NEWS

her party by creating two voter lists

one of which, she alleged, was given

to BNP and the presiding officers,

identity cards for all voters and trans-

She also demanded voters'

Saying many new polling centres

have been created for the benefit of

BNP-Jamaat alliance's candidates,

she demanded that the previous

polling centres be kept operational as

per the electoral manual. Presiding

and polling officers will have to be

appointed following consultations

January 7 and 8 blockades when

numerous previous blockades and

other attempts to pressure the care-

taker government did not result in

updating of the voter list to their

satisfaction or in removal of lajuddin,

Hasina replied that they have in fact

gained a number of successes, more

of which will continue coming in the

future. "We have prevented KM Hasan

from becoming the chief adviser, and

have gotten rid of MA Aziz and SM

Zakaria from the Election

Commission through small but strong

free and fair election," she added.

Ershad, B Chy

Meanwhile, Badruddoza

Chowdhury, president of Liberal

Democratic Party (LDP), a major ally

of the AL-led grand alliance, said i

the Election Commission.

FROM PAGE 1

Asked about the purpose of the

with all candidates, she added.

while AL was given 'the false one'.

parent ballot boxes.

Indian cops arrest serial 'child-killer'

Find 6 bodies

AFP, New Delhi

A suspected serial child-killer was arrested yesterday by Indian police following the discovery of the bodies of six children in a satellite city of New Delhi. The suspect appeared to be a

"mentally ill" man who confessed to police he had lured the children with chocolates and other candies and tovs. senior Noida police official R.K.S. Rathore told TV reporters. "He says he kidnapped the children

for sex," Rathore said, adding that police were still questioning the man. Residents called police after they

detected a foul stench emanating from a house in Noida

Skeletons and body parts of the victims -- aged between six and 12 -were found hidden in the multistorev house in Noida, a hub for global software giants, police said.

Television footage showed policemen with shovels recovering bones, clothes and slippers of suspected victims from a drain just outside the property

The remains, gathered into sacks, have been taken for DNA testing, police said.

Of the six victims, two were boys and four were girls, the Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency reported.

The victims were the children of migrant labourers living in shanty clusters near the house, reports said, adding some 40 children had been reported missing in the area in the past two vears. The house where the remains

were found belonged to a businessman identified as Mohinder Singh, who has been detained for question-

ing. The suspected killer, whom the police identified as Satish, was his domestic help and lived there, the PTI reported.

Satish was initially picked up for questioning in a case involving the disappearance of a 16-year-old girl, identified as Payal, from the neighbourhood. Rathore said.

"When he confessed to killing Payal, we questioned him about the children who were missing too. Then he confessed to kidnapping some kids after offering them sweets and candies, and then killing them.

"We then searched the house where he lived and found skeletons. body remains and some clothes of the children." Rathore said.

As news of the discovery of the children's remains spread, hundreds of irate relatives gathered outside the

Cattle prices FROM PAGE 16

especially for Eid-ul-Azha had to buy cattle food with almost double the price. Meanwhile, traders faced problems buying Indian cattle due to

buildina. "It's been over a year that my nephew has been missing and whenever we went to the police, we were told to register a complaint and look for the child ourselves." said a woman. identified as Kamlesh by NDTV news channel.

"We told the police (we) were suspicious of this man (Satish) but they did not listen to us," said Kamlesh, one of those who gathered outside the house with a photograph showing a boy dressed in a blue pullover. Sunil, the father of a 10-year-old gir

missing since April, said his daughter was last seen near Satish's house. He complained that the police had taken his complaint casually, telling

him his daughter would come back on her own, PTI reported.

Asia Internet slowly comes back online

AFP, Hong Kong

Millions of frustrated Internet users across Asia slowly regained access to overseas websites yesterday, three days after an earthquake off the coast of Taiwan snapped several vital undersea cables. Telecoms operators across the

region re-routed Internet links to circumvent the ruptured lines off the southern part of the island, as engineers donned diving suits to assess the damage and begin repairs.

But customers in the Philippines have been asked to play their part too -- by limiting overseas calls to family and friends over the New Year.

