Manzur-led faction DU Syndicate

Manzur. The sources said the faction was considering appointment of Dr MA Matin as party chairman. But as BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has "reservations" about his appointment, they are now thinking of alternatives. They indicated that Naziur could be the chairman and Firoze Rashid secretary general. But when contacted, Feroz Rashis denied this.

The sources claimed that they were the "main JP" and would

remain in the four-party alliance. The faction has also urged BNP to allocate 30 seats to it for contesting in the coming election. Khaleda Zia told them that the more they would be able to draw Ershadsupporting MPs to their faction the more seats they would be allotted.

Meantime, the Asiatic Printers. owned by Naziur, has stopped printing of the daily Janata, mouthpiece of Ershad-led JP.

In another development, the

Laltu arrested

Laltu, all other leaders and activists of four-party opposition alliance. Presided over by Manir Hossain,

the rally was also addressed, by Asaduzzaman Palash, Nuruzzaman and Lutfar Rahman. Meanwhile, the JCD-led All Party

Students' Unity (APSU) decided to march towards the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban today demanding dissolu-

According to parliament secretariat

sources, the current session would

deal with several serious legislative

businesses including passage of

some bills on issues related to the

ruling Awami League's 1996 elec-

tion pledges.

As decided by the Business
Advisory Committee, the session
will run through April 12 with only

eight working days. However,

parliament secretariat sources

hinted that the session could be

prolonged, should major political

tabled in the House on the opening

day today. These are Vested Property (Return) Bill 2001, Upazila

Parishad (Amendment) Bill 2001,

Sylhet City Corporation Bill 2001

Barisal City Corporation Bill 2001, Bangladesh Handicapped Welfare

Bill 2001, Bangladesh Telecommunication Bill 2001,

Dhaka Transportation Coordination

Board Bill 2001. Brick Kiln Control

(Amendment) Bill 2001 and

Bangladesh Land Port Authority Bill

Nine new bills are expected to be

developments take place.

JS goes into session

Ershad-led faction of JP at a meeting last night with Raushan Ershad in the chair expelled joint secretary Dr. M A Matin from the party, meet-

Change of power

FROM PAGE 1
ultimatums time and again as she has

'gone mad' losing power in the last election. But before giving the ultimatums she should think whether she is strong enough to topple the "You don't have enough strength to

remove the present government, you have failed in the movement and will also be defeated in the election." she said criticising the opposition for killing people in the name of movement.

The Prime Minister spent a hectic day in two northern districts laying the foundation of two important bridges and addressing four meetings.

She first reached Sanadabari in Dewangani of Jamalpur district and laid the foundation of a bridge on the Gingiram. Addressing a meeting after opening the work of the bridge she went to Bakshiganj and addressed a public meeting at NM High School

She opened the ground breaking work of the Gingiram bridge, which will be completed by November 2003 at a cost of Tk 7.87 crore.

In the afternoon, the Prime Minister flew to Charalibazar in Nalitabari and laid the foundation of a bridge on the river Bhogai which will connect Sunamganj, Netrakona, Mymensingh, Sherpur and Jamalpur districts.

The bridge on the bordering road will be constructed at a cost of Tk 9.85

In the late afternoon, she addressed a big public meeting at Taraganj High School ground in

Five other bills Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (Amendment) Bill

2001, Bangladesh Water and Power

Development Boards (Amendment)

Bill 2001, the Rural Electrification Board Bill 2001, the Local

Government (Union Parisad) Bill

2001, the Member of the

Bangladesh Public Service

Commission (Terms and Conditions

of the service) (Amendment) Bill

2001 would also be placed in the

retention of women's reserved seat

in parliament for another 10 years.

BSS 'misquoted

"We want to hand over power in a

peaceful manner. So take part in

polls, go to the people. We will accept the verdict of the people in

The prime minister also said, "We

talked about our readiness to hold

the elections before June 12 in

response to the demand by the

about handing over power after April

17 after observance of the

the President and requested him to

negotiate and settle all the complexi-

ties with the opposition through

have put forward our proposal with

honest intentions, but they challenged it and called hartal. They

want to topple our government by

BSS sincerely regrets the inad-

force, let us see how they can do it."

