

**Fazlul Haq made Whip of 8th JS**

UNB, Dhaka

Md Fazlul Haq (Aspia), a ruling party MP from Sunamganj-4, has been appointed Whip of the 8th Jatiya Sangsad.

President Prof AQM bdrudroza Chowdhury appointed Fazlul Haq as Whip, said a government notification yesterday.

**DU Hons classes 15 to vie for each seat**

DU CORRESPONDENT

About 15 students will vie for each seat in first year honours classes in different faculties at Dhaka University for the academic session 2001-2002.

A total of 18,372 forms were sold for 'Ka' unit (science group), 13,292 forms for 'Kha' unit (arts group), 15,015 for 'Ga' unit (commerce group) and 16,560 for 'Gha' unit (combined group) till yesterday, the last day for distribution and submission of admission forms. Distribution of forms began on November 25.

On an average, 16 students would compete for each seat in 'Ka' unit, six for each seat in 'Kha' unit, 23 in 'Ga' unit and 32 in 'Gha' unit.

The total number of seats is 4,410. Of these, science group has 1119 seats, arts group has 2134, commerce group 644 and combined group 513.

A total of 63,239 admission forms were sold, each at a fee of Tk 250.

Admission test in 'Ka' unit will be held on January 25, 'Kha' unit on January 18, 'Ga' unit on January 11 and 'Gha' unit on February 1.

**Shahriar**

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Rahman of CID is in charge of investigation.

Sources in the JIC said the team particularly interrogated Shahriar about some video footages seized from him. The tapes contain video of the members of the Hindu community who crossed over to India after the October 1 general elections.

The videos show the Hindus demonstrating in front of the Bangladesh High Commission at Kolkata under the banner of Bangladesh Sharanarthi Samity, sources added.

Shahriar Kabir was detained by the Special Branch of police at the immigration desk of the Zia International Airport on November 22 on his arrival from Kolkata. Later, he was shown arrested under Section 54 of the CrPC.

**CU Syndicate**

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added. For the resistance of the Shibir activists the teachers' buses could not ply between the campus and the town and the members of the Syndicate were unable to attend the meeting.

For the quorum shortage VC Prof Fazlee Hossain finally postponed it as the minimum five members out of thirteen were not present. When contacted the VC said it's the conspiracy to continue the stalemate at the university.

After discussing with the pro-VC, he fixed the date of the meeting. But if they do not come I am unable to do anything, he added.

**Cases framed with malifide intent: Abul Hasan Chy**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former state minister for foreign affairs Abul Hasan Choudhury, implicated in a graft case for appointment of a US lobbyist by the past government, yesterday condemned the decision to sue them and strongly defended the appointment made by his (past) government.

In a statement, Choudhury accused the government of filing the 12 graft cases against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and six of her cabinet colleagues, including himself, with "ulterior motive and malifide intent".

"The cases are designed to harass (the opposition)," the former state minister said adding they would face these charges through legal and political means.

One of the cases charged Hasina, Choudhury and others with causing the government a loss of Tk 2.1cr by appointment of a lobbyist in the USA to canvass for duty-and quota-free access of Bangladeshi garment to the US market.

"Anyone who knows the operational aspects of Washington would be aware of the importance of a lobbyist. We have been under constant pressure by BGMEA and other trade bodies to appoint a lobbyist to canvass our case...", the former minister said adding the person appointed made a good contribution towards cancellation of GSP.

**Six killed in attack on Israeli bus in West Bank**

AFP, Jerusalem

Six people were killed when Palestinian militants attacked an Israeli bus in the West Bank late yesterday with rifles and grenades, settler sources and Israeli television said.

Meanwhile a Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up outside a hotel in the southern Gaza Strip Jewish settlement bloc of Gush Khatif also yesterday afternoon, Palestinian security sources said.

**BRTA**

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November 15 imposing a ban on plying of trucks over 25 years in service, buses and minibuses over 20 years in service, auto-rickshaws and tempos with two-stroke engines and delivery vans registered before January 1, 1993 on the city roads.

