US officials, civic leaders agree Falluja peace plan

REUTERS, Baghdad

U.S. officials and civic leaders of Falluja vesterday agreed a plan to bring peace back to the bloodied Iragi city after two weeks of heavy fighting in which hundreds of Iragis

died. And, on a relatively peaceful day, the commander of 2,500 U.S. troops outside Najaf said he would allow time for talks before any attempt to enter the holy city to seize a rebel cleric -- which could spark a wider and bloodier uprising.

The Shi'ite cleric, Moqtada al-Sadr, called for a halt to attacks on Spain's 1,400 troops near Najaf after the new government in Madrid said it was pulling out of the U.S.-led occupying coalition.

'The attacks on Spanish troops should be stopped since they are returning to their country and as long as they don't carry out aggressions against the Iraqi people," said a statement from Sadr's office in the southern city.

Dan Senor, chief spokesman of the U.S.-led authority, told a news conference that negotiators agreed after three days of talks to work toward a real and lasting cease-fire in Falluja.

However, it is not clear how much influence Falluja officials have on the estimated 1,000-2,000 fighters in the city who have battled on despite U.S. Marines being ordered to halt offensive operations 10 days

ago. "The parties agreed that coalition forces do not intend to resume offensive operations if the persons in the city turn in their heavy weapons." Senor said.

Iragi police and U.S. troops would start joint patrols in the city to try and restore order, he said.

U.S. forces launched a crackdown in Falluja after a spate of violence including the killing and mutilation of four U.S. contractors in the town on March 31. They encircled it and vowed to capture those responsible for that crime.

Senor said that once found they would be dealt with by the Iraqi iustice system.

A curfew would start two hours later at 9 p.m. There would be unfettered access to Falluja hospital, food and medicine would be provided to isolated areas and ambulances would be allowed to move freely, he said

"WE CAN WAIT"

On the other front, where coalition troops around Najaf have been fighting Sadr's Mehdi Army, two American soldiers were wounded in an ambush, Major Neal O'Brien

JS bodies mum

But, with the American military wary of enraging Iraqis by sending troops into one of the most sacred cities in Shi'ite Islam, the U.S. commander said no assault was imminent.

"Because of where negotiations are right now, we can wait," Colonel Dana Pittard said. "We still want Iraqis to solve the problem."

A senior coalition official said i was unclear how far negotiations by

progressed. 'It's difficult to get a sense of

Sanchez, commander of the coalition forces, left open the possibility of an assault, promising his troops would be very careful if one were launched

shrines, as we have always been when we've conducted operations in this country," Sanchez told Australian Broadcasting

levels of constraint that we've said

HIGH TOLL

The U.S. military has lost more troops in combat in the last three weeks than in the three-week war that toppled Saddam Hussein. Since March 31, 104 U.S. troops have been killed in action.

man in Iraq Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt said the 24 hours to Monday evening had been "remarkably' quiet, with no troops killed and attacks well below the average of

embassy, unstaffed since 1991.

Spain's new Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, who pledged before his election to withdraw his country's troops, said Sunday they would be pulled out as

and Training Matiur Rahman has been transferred to the Cabinet "We know that there are others Division as Additional Secretary and

who are going to have to assess how they see the risk," U.S. national security adviser Condoleezza Rice told ABC. "We have 34 countries with forces on the ground. I think there are going to be some changes.

Harry K Thomas

The Daily Star

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Harry

K Thomas yesterday afternoon paid a

courtesy visit to The Daily Star office

and exchanged views with the journal-

Talking to newspersons, the US

envoy attached special importance

on the existing US-Bangladesh ties

and informed them of opening two

American Centres in Chittagong and

last year as the 11th US envoy to

Dhaka, emphasised the need for

strenathenina democracy, a sus-

tained aid flow and an enhanced

trade and investment volume. He

said the US is only second to Japan in

The US ambassador, accompa-

nied by Karl Fritz, director of

American Centre, and some

embassy staff, also said Islam is a

fast growing religion in his country.

'We've recruited Imams in US mili-

tary now. We believe in freedom of

The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz

Anam and senior staffers attended

holding rank and status of additional

Chief Controller of Import and

Export Wahid Uzzaman transferred

Additional Secretary Fazlur

Rahman, who was made officer on

special duty, has been appointed as

Chief Controller of Import and

sections of the newspaper office.

eligion," he maintained

FROM PAGE 12

to the Bureau.