The prime minister said, "We

Sheikh Hasina also said she met

ider of the opposition and

FROM PAGE 1

good grace.'

Mujibnagar Day."

vertent mistake.

polls today

DU CORRESPONDENT

The election to the posts of teachers' representatives on the Syndicate of the Dhaka University will be held at the Teachers and Students Centre (TSC) today.

The voting of the Academic Council and the Finance Committee will also continue at the same place from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. non-stop.

As many as 1150 teachers will cast their votes to elect six representatives to the Syndicate, six posts in the Academic Council and one post in the Finance Committee.

Backed by the mainstream political parties, three panels of teachers are contesting the polls.

Bangabandhu FROM PAGE 12 statements of the witness, the coun-

sel told the court that Justice Ruhul Amin had discarded the witness and appealed for upholding that.

Quoting witnesses about the presence of Moslemuddin in the night parade on the morning of August 15 at Balurghat and his presence at Bangabhaban, counsel said the accused had followed the orders of his officers.

The hearing will resume at 10:30 am todav.

11-party

FROM PAGE 12

into the January 20 bomb explosion at CPB's Paltan Maidan rally. The delegation also complained against non-holding of trial of the Ratan Sen murder and attempt on Rashed Khan Menon after passage of so many years.

They informed the President about an alternate democratic movement being pursued by the left-democratic parties beyond the polarisation of ruling AL and the opposition BNP.

The delegation also included Rashed Khan Menon, Pankaj Bhattachariya, Azizul Islam Khan. Nirmal Sen. Dilip Barua. Abdullah Sarkar, Abdus Samad, A F M Mahbubul Haq, Iqbal Majumdar, and Nurur Rahman Selim.

Ershad: Lawyers

22nd session. The House would also adopt an obituary reference on the death of Wahedullah said his client is looking

five eminent personalities who for new counsels after Barrister expired after the end of last session. Rafiqul Huq, who used to represent Besides, the session is likely to Ershad in the High Court Division deal with some seven pending bills, and the Appellate Division, declined including the much talked about the to continue. Constitution (Fourteenth Amendment) Bill 2000 seeking Barrister Huq had earlier

informed his client in writing that he would no longer represent him after his recent political overtures towards the government.

After hearing Wahedullah's prayer the Appellate Division granted two weeks time to prepare the leave petition with a new counsel, court sources said.

Ershad's membership of parliament was cancelled by the High Court earlier upon a petition by a voter in his Rangpur constituency and a leader from the rival faction of Jatiya Party, led by Communication Minister Anwar Hossain Manju

They pointed out that since he had been sentenced to five years in prison and Tk 5.5 crore in fines for the Janata Tower Case last year, he ceased to be an MP on grounds of moral turpitude.

Welcome shower

FROM PAGE 1

stretching from the north-western region to the north-eastern region of the country.

There may be gusty winds with rains in some parts of Sylhet, Dhaka and Raishahi Divisions and in some areas of Kushtia, Jessore, Comilla districts till 6 p.m. today, a Met office forecast said.

The rainfall activity may increase in the next 48 hours beginning at 6 p.m. today, the forecast said.

The rain was triggered by a cool westerly low mixing with moisture laden southerly winds from the Bay of Bengal, they said.

The rains will boost the Irri-Boro crops.

Customs

However, the foreign ministry sent the letter to the Ministry of Communications, which, in its turn, passed the responsibility of providing papers to the NBR on the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA).

But BRTA officials told The Daily Star that they do not keep records regarding cars imported by foreign diplomats

A foreign ministry official dealing with foreign missions told The Daily Star last night that they did not get any order from higher authorities to co-operate with the customs intelligence officials on the issue. The customs intelligence direc-

torate suspects that more than Tk 50 crore in revenue has been evaded over the last five years through imports of expensive vehicles by foreign diplomats.

The duty and tax is believed to have been lost when cars imported by foreign consuls were sold to the general public or car dealers.

Each foreign diplomat can import a car free of any tax. He can return the vehicle to the foreign ministry when he leaves the country or can sell it to a local citizen. But rules require the buver to change the number plates and pay duty for personal use.



