The Daily Star

NEWS

Deputy press secretaries Hela

Uddin Ahmed, Sarwar Alam and

Maruf Kamal are still in their posts at

considering a response. The North also kept up its verbal

attack on the United States in an

editorial by the typically bellicose

in pushing for its war scheme to attack

the North, taking issue with our war-

deterrent measure we were com-

pelled to strengthen to protect our

sovereignty and right to survive from

their serious threat," the editorial said.

nuclear programme as a self-

defensive measure against the

threat of a US attack an accusation

Washington has repeatedly denied.

month's test and the first known

was not clear from the report wher

North Korea's remarks came after

He was speaking at a press

President and Chief Adviser

against the two advisers and the

chief adviser had assured us of

doing whatever needed," he added.

Asked what the chief adviser had

Had they obtained the chief

"We demanded taking actions

lajuddin Ahmed.

Meanwhile, the North's leader

The North often refers to its

'The US has become more fanatic

Rodong Sinmun newspaper.

N Korea

FROM PAGE 16

Civil society

FROM PAGE 1

minority communities can come to polling centres and cast votes without any fear. Nagorik Committee 2006 organ-

ised the dialogue as part of a civil society campaign for honest and dedicated candidates in the 2007 election. Former finance minister M Syeduzzman moderated the dialogue on Election 2007: Amendments to Representation of the People Order (RPO), 1972.

Constitution experts, lawyers, teachers, women's rights activists, iournalists and NGO leaders participated in the dialogue at Brac Centre in the capital as a participatory process to drafting a law towards free and fair election.

Dr Shahdeen Malik presented the keynote paper on the topic, prepared with the help of Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA), Brotee, Centre for Development Communication (CDC), Democracywatch, Fair Election Monitoring Agency (Fema), Steps Towards Development, SUPRO -Campaign for Good Governance, and Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB).

Prominent lawyer Dr Kamal Hossain observed that the present chief of the election commission (CEC) could be removed as there are several instances of such removal in the past.

He cited the examples of Justice Sultan Hossain Khan and Justice AKM Sadeque, who had been obliged to leave the office after losing confidence of the people.

Dr Kamal observed that the CEC is holding a constitutional office for discharging constitutional responsi-bilities. He should not be allowed to hover over the nation like the ghost of Sindbad, he added.

Dr Kamal recalled that former finance minister M Saifur Rahman had rejected a proposal of the present CEC for releasing funds on grounds of misuse. He referred to a similar case in Thailand where election commissioners are serving jail terms for gross anomalies.

Former chief election commissioner Justice MA Rouf emphasised on monitoring casting of votes and the system of counting votes saying that these two things are vital for ensuring transparency in an election.

For ensuring authenticity of election results, a system of double counting should be introduced, he

He also suggested increasing the number of polling booths and setting up of each polling centre for no more than 1000 to 1500 voters. He said the police and returning officers are usually responsible for election rigging. If the number of polling booths increases, casting of votes will end before sunset reducing the opportunity for election manipulation, he added.

"Let the people including women and minorities come to polling centres and cast their votes freely without any fear and many things will come under control." On the other hand the system of vote counting must be updated so that no body can manipulate the results, he

Justice Rouf also observed that scrawling of graffiti on walls, as part of election campaigns, should be restricted.

He said

He also suggested some long term and short term measures for improving the current electoral process

On the question of election campaign. Mahmud observed that one candidate should not organise more than two campaign rallies, and

erection of campaign gates and setting up of campaign camps should be banned. He supported proportionate representation of women in the national election.

Mahmud also suggested registration of political parties and government budgetary allocation for election campaigns in order to keep campaign spending under control.

Barrister Tania Amir observed that many things are mentioned in the constitution and in election rules but those are not reflected in reality. People who are involved in grabbing government assets and harnessing different improper benefits should be disqualified as candidates, she said.

Nushrat Amin of Dhaka University stressed the need for an independent election commission. She said the media should carry campaign messages of candidates so that the messages reach more women helping them to make informed voting decisions and encouraging them to participate in greater number in the electoral process.