The step was taken to reduce air pollution, traffic congestion and road accidents.

A drive to seize vehicles emitting black smoke and causing air pollution has been launched in the city under the supervision of the Directorate of Environment, following the BRTA decision.

**Jumatul Wida**

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eternal peace of the departed souls of their near and dear ones and also for the peace and progress of the Muslim Ummah as well as the whole mankind.

The last Friday in the month of Ramadan is sacred and highly significant for the Muslims around the world. All mosques on this particular day become filled with the devout Muslims. The largest congregation will be in the Baitul Mukarram with hundreds of Muslims saying their prayers both inside and outside the National Mosque.

By saying goodbye to the holy month of Ramadan on the day of Jumatul Wida, the Muslims across the world will earnestly wait another year to welcome this most serene and sacred month of the Arabic year.

**30 hurt**

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to create panic in the area. Their leaders through a mike informed the followers about the presence of police and asked to defend themselves.

The terrorists opened fire on the police. Police returned fire, leading to a fierce fight that continued about three hours.

Sources said police and the terrorists exchanged around 200 rounds of bullets.

Five terrorists were held from the spot.

**Khaleda-Vajpaye**

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Khaleda is expected to leave for Kathmandu on January 3 for the three-day Summit from January 4.

The foreign ministry in conjunction with the Bangladesh high commissions in the SAARC countries are carrying out hectic consultations for fixing the schedule for Khaleda's bilateral talks with the heads of delegations of the other countries on the fringes of the Summit.

Follow up discussions between Khaleda and Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf will be held in Kathmandu. The Pakistani leader is scheduled to make a one-hour halt in Dhaka on December 24 on his way back from an official visit to China.

Foreign Secretary Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury said that the Prime Minister will meet the Pakistan President at the airport when he arrives in Dhaka and the two leaders will hold brief talks at the VIP lounge.

President Badruddoza Chowdhury will also be at the airport to receive and see off Musharraf. The SAARC Summit is being held after nearly three years with the last one held in Colombo in 1998.

**Cold wave**

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this year. The system laden with moisture from the Bay of Bengal has caused the heavy fog to prevail, disrupting navigation by air craft and water vessels because of poor visibility. Normally the westerly system, packed with cool air, replaces the easterly system by this time of the year.

The forecast is that the westerly system is taking over, Akram Hossain said.

It is likely to set in a light or mild cold wave over the country with the spreading of continental high stretching down to Bangladesh from Pakistan and India laced with cold air from Siberian Tundra, he said.

A long range forecast says there will be at least three to four spells of cold wave during this winter, two of which will occur this month.

A mild cold wave is counted when minimum temperature is between eight to ten Celsius. A temperature between is 6 to 8 C is moderate and below 6 is counted severe.

**Road accident kills 4 in Comilla**

UNB, Comilla

Four people, three of a family, were killed and 15 others injured in a road accident at Paduar Bazar on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway in sadar upazila yesterday (Wednesday).

The victims were identified as pedestrian Nuru Mia, 45, of Pratabpur village, mother, sister and mother-in-law of one Abdul Matin of village Bhubanghar in Sadar upazila.

Police and witnesses said the accident took place when a Chittagong-bound bus of S Alam transport was fleeing after running over Nuru Mia.

The bus dashed an auto-rickshaw into roadside ditch in Loipur area and crashed into it, killing three on board.

The injured were bus passengers. Twelve of them were rushed to different hospitals in the district.

Police seized the bus and auto-rickshaw.

**BGMEA seeks**

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duties and VAT from pre-fabricated items to popularise their usage for rapid construction of buildings.

The minister said he would soon meet bank authorities to channel funds for linkage industry. His ministry will also formulate a policy paper in line with the proposals of the BGMEA. Chowdhury assured the RMG sector leaders.

State Minister for Textiles Mizanur Rahman Sinha was also present in the meeting. The BGMEA delegation included second vice-president Kazi Moniruzzaman, directors A Razzak Sattar, Ferdous Amin and Zakaria Taher, and association secretary Fahisur Rahman.