PCCW, Hong Kong's largest fixed-line operator, said it was seeing continuous improvement in Internet access through data rerouting and acquisition of alternative bandwidth.

We are expecting substantial improvement of the service over the next 24 hours," it said in a statement A spokesman earlier said all

international call and roaming services had returned to normal.

Hong Kong's telecommunications authority said five maintenance ships had been dispatched to repair six fiber-optic cables, which handle about 90 percent of telecommunications capacity in the

area "Overall, there has been some improvement in access to the Internet today. However, most users will continue to experience slow access." it said in a statement. It added some ships arrived at

the scene Thursday, but the

AL's alliance

and many other civil society members also expressed their solidarity with the FROM PAGE 1

Youths FROM PAGE 16

solo--performed.

ment," he added.

tion.

freedom.

the corrupt.

the young generation.

performed in the concert.

cosponsored the concert.

national and local levels.

of the country.

FROM PAGE 1

ng groups.

4:30pm

Health Complex.

It arranges debates, essay-writing

and cartoon competitions, and anti-

corruption programmes with volun-

teer groups in 36 areas of six divisions

Activists of the two rival political

parties exploded bombs and used

lethal weapons during the clash that

continued for an hour. Police rushed

AL man killed

ciated its concept.

Mehrin.

future.

inaugurating the concert.

vital role in the anti-corruption move-

Mojammel Hossain Manju said the

media can tear off the mask of the

corrupt if the press is given complete

establishing band music in the coun-

try, urged the youths not to be used by

As part of its ongoing anti-

corruption movement, the TIB organ-

ised yesterday's concert themed "the

youths will resist corruption" to inspire

Of the popular bands Feedback,

Souls, Renaissance, Miles, Warfaze,

Pentagon, LRB, Meghdal, Dalchhut,

Face to Face, Arthohin, and Artcell

participated in the concert and appre-

ncluded Azam Khan, Fahmida Nabi

Leading bauls from Kushtia, a

Azam Khan, one of the pioneers in

Urging the youths to hate corrup-

Daily Samakal News Editor

initiative.

the election Hasina said, "We have Several thousand youths attended always wanted to go to the election the eight-hour long concert where and we still want to go. But where is around 30 singers--both bands and the proper voter list?

"How can we participate in the "All our advancements since the election, when our activists are being ndependence have failed because of murdered by Rab without trial?" she corruption and failing to establish asked demanding suspension of good governance," TIB Executive Rapid Action Battalion's (Rab) activi-Director Iftekharuzzaman said while ties until the election. "Do they want to create a farce? Do they want to He urged the young generation to hold an eyewash election?" asked come forward and stand against Hasina. corruption. "The youths can play a

The AL president said lajuddin does not want the people's participation in the poll, all he wants is to steal the people's votes so that he can bring his 'madam' [Khaleda Zia] back to the seat of power.

Asked about Ershad's statement earlier in the day that the grand alliance is not ready to go to the election without him, Hasina categorically dismissed the claim by saying, "It is his personal view."

The grand alliance's demands are resignation of the CA, rescheduling of the election and publication of the correctly updated voter list, she added.

She also called for rescheduling of the polling date for establishing a congenial atmosphere prior to holding the election, "Because," she said "An election acceptable to the people and participated by them is more important than holding it on a fixed date.

team of Gambhira -- a type of folk music of Chapainawabganj--also "The people will neither accept nor allow an election where votes are stolen indiscriminately. The Solo performers of the concert people want an acceptable election through which their verdict will be SI Tutul, Hyder Husyn, Shahed, and reflected. That is why all the voters names will have to be on the voter The Daily Star, Channel i, Radio list," said the AL chief threatening to Today, Radio Furti, and Bangla Vision go for a tougher movement to materialise the people's expectation The TIB initiated a project called for a constitutionally sound election.