Omit Das Gupta underscored the need for commitment by political narties that they will not exercise communal politics. Supporting the suggestion of forming vigilance teams. Gupta said parliament membership of an elected lawmaker should be suspended if there is an allegation of attack on any minority community under his or her

leadership. Editor of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam demanded reforms in the system of election tribunals as there is hardly any redress from judgement of these tribunals. He observed that most of the people are not aware of the roles of returning officers in ensuring transparent and accountable elections.

> Barrister Amir-UI Islam wondered whether the Supreme Court itself had been involved in election engineering as it often issued stay orders against many writs regarding electoral disputes. He suggested that the list of

voters of each polling booth should be publicly disclosed so that the chance of tampering with the voter list can be reduced. Amir observed that resolving election disputes should not take long time. He said High Court verdicts should be final in settling election disputes instead of keeping the cases pending at the

Appellate Division. Former president of Supreme Court Bar Association Mahbubey Alam suggested formation of vigilance teams in every constituency during the election for monitoring the safety of the minority communities

He observed that eligible voters who were not included in the voter list should be allowed to cast vote showing their identity cards issued by local authorities. An election should be suspended immediately after reports of violence, he added. Dr Tofail Ahmed demanded a

complete ban on involving under migration cost. aged persons in election campaigns or in any election related activity. He observed that the young generation Tk 5,600), whereas the cost was involved in election campaigns. Ahmed said the voter list could Tk 1.4 lakh to Tk 1.7 lakh only a be updated through incorporating year ago. However, emphasis on employlocal politicians and members of the civil society in the updating process. ment of local youths by the import-Barrister Harunur Rashid said ng countries also contributed to there must be several 'election the decline disqualification commissions' fo According to the Bureau of looking into electoral disputes. Manpower, Employment and Amanullah Khan stressed the Training (BMET), the KSA alone need for strengthening the magisemployed almost 72.48 percent of tracy for curbing the influence of total manpower exported from money and muscle in manipulation Bangladesh in 2002. of elections. The number came down to Subrata Chowdhury, Rokeya Kabir, Advocate Salma Ali, and 35.60 percent during January to September last year. The decline Monira Rahman also participated in pushed down overall overseas the discussion. employment to 15.45 percent in 2005 compared to that of 2004. About 25 lakh of over 40 lakh

FROM PAGE 1 offered a substantial quota of hiring

workers from Bangladesh. Italy wanted Bangladesh sign a readmission agreement, which is simply consenting to deport the irregu-

lar jobseekers in the country. This would not have affected Bandladesh at all, as almost all the Bangladeshis who previously entered Italy irregularly were pardoned under amnesties and ssued work permits. Italy wanted to welcome regular migrants and discourage irregular ones, as they

need workers too. Surprisingly, the issue became a puzzle to the ministry. After sitting on the proposal for a long time, officials asked the foreign and a

few other ministries for opinion. But the foreign ministry tragically torpedoed the proposal on grounds that if Italy starts deporting illegal" Bangladeshis, there would be severe political fallouts.

"This was a great opportunity for Bangladesh, as Italy pays much higher salary compared to that of the Middle Eastern countries," said

a recruiting agent. Businesses also suggested that other countries of the European Union would also follow Italy's example had Bangladesh signed the agreement. If signed, it could have opened a new horizon for Bangladesh in overseas employment

The foreign ministry is supposed to cooperate with the expatriates' ministry in opening new markets, but no sign of it has ever been observed.

The expatriates' ministry wrote to the foreign office to ask the US mission in Dhaka for help in openng CGFNS (a globally conducted test by the US to determine nurses' proficiency level) examination centre in Bangladesh.

But the issue is still in the deep freeze. Neither the foreign nor the expatriates' ministry put it forward. A certain grade in the test is

required for employment of foreian nurses in the US. The nearest such centre is in Pune in India, which is financially and logistically not affordable for most Bangladeshi nurses.

Manpower businesses said had there been such a centre here, a good number of Bangladeshi nurses could have got jobs in the US.

A dearth of funds and knowledgeable officials in the expatriates' ministry is also a major deterrent to exploring new markets.