Export

Thomas, who took office in August

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US envoy

office

ists of the daily.

Svlhet shortly.

Bangladesh.

The U.S. army has said it wants to kill or capture Sadr, who is holed up in Najaf, and destroy his militia.

visits various Iraqi intermediaries had

what's real and what isn't," he said. Lieutenant General Ricardo

"We're very sensitive of the holy

Corporation television. We'll be applying the same

always applied in operating in this country and making sure that we respect the people and that we respect their religious shrines," he

But the top U.S. military spokes-

around 50 over the last two weeks. Still, there were several explosions in Baghdad Monday, one of them in the grounds of the Swedish

There were no reports of casualties.

secretary. Director General of soon as possible. Bureau of Manpower, Employment Other countries in the U.S.-led coalition may follow suit.

Babul FROM PAGE 12 During the investigation, two

accused and three witnesses gave amendments to the constitution and judicial statements before the magistrates revealing the involvement of the rules of procedure of the Jatiya Babul, Shamim and others in the Sangsad. The opposition deadline to murdei In the charge sheet, the IO said: 'The arms and ammunition recovered from Babul's office were used for the killing," quoting a ballistic report done by Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Inspector Mohammad Moslem Ali . Monirul Islam, complainant of the case and owner of a dredger, said in the first information report (FIR) his employee Alam was sleeping on his dredger at about 11:00pm on September 1 last year. An armed gang of about 12 allegedly led by Amir and Ripon stormed into the boat and opened fire on the workers. Fatally injured Alam later died at Suhrawardy Heart Diseases Hospital. In a supplementary FIR filed on September 7 Monirul quoted Alam as telling his colleagues before death that Amir and Ripon shot him in line with a blueprint of Babul and Shamim, Alam also named Saidur and Dewan as the attackers Police arrested Babul from his Gulshan house at 2:15am on March 20 and later showed him arrested in the case. He was also shown arrested in an attempted rape case filed by a woman with Badda Police Station on March 23. Hasina leads city rally



financial year 2003-04 instead of the original Tk 20,300 crore.

revision at a high-level meeting very soon, sources said

allocations would be reduced by Tk 500 crore.

current fiscal, only 36 percent of the ADP have been utilised -- 42 percent of local currency and 30 percent of project aid.

"Project aid has been used less this financial year because of added conditionalities of donors and the new procurement policy," Finance Secretary Zakir Ahmed Khan explained.

The World Bank in its Bangladesh Quarterly Update of April 2004 wrote, "The slow pace of development spending is primarily due to weak implementation capacity and poor disbursement of the foreign aid component."

Drive against

terms of providing aids to

Minister Akbar Hossain said number of mobile courts will be increased to check the papers of passenger launch and cargo vessels, meeting

Three mobile courts are operatng at Sadarghat in Dhaka, Narayanganj and Barisal launch terminals now. More courts will start functioning at other places from where large number of vessels sail.

the opinion-sharing meeting and Thomas later went round different Information secy The government meanwhile has added. also transferred three more officials

He said action would be taken against illegal vessels on the basis of the list adding that plying of unregistered vessels above 16

The new bridge will expedite the process of linking Bangladesh and Myanmar by road, gear up construction of the proposed Trans-Asian highway and ensure a hassle-free iournev for tourists to some important tourist spots in Anowara, Bandarban and Cox's Bazar, sources said.

d the sour

ADP up again for cut

Tk 16 crore in industry, Tk 266 crore

The local currency component

was raised by Tk 213 crore for rural

aid and administration, Tk 15 crore

for water resources, Tk 50 crore for

energy and Tk 27 crore for transport

while for industry and electricity, it

The proposed block allocation in

remained unchanged.

NEWS

crore keeping local resources allocation unchanged. The government will finalise the 156 crore in rural aid and administra

This revision will mostly affect in electricity, Tk 68 crore in energy power and road projects where and Tk 285 crore in transport.

The revised proposal increased the local currency component of the ADP by Tk 117 crore such that this component now accounts for Tk 11,933 crore of the total amount while the project aid component was slashed by Tk 1,484 crore and

brought down to Tk 7,000 crore. the ADP was slashed by Tk 305 In the first eight months of the "Every year, the government chalks out an ambitious ADP and every year it is revised due to poor implementation." said a source.

