Formulate policy to end discrimination

Female ward commissioners urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Female pourasabha ward commissioners have called upon the government to formulate policies specifying their duties and responsibilities alongside male commissioners to put an end to 'discrimination'

They made the call at a workshop on 'Gender and Development' in the capital yesterday, organnised jointly by Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) and Local Govern-ment Engineering Department (LGED).

The women commissioners said although they represent three wards each. allocation of development funds for them is one third of that given to a male commissioner, who represents one ward.

"We won direct election overcoming many social hurdles. But the discrimination is discouraging us to take part in the next election," said Fatema Johora Rani, a ward commissioner of Mymensingh

Anjuman Sarkar, another ward

commissioner from Mymensingh said their duties and responsibilities are stressed only at seminars and discussions. But these are not materialised, she regretted.

"We won the polls race pledging a lot to voters. But now we cannot do anything for them. If we ask our pourasabha chairman about this, he says the government has not given any guidelines for you," she said.

sioner from Munshiganj Pourasabha, said "The problems we are facing can be resolved if the government gives a guideline specifying

Akhter and Hamida Begum from Brahmanbaria and Saida Akhter from Jamalpur Pourasabha also

chaired by Khaleda Shahariar Kabii

India, West Indies

Lanka at the Bangabandhu National

Dark horse West Indies also thrived on a Marshall hundred to post a 34-run win against South Africa at the Fatullah Stadium to join India in the semifinals from the same group. It now remains to be seen whether India and Pakistan set up a clash in one of the two Cup semifinals.

Pakistan, who are already through from the other group, can only avoid a semifinal meeting with arch-rivals India provided that they beat former champions England in their last group league game to be held at the Fatullah Stadium today.

West Indies will play the second semifinal against the winners of the England-Pakistan game at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on March 2. The first semifinal is billed at the same venue on February 29.

Meanwhile, Australia moved into the last four of the Plate championship with a shaky six-wicket victory against tournament's surprise package Nepal at the Chittagong

Clarification

FROM PAGE 12

A parliamentary sub-committee is probing corruption charges against its officials who worked in two DSW projects between 1996 and 2000, it

Regarding overdrawing of funds from a project in financial year 2002-03, it further claimed flawed interpretation of government orders at the end of the fiscal year led to such

The letter said depositing money at different branches of a government bank from the treasury caused the mistake and the excess amount was later returned to the Bangladesh Bank

No DSW officials ever handled the overdrawn cash and the matter was reconciled with the office of chief accounts officer, it added.

Papua New Guinea by seven wickets at the MAAziz Stadium.

Both Australia Scotland will know their semifinal opponents after today's match between Ireland and hosts Bangladesh. The home side will be desperately look forward to beating Ireland at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium as it will allow them to have relatively easy opponents in Scotland rather than the

Rod Price Hike

The acute raw material supply crisis has put the entire steel industry with over 300 re-rolling mills and 100

to \$400 while per ton melting scrap rose from \$150 to\$300, virtually hiking the price of MS rods.

As a result, the government's import duty waiver on scrap did not make much difference in checking rod price hike, the association

at least 70 percent of the raw materi-

They called upon the government to facilitate re-rollers' import of ting scrap, re-rollable scrap and sponge iron as substitute raw materials to reduce dependence on shipbreaking instead of encouraging MS rod import.

They also called for government control over the iron raw material

Govt, AL seem

against any violent political move.

'[Confine] those inside their houses who want to block the roadmap for development," she told the government loyalists. Leader of the Opposition and AL

President Sheikh Hasina refused to sit with the ruling alliance to end the stand-off and turned down the appeals, even by the US envoy, to return to parliament.

She has demanded immediate resignation of the government and a mid-term parliamentary election.

Observers fear a violent flare-up on the political front tomorrow as a scheduled public meeting of the BNP in the city's Bashabo playground coincides with the countrywide dawnto-dusk hartal called by the AL.