For instance, Sudan is a potential market for foreign workers as it gets huge investments by foreign companies. Some of those companies expressed interest in hiring workers from Bangladesh. But there is no Bangladeshi mission in the region except in Cairo, which showed no interest in this regard.

Migration experts observe the subordinate mindset of the expatriates' ministry and its utter incompetence are also partly responsible for such failure.

DECLINE IN TRADITIONAL MARKETS

Overseas employment in the traditional markets, mainly in the Middle Eastern countries, took a sharp decline because of high A worker now pays Tk 2 lakh to

Tk 2.3 lakh for a job of a cleaner in Saudi Arabia at a salary of 350 riva

Judges' killing

JMB suicide bomber Khaled

Saifullah, who pleaded guilty before

the trial court, will also be heard by

the same court, sources in the attor-

Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassir Husain,

will hear all the petitions, cour

iudicial system under the constitu-

constituting a court guided by Islamic

outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) chief Abdur

Rahman, his second-in-command

Siddiqul Islam alias Bangla Bhai

son-in-law Abdul Awal, brother Ataur

Rahman Sunny, and suicide bombers

Iftekher Hassan Al Mamun and Khaled

stayed the execution of their death

sentences following submission of jail

appeal petitions and it will continue

On May 29. a Barisal court sen-

tenced to death JMB chief Abdur

Rahman and five other militants in the

sensational Jhalakathi judges' killing

On August 31, the High Court

Senior Assistant Judges

Jagannath Pandey and Sohel Ahmed

confirmed the death sentences

until disposal of the petitions.

awarded by the trial court.

November 14 last year.

Earlier, the Supreme Court had

The jail appeal petitioners are

A seven-member full court of the

ney general's office said.

FROM PAGE 16

sources said

laws

Saifullah.

case.

Bangladeshi workers.

Manpower market shrunk

Oman had about 2.5 lakh Bangladeshi workers just two decades ago which, instead of increasing, has come down to 1.1 lakh now. The country, which is third in the ME in terms of sending remittance, could hire at least 50,000 workers if there were a bilateral agreement, Bangladesh Ambassador to Oman Golam

Akbar said recently. With much hype, Bangladesh signed a cooperation agreement with Qatar. The government allowed enhancement of flight frequencies of Qatar Airways upon verbal understanding that they would open and take massive manpower from Bangladesh.

Though the flight numbers have been increased, Bangladesh is yet to realise its portion of the bargain. Another ME country, Lebanon, has demand for Bangladeshi workers, but it is not much fruitful either as there is no Bangladesh

mission in Beirut. A new opportunity has been created for construction workers in the wake of the recent Israeli attacks on Lebanon. But neither of the foreign or expatriates' ministries took any initiatives to this effect

FAILURE TO CONTROL

RECRUITING AGENCIES The ministry's efforts to control migration cost never had a chance due mainly to big agents spearheaded by lawmakers close to Hawa Bhaban.

Flaunting rules, they always got away scot-free with less than minimum salaries and highest possible migration cost. The cases of Malaysia and Korea are the best examples of how the ministry totally failed to regulate recruiting

MALAYSIA

In the last few years Malaysia banned hiring manpower from Bangladesh several times on allegation that recruiting agencies here overcharge and even create an unholy competition in securing job demand letters. The agencies are also accused

of sending more workers than the number of original visas issued.

Late in July this year, Malaysia lifted the last ban imposed, allowed Bangladesh Association of nternational Recruiting Agencies (Baira) to manage the total migra-tion process and installed a computerised network to prevent

forgery. Malaysia also gave Baira an option to design a distribution system of job demand letters of Malaysian companies. But contro-versies arose in the trade body itself.

A section of agencies said the demand letters should equally be distributed among all the Baira members so that the unholy competition could be averted.

But a number of influential agencies, including those owned by both BNP and Awami League lawmakers, said this would depend on the agencies' capacity to secure the letters.

Over 100 agencies, which had close links with Malaysian agents, supported this view, while most others were unaware of the real context of the proposed system.

