Advisers tell Zakaria

Information Adviser Mahbubul Alam told reporters after a meeting of the advisers yesterday after-

On voter list correction, he said the electoral roll can be updated up to the day before election and the lists will be available at the district election offices for correction.

The advisers' meeting came up with the changes after three days' negotiation with the two major political alliances led by the BNP and AL to resolve the political deadlock arising out of a face off between them

The BNP-led four-party alliance has been demanding holding of the election under the current schedule while the AL-led grand alliance has been asking for a new schedule after properly correcting the voter list and creating an atmosphere for holding a free and fair election.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Adviser Shafiqual Haque Choudhury said they are satisfied with the new decisions and hoped the political deadlock will be resolved. "We took the decision in consulting with the major political parties," he said.

The delegation of AL-led grand alliance, however, said the EC did not consult with it.

"The Election Commission has taken the decision for holding the election in line with a blueprint. We do not agree with the new timetable," M Mokammel Haque, member of the AL advisory council who headed the delegation, told report-

Meanwhile, an adviser told The Daily Star requesting anonymity that yesterday's meeting of the advisers' council did not discuss the other issues of the package proposal

EC RECAST

Information Adviser Mahbubul Alam said. "The council of advisers unanimously decided to request Election Commissioner SM Zakaria to go on leave of absence." Although Mahbub said Zakaria "will not be in office during the election", he did not make it clear when Zakaria will go on leave.

Another adviser and the EC secretary also told The Daily Star last night that they do not know anything about it.

The information adviser also avoided the question if they took any decision on the other election commissioner, Modabbir, who aspired to be a four-party alliance candidate from Habigani-2 constituency before his appointment in the EC on November 27. It took the council of advisers 16

days to implement its proposal partly as President and Chief Adviser lajuddin Ahmed had suddenly opposed the move to send Zakaria on leave of absence.

Coincidentally, the BNP-led alliance, which had earlier agreed

to the proposals, also changed its stance over the Zakaria issue.

Finding the president's differences of opinions with them on implementation of the package proposal, four advisers resigned on

Later at a meeting of the advisers' council on December 13, however, lajuddin gave consent to sending Zakaria and Modabbir on

"If both the parties [the AL and BNP] agree, the president will request Flection Commissioners Zakaria and Modabbir to go on leave. I believe they will agree to go on leave if both the parties reach a consensus," the president's adviser quoted lajuddin as telling the US ambassador earlier.

Resigning adviser Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury told the media that the president had himself informed them that he would send Election Commissioner Modabbir on leave of absence as his appointment in the commission triggered enormous controversy.

But the council of advisers retreated from its original package proposal and yesterday took decision only on Zakaria.

Adviser Shafiqual, who was involved in the negotiation with the two political alliances, however, claimed that he was not aware of the content of the original package

"So far as I knew, sending one election commissioner on leave was in the agenda," he told The Daily Star, adding, "We are now satisfied that we have taken the

Zakaria, who left office at 5:30pm, declined to make any comment on the decision. GRAND ALLIANCE'S DEMANDS

The three-member delegation of the AL-led grand alliance placed its demands before the EC secretary.

"We have demanded announcement of a new schedule after properly correcting the voter list," said M okammel Haque.

In reply to a question, he said, "We [the grand alliance] of course want to participate in the election but there is no environment at present for a free and fair election.

The Election Commission did not discuss with us before announcing the poll schedule," he said, demanding declaration of a fresh schedule after consulting with all political parties

"It is better to hold the election late than to hold a controversial election." Mokammel said.

A three-member delegation of Jatiya Party (Manju) led by General Secretary Sheikh Shahidul Islam also met EC Secretary Sarkar vesterday afternoon and placed a set of demands. Their demands include preparation of a flawless voter list and ensuring a level playing field for a free and fair election.

Bush may

FROM PAGE 16 'People were hopping over and treading on bodies as they scattered to get away," said a young man who

The explosion took place on a major road leading through the Karrada area, a once prosperous part of Baghdad which was known as one of the most mixed areas of the city but is now increasingly dominated by Shiites.

Baghdad's universities have come increasingly under attack from Sunni extremist groups, and last week an Internet statement nurnortedly from the Ansar al-Sunna militant organisation explicitly threatened students.

remained trapped in a vicious cycle of sectarian killings led by warring Sunni insurgent groups and Shiite And, in a turnaround from past

not losing.