Sources said there is a good chance of confrontation between supporters of the two biggest parties in Bangladesh over holding the rally and enforcing the hartal. There has been no move yet from any side to either shift the rally or defer the

shutdown to avert a possible conflict. The BNP claimed that the public meeting is one of eight such meetings to be held in Dhaka, which was announced much ahead of the hartal

call. Prime Minister and BNP chief Khaleda Zia will address the meeting However, AL sources claimed the

BNP announced the rally after the

Privatisation

FROM PAGE 1 government of Bangladesh and generally has found an overall commitment by the government to the ultimate full closure of all the loss making SOEs -- a total of 130 in all (including 28 which have already

The mission, however, recoming door strategy' and the subsequent early sell off of these downsized enterprises immediately after the elections."

Security beefed up ahead of Kushtia-1 bypoll

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

The Election Commission (EC) has taken strict security measures ahead of Kushtia-1 by-poll on February 29.

According to district election office 650 army and paramilitary Rifles personnel with police would be deployed at various points of the constituency from today. Some 50 magistrates 6 upazila

nirbahi officers and 25 officers-incharge of police would be kept on duty to ensure a free and fair election, sources said. Amidst the main opposition Awam

League's boycott of the election, eight candidates including an independent one are contesting the poll. The AL stood off the by-election saying it would not be fair.

The contestants in the by-polls are ruling alliance nominee BNP candidate Reza Ahmed Bachchu, Abdul Halim (JP-Manju), Nazrul Islam (NAP-Bhasani), M Korban Ali (JP Naziur-Firoj), Ázibur Rahman (JSD-Rob), Nazrul Islam (Muslim League), Abdul Khaleq (Freedom Party) and Shahidul Islam (independent).

A total 2,68,334 voters would vote at 101 polling centres under 14 unions of the constituency while 101 presiding officers, 535 assistant presiding officers and 1070 polling officers would conduct the election, EC sources

Unite against unhealthy politics

Urges Dr Kamal **OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra**

Gano Forum President and Convenor of Oikya Prochesta Dr Kamal Hossain has said there is no rule of law in the country and people want an end to such a situation.

The eminent jurist called upon all sections of society to stand united against violence, corruption and unhealthy politics.

Addressing a public meeting at Shaheed Khokon ground here yesterday, Kamal said, "Democratic oractice is absent as black money holders are ruling the country sitting in parliament." Organised by the district unit of

Oikya Prochesta, the meeting was also addressed by Zahirul Islam, Bhattacharya, Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, Abdur Rouf and Mostafizur Rahman.

Earlier, Kamal had a meeting with local lawyers.

Businessman robbed of money, pistol

OUR CORRESPONDENT. N'gani

Miscreants stabbed a businessman and snatched Tk 3.5 lakh and a icensed pistol from him, while extortionists mugged a shop owner at Kayumpur in Fatullah yesterday.

Police said Manir, 40, a garment owner, went to a re-rolling mill to collect the dues when hoodlums led by municipal member Abul attacked him with sharp weapons and took away the money and arms A case was filed with Fatullah

Police Station.

In the other incident, extortionists beat up shop owner Ahid and took away Tk 23,000 from him at 10:30am when he asked them to pay off their dues.

Meanwhile, 21-year-old Humayun Kabira, a college student, died at Isdair in the city at 12:30pm when a Narayanganj-bound truck ran over

New centre

FROM PAGE 12

UK visas of the British High Commission, told reporters at the high commission auditorium in the city yesterday. Visa applicants will have to pay

extra Tk 400 for the new system, in addition to the existing visa fees. A commercial organisation will

run the centre representing the high commission. However, Ross did not name the organisation.

The new centre will host waiting lounge, snacks, photocopier and other facilities to end visa seekers' hassles, who currently wait in long queues for several hours. The high commission will set up

the centre in Gulshan-Baridhara area, and might launch another in Sylhet later. These new improvements will

be for the convenience of all our visa customers," said Nick Bostin, entry clearance manager of the high commission, who was present at the oress conference. "But it doesn't mean that we're making any changes to our UK

mmigration regulations," Ross clarified, "UK immigration regulations remain unchanged." Visa applicants will be able to arrange interview schedule convenient to them through the new

centre. Applicants not requiring interview will get visa from it the next day they apply, said high commission officials Application for the UK visa has been steadily increasing over the

ast few years, said the officials. The high commission received 18,000 visa applications three years back, while it got 38,000 applications last

The number of overall application rises by 30 percent every year, they observed.