Eventually, the latter made 'successful' attempts to clinch their al, resulting in a severe competition in securing job demand letters. These agencies started crowding Malaysia and some of them allegedly made a syndicate and began persuading Malaysian employers. This seriously annoved the Malavsian government and actually invited another partial ban on manpower hiring on October 4. Some Baira members filed complaints with the government that the agencies are charging each worker Tk 1.5 lakh to Tk 2 lakh, whereas Bangladesh and Malaysia bilaterally fixed the rate at \$1,200 or Tk 84.000 They alleged the Baira was charging the extra money on the plea of paying fees to Malaysian lobbyists. But satisfying some Bangladeshi expatriates work in Bangladeshi ministers, who also the ME countries and among them demanded a share of the extra sum, was another reason. about 16 lakh are in the KSA. On October 22, the expatriates' Absence of a bilateral agreeministry asked the commerce ment and cold diplomatic relations ministry to suspend Baira execuwith Oman are also thwarting huge opportunities of employing tive committee. The Baira was

overcharging the workers and Baira President MAH Salim rented other ministries deleted the clauses that defined their responsian office in Kuala Lumpur without bilities in promotion of overseas the government permission, the ministry reasoned. manpower employment. Btu the draft policy was quite comprehen-It also sought permission from sive, as it was prepared after

thorough consultations with other

Apathy and negative signals

The expatriates' welfare ministry

took an initiative to prepare a

comprehensive report on availabil-

ity and potentiality of manpower in

the country and formulate a strat-

But arrangement with the home

Probashi Channel, a bus ser-

vice for returnee expatriates, is a

laudable initiative for smooth

departure and arrival, but it is not

countries' policies.

FEMALE MIGRATION

the Prime Minister's Office to form a committee to investigate the matter. The committee is scheduled to give its reports in 30 days.

There are allegations former state minister for the expatriates' ministry Maj (retd) Quamrul Islam, who maintains close links with Hawa Bhaban, allowed recruiting to Saudi Arabia. agents to send workers to Malaysia last year receiving a bribe of Tk 15,000 for per worker.

At that time Malaysia allowed Bangladesh to send about 8.000 workers, who had been deported under the general amnesty. Taking the advantage of bribing, many agents substituted original workers Bangladesh is yet to exceed one percent mark. About 80 percent of by new ones keeping other particulars intact. The news quickly travelled to

the Malaysian authorities who Lankan and 90 percent of the showed little interest to deal with Philippine migrants are female. the manpower issue at government level Bangladesh of so many opportuni

Consequently, the recent arrangement has been done with ties. Besides, such a negative stance is pushing female jobseekers to bribe their exit and private sector business body, the Baira. Malaysia hardly bothered to putting them into more vulnerable discuss their decision with the position. government. The country even did from our mission officials are stalling the ministry from taking a not respond to a formal request of the expatriates' ministry for hiring 30 percent of the total workers comprehensive policy and monithrough the government-owned torina programn CONCEPT PAPER recruiting agency BOESL. SOUTH KOREA

Similarly, South Korea, another lucrative job market for Bangladeshi workers, also identified high migration cost as the root cause for switching jobs and illegal

The ministry failed to reduce the migration cost to Korea that shot up to Tk 8 lakh to Tk 10 lakh. Over Such negligence is stifling the country's most potential sector, Line Associate of BNP lawmaker which is contributing \$5 billionremittance every year despite unlimited obstacles. DATA BANK Creation of a databank at the

BMET was a good initiative for storing data of the aspirant Except a few hundreds, Korea banned Bangladeshi workers by a migrants, migrant workers and resolution in its parliament through those returned from abroad.

the cartel of the four agents. Under the Employment Permit System (EPS), Korea is hiring ministry is still pending to use the database for online immigration workers from South and Southeast system of entry and departure. Asian countries without any restric-WELFARE DÉSK The ministry has established two welfare desks at Zia International tions. Bangladesh was deprived of it only because the government failed to control the cartel of the Airport for facilitating safe arrival four agencies and departure. But there are alle-

WAGE EARNERS' WELFARE gations that desk workers in con-FUND nivance with corrupt immigration Wage Earners' Welfare Fund officials extort many aspirant migrants and help irregular

created by mandatory contribu-tions from out-bound expatriates and supposedly to create welfare provisions for them, is a mystery. Its accumulated amount was never made public and the media has no access to any of its information.