> "The facts and figures since the early nineties show the same old story of revision." In the last 13 years, the maximum ADP utilisation occurred in 2001 when Tk 16151 crore was used.

Commenting on low implementaion of the ADP, Finance Minister Saifur Rahman recently said, "If we must utilise Tk 20000 crore, we need to chalk out an ADP of Tk 22000 crore."

FROM PAGE 1

sources said.

Akbar instructed Department of Shipping officials present at the meeting to prepare a list of unregisered vessels in the country within 15 days to stop their operation. He asked the Bloa to help government officials to prepare the list, sources

PM lays foundation

FROM PAGE 12

The development of Foy's Lake and construction of Motel Saikat will significantly enhance infrastructural facilities in the tourism sector.

not interested The revised ADP reduces project to be Kerry's aid in the agriculture sector by Tk 66 running mate Project aid was reduced by Tk

AFP, Washington tion, Tk 31 crore in water resources.

Senator Hillary Clinton insisted yesterday she has no interest in becoming the vice presidential candidate with Democratic challenger John Kerry

"I would not do it," the wife of former president Bill Clinton told ABC television in an interview.

She added however that she is an enthusiastic supporter of the Massachusetts senator.

"I am going to support John Kerry, whom I think would be a terrific president in every way, and whoever he chooses. It's going to be a positive ticket for the future." she said.

Clinton added that the deteriorating security in Iraq, and the mounting US military casualties there, underscored the need for a new occupant of the White House.

"The events of the last months have proven really beyond debate that this administration fails both on credibility and competence and they shouldn't have their contract renewed for another four years," she said.

"We're losing now 99 of our young men and women just this month and there's no end in sight.' Clinton said.

She brushed aside recent critigap. That is why we should request cism by senior members of the prime minister to send a special President George W. Bush's adminenvoy to Beijing with her letter. istration that global terrorism -perpetrated by groups like Osama the Taiwan office, requesting him to defer the inauguration schedule. bin Laden's al-Qaeda network -- not given enough priority by President Clinton.

increased dredging activities on "I have no doubt that my husvarious river routes for smooth plying of marine vessels. The minisband and his administration did ter assured them of implementing a everything they could think of to do. new project shortly for clearing river They were obsessed with al-Qaeda, and they passed that on to the Bush The minister also asked launch administration," said the senator for owners to take extra care about New York state safety of passengers during the

Our Mymensingh correspondent

were admitted to the MMCH and the

The storm damaged more than

The victims of Wednesday's twin

"Crisis of food troubles us much

tornadoes need their houses to be

rebuilt on a priority basis as they are

living under the open sky, our corre-

but we are suffering more due to

lack of shelter," said a victim. Many

spondents said.

others echoed him.

rest to different health centres.

rainy season when launch disasters 3 killed

Among others, AKM Ahsanul FROM PAGE 12 Azim, director general of sustained multiple cut injuries and Department of Shipping, Haider Ali, fractures. chairman of Bangladesh Inland Water Transportation Authority, and reported that the tornado lashed six Shamsur Rahman Shimul Biswas, unions of Phulbaria, Trishal and

horsepower would be stopped

Bloa leaders suggested for

immediately to ensure commuters

safety.

silts.

occur most.

chairman of Bangladesh Inland Bhaluka upazilas Sunday evening. Water Transportation Corporation, Upazila adminstration sources attended the meeting. said the tornado hit Kaladah Naogaon, Asim, Harirampur Dhanikhola and Uthora uinons at 7:00 pm. Twelve out of 50 injured

to be complete in two and a half 500 houses and uprooted hundreds vears of trees.