YES (Youth Engagement and She also called for publishing a Support) to create awareness among rough voter list for the public, saying, the young generation and create the people have a constitutional right leadership to prevent corruption in to know whether their names are on the voter roll. According to the elec-YES emphasises on creating toral laws, 15 days have to be allotted possibilities of democracy, good for examining the rough list, she said governance and anti-corruption explaining her demand for reschedulvalues in the fields of education and ing the polling date. professional life of the youths at

The AL head also accused the Election Commission of misleading

Ershad appeals

FROM PAGE 1

EC sources also said Awami League (AL) leader Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir yesterday submitted an appeal to the EC for cancelling the nomination paper of BNP leader ANM Ehsanul Hague Milon on charge of dual citizenship.

to the spot and dispersed the clash-Those who appealed vesterday against cancellation of their nomina-Critically injured Saad was taken tions include some high profile to Kushtia General Hospital where aspirants like Yusuf Abdullah Harun from Comilla-3 constituency, Nasrin he succumbed to his injuries at Jahan Ratna (wife of JP General Secretary Ruhul Amin Howlader) The injured are undergoing from Barisal-6, SM Akram from treatment at Daulatpur Upazila Narayanganj-5, Laxmi Prasad Chakma from Rangamati, and

Lovely Yasmin from Dinajpur-6. As per the election laws, a ca date can appeal against rejection of

his or her nomination papers within

three days. The candidate can also

move in the High Court if the EC

The EC starts disposing of the

rejects his or her appeal.

Gangsters

FROM PAGE 16 for the rivals of the immediate past government out of 'anger' at

the four-party alliance. "We worked for them (fourparty alliance), but in reward, they prepared criminals' list after aetting elected, compelling us to leave the country," said another expressing his indignation about the immediate past government.

Joy's men are active in the Mirpur, Mohammadpur, Moghbazar and its adjacent areas, he added, while Shuvro's goons operate in Motijheel, Ramna and its surrounding areas.

Several men of Shahadat Bahini, infamous in Mirpur area, stepped into Bangladesh a week back and are now busy organising the group that became scattered after Shahadat fled Dhaka to escape arrest.

Several businessmen from Mohammadpur, Mirpur and Moghbazar areas have reported of being threatened by the gang. Sources also said another gang, known as the 'Kakrail Group,' has also regrouped and

movements. We can keep achieving started their activities in Dhaka. more through our movement for a Contacted, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), however, denied any such entrance of the criminals in the country. The Director General of Rab SM Mizanur Rahman told The Daily Star last include resignation of President lajuddin Ahmed from the post of chief night that the anti-crime forces adviser, updating the voter list as per have kept vigil on the situation. the high court verdict, and reform of

"There is no report of any such entry of the wanted criminals in the country. We have put our men on alert and are working on the matter," he said.

2 JMB militants FROM PAGE 1

Sirajul and Joynal around 12:30am yesterday after they got on the bus to check the passengers' luggage at a check post on Rabna Bypass on Dhaka-Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Extension Road in Tangail. The bus was heading for Dhaka from

Meherpur. "As the policeman and the other man got on the bus, two youths sitting in the front row of the bus pulled their firearms out and fired two shots at the them," Superintendent of Police (SP) of Tangail Israil Haoladar told The Daily Star quoting a passenger of the bus.

Hearing the gunshots, three traffic sergeants and a police natrol team rushed to the spot and encircled the bus. The criminals then fired at least three shots from inside the bus

Later, police with assistance from the bus passengers managed to arrest Fahad and Saiful.

AL leader shot dead FROM PAGE 16

left the scene. Babar died instantly. The injured AL men--Sabur, Ruhul, Sona Miah, Salim, Jabbar and Omar--are undergoing treat-

Rejoinder, our reply

have been initiated against any officer basing on mere anonymous letter. If there are specific allegations against any officer, departmental proceeding is drawn against him," said the reioinder signed by Additional Inspector General of Prisons Col Md Siraiul Islam

Opposing Amik's statement, t claimed no jail guard was sent to any jail without mentioning job description and that everyone working in the jail department is assigned with a specific job.

"The statement of collecting money from inmates' visitors at different jails in the name of 'Command Fund' is not correct," said the rejoinder. OUR REPLY

In a letter to the home secretary on November 5, prisons officer Amik expressed his apprehension of harassment and being harmed for filing a writ petition against recruitment rules and seeking legal explanation and written orders after being asked to "comply with extra-legal circulars and improper orders over telephone".