Supported by an average collection of Tk 10 lakh every day, this swelling fund is reportedly clocking around Tk 300 crore. It takes only a

State media

Executive Producer (news) Nurul Azam Paban and News Producer Main Uddin, who are also in control the PMO (Chief Adviser's Office) of news flow from the BTV's bulletins, are widely known as beneficiaand were allegedly appointed under ries of the immediate past governpolitical consideration ment.

At the very end of the four-party government's tenure, it gave senior In December 2002, the govern-ment partially liberalised the officials of BTV M Hamid and Abu Taher, forced retirement so that they female migration to all ME councannot get important positions tries on individual application during the caretaker government basis. It was previously limited only period

In the state-run radio --At a later stage, the Baira was given the responsibility to arrange Bangladesh Betar -- Apel Mahmud, deputy director general. pre-departure trainings and run the (programme) is also the incumbent management at destination counvice-president of Jatiyatabadi tries in cooperation with the Samaiik Sangskritik Sangstha cultural wing of BNP. He received Bangladesh missions, which the body totally failed to comply with. In a scenario where 48 percent contractual appointment twice in the current post during the previous of the global migrants are female, regime.

Nasimul Quader Chowdhury deputy director general (news) of Bangladesh Betar, is also a politithe Indonesian, 75 percent of Sri cally biased officer and he was promoted twice, in the special quota of the president, during the four-Policy inadequacy is depriving

Kim Jong II visited an army unit, party regime. KCNA reported late Friday, his first Surprisingly enough, Mokhlesur public military visit since last Rahman Chowdhury, press secre-tary to the president, who was a public appearance after the country senior journalist of BNP mouthpiece agreed to return to the arms talks. It the Dainik Dinkal, is still in his post. Senior Joint Secretary General of Kim made the visit. BNP Tarique Rahman is the pub-

lisher of Dinkal. the nation's No. 2 leader, Kim Yong Sources said the four-party Nam, said any progress at the revived government, just a few days before talks on the communist nation's completing its term, made Abdu nuclear programme will depend on the Hye Siddique the director general of United States, an indication a break-through could be difficult. PIB. Hye, a pro-BNP journalist, has been trying to get four-party ticket for the next general elections. Despite his overt political activities, he has not yet been axed.

2 advisers Meanwhile, BNP appointed PIO, a vital post under the information FROM PAGE 1 ministry, M Muhaddes is still in give this decision and they (the two

service. advisers) did not take his permis-Besides, Zahirul Haque, director sion." Bhuivan said adding that the general of external affairs division council of advisers has no right to s going on with his contractual job. Known as a staunch BNP supporter give any decision in this regard. among the journalist community, he was made DG at the very beginning conference at the BNP central office of the four-party alliance rule. after a party delegation called on

AL man beaten FROM PAGE 16

wounded and unconscious Taiul to the local office of Zia Sangsad, tied him up and confined him there, local sources said.

told them (BNP delegation) regard-Hatia police recovered Tajul's ing this, Bhuiyan parried the quesbody yesterday morning from a paddy field near Centre Bazar and tion saying, "It's very much clear that they (two advisers) went to meet the sent the body to the morgue for an AL leaders on their own, not by autopsy taking permission of the chief

Hatia upazila BNP leaders. adviser however, claimed the deceased was a forest bandit and not member of any political party. They also adviser's permission, they would not claimed that angry locals beat Tajul go by un-flagged car secretly and in to death. violation of protocol, he added

Judgement on Saddam

FROM PAGE 16 It is feared that the verdict, in which Saddam faces a possible death penalty, could trigger widespread violence in already war-torn Iraq

Tikrit.

the Iragi High Tribunal.

Ibrahim Shaker.

the dominant Shia community

whose representatives now rule

Shia militia -- enemies of

Saddam -- are the main suspects in

Saturdav's rocket attack, which

claimed casualties among

Russians and an Iraqi colleague

working for the Basra Electricity

Company. Four Russians "received light

wounds as the result of a mortar

shell explosion", the foreign minis-

try in Moscow said. Russia was

planning to repatriate the wounded

A British military spokesman

attack in the northern Najidiyah

It was caused by "indirect fire ..

that appears to be a rocket attack

near their factory", British military spokesman Major Charlie

hit their factory premises," he said,

adding that the casualties worked

and elsewhere in southern Iraq

groups connected to political and

ribal factions in the city

'The rocket missed the base but

men.