**Call money rate**

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Before hitting as high as 20 per cent yesterday, the call money rate was 17.75 per cent Tuesday.

Most banks faced shortage of currency notes of smaller denominations. People made long queues in front of the counters at the central bank to collect one and five taka coins, 10 and 20 taka notes. However, the tellers turned them away as they claimed to have run out of smaller denomination notes.

However, some unscrupulous persons sold coins and smaller notes at higher prices inside the central bank. A two-taka bundle of 100 notes was selling at Tk 215. Demand for new notes was also very high.

**Bus terminal**

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Naogaon, Joypurhat, Panchagarh, Kurigram and Lalmonirhat have been raised. At Salma Transport, a ticket to Joypurhat costs Tk 210 against the normal rate of Tk 180 while a ticket to Iswardi in Pabna district costs Tk 170 but now it has been raised to Tk 200.

A ticket to Chapainawabganj usually costs Tk 190 but now the fare has been increased to Tk 210.

A S M Ali Khabir Chand, chairman of Bangladesh Bus-Truck Owners' Association, tried to justify the increase of fair saying "We have not taken any formal decision to raise the fares but as you can understand someone has to compensate for the return of empty buses. So whatever is being charged, though unofficially, is for the benefit of our valued passengers."

Chand continued, "Many people misunderstand that the extra fares are charged for our profit. But it is completely wrong and I want to clarify that the extra fares are just a part of the funds being raised to pay fuel and other costs for every bus to return empty."

Meanwhile, porters at Gabtoli are asking for fees much higher than the fixed rates. For a heavy luggage a porter charges Tk 200 whereas Dhaka City Corporation has fixed the rate at Tk 50.

The porters also charges from a passenger even he carries his own luggage. "We are hostage to the gang of porters," said a victim who was forced to pay Tk 140 to a porter though he carried his own luggage.

**Transshipment**

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ministry has given its opinion in favour of transshipment, sources said.

A commerce ministry source expressed his hope that the Indian government would allow zero-tariff access of 25-category items as a 'goodwill gesture' to the new government of Bangladesh to improve bilateral ties.

Hope is also running high among the policy planners that this time there could be some 'ground breaking' developments between the two countries. But they feel much would depend on India's allowing zero-tariff access of 25-category products.

Commerce Secretary Suhel Ahmed said, "There are signs of a positive outcome at the bilateral talks."

As part of preparing the ground for a 'desired result', the country's policy planners have already contacted the Indian side. Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman during his visit to New Delhi last week, discussed different 'mutually beneficial issues' with the Indian government including Indian prime minister. The commerce minister also had an informal meeting with his Indian counterpart on the sidelines of WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar last month.



UNFP Country Representative Sunita Mukherjee and UNAIDS Country Programme Coordinator Geeta Shethi called on President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury at Bangabhaban yesterday.

**Probe into graft cases**

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The government is also taking steps to file 18 more graft cases against more ex-AL ministers. BAC is probing allegations of corruption in the food ministry, telecom ministry, public works ministry, and the power division of the energy ministry.

Sources said the bureau is likely to seek the prime minister's approval to file these additional cases after the Eid holidays.

Meantime, following the bail petitions filed by Nasim, Mosharraf and Abul Ahsan, the High Court yesterday issued a rule upon the government asking it to explain why the petitioners would not be given permanent bail. The High Court granted them interim bail, though.

Nasim and Mosharraf filed their petitions with the High Court Division Bench comprising Justice Badrul Haq and Justice Montajuddin. Barrister Amir-ul-Islam defended Nasim while Barrister Rokonuddin Mahmud moved the petition for Mosharraf.

Attorney General Hasan Arif opposed their bail. Defended by Dr. MA Zahir, Abul Hasan Chowdhury filed his petition with the High Court Division Bench comprising Justice MA Aziz and Justice Nazrul Islam Chowdhury.

Meanwhile, our court correspondent reports that the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court yesterday received documents of the 12 graft cases. The court fixed

the hearing of the cases on January 12.

Meanwhile, two lawyers on behalf of the accused ex-ministers wanted to see the files of the graft cases on the court premises. But the Anti-Corruption Bureau officials refused.