Arshad Ahmad, a participant from Sri Lanka, addressing the national workshop on "Disasters and Livelihoods" organised by ITDG at BETS auditorium in the city yesterday. Also seen in the picture are Veena Khaleque, Bangladesh country director of ITDG, and Syed Fahim Munaim, Managing Editor of The Daily Star.

Disaster mitigation

rounding social and political institutions reckon with this interdependencies, households barely have time to recoup before the next cycle of destruction

The report termed the quality of existent disaster management programmes 'wanting'. Attention was focused mostly on floods among the three types of disaster. "Programmes that directly address the problems arising from river erosion are practically nonexistent," the report said. The study found that there was

not enough political will to cope with the arsenic disaster. "Community level interventions are mostly limited to providing information about the dangers of arsenic-polluted water, but nothing is being done to enable communities to acquire facilities for arsenic removal or the treatment of surface water." On the other hand, so far as

floods are concerned, management activities are concentrated only on emergency needs, it observed. Making a three-point recommen-

dation at the levels of policy, advocacy and the community activities, the study said the forecasting of disasters and dissemination of information on floods should be improved by strengthening coordination among flood forecasting, warning centre and the Meteorology

Department. Similar policy directives should be set to assess and upgrade quality, timeliness and forecasts of river

erosion, it suggested. It also recommended the upgrading of disaster management plans, establishment of flood refugee centres and drills in complex activities such as emergency evacuation.

It further suggested that activities at the village level be aimed at establishing facilities needed in case of an emergency. These include setting up and equipping flood refugee sites, community silos, community livestock shelters on high land and elevated beds for seedlings.

Mobilisation of local resources through the donation of land for facilities, materials, cash or labour was also suggested at the work-

Khaleda: Ultimatum to go

According to the Bangabhaban communiqué, the president explained to the opposition leader that there was a difference of only a few days between the election timeframe proposed by the ruling Awami League and main opposi-tion BNP. "This can be adjusted mutually," the president was quoted to have said.

In response, Khaleda said she would consider his advice "only if the government declares dissolution of the parliament by the first week of April."

Outcome of the Shahabuddin-Khaleda talks is viewed as a major breakthrough in the existing political deadlock over the timeframe of next general polls. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

earlier offered to resign after April 17, the Mujibnagar Day. The Bangabhaban announcement further said that the president's advice to the opposition

leader was given to "sort out the

present political impasse." Neither Khaleda nor her party's Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, who had accompanied her, made any comment to the press while coming out of the Bangabhaban at 6.30pm. The president invited the opposition leader to the meeting on Tuesday, according to BNP sources.

After the meeting, the BNP chief drove straight to her Banani office where she informed top leaders of the four-party opposition alliance of the outcome of the crucial meet-

Later, while briefing journalists, Mannan Bhuiyan said the president had advised them to resolve the existing political crisis across the table. "In reply, we told him that there could be no dialogue with the present government."

BNP requested the president to dissolve the parliament immediately and form a caretaker government, he added.
"Only then, we'll discuss every-

thing with you (president), the caretaker government and the Election Commission for holding of a fair election," Bhuiyan said to have told the president.

The BNP secretary-general

further said that they had explained to the president that immediate resignation of the AL government could only help rid the country of the political crisis. "We also apprised the president

of our demand for freeing the civil administration from politicisation. recasting the Election Commission and recovering illegal arms from the ruling party men," he said.

Bhuiyan suggested that the government should resign now for holding of the next polls before the rainy season so that the caretaker administration gets enough time to ensure free and fair elections. "We're ready to discuss all

election-related issues with the

caretaker government and all parties including the Awami League." he said. Asked if his party would agree to a dialogue if mediated by the president, the BNP leader replied

in the negative. "We'll not participate in any discussion as long as the Awami League is in power.

He said the opposition would go ahead with the March 30 ultimatum and the April 1-2 hartal, when asked whether yesterday's meeting would bring about any change in the alliance's plans. "We'll go for more such programme, if AL refuses to step down."

BBC agrees to probe

assured him that he will write "fully

once that investigation has been completed". Dyke requested the high commissioner to extend necessary assistance to Elizabeth Wright, Head of the Asia Pacific Region, to carry out her investigation.

Meanwhile, Wright, who is to

investigate the case, has already procured the tape of the interview Syed Mahmud Ali gave to Masuda Bhatti, sources said.