Burbridge said.

the war-ravaged country.

has left thousands dead.

Meanwhile, Iraqi police have recovered 83 bodies of men shot to death over the past 48 hours in apparent sectarian attacks, a security source said. Interior ministry spokesman

between remaining supporters of the former president and his many Brigadier Abdul Karim Khalaf the r As an immediate security meagive his own figure for how many sure, Iraq ordered curfew in the bodies had turned up. country's two most violent prov-A gunbattle erupted in Baghdad inces -- Baghdad and Diyala -- and during the early hours as US and Iraq forces raided the capital's Shia also in the northern province of Salaheddin, which houses the bastion of Sadr City and detained deposed dictator's hometown of three suspects. The US military said the raid Aside from the curfew, more was aimed at capturing a leader 'security measures are under and member of a group that had killed "innocent Iraqi citizens and consideration", Iraq's National Security Advisor Muwaffag alsecurity forces". Rubaie told reporters Saturday There were no casualties On Friday, Iraq took a first step among the joint force, it added, but to tighten security by cancelling all gave no details on whether any military leave and put its armed militants or civilians had been hurt forces on alert to prevent violence Last week US forces sealed of before or after Sunday's ruling by Sadr City to hunt for a kidnapped American serviceman of Iraqi "All military personnel are on origin believed to be held captive in alert. Leave has been cancelled the district. and we are on alert for any possible Days later, however, Iraqi Prime emergency. Those on leave should Minister Nuri al-Maliki ordered report to their units," said defence ministry spokesman Major General them to abandon the cordon they had set up around the sprawling district, a stronghold of the Mahd Baghdad, which is already Army militia loyal to radical Shia reeling under a brutal campaign of

egy to negotiate with foreign counoverstaying of workers. tries in this regard. Bangladeshi workers in Korea The ministry formed a committee in December 2004 for negotia-tions and facilitation for liberalising violate contracts by switching jobs or by migrating to Japan for higher salary because they are desperate temporary movement of natura persons under Mode-4 of GATS of to earn more to recover the huge the WTO. amount they pay the recruiting A proposal for funding the study was forwarded to the Ministry of Commerce, but the exercise is in agencies at home limbo since then.

the five years it had no control over four recruiting agencies -- Silver MAH Salim, Unique Eastern (Pvt) Ltd of AL MP Noor Ali, Rupsha Overseas Ltd of BNP MP Ali Asgar Lobby, and Orbital Enterprise of former AL MP Mostafa Kamal.

elections as 'dummy candidates' and some become polling agents to manipulate the polls in favour of corrupt candidates. Polling booths should be set up near residential areas to encourage more participation of women voters in the election, he added.

Rouf said the existing ceiling on election expenditure for each candidate should be increased in line with the price hike of essentials.

Former adviser to a caretaker government M Hafizuddin Khan said the Election Commission must be authorised to put on trial the officials who will be accused of election rigging.

He observed that government officials often get relief from election related allegations when they go back to their original duties. Barrister Rafig UI Hug observed

that removing the present CEC will be very difficult as he is adamant not to resign but he may be made ineffective through a presidential directive to go on a leave for three months in public interest.

He suggested implementation of several directives of the High Court Division regarding election related issues. Hug said statements of life style should be incorporated in income tax returns of candidates. Former foreign minister Anisul

Islam Mahmud suggested formation of a parliamentary committee for appointing chief election commissioners and other members of the **Election Commission**

Take steps

FROM PAGE 16 elections separately, said a press

release. The meeting at the party's central office in the capital observed that the uncertainty loomed large in the country while the differences among the major political parties widened even after the caretaker government took over

The JP presidium meeting suggested that a level playing field be prepared and the neutrality and acceptability of the Election Commission ensured so that all the political parties enjoy equal opportunities for participating in the next general elections.

The presidium members also demanded transparent and neutral electoral process and strict maintenance of electoral laws.