He is facing mounting pressure to reduce America's military commit-ment in Iraq but has also said he wants to expand the overall size of

Snow said the Iraq troop increase "is something that's being explored' amid media reports that the president might add tens of thousands of JS soldiers to help quell what the Pentagon now warns is the worst violence on record.In an interview in the Wednesday edition of The Washington Post, Bush for the first time admitted that the United states was not winning in Iraq.

losing," Bush said in a marked reversal from a remark he made before the November 7 Congressional election that "Absolutely, we're winning."

Bush's Republican Party lost

control of the US Congress in that election to opposition Democrats largely due to voter anger over the war in Iraq.

the Iraq troop increase except to say that "all options are viable," but told the Post that he ordered the new defense secretary, Robert Gates, to develop a plan to expand the US army and Marine Corps. "I'm inclined to believe that we do

need to increase our troops, the army, the Marines," he said.

active army is about broken" due to strains from Iraq and Afghanistan. "I haven't heard the work 'broken,

but I've the word 'stressed," said the

fight a global war on terrorism going to need a military that's capable of being able to sustain our efforts

"We need to reset our military. There's no question the military has been used a İot," said Bush.

and to help us achieve peace," he

Arrestee admits

FROM PAGE 16 Liton and Sheuli, said Sayeed.

However, he denied of knowing the criminals involved in the killing and how the victim had been

The dismembered body of 23vear old Turva. son of a leading ewellery trader in the city, was dug out from Rampura on Monday, after 43 days of his abduction.

Turya was kidnapped on October 29 by a group of criminals led by Shamsunanhar Sheuli and his boy friend Shahadat Hossain Liton aĺias 'Khora' Liton.

In his statement, Sayeed also told the magistrate that he came to Dhaka last year and met Liton at Gulistan. Hé had been living with Liton and Sheuli in the same place in Rampura since then.

On October 29, while Sayeed vas out of town at his village home Barguna, Liton and Sheuli asked him to return to Dhaka. He got back n Dhaka on October 31 and found a body (Turya's) in his room. Liton and Sheuli then asked him to collect gunnysacks, polythene bags and a saw from a nearby market.

The same afternoon, Sheuli and Liton put the body in a gunnysack and asked Sayeed and Mamun to go to Mirpur Ćricket Stadium and collect Tk 10 lakh and ten tolas of gold for ransom of the victim from nis parents.

They returned home at around 10:30am and hired a van to dump the body at West Rampura, Sayeed

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested Saveed on December 6 from his home village in Barguna. Rab, following the leads gathered from Sayeed, arrested Liton, Sheuli and Mamun from different parts of

BDR, BSF

FROM PAGE 16 outposts. BDR sources said they

have put the troops on alert. When contacted, Major Kamrul Hasan of 41 Rifles Battalion, confirmed the incident.

3 cattle lifters

FROM PAGE 1 eight cows onto their truck from two cattle sheds owned by next-door neighbours Haji Ashraf Áli and Abdul

The villagers rushed to the scene after Abdul Hamid heard the thieves and started screaming out for help. The villagers captured four of the thieves while the others managed to

The villagers' beating was so severe that three of the thieves were killed on the spot and one injured. The mob also set their truck on fire.

Police recovered the bodies at around 5:30am and sent the injured to the upazila health complex. The injured was later transferred to CMCH.

9 top PDB officials

designs, PDB), Khandker Iftekhar Uddin (executive engineer, Sylhet 150 MW power project), Chowdhury Nuruzzaman (executive engineer, Civil Works Division-2, PDB), Abdul Halim Sarkar (executive engineer, Baghabari power plant) and engineer Kazi Kamal Uddin (resident consultant, PDB).

The officials in question misused their power, in connivance with each other and with ill motives. and accepted low quality and low capacity gas booster compressors for the PDB, incurring a government loss of Tk 14.45 crore, ACC Assistant Director Ashish Kumar Kundu in his First Information Report (FIR) to the police said.

The contract between the PDB and Harbin stipulated that Harbin supply and install a Man Turbo gas booster compressor (GBC) system that had been manufactured in either France, Germany or the United States. The PDB board approved this decision at a meeting on May 5, 2003, adding that Harbin could provide the same device from any other globally reputed manufacturer providing it could be approved at the project design level.

Upon signing the contract on June 8, 2003, Harbin stated that it was unable to provide the Man Turbo GBC, and would instead provide the same device from the 'globally reputable" SGL. Instead. Harbin supplied a low quality and low capacity set of GBC's, manufactured by Shenyang Gufengji Ltd (SGL), China.