After he challenged the legality of his transfer to Sunamganj, which he termed demotion in his petition, an HC bench on October 19 issued a rule asking the authorities concerned to explain why the order should not be declared unlawful and of no legal effect.

Although Inspector General of Prisons Brig Gen Zakir Hasan had described Amik as the most corrupt officer of the department, the rejoinder admitted that the prisons authorities had sent a proposal to the home ministry to promote Amik to the post of a deputy inspector general.

The jail authorities denied collecting money using the name 'Command Fund', but admitted of collecting Tk 2 as service charge', which is violation of home ministry's and previous prisons administration's prohibition on collecting any money from the visitors. A High Court bench on October 19 stayed for three months collection of Tk 2 from visitors "in the name of Command Fund".

Analysts said a government

"I think we're at a crossroads

He said the government could

Somali PM enters

FROM PAGE 16

the capital were manned by much of the territory seized by the relaxed-looking Somali govern-Somalia Islamic Courts Council ment and Ethiopian troops. In the (SICC) since June. center of the capital, militia loyal Gedi, whose interim governto former warlords ousted by the ment had been confined to its Islamists sat atop pick-up trucks

base in the provincial town of mounted with heavy weaponry Baidoa until less than two weeks including anti-aircraft guns. ago, said parliament would vote to declare martial law to maintain victory was in no way certain and control of a country, which has that the conflict could be about to been without an effective central take another turn. government since the 1991 over-

hrow of a dictator. Ethiopian troops and air strikes right now," said Ken Menkhaus, were critical to the government's Horn of Africa specialist at assault, experts say, and there is Davidson College in Charlotte, some question what will happen North Carolina. when Addis Ababa finally with-

draws its forces. exploit splits within the SICC and With Eritrea accused of backattract some members to join a ng the Islamists, many feared the unity government. conflict could engulf the Horn of "But alternatively this could be Africa. Ethiopia, like the United the beginning of a new kind of States, says the Islamists are war." Menkhaus said.

supported by al-Qaeda. "One in which the Islamists are Gedi on Thursday made a going to fight their kind of war ... riumphant return to his home an asymmetrical war involving a village outside Mogadishu for the combination of hit and run guerfirst time since 2002. He acknowlrilla attacks, car bombings, assasedged the chaotic country was far sinations and possibly even from stable. selected acts of terrorism on other

Gedi told reporters in Mundul Sharey, a dusty village some 40 parts of East Africa." km southwest of Mogadishu, parliament would vote on Ahmed said his forces were Saturday to declare martial law for united and determined to push out three months. Ethiopian forces, but had

Government spokesman Abdirahman Dinari said the Islamists had fled to the southern port city of Kismayu and that the administration now controlled 95 percent of Somalia.

Seyoum Mesfin flew into Baidoa on Friday and held talks with President Abdullahi Yusuf.

shed

appeal will be placed before the The ROs on Wednesday rejected 264 nomination papers on

grounds of loan default and other disqualifying factors. The ROs also rejected all the five nomination papers Ershad had filed for Dhaka-5, Rangpur-3, Lalmonirhat-3, Sylhet-3 and Habiganj-3 on grounds of the Supreme Court's rejection of his

appeal against a High Court (HC) verdict. The HC had sentenced Ershad to two years in prison in a graft case. "Ershad's nomination papers

have been cancelled for political gain," JP Secretary General Ruhul Howlader yesterday

newsmen after filing an appeal with

"We did not get justice any-

Ershad's lawyer Sirajul Islam

"We hope to get

the EC on behalf of Ershad.

where." he said.

justice from the EC."

from the EC." he said.

depends on the chief adviser whether the election will be held or not. "lajuddin will have to meet the people's demand for holding the next general election in a free and fair manner. This person will be held responsible if the election is not held, ne told newsmen.

The two former presidents were present at the press conference where AL President Sheikh Hasina announced fresh agitation

programme.

borders with India, sources said.