The 10-storey establishment will have the status of a three-star international hotel. It will have a shopping complex, spacious basement parking for vehicles, tourist information centre, conference room, space for private commercial offices and separate stairs and elevators for boarders and shop-

pers. said not any of the houses damaged State Minister for Civil Aviation in Wednesday's tornado in Kalian

Hillary Clinton **Dhaka-Beijing row** FROM PAGE 1 "China believes that the inaugura-

tion of the trade centre is being done under a package of actions," Mintoo said, adding the Chinese envoy expressed his beliefs that the centre was not really a trade office and Bangladesh was hiding facts. Chai officially conveyed Chinese

objection to the opening of the office

at a meeting with Foreign Minister M

Morshed Khan on March 14. The

ambassador called on Prime

Minister Khaleda Zia on the same

Responding to Chai's request

Mintoo held informal talks with

Prime Minister's Principal Secretary

Kamal Uddin Siddigui and Foreign

Secretary Shamsher Mobin

Chowdhury at Sonargaon Hotel

where they gathered to bid farewell

to outgoing British High

with the prime minister before the

inauguration of the trade centre,"

Mintoo told The Daily Star without

disclosing details of his meeting with

business with Taiwan. But it's not

desirable to damage relationship

with another country," he said, "that

is why I will meet the prime minister

requesting her to do everything by

Beijing relations did not improve

despite some initial sings of prog-

ress, Mintoo said: "There was no

talks after that. It has widened the

Mintoo will also meet the chief of

Both Kamaluddin and Shamsher

Spanish PM

declined to comment on their talks

counterpart, Miguel Angel

Moratinos, that Spain would pull out

of Iraq in 15 days. The officials

backtracked from that in a state-

ment, however, saying the Spanish

leader said "the date will be

announced in Iraq and has not yet

In Washington, US officials said

"We knew from the recent

Zapatero's announcement was not

Spanish election that it was the new

prime minister's intention to with-

draw Spanish troops from the

coalition in Iraq," said a White

House spokesman, Ken Lisaius.

"We will work with our coalition

partners in Iraq and the Spanish

government and expect they will

implement their decision in a coordi-

nated, responsible and orderly

Zapatero in the election after Aznar

decided not to seek another term.

said the decision made Spain "much

more vulnerable and weak in the

Zapatero has "thrown in the

face of terrorism in the face of terror-

Mariano Rajoy, who ran against

Eqvpt's foreign ministry later

spoke on condition of anonymity.

FROM PAGE 12

been fixed.'

a surprise.

manner

Explaining why the Dhaka-

mending the fences with China.

"We want to promote private

"I will now seek an appointment

Commissioner David Carter.

the principal secretary.

issue on March 30.

DHAKA TUESDAY APRIL 20, 2004

Executive Chairman of the Board

of Investment Mahmudur Rahman

said, "There will be no inauguration

of the Taiwanese Trade Centre on

April 26. But there will be meetings

etween a 71-member Taiwanese

business delegation and Dhaka

Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Chittagong Chamber

closedown of the Taipei representa-

tive office, he said: "It's absolutely a

trade office. It has no diplomatic or

political links. We want greater

foreign investment in the interest of

The last electrocardio-gramme

showed his condition had

improved," he added. He said the

condition of his heart had not deteri-

Maradona, who has been bat-

In 2000, in Uruguay, Maradona

He then began a long recovery

tling drug addiction for years, has

been sedated and was attached to a

suffered a severe heart crisis due to

treatment in Cuba, but since an

overweight Maradona returned to

Argentina, speculation and concern

won Italian and Argentine league titles

and led Argentina to World Cup victory

for the accolade of FIFA's best ever

him to reverse the course of his

me to take the decision to order the

return of our troops with the maxi-

mum safety and thus in the shortest

"More than anything, this deci-sion reflects my desire to keep the

promise I made to the Spanish

people more than a year ago," he

in coming days of the process of

bringing the soldiers home, and that

he himself had convened an urgent

meeting of Parliament to discuss his

Zapatero said Spain's govern-

ment would continue to support

Iraq's stability, democratization,

territorial integrity and reconstruc-

tion. Spain will also support any UN

or European Union effort to help

Iraqis' recover sovereignty and hold

stationed in south-central Iraq with

responsibility for Diwaniya and the

flashpoint Shia holy city of Najaf.

Eleven of the Spaniards have died

since August, including seven

intelligence agents in a highway

ambush in November.

Spanish troops have been

free, democratic elections, he said.

He said Bono would give details

time possible," Zapatero said.

These circumstances have led

campaign pledge.

in 1986 and second place in 1990.

In his 20-year career, Maradona

In 2000, Maradona tied with Pele

Bangladesh's development."

Maradona

FROM PAGE 12

orated.

respirator

plaver.

said

decision

a cocaine overdose.

has grown over his health.