In that interview which appeared in Janakantha, Syed Mahmud Ali stated that he fought against the people of Bangladesh in 1971 as an officer of Pakistan Army and was present at the Dhaka Radio Station

Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Muiibur Rahman along with members of his Syed Mahmud Ali in the interview

also claimed that he subsequently arrested Tajuddin Ahmed, the war-time Prime Minister of the Bangladesh.

While demanding immediate action against BBC Bengali Section Chief Syed Mahmud Ali for his past activities, State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed paid rich tributes to BBC for its traditional and glorious role in promoting democracy, progressive politics and human rights.

Indian film awards

ity of some jury members came from

Film director Pradip Kishen, who

resigned from the jury, and Dhritiman Chatterjee alleged several members of the jury owed their position due to "political patronage." was obviously in reference to the presence of a lady BJP legislator, editor of the RSS mouthpiece, and another lady who had campaigned for Information Minister Sushma Swaraj against Congress chief Sonia Gandhi in a parliamentary byelection. Also, another member of the jury, veteran actor Mac Mohan, is an uncle of Rayeena Tandon

What angered Kishen, husband of leading author Arundhuti Rov. more than inclusion of these people in the jury was the manner in which they had pushed through decisions about certain awards. Daman. which won Raveena got the best actress's award, was recalled for consideration after having been rejected by a team of selectors who had short-listed the films for the final ound, Kishen pointed out. It was done to reward Raveena for campaigning for BJP in the 1999 parliamentary polls, he alleged.

As per rules, Dhritiman Chatteriee said. nobody related by blood or marriage to anyone in the race for the awards should be on the jury. "But I am told Mac Mohan is veena's uncle."

Vijayantimala Bali, however, pointed out that Mac Mohan had abstained from voting while the jury chose the best actress. Raveena's close contenders for the award were Hindi film stars Tabu for her role in Astitva and Karisma Kapoor in Shyam Benegal's Zubeida. In being adjudged the best actor, Anil Kapoor is understood to have edged out veteran Bengali actor Soumitra Chatterjee for his performance in Dekha directed by internationally acclaimed director Gautam Ghosh Soumitra was given a Special Jury

However, there was complete unanimity about most of the other awards including the one for best director, which went to Rituparno Ghosh for his Bengali film Utsab. Malayalam language film Shantham, starring among others star Indian footballe was adjudged the best film.

Gidita protested atrocities

the loans they often give without any proper agreement, the villagers told a group of journalists who visited the spot on March 25 to investigate the incident and subsequent atrocities by the Bangalees there.

The murder followed when Gidita's younger sister Namreta Rema, a fifteen-year old school girl, was allegedly abducted on February 7 and forced to marry Hobibur Rahman's younger brother Mafizur Rahman

Gidita brought her sister back after she lodged an informal complaint with the Union Parishad. Initially. Namreta was thought to have eloped with Mafizur, but when rescued, she said she was forced to

marry.
Police and the administration were informed of the incident officially, but no effort was made to resolve the issue. Namreta has been kept away from the village for her safety.

of sending my daughters to school," said a father who refused to tell his

A neighbour anticipating more violence said, "This may be the first incident of murder, but we have been forced to obey their orders almost everyday since they had settled here. They lay their hands on whatever we earn."

Eleven persons including two women have been accused in the murder case, but none has been rested so far. In-charge of the Aurankhola

police outpost Hemavet Hossain said it is not true that police are not arresting the accused. "We are looking for the accused. In fact, we have been instructed to

use our full force to arrest them," said Hossain. Sub-inspector Dulal Chandra Sutradhar at Madhupur police

station said efforts are underway to

whether they are in this district." Chairman of the Union Parishad Mohammad Zakir Hossain refuted

she belongs to her husband Mafiz. So, I asked them to settle the issue accordingly," said Hossain. "In fact, it was Hobibur who had earlier complained to me that he was being harassed by the Garo

the charges that he was involved in

settlement. Namreta confessed that

"I had called both the parties for a

added. The Adivasi Coordination Committee has called a rally to protest the growing atrocities in Magantinagar at the Central

Shaheed Minar at 3:00 pm tomor-"We protest this, and this is a big threat to the indigenous people, said Sanjeeb Drong, general secre-

tary of the committee