' query

situation in their respective areas.

ging incidents have increased recently and said, "We're working on how to improve the overall law and order The state minister, however,

nselves get involved in such crimes.

During the meeting, he also directed

committing any crime," he said.