The project's director Fatimi initiated the process to accept Harbin's deviation proposal, which was further endorsed by other high officials, including chairman SA

facing non-cooperation from the

port workers since the operation of

the crane by the private company

resumed on December 15, sources

said, adding that the port operators

do not place the trailer under the

spreader in a proper way for loading

and unloading the containers

quickly. The operators are also not

keeping the containers at proper

places causing space problems in

Limited in a letter to the Chittagong

Port Authority alleged that the port

operators are not providing suffi-

cient trailers and straddle carriers

Private company Saif Powertec

the RTG vard, the source said.

Port performance

Mayeed, despite objections from the project's consultant.

This deviation is further critical as the PDB did not seek the necessary approval from the board or ministry for project equipment to be received from an alternate country of origin than those stipulated in the initial contract.

A seven-member PDB Basic Design Approval Team (PDBBDAT) visited China, whose members were: Dr AKM Azad Akhatarul Islam, Naimul Hossain Khan, Khandker Iftekhar Uddin, Chowdhury Nuruzzaman, Abdul Hakim Sarkar and Kazi Kamal Uddin Ekram. During the visit Harbin informed the PDBBDAT of some serious parameter changes, clearly stating that the proposed device was not appropriate. Notwithstanding, the team gave positive comments and approved the GBC upon return.

According to data of the PDB and Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB), the grossly flawed Tk 360 crore Tongi plant remained out of action for 2231 hours exclusively due to the plant's incompetent Chinese builder Harbin. This shutdown alone deprived the PDB Tk 42.83 crore of revenue, experts say.

The builder's faults include the installation of sub-standard equipment such as gas booster compressors and gas compressors, air compressors. mist eliminator motors, gas relief valves and an assortment of different types of

Any other persons found to be involved in the scandal through further investigations would also be held accountable, the FIR said.

for handling each container.

The port workers who had been

relieved from the job started non-

cooperating with the private com-

pany. With the beginning of country-

wide political agitation programme

in October those port operators

They kept the CCT besieged for

created barrier in private operation.

over two weeks demanding cancel-

lation of the agreement with the

private company. Later, the port

operators backed by Chittagong city

Khaleda FROM PAGE 16

Referring to LDP President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, she said, "He did not do anything for the development of his own constituency of Munshiganj-1 and carried out his political activities like a zamindar depriving the people of much needed development in the area".

"I would like to assure you that we will bring enormous development to your area if you vote for four-party, she told the new comers.

The former prime minister said BNP wants the people of all faiths to live side by side peacefully in Bangladesh enjoying equal rights and dignity by making the country a prosperous one through educating the

Alleging AL of repressing the Hindus when it was in power, she said BNP carried out various development activities for the people of all faiths including the Hindu community when it was in power. Describing the development works

for the Hindu community in the last five vears. Khaleda Zia said some 22.000 puja mandaps were set up across the country during the regime of the immediate past four-party government and arrangements were also made for rebuilding the Kalimandir at Ramna. "Ramadan and puia were simulta-

neously held and celebrated peacefully during our rule, which is a unique example of communal harmony in Bangladesh," she said adding that BNP does not believe in majority or minority as it believes that all citizens are Bangladeshis.

Presided over by Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, a BNP ticket aspirant from Munshiganj-1, Joint Secretary General of the party Aman Ullah Aman, Goutam Chakrawarty and Nitai Roy also addressed the

Rajuk starts FROM PAGE 1

Rajuk had previously demarcated the same stretch of the lake's bank with large tree trunks leaving space between the lake and the proposed walkway. Residents there said they were amazed Rajuk was again spending money to encroach on the lake for the walkway.

"They have already demarcated a wide area for the walkway on the bank of the lake. The plot-sized areas now make it evident as to why they are encroaching upon the lake," said Nurul Islam, a resident of Kalachandpur. Emdadul Islam, Raiuk's chief

engineer, yesterday stated over the telephone that he had asked Uzzal Mallick to stop the re-demarcation work. He also said that redemarcation would not resume until the matter had been investigated. Raiuk has previously filled in large

stretches of Gulshan lake that were later converted into plots and secretly allocated to influential persons.

The walkway project was initially undertaken to demarcate the lake and thus prevent the lake's water body from encroachment.