The two lawyers -- Kamrul Islam and Mosharraf Hossain Kajal--protested the refusal, but the BAC officials told them the files could not be shown due to instructions from the higher authorities.

The 12 graft cases have been linked to purchase of Mig-29s, printing of passport books, preparation of the site of Meghnaghat power plant, selling of property of Bangladesh Jute Corporation (BJC), 'irregularities' in Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authorities (BEPZA), 'misappropriation' of abandoned property under the Public Works Department, 'corruption' in the Public Service Commission, 'irregularities' in the Food-for-Work project and allocation of public land.

The former premier alone has been accused in two cases on charges of graft. Cases have been filed against AL Organising Secretary and former home and telecommunication minister Mohammad Nasim (two cases), former public works minister Mosharraf Hossain, former state minister for power Rafiqul Islam, state minister for foreign affairs Abul

Hossain Chowdhury, former state minister for jute AK Faizul Haq and former deputy minister for local government and rural development Saber Hossain Chowdhury.

Incumbent Election Commissioner Shafiqur Rahman, present Forest and Environment Secretary Mahfuzul Islam, former air chief Jamal Uddin, former principal secretary Dr. SA Samad, former defence secretary and incumbent Comptroller and Auditor General Syed Yusuf Hossain, Public Service Commission chairman Mostafa Chowdhury, former secretary Jagannath Dey have also been accused, among others.

**Street beggars sent to vagabond centres**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A large number of street beggars were rounded up from different parts of the city yesterday and sent to government vagabond centres at Mirpur.

The beggars were involved in causing harassment to car passengers stopped at traffic lights around the city.

The action followed orders by the Inspector General of police Modabbir Hossain Chowdhury who came across the beggars as his vehicle stopped at a traffic signal at the Hotel Sheraton Crossing shortly before the evening. At least 8 beggars surrounded his car at the time.

The IGP asked the police personnel on duty to use the beggars to government centres under the Motor Vehicle Act.

Later a large number of beggars were rounded up and sent to shelter homes for rehabilitation.