They also said political leaders were hindering the transport of cattle to the capital. Besides, extortion on trucks loaded with cattle has also increased and it is playing a key

role in the high price of cattle. The DCC has fixed hasil (commission) at five percent against the selling price of each animal in the temporary markets and 4.25 perthe Gabtoli permanent market this year. However, it was alleged that seven percent hasil was being charged at Naya Bazar in the capital

Most of the inhabitants of Dhaka are expected to start buying their sacrificial animals from today

Meanwhile, goat traders were seen selling goats at different areas of the capital indiscriminately including on roadsides, in front of shopping malls and residential areas without the approval of the DCC.

The cattle markets in the capital are at Naya Bazar, Postogola, Agargaon slum ground, Taltala Bus Stand, Meradiya Haat, Uttara Azampur, Kamalapur Brothers' Union ground, Hussaini Dalan Raod (from Chankharpul to Bakshi Bazar ṫraffic signal), ḃhupkhola ground, Rahmatganj playground, Jhigatala Hazaribagh ground, Khilkhet Tanpara and Sunrise Sporting Club ground.

created as nearly 1,000 vehicles got

stuck on the two sides of the Padma

river at Paturia and Daulatdia ferry

terminals for seven hours, reports

Bhasha Shahid Barkat ferry with

several buses and trucks on board

kept floating on the middle of the river

trucks also remained stranded at the

Paturia ghat as the authorities

allowed the passengers carrying

vehicles on priority basis. The fog

disrupted the launch service also, our

the bus at Paturia ferry terminal

vesterday. As there was no arrange-

ment for lunch there, my son had to

fast the whole day." said Md Shariful

movement in the last few days

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport

Authorities Deputy Director General

of Aricha zone Shahadat Ali told the

The dense fog disrupted the ferry

Islam, a resident from Mirpur.

"My wife spent several hours in

Manikganj correspondent added.

Besides, 1,500 goods carrying

from midnight to 11:00am, he said.

our Manikganj correspondent.

FROM PAGE 1

BNP bins weather had obstructed survey and assessment work.

"Initial surveys indicated that damage to the submarine cables was substantial," it said.

The authority said it may take longer to repair the cables than the original estimate of five to seven davs.

Muslims pray

mits too.

crack down hard on Muslims who try to sneak into Makkah without official permits -- a phenomenon that can than 2.5 million.

But at Mount Arafat on Friday there were few indications that the new measures had been success ful. Roads and pathways were lined with beggars, traders and pilgrims without permits who had bough tents to sleep in and shelter from the

sun der, things have not improved," Ruquia Manouzi said.

with sleeping bags and cooking utensils said there was nothing the authorities could do about them.

FROM PAGE 1

swell numbers by 500,000 to more

'It's a pity we see so much disor-A security officer standing

Seeing the programmes enforced

the election.

Ershad issue.

"To criticise the court verdict or

going for movement against it is

antamount to conspiracy as one

Mannan Bhuiyan said they would

draw their nominations."

ers.

DMP

FROM PAGE 16

some unruly youths resort to objec-

tionable activities in the name of

"It hampers the normal life of

pleasure, said a DMP release.

taining peace and discipline.

said.

by the 14-party, it seems that they would like to create constitutional crisis through creating obstacles in the way of election." he said

FROM PAGE 1 Saudi Arabia usually receive per-

The authorities say they will

programme and people will give the proper reply through the ballots. 'We don't think but people think.' he said when a reporter asked him if he thinks the AL-led alliance's programme is linked with the

can appeal if he is aggrieved," he

beside a group of people camping said, adding that the High Court only confirmed the conviction of Ershad. announce the candidature list on the day of nomination withdrawal.

appeals from December 31. Regarding the demands about On not accepting the appeals Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), the from different banks, EC Secretary BNP leader said police and Rab are Abdur Rashid Sarker yesterday told trying to recover illegal arms for newsmen at his office that there is ensuring a peaceful environment for no scope for appeal to cancel nomi-

nation papers already accepted. "They have declared such "There is no such law to cancel programmes only to create obstathe nomination papers that have cles in the democratic process," he

once been declared accepted by the ROs," he said. Asked about their 'counter

programme', he said the BNP does such appeals were accepted during not believe in any counter the last election, Sarker said, "That was done from a different perspective.

He, however, said, "The ROs responsible could be brought to justice if it is proved that they had accepted nomination papers of loan defaulters despite having proper evidence in this regard."

On Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir's appeal, the EC secretary said, "His

RO's decision to reject his nomination paper for Barisal-2 When he was reminded that The RO rejected Ovi's nomination on grounds of loan default on December 27.

Ovi had filed nomination as an independent candidate on December 26 protesting his party's decision to join the BNP-led fourparty alliance.

Advocate Humavun Kabir filed the appeal on behalf of Ovi, who is now in Canada.

JMB Leaders' appeal

Asked about the dissident lead-

Ahmed were killed in the suicide ers of the party, he said, "There is bomb attack at Purba Chadkati in nothing called dissidents while we Jhalakathi town on November 14 have a lot of competent candidates last year in the wake of a series of in every constituency. Those who bombings carried out by Islamist will not get the party ticket will withmilitants across the country.

The High Court on August 31 The party will take action against upheld the trial court verdict that handed death penalty to the seven JMB men on May 29.

Although the convicts repeatedly said they do not accept the verdict of any "worldly court" and Corporation Mujibur Rahman will not appeal against it, they Sarwar were present, among otheventually turned around following the HC verdict.

Abdur Rahman and Siddiqul Islam sent letters to the SC registrar, saying once again that it is justified to kill people for establishing Islamic rules and that the judges, who held their trial under Taguti (non-Islamic) laws neglecting the Shariah, themselves deserve death.

WHAT NEXT

After the copy of the SC judgment The DMP has requested the city reaches the jails, the prisons dwellers to extend their cooperaauthorities will convey it to the tion to the law enforcers in mainconvicts. The jail authorities will also ask them to inform in seven

days if they want to submit any mercy petition to the president.

If the convicts furnish any mercy petition and the president turns it down, the jail authorities will fix a date for execution in 21-28 days since getting the president's decision.

"In case the convicts decide not to file any mercy petition, we will start counting down 28 days after the seven-day period and fix a date for their execution in 21-28 days, said IG Prisons Zakir Hasan.

However, the jail authorities receive the mercy petition up to midday of the date of execution and send it to the president for his decision, he said.

Death sentences are executed at one minute past the zero hours. If anyone submits mercy petition

after midday, the jail authorities send it to the president and contact him over telephone for instructions, Zakir said. "If the president tells us to hold on the execution, we will do so. But if he turns down the petition or we fail to get his decision, we will carry out the execution timely," the IG prisons added.

ment at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

A case was filed with Ramu Police Station. Police arrested seven people, including local BNP leader Jabbar, in connection with the case.

also claimed that the ROs have Local Awami League staged rejected Ershad's nomination demonstration at Ramu bus stand papers "illegally". "We will go to the yesterday demanding exemplary higher court if we do not get justice punishment to the attackers.

Golam Faruque Ovi, international affairs secretary of JP-Manju, Iraq mosque filed an appeal with the EC yester-FROM PAGE 16 day, challenging the validity of the

confirmed the attack but gave a higher casualty toll, saying that 10 people had been killed and 15 wounded.

Khalis is a town in Diyala province 70km north of the capital in an area roamed by Sunni insurgents fighting under the al-Qaeda banner and Shia militias linked to parties in Iraq's US-backed government.

The attack came as the Shialed government prepared to execute ousted Sunni dictator Saddam Hussein, an event which is expected to further increase the already sky-high tensions between Sunni and Shia factions.

Meanwhile, US troops killed six people and destroyed a weapons cache Friday in separate raids in Baghdad and northwest of the Iraqi capital, the US military said.

American forces killed four people and destroyed two buildings in a morning raid in the village of Thar Thar, northwest of Baghdad, the military said in a statement.

Intelligence reports indicated that roadside bombs were being produced in the buildings, and US troops found 16 pounds of homemade explosives, two large bombs, a rocket-propelled grenade. suicide vests and multiple batteries, the military said.

"Upon entering the first building, coalition forces were engaged by armed terrorists. Coalition forces returned fire, killing four terrorists," the statement said. The military then destroyed the buildings in an airstrike.

In another raid, US troops killed two people and captured two others in a raid against purported al-Qaeda terrorists in Baghdad, the military said. Two Iragis were also wounded. A cache of AK-47s was seized in that raid

'We are here to stay. We will not leave. It has taken us a lot of effort to capture Mogadishu." Somali government soldier Yusuf Flmi told Reuters in the bulletscarred city.