Barrister Omar Sadat and Supreme Court (SC) authorities brought the sedition charges separately against around 200 lawyers for the November 30 vandalism on the Supreme Court premises.

(HC) bench granted ad interim anticipatory bail for six months to seven SC lawyers, including Barrister Amir-Ul Islam and Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud, in two separate sedition cases.

At a later hearing, Barrister Tania Amir obtained bail.

petitions minutes before giving a rule by a High Court division bench.

Leaders of Awami League-led 14-party combine and some other parties filed the writ petitions challenging the legality of the president's assuming the office of the chief adviser to the caretaker govern-

14-party

said declaring the election schedule and holding polls before publishing the final voter roll are unconstitutional As per the previous election

schedule, the last date for filing nomination papers was today. But the Election Commission yesterday extended the date for nomination filing to December 24 keeping unchanged

carrying vehicles and other emergency vehicles will remain outside the purview of today's shutdown. The 14-party combine and

Jatiya Party (Ershad) have taken all

the purview of the hartal

Right to pick honest

FROM PAGE 1 some vital information about the poll

make the criminalised politics more

tion of the stay order, former adviser to caretaker government Hafizuddin Khan said the EC might look after a certain quarter's interest. It was a 'dillydally body earlier, now it seems over prompt" Syed Abul Maqsud, eminent

columnist, asked, "Does the state machinery assist the black money holders and criminals, harming the rights of people"? Badiul Alam Majumdar said Abu

family sources said he is now staying with his second wife at Tongi and working with a shop at Cherag Ali market there. But Safa could not be

objection to disclosing the academic qualification, the Supreme Court (SC) stayed all the eight points of the HC verdict, Shujan leaders said.

Meanwhile, at another press conference at the second hall of the SCBA, the three writ petitioners advocates Abdul Momen Chowdhury, Appellate Division

without letting the advocate-on-record get informed and in presence of BNP leader and former law minister

Barrister Moudud Ahmed and Barrister Omar Sadat, son-in-law of another BNP minister Shahiahan

Ábdul Momen Chowdhury, one of the writ petitioners, alleged Moudud acted behind the scene while Omar

moved the matter in the Appellate

"If we were informed through the advocate-on-record, the SC after proper hearing might not issue stay on hat public interest case," he said.

11 western

FROM PAGE 1

foreign envoys wanted to know about the constitutional process and the meeting discussed the extent of

Morshed said, "Neither they asked to defer nor they asked to advance the election date. They said it's the matter of Bangladesh into which they won't poke their nose."

see Bangladesh marching forward under a constitutional system.

Terming the 90-minute meeting informal. Morshed said this sort of meeting will be held regularly.

ber Khandaker Mahbub Uddin Ahmed, BNP Chairperson's another adviser Reaz Rahman, former state minister Mir Nasiruddin and BNF Office Secretary Nazrul Islam Khan were also present at the meeting.

Apart from the UNDP country representative and the British high commissioner, ambassadors of the European Commission, Germany

Latest proposal

Conspiracies are still on. Instead of

implementing the entire package proposal, the caretaker government has taken a piecemeal approach only to hold a farcical election conspiring to destroy the democratic In the original package proposal

the CG proposed that Zakaria and newly appointed Election Commissioner Modabbir Hossain Chowdhury would be sent on leaves of absence and three new commissioners would be appointed, he "We have learnt that the care-

taker government will only send Zakaria on a leave. But we know nothing about when will he be sent on a leave?" said the AL leader adding that the Chief Adviser (CA) lajuddin Ahmed-led CG has failed to create a congenial atmosphere for a The AL leader reiterated his

demand that laiuddin steps down from the post of CA and appoints a non-partisan person to the post, cancels the current poll schedule, reconstitutes the Election Commission through removal of all controversial persons in it. changes all election officials in the EC secretariat and in the election offices in districts and upazilas, corrects and publishes the updated voter roll. depoliticises the administration. announces a fresh poll schedule after publishing the corrected voter list and implements the package deal in its entirety.

None of the demands has been net yet which are prerequisites for holding a free and fair election, Jalil

JP (ERSHAD)

Jatiya Party Presidium Member Kazi Zafar Ahmed yesterday said the president and CA should resign from the post of chief adviser and should appoint an acceptable person instead since 'he has totally failed to create a congenial atmosphere for holding a free and neutral election'.