**Afghan FM arrives in Delhi**

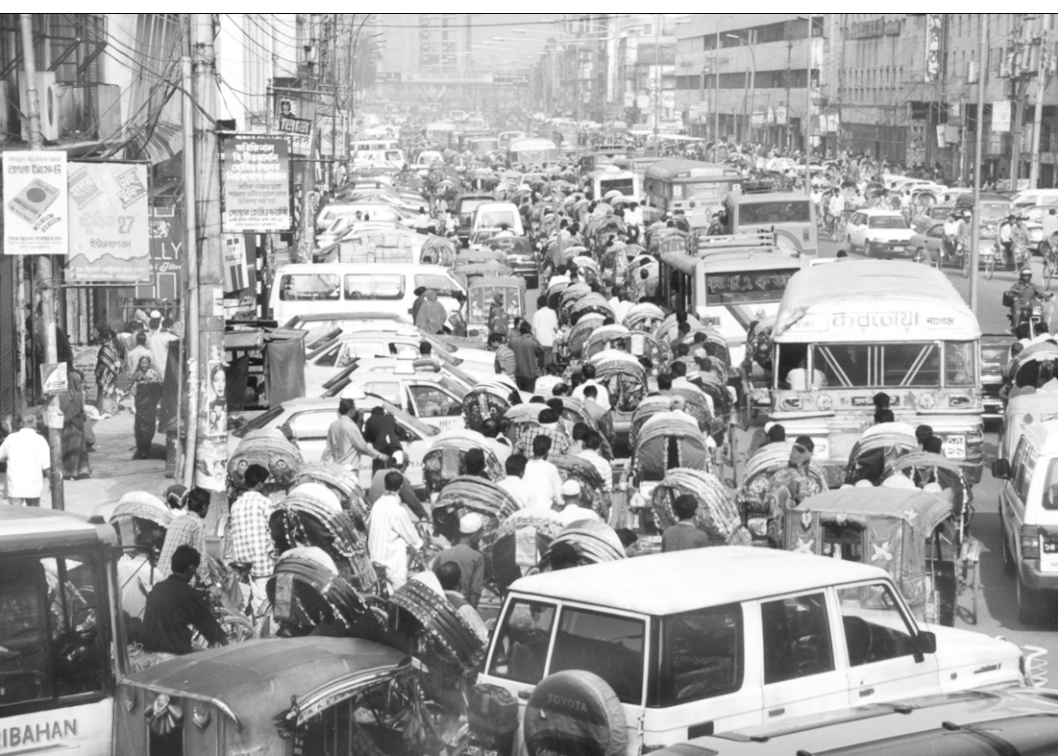
AFP, New Delhi

The foreign minister of Afghanistan's interim administration arrived in New Delhi yesterday.

Officials from the Afghan embassy said Abdullah Abdulah was received by Indian foreign ministry officials when he arrived at New Delhi airport from Kabul.

Abdullah then went to meet his wife and three children, who took shelter in the Indian capital after the takeover of Afghanistan by the now-routed Taliban in 1992, officials said.

Indian foreign ministry spokeswoman Nirupama Rao said Abdullah would meet his Indian counterpart Jaswant Singh on Thursday.



Rickshaws, baby-taxis, motorbikes, buses and private cars--vehicles of all kinds try to squeeze their way past one another in the bumper to bumper traffic jam extending from the city's Tikatuli crossing to Bangladesh Bank yesterday.

**DU in quest of alternative style of student leadership**

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka University authorities will introduce a new system to create alternative student leadership on the campus and improve discipline after the Eid vacation.

Under the new system, a prefect would be made in each department, who will look after disciplines and other matters concerning the general students.

The prefect would be chosen according to merit.

"Students who will stand first in the Honours third year examination would be made prefects", Vice-chancellor Prof. Anwarullah Chowdhury said.

He also said the same system was followed by the university long time back and added, "The system is in practice in many universities

abroad and it is also embedded in the Dhaka University proctorial rule."

The authorities are also planning to implement the system in the residential halls as well.

While addressing an Ifter party with the reporters on Tuesday, the VC also disclosed that police would be deployed on some spots of the campus to check mugging prior to the Eid.

These spots include the road in front of the Institute of Fine Arts (IFA), Doyel Chatter, BNCC Crossing and Shaheed Minar.

Proctor of the university Prof. Nazrul Islam said all the students having legal identity must be rehabilitated in their respective halls of residence. "We must ensure security of the students and their individual rights," he said.

**Al Qaida deadline**

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Press (AIP) news agency reported that the mostly foreign fighters loyal to Osama bin Laden, believed to number about 1,000 wanted to be handed over to the United Nations in the presence of diplomats from their respective countries.

It was still not clear whether bin Laden was in the Tora Bora region, although US officials said Tuesday there were "indications" he was there.

"There were some indications that bin Laden was in the area" when a 7.5 tonne Daisy Cutter bomb was dropped over entrances to the Tora Bora cave complex over the weekend, a US official told AFP.

ABC News reported Tuesday that the blast sparked a series of panicked radio and satellite telephone calls among al-Qaida members, confirming that the Saudi-born dissident and his entourage were still in the region.

ABC said US forces were using aerial surveillance to track several groups of al-Qaida fighters as they attempt to flee, saying intelligence sources believe bin Laden is with them.

Most of the leaders of al-Qaida and the Taliban so far have managed to escape capture despite a chain of surrenders of cities across Afghanistan that ended last week with the fall of Kandahar, the Taliban's last stronghold.

Taliban supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar is believed to be in the country, but US officials believe almost all of the remaining top Taliban leaders have escaped into Pakistan, NBC News reported, quoting Pentagon sources.

Meanwhile, as many as 500 Taliban and al-Qaida troops captured in the northern cities of Mazar-i-Sharif and Kunduz have bought safe passage into Iran, the network reported, citing informed sources.

Pakistani officials claimed to have sealed the Afghan border in the region to prevent the escape of bin Laden and his forces, whom US authorities blame for the carnage on September 11.