Macedonian president killed in plane crash

REUTERS, Near Stolac, Bosnia

Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski, hailed in the West as a peacemaker who averted civil war. was killed vesterday when his plane crashed into a Bosnian mountainside

Prime Minister Bertie Ahern, who was to have held talks in Dublin with Macedonia's prime minister on the day of the country's formal application to join the European Union.

A Bosnian official said the wreck had been found and there were no survivors among the nine aboard. A screens in the morning.

senior Macedonian official told the news agency in the capital, Skopje. A Trajkovski aide said there would be no confirmation "until a body is identi-

broadcast only solemn music. The 47-year-old Trajkovski had been on a short flight to the Bosnian town of Mostar for an economic conference. A Methodist Christian preacher

and career lawyer, he made his name internationally during a crisis with ethnic Albanian rebels that brought brink of civil war in 2001. With NATO help, he oversaw a peace deal,

Beechcraft 200 Super King Air twinengined turboprop with two crew and six aides on board in addition to the president. Bosnian officials, who earlier gave a later crash time, said it seemed to

go down south of Stolac, inland from

Commerce Secretary Ron Brown, was among 35 people killed when a U.S. Air Force passenger jet got into trouble and crashed into a mountain

The official Macedonian Information Center said Trajkovski's plane had "several times" nearly cost

officials their lives. A Bosnian officia added that "weather conditions were very bad with heavy fog and rain vesterday morning.

Helicopters of the US-led NATO peacekeeping force in Bosnia, helping rescuers and police, were spotted hovering over a steep mountainside but no wreckage was visible and access was restricted. Local people said the area may still be mined from the days of the Balkan wars in the 1990s.

Macedonian Prime Minister Branko Crvenkovski was already in Dublin when news of the crash was announced, on a mission to formally deliver his country's application to oin the European Union, of which Ireland holds the presidency at the moment.

Journalists traveling with him were told to pack up and be ready for an immediate flight back to Macedonia.

From his election in late 1999 Traikovski's term was marked by tensions between Slavic-speaking Macedonians and the former Yugoslav republic's large ethnic Albanian minority.

Although his powers were limited and his role largely ceremonial, he presided over a NATO-brokered peace deal in 2001 that ended months of armed clashes and prevented a full blown civil war in the mountainous state bordering

Prime Minister Crvenkovski will etain the main powers

Mark Laity, a NATO official who worked as an adviser to Traikovski during the 2001 crisis, said he was

"In 2001 no Macedonian was more important to stopping that country having a civil war. He was controversial and people often attacked him, but in the end he was a person who could always be relied on to do the right thing," Laity said.

In early 1999 he was appointed Macedonia's deputy foreign minister. During the Kosovo crisis that year he accused NATO of paying too little attention to the ethnic tensions brewing in Macedonia and the influx of 300,000 ethnic Albanian refugees. Trajkovski was married with a son

and a daughter.

Defy hartal, drive vehicles

in the same vicinity.

more crops and increase food products taking loans and other facilities offered by the government. Blasting the main opposition

party for not attending parliament sessions and disregarding the speaker's ruling, she said the Awami League has opted for hartal and destructive politics as it doesn't want people's welfare and development of the country. Communications Minister Nazmul Huda, Post and Telecommu-

nications Minister M Aminul Haq, Rajshahi City Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu, Shamsul Alam Pramanik and Rajshahi Krishi Bank Chairman Ruhul Kabir Rizvi addressed the meeting presided over by local MP Shamsuddoha Khan.

The prime minister described some of the present government's development programmes and said the BNP believes in the politics of development. On the other hand. she added, the Awami League always resorts to destruction, and plundering of people's assets.

Referring to the past five-year rule of the AL, Khaleda said they killed people, grabbed property, country with arms. She said it (AL) is also trying to tarnish the country's image abroad through orchestrated propaganda.