"The package proposal of the caretaker government was not implemented due to interference from a vested quarter and the CA is subservient to a specific party," he said at a news briefing in Jatiya Party chairman's Banani office in the capital. About the new EC decision of

extending the deadline for submission of nomination papers and the council of advisers' decision to request Election Commissioner Zakaria to go on a leave, he just said, "The final victory will also come the same way."

He demanded cancellation of the 'biased election schedule', reconstitution of the Election Commission through removal of the two controversial election commissioners, and termination of 'politically appointed' election officers.

He said the voter list should be updated under a reconstituted election commission and the administration should be free of political influence.

"A fresh election schedule should be announced after publishing a corrected voter list," he said.

In reply to a question he said 'Components of the grand alliance have come to a sweeping political understanding and we are united for the movement, for the election and also for forming a government." JP Secretary General Ruhul Amin Hawlader, Kazi Firoje Rashid,

Ziauddin Bablu, Tajul Islam Chowdhury, and Ahsan Habib Lincoln were also present. Jatiya Oikya Front comprising Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)

Mannan said. "We are fighting for a free and fair election. Until an environment for a free and fair election is created in the country we will not allow any-

Mannan accused the president of taking wrong, biased and autocratic decisions making the situation

more complex than it was.

He also demanded correction of the voter list rejecting the current one by terming it a 'voter list of the

nationalists' Leaders of JOF said the responcreating a congenial environment the CA's office is busy implementing

Jatiya Oikya Front also demanded that the administration

be purged of four-party partisans. B Čhwodhury, former president of the country and president of LDP, and other leaders of Jatiya Oikya Front were also present at the conference.

50 Taliban men killed in raid

killed around 50 Taliban insurgents in a fresh anti-militant sweep in southern Afghanistan, the alliance said vester-

Operation "Baaz Tsuka" (Falcon's Summit) was launched last Friday by

two small villages of Taliban. We have killed about 50 Taliban," Nato spokesman Brigadier Richard Nugee told a press conference in Kabul.

ties during the operation.

The 31,000-strong ISAF is fighting a fierce Taliban insurgency alongside Afghanistan's fledgling army and 8,000 troops from the US-led coalition that ousted the Islamist regime in late 2001.

Afghanistan's restive south and east earlier this year, would stay in Afghanistan as long as they were needed. "We are here to stay for as long as

the government of Afghanistan wants us to help them and that might, we anticipate, be beyond 2010," he said. His comments come amid mount-

ncreased Nato casualties in Afghanistan this year. A stepped-up Taliban insurgency has claimed more than 4,000 lives

during 2006, four times the previous year's toll. Around 1,000 of those were civilians while militant deaths make up the bulk of the rest.

lajuddin 'key obstacle'

FROM PAGE 1 were deputy chief observer Graham Elson and political expert Jenni Christenser They met the AL leaders, including AL President Sheikh Hasina. in

the views of different political parties ahead of the upcoming election. "We will evaluate the parties' positions and make our observations

include partisan role of the CA and the Election Commission (EC), and

The AL leaders also described

their demands -- resignation of the

CA, reconstitution of the EC with

erroneous voter list."

neutral and credible people in charge, cancellation of the existing polls schedule and correcting the voter list, he added. Earlier, the EU team had an hourlong meeting with the LDP leaders in the morning. LDP President Badruddoza Chowdhury led his party also attended by its leaders

main hindrance to the free and fair voting, the LDP leaders reiterated their demand for his immediate resignation from the post of CA. Badruddoza also apprised the team of the demands of all parties, except BNP and Jamaat, in the current political situation. meeting, LDP leader Firoz M Hasan

during the polls were discussed in the meeting

observers also met the BNP leaders

lated in the constitution, as any citizen can challenge it in court, the BNP leaders told the delegation led Alexander Lambsdorff. BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, BNP chairper-

son's advisers M Morshed Khan and Reaz Rahman were present at the eting that lasted for 90 minutes. Briefing reporters after the meeting, Reaz Rahman said they

even if other political parties did not participate. Replying to query, he said the EU observers hoped that a free, fair, peaceful and credible election

would be held in Bangladesh.

Cop's murder

carrying out. who was found dead in house No. 6 on road No. 116 of Gulshan-2, was strangled to death and bore several marks of injury on his eyes and

Khan Mohammad Sirajul Islam, officer-in-charge (OC) of Gulshan PS, told The Daily Star that they are not sure yet who killed the SI and why. Different teams of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and the Detective Branch of police are investigating

The police filed a murder case. The police suspected that the people who came by a white microbus to pick up Mizanur from Gulshan PS on Tuesday night committed the "pre-planned" mur-

phone and revolver at the spot where is was found. Mizanur's namaz-e-ianaza was held at the Raiarbagh Police Line mosque after Zohr prayers yesterday. He was later buried at his

1994 and was posted at the Gulshan PS eight months ago.