On Chinese demand for

of Commerce and Industry.

pointed out.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at the March 21 BNP parliamentary party meeting advised the chairmen and members of the standing committees to work together and not to behave like the opposition at the committee meetings.

this moment, fearing that would go

in favour of the opposition, sources

"How will we work together avoiding confrontation with the ministries when we are tasked to scrutinise the ministries' activities? If we mention corruption or irregularities in a ministry, it will go against the government image," said a powerful committee chairman, requesting anonymity.

In the absence of the main opposition on various committees, ruling BNP and Jamat-e-Islami committee members have a significant role. But most of them are apparently not willing to do so. A few committees, including those on communications and commerce ministries, however played their role.

Chairmen of some of the standing bodies initiated a move in February to strengthen the committees and gear up their operation. The move aimed to convey the committees' limitations to the prime minister and urge

The main opposition party, led by

Hasina, says Prime Minister

Khaleda Zia's 30-month administra-

tion failed to tackle crime, corruption

and the price spiral of essentials and

should step down by April 30, two

years ahead of the next scheduled

election. The former prime minister

pledged to restore democratic rule

to the country if her party 'gets a

Referring to the recognition of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur

Rahman as the greatest Bangalee

of all time by the listeners of BBC

Bangla Service, Hasina, daughter of

Bangabandhu, said: "Bangabandhu

is the name of history, a noble sacri-

independence and established

Bangladesh as the proudest country

in the world," she said in an emotion

Hasina, also AL president, riding

an open jeep waved to people who

lined roadsides and waved back.

Part of the procession turned into a

celebratory parade rejoicing over

and his daughter and miniature

national and party flags, the demon-

strators shouted slogans, while

Carrying portraits of the father

the recognition of Bangabandhu.

"Bangabandhu gave the nation

fice and inspiration of a nation."

FROM PAGE 1

chance'.

charged voice.

dislodge the government has slowed the move for the time being, one

chairman indicated. Some chairmen, however, denied any stagnancy in the functioning of the committees because of the prime minister's advice or the opposition deadline. They said a lengthy parliament session that

began on January 18 and continues still affected the committees' operation to some extent. The committees are meeting almost regularly but they do not initiate any discussion on important issues, officials at the parliament secretariat said.

"A few committee chairmen avoid the agenda and do not allow any member to initiate any discussion, saying the agenda will be taken up later," said one official seeking anonymity. However, the chairman of a vital

horses, decorated horse-carts and

vans added colour to the proces-

Yesterday's procession was

announced earlier as part of

programmes to observe Mujib Nagar

Day, but turned into an anti-

government showdown ahead of

tomorrow's demonstration to lay

siege to Hawa Bhaban, dubbed as

the alternative powerhouse of the

sea of humanity before the proces-

To avoid clashes, police formed a

line between the AL procession and

a rally of BNP's student chapter

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) at

Muktangon, when the anti-

government demonstrators crossed

.ICD men held the rally in support

its programme to lay siege to

Hasina's Dhanmondi residence,

Sudha Sadan, tomorrow, terming it a

committee said, the minister concerned requested him not to hold meetings frequently. A member of the committee is a rival of the minister and embarrasses him, the chairman added

selection

BNP

Dha

of

roads in gridlock.

Paltan intersection.

centre of 'conspiracy'.

Judiciary

FROM PAGE 1 sion. Wearing paper caps and citing specific reasons for seeking ribbons, many sprayed coloured further extension. water to celebrate BBC listeners'

The court yesterday however expressed satisfaction at the government initiative Attorney General AF Hassan Ariff explained for the separation of the judiciary.

The government attorney told the court the government complied with the 12-point directive by promulgating Bangladesh Judicial Service Commission Rules, 2004.

The AL leaders and activists Three other rules and a bill for streamed into Bangabandhu Avenue mendment to the Code of Criminal in processions from different parts of Procedure (CrPC) are in the proaka and the crowds swelled into a cess, added the attorney and elaborated on a series of exercises the sion began at 4:45pm. The procesgovernment took up for implemension brought traffic to a halt, leaving tation of the directives.

Meanwhile, the contempt petition filed against the government for violating the Supreme Court directives, a hearing on which was scheduled for today, has been kept on record.