She said the AL dishonoured mosques, looted Hindu temples, and blasted bombs at churches when it was in power.

pledges to the locals that included construction of a bridge over the river Atrai, upgradation of Dhamaihat Upazila Health Complex to a 50-bed hospital, construction and development of roads, rural electrification and development of educational institutions. Farlier, the prime minister for-

mally inaugurated the development work of Naogaon-Patnitala-Joypurhat Highway. The 57.50 km road will be developed under a Tk 15 crore project to be completed by

She also gave away an ambulance to the upazila health complex and distributed goats and spray machines among the poor people under poverty reduction progra-

Stop using religion

FROM PAGE 12 said, adding different parties are posing as protectors of separate groups, aggravating the problem.

Religious intolerance cropped up recently with the advent of modern politics and for so-called democratic role of political parties. Ariff said "Rectify your ideology and strategy," he asked leaders of political parties. "The issue is a disgrace for the

country and the authorities should publish findings of their probe that found organised effort by some groups to create religious disharmony after the last general election," said the attorney general, who was the chief guest at the discussion.

Dr Asif Nazrul of Law department of Dhaka University presented the keynote paper on 'Legal Aspects of Religious Freedom in Bangladesh' at the discussion organised by rights body Odhikar.

He stressed the necessity of a vigilant civil society for overseeing the implementation of constitutionally guaranteed religious freedom. US Ambassador Harry K Thomas Jr, who attended the programme as a

guest of honour, spoke on how Article 41 of Bangladesh's constitution deals with religious freedom and how to strike a balance between law, public order and morality and citizens' religious rights. "Since the definition of law, public order and morality in the article is open to broad interpretation, it is

important to clarify its content and application," he said. Any potential abuse of the provisions in the article would provide an opportunity for the state to infringe on rights of religious minorities, he added. Despite general communal harmony, there are continuing reports of violence and intimidation

involving members of various reli-

gious minority communities,

envoy said.

demonstrations against the Ahmadiyyas centring their Dhaka mosque, he termed banning of Ahmadiyya publications 'disturbing' He however mentioned government measures to safeguard the mosque. "We understand the government has not issued an official circular or gazette notification formalising this announcement, but the political and psychological impact remains the

Rights organisations and the press can help improve the situation, Thomas said. "But the burden lies on governments to honour and respect the rights of their citizens.

same." he said.

parties should not attempt to exploit religion and religious prejudice for political gain." he said. Bangladesh Amir of Ahmadiyya

Muslim Jamaat Meer Mobashwer Ali said, "The government played a defensive role, though we expected it to play a pro-active one in protecting our rights of religion. He went on, "While imposing ban on Ahmadiyya publications on January 8, the government said they did so to quell the situation. But you

stitution, he said. The discussants included Dr

Rebeca Milton of Acid Survivors Foundation, Seema Das Simu of Ubinia and iournalist DP Barua. Odhikar President Tasneem Siddigu delivered the welcome address.

Northern region running dry of diesel fast

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The northern region of the country is running dry of diesel fast.

A Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) official at Baghabar depot yesterday said the corpora-tion would be forced to completely suspend diesel distribution in the region in case it failed to secure a fresh supply by last night.

Of the three state-owned fuel distribution companies run by the BPC, Meghna Oil Company has already stopped diesel distribution since Wednesday last. The same fate looms large over the other two companies -- Padma and Jamuna.

The acute diesel crisis, due mainly to lack of timely supply, poses a threat to severely damage the region's irrigation-based Boro culti-

Injured fish trader dies at DMCH

Shops closed for three hours after police club agitating traders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fish trader died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) yesterday, 12 hours after armed assailants killed his landlord in an attack which also left three others including him wounded at a kitchen market at Ahmed Nagar in Mirpur on Wednesday night.