His family members demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment to the criminals nvolved with the murder.

fled the scene

Both attacks came as Baghdad

upbeat assessments on the Iraq war, Bush told the Washington Post in an nterview posted on the newspaper's Web site: "We're not winning, we're

the US armed forces. White House spokesman Tony

'We're not winning we're not

Bush made no specific mention of

Bush declined to put a number on he increase, and disputed former US secretary of state Colin Powell's assertion over the weekend that "the

president, who told the Post that more ground forces were required to "It is an accurate reflection that this ideological war we're in is going to last for a while, and that we're

> for smooth movement and shifting of containers At a meeting on Tuesday, the port authority discussed the matter and decided to give a warning to the

port operators about their alleged non-cooperation. The Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry in a letter to the CPA also urged it to accelerate the back up services for full utilisation of the gantry cranes. Managing Director of Sait Powertec Tarafde Ruhul Amin. however, claimed that his operators are handling 25-30 containers per operation hour

despite non-cooperation from the CPA operators. The government installed the sophisticated cranes spending over Tk 150 crore in January this year and at first tried to operate those by the port operators. As the speed of the crane operation by port operators was very slow, the government appointed private company Saif

Powertec Limited for its operation in

The private company appointed

trained foreign personnel and

increased the handling of contain-

June this year.

Mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury took the charge of the gantry cranes and

started operation by themselves. But the private company filed a writ petition with the High Court and obtained a rule nisi in favour of them. Following the High Court verdict, the private company resumed their operation on

Outlaw leader

FROM PAGE 16

to hold a meeting.

Amzad Hossain, 35, son of Rahatul Islam of Chandpur under the same According to a Rab press release, after being tipped-off, a team of Rab 6 went to Debipur field at around 4:00am where members

Rab cordoned the filed and called on the criminals to surrender. The outlaws ignored the call and opened fire on Rab sparking off an hour-long shootout between the outlaws and the law enforcement

Amzad was found dead on the field after the shootout was over

while his accomplices managed to

Rab recovered a firearm and 10

flee, the press release claimed.

four for murder filed with Gangni and company, however, charged Tk 470 sadar police stations in Meherpur.

Gas sale deal with Niko Bapex. It has been producing s between 20 million cubic feet per

Tengratila blowout compensa-The government remains silent on the Tengratila blowout compensation issue. Based on two investigation reports, the government a year ago submitted a claim of 8.9 billion cubic feet (bcf) gas and a Tk 250 crore bank guarantee from Niko as

The two rounds of blowouts took place in January and June, 2005. this compensation, the then energy ministry adviser Mahmudur Rahman repeatedly said loss of 8.9 bcf gas from the Tengratila field

part of a three-stage compensation

for the Tengratila blowouts.

the government Niko sought an international arbitration to decide on the compensation issue. It sought details on how the government came to the conclusion about the losses caused by the blowouts. Niko argues that the gas loss

110 bcf gas. But a 1996-97 Petrobangla study had identified a resource base of 1.9 trillion cubic feet (tcf) there, of which 1.1 tcf can be commercially produced.

-- with the company's insurer bear-

ing the cost. Petrobangla suspects

that Niko drilled the two wells at the

cost of the insurer with the plan to convert one of these into a development well at a convenient time, and show the cost of that well as 'recoverable' Back in June-July. Niko tried to test the observation well amid

The then state minister Mosharraf was ousted in mid-2005 for receiving a Tk 1 crore car from Niko. The company was disqualified by the government in the Second Round Block Bidding for oil and gas

FROM PAGE 1

January 22 election day The hajj pilgrims carrying transports, ambulances, newspaper vehicles, drug stores, garbage

Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, Shujar chief. in his introductory speech said the qualitative change that was enhanced through the May 24, 2005 HC verdict on people's right to know

has now been undermined. Dr Badiul Alam Majumdar, Shujan secretary, posed a question, "Will it not

Over the immediate implementa-

Safa. according to Shujan investigation, who filed the appeal against the HC verdict, is not at all a philanthropic nomination seeker; rather he abandoned his wife and two children at Kalapahia village in Sandwip. His

traced in Tongi.