"It would be taken up at an appropriate time," the court told the counsel for the petitioner, Amir-ul Islam, in an apparent reluctance to proceed with the contempt move

The Foy's Lake Development Project is expected to be complete in 2007. Under the project, the lake will have an amusement park comprising modern recreational facilities including cable cars, balloon wheels, boating facilities, family coasters,

trains, theatres and laser shows. Bangladesh Parjatan Corpora tion officials told BSS that construction of Motel Saikat located in the busy station road area on nearly three bighas of land was expected

India goes to polls

FROM PAGE 1

elements aided by militant groups have prompted authorities to step up security in Guiarat.

Besides Advani, who is in the frav from Gandhinagar constituency of Gujarat, and Sinha, who is seeking re-election to Hazaribagh seat in Jharkhand, the prominent candidates in the first phase include former prime minister HD Deve Gowda in southern state of Karnataka, and seven ministerial colleagues of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vaipayee.

The din and bustle of the campaigning for the first phase of elections ended on Sunday and the door-to-door electioneering came to a close yesterday evening after star campaigners of both BJP and main opposition Congress travelled across the country to woo the voters. Despite the rising mercury, Vajpayee and top opposition leader Sonia Gandhi held several rallies.

The second phase of the elections on April 22 will cover only two seats in Tripura state, the third phase takes place on April 28, the fourth on May 5 and the last phase on May 10. The counting of votes is slated for May 13.

likely to cast their votes during five phases to elect 543 Lok Sabha members with the largest number of parliamentary seats being contested in Uttar Pradesh (80) followed by Maharashtra (48), Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal (42 each), Bihar (40) and Madhya Pradesh (39).

The first phase will include all the 26 parliamentary seats in Gujarat, 11 in Chhattisgarh, 24 of the 48 seats in Maharashtra. 21 of the 42 in Andhra Pradesh, 11 of the 40 in

and Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin told BSS that the Motel Saikat Complex will become a nerve centre for local and foreign tourists. Tourists bound for Cox's Bazar, Bandarban and Rangamati could facilitate their journey by using facilities of the motel.

The Women's Technical Training Centre to be constructed on 1.72 acres of land at Nasirabad will impart training to about 720 unemploved women every year.

Bihar, eight of the 13 in Assam and 15 out of 39 in Karnataka.

Ruling BJP-led National Democratic Alliance raked up the issue of Sonia Gandhi's foreign origin in a big way and sought votes on the planks of development and stability while Congress and other opposition parties zeroed in on the scams that came to the fore during six years of NDA rule.

Electioneering at times tended to be marred by mud-slinging with personal attacks on Sonia and Congress seeking to question Vajpayee?s role during India?s freedom movement.

Surrogate political advertisements had flood the popular television channels targeting Sonia and Vajpayee raising a stink and prompting the Supreme Court to suggest a set of guidelines to the Election Commission to vet such advertisements before their clear-

President APJ Abdul Kalam meanwhile has appealed to the voters to come out in large number and 'vote positively', saying the right to vote is a 'sacred right and an onerous responsibility you owe to

the motherland'. In a televised address to the nation on Sunday night, he said 'by casting your vote who in your opinion can represent you in the Lok Sabha, you are sowing the seeds for the creation of a prosperous India, a happy India, a safe India. a secure India and above all. an India with nobility'.

This was the first time that the president of India has chosen to appeal to the voters ahead of parliamentary elections.

Kasda, Boalmara, Samulia Para and Gazir Bhita was rebuilt till yesterday.

Our Mymensingh correspondent

However, army personnel have set up some 50 tents in the affected Samulia Para and Gazir Bhita for the shelterless. They have also repaired 18 tubewells and installed three to ease drinking water crisis.

The relief ministry yesterday decided to allocate Tk 2 crore and 1250 bundles of corrugated tin as house building assistance for the tornado victims of Mymensingh and Netrakona. It also decided to provide Tk 12,50,000 in cash assistance, 500 tonnes of rice, 800 pieces of lungi and an equal number sari and 1000 tins of biscuit.

Meanwhile, taking advantage of the heavy rush of people to the tornado-hit villages in Halughat upazila, tempo drivers and rickshawpullers have greatly increased fare.

Traffic barred

FROM PAGE 12 office-goers, school students and their guardians, suffered the most at New Market, Rail Station, CDA Avenue, GEC Crossing, Muradpur, Bahaddarhat, Agrabad and Bakalia points for the restriction.