Ameer Hossain, a fish trader and tenant of Sikder Market owner Rashid Sikder, died at about 8:00am, sources said. Earlier, Rashid, also the presi-

dent of a local unit of BNP, died soon after an armed gang sprayed bullets on him apparently over land dispute. Buvers Naravan and Zunaved who also suffered bullet wounds

during in the attack, were undergo-

ing treatment at the DMCH, sources

Meanwhile, local traders and shop owners in Ahmed Nagar area kept their shutters down for about three hours in the afternoon after police chased their procession in protest of the killings, locals said.

bats at police after police clubbed them, they added. Rashid's son Mujibur Rahman lodged a case with Mirour Police Station late Wednesday accusing 11 people including Rahmat, Rabi,

The demonstrators pelted brick

Mirpur police held one Nurul suspecting his involvement in the Locals said Rashid had a long dispute with Rahmat over the own-

ership of the 52-katha market land,

Hamid blames

Jasim and Baten.

which houses 60 shops.

confine opposition activists to their houses and Altaf Hossain Chowdhury echoed the same voice at a Patuakhali rally on Wednesday. "I must say today's attack was

the ruling BNP) in league with the opposition." Protesting the attack that left several AL activists injured. Hamid warned the government of dire

they're (ruling coalition leaders) riding for a fall. Now people of the country would get more actively involved with our anti-government movement." he said.

cessions or agitation This goes totally against our fundamental democratic and constitutional rights. A government cannot quash people's rights to assembly

AL lawmaker for Khulna Panchanan Biswas was also pres-

Strip Mustafiz FROM PAGE 1

the Jativa Sangsad (JS) Bhaban. condemned such 'unprecedented appointment.' High officials of the ministry and the armed forces attending the meeting also judged the appointment as illegal, he added.

Referring to Mustafiz' joining in

politics after retirement, Mahbub

said though the existing

organogram of the country's army

did not support the rank of a fourstar general, the promotion too was given from political interests. Asked what public interests did

The meeting was originally scheduled to discuss some alleged irregularities in construction of the central mosque and the Heroes Gate at Dhaka Cantonment during Mustafiz' tenure, on which the chief to report back.

US lifts travel ban on Libya

AP, Washington

The United States lifted a longstanding ban on travel to Libya vesterday and invited American companies to begin planning their return, after Moammar Gadhafi's government affirmed that it was responsible for the bombing of Pan Am flight 103 in 1988.

The administration also encouraged Libya to establish an official presence in Washington by opening an "interests section." a diplomatic office a level beneath an embassy. The United States also will expand its diplomatic presence in Tripoli. The White House announce-

ment rescinded travel restrictions that have been in place for 23 years against Libya, a country which the United States had long branded a sponsor of state terrorism. Allowing U.S. travel to Libya would give American corporations an opportunity to do lucrative busi-

t also would help Gadhafi emerge from semi-isolation. US firms which had holdings in Libva before sanctions were imposed were authorized to negotiate the terms of renewing their operations, the White House said. However, the companies will be required to obtain U.S. approval of any agreement, if economic sanc-

ness legally in Libya's rich oil fields.

The White House said it would 'continuously evaluate the range of bilateral sanctions that remain in place relating to Libya" as its government moves toward totally dismantling its weapons of mass destruction programs and related missiles projects and adheres to its renunciation of terrorism.

The lifting of the travel ban came

after the Jamahiriya news agency

disavowed assertions by the Libvan prime minister that Libya had not acknowledged it blew the jetliner out of the skies over Lockerbie Scotland in 1988, killing 270 people ncluding 181 Americans. The United States has been moving toward improved relations with Tripoli since Gadhafi renounced the development of weapons of mass destruction and

verify that his country was abandoning nuclear, chemical and biological orograms. While more remains to be done, Libya's actions have been serious, credible and consistent with Col Gadhafi's public declaration that Libya seeks to play a role in 'building a new world free from (weapons of mass destruction) and from all forms of terrorism'," a White House

allowed weapons inspectors to

N Korea offers

said at a briefing

tions remain in place.

"As for the details and specific arrangements for stopping the nuclear activities, it is still being discussed

among the various parties," he said. His comments came just after the official Xinhua News Agency cited Alexander Losyukov, head of the Russian delegation and his country's deputy foreign minister, as saying North Korea showed "readiness" to

According to Losyukov, the North would retain its nuclear program related to "peaceful purpose," Xinhua said. That's a major step but one somewhat less than what China described. Losyukov said verification was a

abolish its nuclear weapons program.