Though Safa in his petition raised

KM Zabir and Mohammad Zahirul Islam submitted caveat to the advocate-on-record, Syed Mahbubur Rahman. to contest the case at the SC They said the hearing was held minister M Morshed Khan said the

the constitutional obligation to hold the election within 90 days. "We heard their opinion and we expressed ours," he said. Asked if the envoys were in favour of deferring the election,

He said the diplomats want to

BNP standing committee mem-

Australia, Canada, France, Italy Sweden, Norway, Switzerland and Denmark attended the meeting

obstruct the candidates of four-party

alliance going there to submit nomi-

LDP Secretary General Major

(retd) Abdul Mannan at a news

conference yesterday termed

nation papers.

President laiuddin Ahmed as 'the president of four-party alliance and not of the people of Bangladesh' Their programme will continue until December 24, the last date for submission of nominations,

body to submit nomination forms Mannan said.

"But we think. President lazuddin still can resolve the ongoing political crisis by handing over the office of chief adviser (CA) to a neutral person," he added.

sibility of the CA's office and the Election Commission is to conduct a free and fair election but instead of

the conspiracies of four-party alliance.

AFP, Kabul Nato-led and Afghan forces have

hundreds of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Afghan troops in the Panjwayi and Zhare districts of Kandahar province. "We have cleared one large and

The spokesman said there had oeen no Àfghan army or Nato casual-

Nugee said ISAF forces, which took over from the coalition in

ng concerns in western nations over

No one has the authority to defer the election beyond the time stipu-

the evening while the meeting with the LDP leaders were held at the party's Baridhara office in the morn-Emerging from the meeting with Hasina at the latter's Sudha Sadan residence, Lambsdorff said that they are in the process of learning

through a press conference later, Briefing the reporters, AL chief's Political Šecretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury said, "We raised our concerns on a number of issues that

Abdul Mannan, Anwarul Kabir Talukder, Ziaur Rahman Khan and Firoz M Hasan. Saving that the president is the

Talking to the reporters after the said the EC reconstitution, flawed voter list, politicisation of civil and police administrations, arrest of the corrupt people before the polls security of political leaders, neutrality of private television channels and use of black money and firearms

MEETING WITH BNP The delegation of EU election

at Hawa Bhaban in the evening.
During the meeting, the BNP leaders informed the EU election observers that it is not possible to defer the election date even if the

on it, according to the UNB.

two maior political alliances agreed

told the delegation that BNP must go to the polls within the stipulated time, as there is no alternative to it

murder may have links with the investigations the SI had been Morgue sources said SI Mizanur,

the matter, he said.

SI Mizanur had been investigating 12-15 cases, a few of them sensitive, and his murder may have links with them, the police said, adding that they did not find Mizanur's mobile

lage home in Tangail. Mizanur joined the police force in

According to police, Amzad was ers to 25-30 per hour from 10-12 by accused in different cases including the port operators. The private

bullets from the spot.

day (mmcfd) and 30 mmcfd gas while the country consumes over

While Niko is unwilling to pay would be compensated from the Feni field. A few months back, in a letter to

due to Tengratila blowouts could not be so high as the field itself has

A Niko study of Tengratila gas

field claimed that the field has only

To seal off the blown out gas field's well, Niko drilled two wells -an observation well and a relief well

reservations by Bapex and faced difficulties. Ever since the company abandoned the well. Niko succeeded in striking the JVA without any competitive tender and in violation of various rules.

exploration under PSCs in 1997. But it kept on trying to enter Bangladesh's gas sector through the backdoor and finally got access to the sector through a hush-hush joint venture deal with Bapex and also through purchase of shares of an American oil company in Block-9.

Accused lawyers FROM PAGE 16 of PBCP Lal Pataka were supposed Kawsar would be lawyer surety while Advocate Abdullah Abu local Earlier on December 4 and 5,

On December 10, a High Court

The vandalism took place following the stay orders by the chief justice upon public interest writ

out preparations to make today's

hartal a success while the activists will demonstrate at some 40 spots in the capital in support of the hartal. The hajj pilgrims carrying transports, ambulances, newspaper

vehicles, drug stores, garbage Jatiya Oikya Mancha and Tarikat carrying vehicles and other emer-Federation will start a daily sit-in gency vehicles will remain outside from today around the divisional election commission office in Segunbagicha of the capital and