"They discussed the situation in Somalia and the government's takeover of Mogadishu and how the government was welcomed into the city," a Somali government spokesman said.

Bosho Ibrahim told Reuters: "This

is not true. He is still with the

US military spokesmen said

they had nothing to add to a state-

ment late on Thursday that he was

Islamist leader Sheikh Sharif

retreated to avoid more blood-

Ethiopia's Foreign Minister

Checkpoints in many parts of

Saddam to hang

FROM PAGE 16 last month and "no delay" in carrying it out.

An aide confirmed the content of the remarks, reported by state television, and said he made them to relatives of victims of Saddam's oppression.

wanted Saddam hanged this year

for the killings, torture and other

crimes against the Shia population

Saddam's Sunni minority say an

execution may increase alienation

among their rebellious community.

Some Kurds would also like to see

Saddam convicted of genocide in

the Kurdish north. That second trial

Khalil al-Dulaimi, who led

Saddam's defence team until he

was sentenced on November 5,

told Reuters: "The Americans

called me and asked me to pick up

upheld Saddam's death sentence

for crimes against humanity and

said he should hang within 30

allowed to see two of his brothers.

who are also in detention at a US

base near Baghdad. A lawyer said

the former president was in high

One defence lawyer, who

declined to be identified, said

Saddam had been handed over by

US forces to Iraqi government

custody. Deputy Justice Minister

On Thursday, Saddam was

An appeals court on Tuesday

is due to resume on Januarv 8.

the personal effects."

days.

spirits

But some members of

of the town of Dujail in the 1980s.

Ibrahim also dismissed a Those who opposed the hangremark by a senior US official who ing were insulting those who had said there were plans to send suffered, the newsflash quoted Saddam to the gallows as early as Maliki as saying, adding that no Saturday. The ministry, which is in one could reverse the sentence. charge of implementing court Several officials this week have rulings, would not execute highlighted that, unlike in other Saddam before January 26, he capital crimes, the president cansaid. not pardon those convicted of crimes against humanity.

Americans.'

still in their control.

US military and embassy spokesmen dealing with the issue Maliki, from the Shia Muslim have stressed a need for secrecy majority oppressed under over the arrangements. Saddam, said last month he

Although legally in Iraqi custody, US troops physically keep guard over Saddam. And although Iragis will carry out the execution. US and Iragi officials say, it also seems likely US forces will stay on hand throughout for fear that opponents of the former leader could turn it into a public spectacle. Iraqi officials backed away on Thursday from suggestions they

would definitely hang him within a month, in line with a 30-deadline apparently set out in the statues of the tribunal. A cabinet minister also told Reuters a week-long religious holiday ending only on January 7 would stall any execution.

One of Saddam's lawyers said he bade farewell to two of his brothers on Thursday in a rare prison meeting.

"He was in very high spirits and clearly readying himself," Badie Aref, told Reuters after the 69year-old former leader met halfbrothers Watban and Sabawi, who are also both held at the US armv's Camp Cropper near Baghdad airport.

"He told them he was happy he would meet his death at the hands of his enemies and be a martyr, not just languish in jail.

those who will not accept the party decision, he added. BNP Vice-chairman MK Anwar, Joint Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan, Mayor of Barisal City

More difficulties are feared for the

I remain the same today. Fog prevailing for three consecu-

tive days made life in northern districts miserable, report our correspondents. With the onset of cold wave-like

weather, poor people have been common people and also disrupts subjected to abject misery while the the law and order situation. which day labourers in the rural areas seem is undesirable," the release added. to be the worst affected.

People living along the Teesta Brahmaputra and Dharla rivers could not go out of their houses for work due to the cold.

ry service operative," he said. Hundreds of buses and trucks got stranded at Kazirhat ferry terminal, our Pabna correspondent adds.

"We are doing our best to keep the

Dense fog bedevils

The chilly weather caused much problem for road communications across the country, especially where buses and other vehicles have to cross rivers by ferry.

people bound for home before the Eid as the Met office said the situation