No one will agree to move forward without inspections. Such an approach is quite justified," he said at a news conference. He added that disagreements still remain between Washington and Pyongyang over exactly what will be eliminated. "Agap remains," Losyukov

key part of the discussions.

session of talks." The announcement came during a second round of Beijing-based talks on the North's nuclear program. Participating in the talks are the Koreas, the United States, China,

Russia and Japan.

said. "We have certain doubts that it

will be possible to remove it during this

an immediate dismantling of the North's nuclear programme. Pyongyang demands aid and security guarantees before it begins to do so a position backed by China, which has always included the North's security in the equation.

The United States has demanded

Liu said China "agreed with North Korea's requirement for reasonable security guarantees and to give North Korea a normal development environ-

A US Embassy spokesman in

The second day of meetings

followed a rare, lengthy one-on-one

session Wednesday between high-

Beijing said he had no information.

this meeting open-ended, hoping for

town to address a rally from Bhola on the last day of her three-day tour

Violence gripped Barisal town as police raided AL workers' houses during the day and BNP activists attacked people going to the rally. BNP men also prevented engine hoats and launches carrying rally-

Barisal-Dhaka highways. Passengers were beaten away. At Amtala in the town, a group led

bus carrying AL supporters to the meeting and dispersed them. They also stopped ferry operation at different

The attackers chanting the slogan "Tofailer Astana Jaliey Dao, Puriye Dao" (Burn Tofail's den) attacked and threw bombs on the office before looting it. The office

and police recovered two unexploded bombs. Police are patrolling the town as tension runs high. "The coalition government has

"No-one can do anything without giving a share to the Bhaban," she

rupted the country and only developed terrorism and corruption," she "If anybody thinks our tolerance

make a big mistake. We know how to strike back." AL central leaders including Amir Hossain Amu, Tofail Ahmed

being a sign of weakness, they will

tour. She later visited the family members of the AL supporters injured in the attack during her

meeting at the same venue in the evening.

the world's largest mangrove forest in the respective parts of their countries

North Korea and the United States have been at odds over Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions for years and especially since October 2002, when Kelly said the North told him it had a secret weapons programme based on enriched uranium.

Pyongyang the two key players in the

meeting between US Assistant

Secretary of State James Kelly and

North Korean Vice Foreign Minister

Kim Kye Gwan, but the State

Department described it as "useful."

Neither side gave details of the

dispute.

known plutonium-based program, but it brandishes the threat of what it vaguely describes as its "nuclear deterrent" in an effort to extract concessions The impoverished North wants aid in return for halting its nuclear programmes, and in December

demanded economic aid and other

North Korea publicly denies it has a

uranium program in addition to its

US concessions in return for a freeze. Washington said that Pyongyang must not only freeze, but start dismanling, its nuclear programmes first. North Korea also wants a nonaggression treaty with the United States or at least a security quarantee from all five of its negotiating partners.

Wednesday, Kelly said the United States has "no intention of invading or attacking" the country, he said. This week's meeting is the second round of six-party talks. The first one in August, scheduled for three days only, yielded little more than a vague promise to meet again. Parties have made

more progress. "I think it's realistic optimism." said Bill Tow. a professor of international relations at Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia. "They wouldn't have come together at this juncture unless they felt there was a reasonable chance there might be some

Hasina's motorcade

to the south.

bound passengers from anchoring at terminals and even riverbanks. Passengers were also beaten up. Transports were searched and ransacked at Bakergani on Barisal-Patuakhali and at Kashipur on

by Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal leader Akbar swooped on a procession and roughed up the demonstrators. The attackers also vandalised a

Later in the night, BNP men torched Bhola AL office near Bangla School at about 7:15pm.

furniture was set on fire. Firefighters extinguished the fire

failed in every sector and lost every right to stay in power any more," the leader of the opposition told a mammoth rally at Bangabandhu Udyan of Barisal town in the afternoon amidst a tense situation. "The country is under a dual rule of the government and the Hawa

motorcade.