Police ordered the 20-kilometre Biswa Road (Asian highway) stretching from Shah Amanai International Airport to Karnaphuli Shah Amanat Bridge off limits to vehicular traffic from 11:00am. They also stopped vehicles on the road from Bahaddarhat Intersection to Karnaphuli Bridge ahead of the prime minister's arrival

Other city roads leading to the Outer Stadium came under restriction or were made off limits until the prime minister left the venue.

"This is unbelievable in a civilised country. Why should our kids be barred from returning home in time." blasted a guardian at GEC Crossing, sitting stranded in a rickshaw with his son.

RU appointment FROM PAGE 12

senators submitted separate memoranda to the VC demanding that the university authorities cancel the move to make the appointments or face a strike.

RU authorities Saturday appointed 327 third class and 217 fourth class staff on a daily basis against 270 vacant posts allegedly without following proper appoint ment procedure.

towel" rather than try to exhaust all possibilities of getting a UN resolution to meet his demands, Rajoy said

many other politicians But praised Zapatero, including Jose Antonio Labordeta, a congressman from a small party based in Aragon in the northeast.

"What Zapatero did is keep his word, which is rare in this country. For the first time, we have come across a politician who keeps his word," Labordeta told the news agency Efe.

Bono, the defense secretary, is reported to have met secretly in Washington with Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld on April 5.

Moratinos, the foreign secretary, said he will travel Tuesday to Washington to discuss Spain's plans with Secretary of State Colin Powell and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice.

Before Sunday's announcement, the newspaper El Pais said Moratinos would offer nonmilitary cooperation, such as training Iraq police, if Zapatero made good on his vow. Now, it appears the visit was designed from the outset to announce the withdrawal decision, not to talk about how to keep Spanish troops in place.

In his announcement, Zapatero indicated that nothing argued for

BNP-AL face

FROM PAGE 1 law enforcing agencies told The Daily Star yesterday.

Huge contingents of policemen and policewomen, both uniformed and plainclothes, would be deployed around Hawa Bhaban.

Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Ashraful Huda said at a press briefing yesterday law enforces would take whatever steps are needed to protect people's life and property.

Hawa Bhaban has been at the centre of controversy with widespread allegations of corruption and abuse of the government power levelled against it since the BNP and its allies came to power.

The AL Central Working Committee at a meeting with Hasina in the chair on Thursday night asked the party's front organisations to lay siege to Hawa Bhaban, demanding shutdown of 'the seat of unbridled corruption'

The BNP reacted sharply and decided to prevent the Hawa Bhaban siege. The JCD took up the siege programme demanding closure of Sudha Sadan.

In a videotape found the night before the election, an Arabicspeaking man claiming to speak for al-Qaeda said the bombings were punishment for Aznar's support of the war. Before then, Aznar's party

had been expected to easily win. Zapatero's warning of a possible Spanish withdrawal had prompted some US lawmakers to charge such a move would appear to be appeas ing terrorists. Zapatero rejected this,

saying his idea of removing them came long before the March 11 bombing.

Aznar, a close Bush ally who deployed the troops, said Sunday that withdrawing them would only lead to more violence and chaos in

Iraq. "That will not be good for Spain, not a good day for the coalition, and a very good day for those who don't want stability and democracy in Iraq," Aznar said on "Fox News Sunday."

Cabinet okays

FROM PAGE 1 some ministers, the cabinet rejected

the proposal, mindful of controversy the decision, if taken, might have stoked.

The provision was up for inclusion into the already drafted bill on the 14th amendment to the constitution, which the parliamentary standing committee on law ministry is scrutinising.

The Supreme Judicial Council formed with three most senior judges of the Supreme Court headed by the chief justice, probes allegations of misconduct against any judge and forwards its recommendations to the president for action in line with Article 96 of the constitution. The council also pre-

scribes the code of conduct for judges. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia chaired the cabinet meeting rescheduled from the port city of

Chittagong to Dhaka in a lastminute change. **BAIL FIX**

The High Court additional judge was appointed by the government in April last year amid strong opposition from the Supreme Court Bar

Association that levelled allegations of embezzlement of the association fund against him. The Supreme Judicial Council

investigated an allegation against Shahidur of taking bribe for fixing bail for an accused in a women's repression case and recommended his resignation.

ance for telecast.

An estimated 67 crore voters are