The US military campaign in Afghanistan, launched on October 7, targets the country's Taliban militia for refusing to hand over bin Laden, who has lived in Afghanistan as an honored guest since 1996.

But US officials were clearly fretting over the possibility that bin Laden could slip out of the country.

"It is a porous border. It's long border... there's just simply no way you can put a perfect cork in the bottle," US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld told reporters in Washington.

Meanwhile, in Kabul, top UN envoy for Afghanistan Lakhdar Brahimi said the Northern Alliance had "no objections" to the deployment of an international force in the capital, but admitted no deal had been reached.

Brahimi, in Kabul to smooth a transfer of power to a new interim government on December 22, said "operational issues" such as the size of the force, its mission and the withdrawal of alliance soldiers from Kabul still had to be agreed.

The existence of a force was a key clause in the historic UN-brokered inter-Afghan deal reached last week in Bonn, but the Northern Alliance, which holds power in Kabul, said Monday it would not withdraw all its soldiers from the Afghan capital.

In London, Prime Minister Tony Blair said Britain was willing "to play a leading role" in the force, but stressed after talks with US

**Bhuiyan**

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purchase of MIG-29 aircraft, frigate etc. by the former AL government and had committed itself to investigating the matter after sensing massive corruption in those purchases.

The court will find whether those accused in the corruption cases are really guilty or not, he said emphatically.

Secretary of State Colin Powell that a formal decision had yet to be made.

Recent media reports said Britain was planning to deploy hundreds, perhaps thousands of troops to head the force, and Powell said before meeting Blair that he welcomed the news.

With the end of the Afghan campaign now in sight, speculation mounted on likely future targets in Washington's war on terrorism, while US allies including Britain warned against any expansion of the conflict.

Powell promised that the United States would consult with its coalition partners before extending the campaign beyond Afghanistan, but stressed that the al-Qaeda network needed to be totally destroyed, during a stop in London.

But Vice President Dick Cheney signaled that the United States was concerned about Somalia and Iraq, and warned Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to take note of the fate of the Taliban.

In London, Britain's top military official, Chief of Defense Staff Admiral Michael Boyce, acknowledged for the first time that Britain and the United States were at odds over the future of the US-led campaign.

Britain's armed forces were already stretched far enough, he said, but could find themselves taking part in operations that may "contradict national policy."

In addition to Somalia, Yemen and Iraq have also been mentioned as possible future targets, sparking warnings from Washington's European and Arab allies that any expansion of the campaign could destroy the anti-terror coalition.

In Washington, US Attorney General John Ashcroft announced the first indictment in the probe of the September 11 terrorist attacks, charging a French national with six counts of conspiracy.

Zacarias Moussaoui, 33, of Moroccan origin, was indicted on counts ranging from conspiracy to commit terrorist acts, destroy aircraft and murder US employees to conspiracy to use weapons of mass destruction.

The indictment also names bin Laden and other members of his al-Qaeda organisation as unindicted co-conspirators, along with the head of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad.

The announcement came on the same day the United States marked the third month since the September attacks, which claimed more than 3,000 lives, with ceremonies in the US capital, New York, and in Pennsylvania where a fourth hijacked plane crashed on September 11.

**AL to fight cases**

FROM PAGE 1

ever thinsly attended as many of the members have already left Dhaka for their respective home districts to celebrate the Eid.

Samad Azad told The Daily Star that a fully-fledged meeting of the ALCWC will be convened after the Eid to decide the next course of actions.

The ALCWC meeting yesterday expressed deep anguish and frustration at the government's indifference towards the deteriorating law and order situation.

The meeting in a resolution urged the ruling alliance to withdraw the 'false' graft cases and walk off the path of oppression. Otherwise, the government would have to bear the consequences, it warned.

In another resolution, the meeting noted that "the fascists" Khaleda government filed the cases to execute its political vendetta and to tarnish the image of Sheikh Hasina.

The ALCWC expressed its deep anguish at the 'government's blueprint' to annihilate the AL through the so-called 100-day programme.