The JP Secretary General Sheikh Shahidul Islam, presidium members Abdur Rahim, Begum Kamrunnahar Zafar. Shah Rafigul Bari Chowdhury, Col (retd) Dr Abdul Latif Mollick, Habibur Rahman Hobi, Mofizul Haque Bebu, Amena Bari and Additional Secretary General Sadek Siddique were present at the meeting.

CG to form

could not take such steps at its inaugural meeting on last Wednesday.

esterday's meeting observed that so

properly

committees.

officials

commissioner.

regime on political considerations.

postings.

alliance, the other political parties and professional bodies described the reshuffling measures as mere evewash while the experts suggested massive reshuffle in the administration to ensure a level playing field in the

FROM PAGE 1

Sources said some advisers at

far the measures taken to ready the administration for holding a free and fair election have been haphazard.

In absence of such committees. the advisers except the chief adviser who is in charge of most of the major portfolios relating to the conduct of election, cannot monitor the functions

On instructions of the advisers' council, the cabinet division is working towards formation of the planned Since assumption of office on last

Sunday night, the chief adviser has taken a number of measures aimed at reorganising the jobs of top admin

So far the caretaker government has cancelled contractual appointment of nine secretaries. transferred 18 secretaries, six divisional commissioners, all divisional police commissioners including inspector general of police and Dhaka Metropolitan Police

Some officials with reported leanings towards BNP and Jamaat were given charges of different vital positions in Monday night's first reshuffle. Those officials had got quick and sometimes undue promotions during the immediate past four-party alliance

The redistribution of jobs at the police administration on Thursday night shows that the officials who had allegedly been in the good book of the last regime have got even better

Except the BNP-led four-party build-up to the next election

tew welfare measures like death compensation, housing facilities and construction of one-stop service centres to provide short stay and other facilities for aspirant migrants.

The sheer volume of the fund is a problem in itself and alluring ingenuous ways and means by its custodians to expend.

One such outlet is frequent multi-country global trips by MPs of the parliamentary standing com-mittees, ministry and BMET officials and even Baira office-bearers in the pretext of business exploration and status survey of the expa-

OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT POLICY

After years of exercise, interministerial meetings and dialogues with private sector, NGOs and international organisations, the cabinet approved Bangladesh Overseas Employment Policy.

But it is yet to be passed in parliament. Experts said most

Hawa Bhaban

FROM PAGE 16 stopped," he said at a press briefing at AL's Dhanmondi office in the evening Jalil, also the coordinator of the

14-party combine, asked BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuivan not to "mislead" the nation and not to put "pressure" on the

president. In the petitions, the condemned He further urged the president to militants rejected the established appoint a new chief adviser to the caretaker government according to tion, terming it manmade and urged the constitution for holding a free the Supreme Court to try them by fair and credible election.

Jalil was critical of Justice MA Aziz for holding on to the office of the chief election commissioner "ignoring the whole nation's desire" asked him to resign immediately to save the country from confrontation.

The AL general secretary was also highly critical of Adviser Justice Fazlul Hug for his reported remark about the Awami League-led 14party combine, saying this proved that he is "a partisan, not neutral person" and he is "not fit" to be an adviser.

Jalil urged the chief adviser to remove Justice Fazlul Huq from the council of advisers.

Referring to the BNP secretary general's demand for resignation of advisers CM Shafi Sami and Sultana Kamal for their meeting with Sheikh Hasina at her residence Thursday night, he said they met the Awami League president as per directive of the chief adviser

"The Awami League-led 14-party combine wants to participate in the were killed in a suicide bomb attack at Purba Chadkati in Jhalakathi town on election and it doesn't believe in any

conspiracy against election," Jalil said

He demanded reconstitution of the Election Commission, saving that no credible election is possible under this Election Commission. He further demanded updating the

existing voter list. Jalil urged the president to take proper initiatives to make the stateowned BTV neutral and give permission to resume telecast by the private TV channel, ETV.

Central leaders of the 14-party combine were present at the press briefing.

90 hurt

FROM PAGE 1 sleepers and rocks at different points along the route from Dhaka to Chittagong were not in place. As the train was moving only at 30km per hour, 200 passengers on board could have been in a much severe accident, he added.