On Wednesday night, BNP men burned a truck at Goria on the city outskirts reserved for carrying people to Hasina's rally. They also attacked and ransacked the village home of the Jubo League central

agreed to conduct Bengal Tiger census in

been closed in 2002/03)." mends that "there will be a definite need to obtain government's firm written commitment to 'a no revolv-

Salma Akhter, a ward commis-

Ward commissioners Shamima

expressed similar views. Asian Development Bank (ADB) consultant Saiyid Musharraf Hussain, Christine Pomerieau, a social development expert, and Ferdousi Sultana of the ADB presented papers at the workshop

Divisional Stadium. Scotland pipped Nepal to the post of last four when they thrashed

steel mills at stake, they said. The price of per ton MS scrap rose from Tk 16,000 to Tk 32,000 and Garda iron from Tk 12,000 to Tk 24,000 over a short span, they said The C& F (clearing and forwarding) price of per ton ship scrap in the international market rose from \$180

Traditionally, steel mills and reollers depend on ship breaking for

hartal call in an attempt to foil the shutdown and repress the AL leaders and activists, who will be out picketing on the streets. The police meanwhile yesterday raided the houses of leaders and workers of opposition Awami League

(AL) and its affiliates as top police

officials briefed the field-level officers

on the government instruction to keep city streets off pickets and procession during tomorrow's hartal. Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Ashraful Huda yesterday addressed the police officers at Raiarbagh Police Lines and asked them to execute the government order. High zonal officers, officer-incharge (OCs) of DMP police stations inspectors and sub-inspectors were

also present at the briefing, sources

Jubo League leaders were raided

The houses of ward level AL and

across the city. The home ministry on Wednesday ordered the police to arrest some 1,000 Awami League (AL) activists in the city and confine the opposition leaders and workers indoors during the countrywide hartal. It also directed the police to press

charges against opposition activists

arrested on more than one count.

Additional strike forces will be

deployed in the strategic points

across the metropolitan areas. The law-enforcers were also directed to file cases in a way so that the accused cannot be cleared of the charges and collect witnesses on the spot during the hartal Plans are underway to revive

previous cases against opposition

leaders to quell the anti-government

Asked about the government

agitation, sources said.

move to resist the hartal. AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil told The Daily Star that they do not scared of the government threat. "Demonstration is our democratic right which we will do on the streets during Saturday's

in thick fog, officials said. His death was confirmed by Irish

Reuters reporter said at least one convoy of NATO and Bosnian police vehicles and ambulances had yet to reach the site four hours after the flight disappeared from radar "Most probably he is dead," a

Macedonian radio and television

the former Yugoslav republic to the Macedonian officials described the president's plane as an aging

the Croatian port of Dubrovnik, a treacherous zone for aviation in In April 1996, a member of US President Bill Clinton's cabinet,

created godfathers and flooded the

She made some development

March, 2005.

"Law enforcement agencies should respond swiftly and decisively to attacks on religious freedom and religious minorities, and political

cannot infringe on our religious rights only because of threats by a small group of peddlers of religion," he said. The peddlers' demands for declaring Ahmadiyyas non-Muslim and removing Ahmadiyyas from top posts go against the country's con-

line with the changed world order.

carried out at the directives of the prime minister. The hoodlums (of

consequences for which 'Khaleda Zia will be held responsible'. "By attacking the opposition

Hamid also came down heavily on the government for using law enforcers to block opposition pro-

and hold peaceful programmes.

chairman of the committee, who is also a former army chief, told newspersons after the meeting. Mahbub said the meeting, held at

the decision to strip Mustafiz of his rank carry, Mahbub said it would correct a wrong done by the previous government. "We don't want repetition of such wrongdoing in future," he added.

committee earlier asked the army The committee reviewed implementation of some of its earlier recommendations and, in course of the meeting, it was informed that the Armed Forces Division was preparing a compatible defence policy in

During the opening of talks

level officials from Washington and progress made."

alleged. She demanded reform of the electoral system with transparent ballot boxes and transparency in vote casting and counting.
"The government has bank-

Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Obaidul Kader and Mahmudur Rahman Manna accompanied Hasina on the

Hasina changed her overnight stay at Barisal Circuit House and left for Tungipara after the rally as State Minister for Cultural Affairs Seilma Rahman organised a workers'

secretary at Patarhat on the same night and assaulted his mother. liger census

such survey in its side in January. Recently, Bangladesh and India