However, technical faults might as well be the cause of the accident, sources said.

The injured were admitted to Laksam Upazila Health Complex and Comilla Hospital.

A rescue train from Akhaura reached the spot at 12:30pm, railway officials said.

High officials from Bangladesh Railway visited the spot, said the sources

Oli asks

regular in operation.

FROM PAGE 16

migrates.

Oli was addressing a joining ceremony at the party's Baridhara office in the capital. A number of leaders and workers from Jatiya Party (Ershad) of Gazipur and former honorary captain from Brahmanbaria Abdul Haque joined the newly

formed party. He said more "honest" people from BNP would join the LDP by the next month. He bitterly criticised the immediate past government for its involvement in unabated corruption. LDP leaders Maj (retd) Abdul

Mannan, Sheikh Razzak Ali, Ánwarul Kabir Talukder, Alamoir Kabir, Redwan Ahmed and Firoz M Hasan also spoke on the occasion.

4-party

FROM PAGE 1

Commission is preparing to announce the schedule of the next general election. In this situation, we Rahman, delivers his verdict. vill ask the caretaker government chief not to move for any change here in the face of pressure from any quarter. president to carry out attacks on

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia chaired the meeting that began around 4:30pm and continued for about one and a half hours.

The meeting reiterated the fouras the two communities are party alliance's demand for steps against caretaker government advisers Sultana Kamal and CM Shafi Sami "as they violated their and neutrality by meeting oath Sheikh Hasina secretly and avoiding the national flag on their vehicle Muiahid said.

He was briefing the reporters on the meeting as BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan left the place without saying anything.

Mujahid said the meeting opposed indiscriminate reshuffling ir the administration, which, observed, is creating "uncertainty"

"We will request the caretaker government to rather steer the country said two Russians had been killed towards the election." he said, adding along with the Iraqi colleague in the 'The caretaker government has two functions--carrying out routine work and assisting the Election Commission in district of Basra. holding free and fair election in a peaceful atmosphere. "There is a congenial environaimed at a coalition base located

ment for election now. The four-party alliance, along with people, will resist any move to foil this environment,'

Mujahid said. BNP standing committee members Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, M Shamsul Islam and KM for the Basra Electricity Company. British military bases in Basra Obaid, Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP) Chairman Naziur Rahmar Moniúr and Islami Oikva Jote (IOJ) regularly come under rocket and mortar attack from Shia militia leader Mufti Fazlul Haque Amini, among others, were present at the meeting

cleric Mogtada al-Sadr. insurgent and sectarian violence, A civilian was killed and seven is expected to be virtually sealed were wounded Saturday as a off on Sunday as the chief judge in bomb loaded on a bicycle exploded the Dujail trial, Rauf Abdel at a petrol station in the town of Suweira, south of Baghdad, while Iragi authorities expect Sunni three corpses were also fished out Arab supporters of the ousted of the nearby Tigris river.

BSF Widespread violence is feared

already engaged in communa FROM PAGE 1 bloodletting since February that

opened fire on a group of Bangladeshi farmers when they went to their croplands near border pillar 378/2-F at around 6:00am, killing three of them on the spot.

Two of the dead were identified as Anar Uddin, 25, son of Mozimuddin of Baria-Bashi village and Hamidul Islam, 32, son of Piaruddin Ahmed of Jhuliabasti village under Baliadangi upazila. Identity of the remaining one, aged about 15, could not be known.

Immediately after the killing, the BSF men took away the body, but did not return as of 5:00pm vesterday.

According to locals and BDR

sources, abducted Ramzan went to

the border area along with the

farmers. As he tried to flee the

scene, the BSF troops chased and

Lt Col Rafigue Hassan, com-

manding officer of 20 Rifles

Battalion sent a protest note to his

Indian counterpart, demanding return of the bodies. He also asked

the BSF authorities to hand over the

abducted Bangladeshi. Sources said the BDR and BSF

have deployed additional troops

along the Baliadangi border follow

ing the incident. A tense situation is

prevailing in the area.

picked up him at gunpoint.