Cabinet body

FROM PAGE 1 the ministries into four groups on the

basis of their functions. "We have taken these decisions to

make the administration more dynamic and people- oriented," said Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman who chaired the meeting.

The cabinet committee suggests that all the existing 40 ministries -except for the law, justice and parliamentary affairs and foreign affairs ministries - should be grouped into four clusters, meeting sources said.

The ministries dealing with finance, industries and commerce will be bracketed in one cluster. A second cluster will group the ministries dealing with utilities such as energy, communication and telecoms. A third cluster will have ministries dealing with development works like the local government ministry and a fourth cluster will have ministries that deal with regulatory

The grouping of these ministries is aimed to make sure that specialised officials above the rank of joint secretary are transferred and posted within certain types of ministries suitable for their expertise. Officials below the rank of joint secretary can be transferred and posted from one group to another as they are considered 'non-experts'.

On increasing the number of PSC, the cabinet committee argues that the present PSC is unable to hire enough officials because of its limitations and

that it also lacks the expertise to hire doctors, engineers, economists and other specialised professionals.

"Primarily, there will be a new PSC in addition to the present one," said a meeting source. "This new PSC will hire professionals while the existing one will recruit general cadre officials."

cabinet committee feels that contractual appointments can be continued on the basis of requirement.

pool that existed during former president Ziaur Rahman's rule, the source said, "This pool will be formed with brilliant officials of and above joint secretary rank. It will make up for the lack of brilliant officials in the present administration."

employees on a 'no-work-no-pay' basis has created resentment among the civil servants. The cabinet committee feels the system is unnecessary and rather discriminatory. So, such employees should be hired as full-time

"These need further scrutiny before we can decide on the issues.

Early warning

FROM PAGE 12 study and made it public at a workshop jointly organised by the Beta and Bangladesh Institute of Administration and Management (BIAM) Foundation in the city yester-

"Lack of employment opportunities and wide financial disparity between the rich and the poor are the two main causes that aggravate monga (near-famine situation)," the study says.

It also says farmers become the worst victims of monga as they are forced to sell their labour at a much lower wage.

While commenting on the study, noted economist and Executive Director of Power and Participation Centre (PPC) Hossain Zillur Rahman said monga is the extreme outburst of

"We have arranged the discussion in light of poverty as there's a nexus between monga and poverty," Rahman said, adding, "Poverty eradication is the focal point of our development process.

Senior research fellow of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) Dr Binyak Sen told the workshop that Bangladesh has overcome the outbreaks of famine but starvation still exists.

"Participation of the NGOs with the government is necessary to accelerate growth process in the monga-prone areas," he said, suggesting, "The extreme poor can be given identity cards so that they can have some basic services in times of

Former adviser to the caretaker government M Hafizuddin Khan said, "Monga-affected people can't buy food for lack of purchasing capacity, while the producers also don't get proper price of their products."

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Dr Kamal Uddin Siddique said monga must be addressed with

top priority and that is why proper

mapping of monga-affected areas is Addressing the workshop as chief guest, Disaster Management and Relief Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yousuf said the solution of

monga is difficult but not impossible. "Around 50,000 tonnes of foodgrain have been sent across the country but I suspect whether those will reach the actual target people, the minister added.

The workshop was presided over by Beta President Prof Ashraf Uddin

Police attach shop FROM PAGE 1

property, sources said

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police had guizzed five truck drivers, arrested Tuesday night, in connection with the biggest ever arms haul. They were hunting for the truck owners and a transport supplier, who provided seven of the 10 trucks hired for carrying the smuggled weapons, another source said.

The transport supplier owns a transport agency located at the city's Dewanhat intersection, the source

CID police also interrogated was placed on a two-day fresh remand on Wednesday. He was reportedly present at the CUFL jetty with his elder brother Deen Mohammad during offloading of the arms, police said.

CID sources believe Hafizur and other key suspects including Deen Mohammad, Haji Sobhan, Abul Kasem Madu and Barmayia Zahur are staying in their port city hideouts after local police launched a manhunt

Sellers of seasonal fruits

including watermelon, cold drinks,

cold juice and ice-cream did a

brisk business as their demands

Board yesterday said it had to cut

handle the shortfall of 300 mega-

Unofficially, the shortfall was over

The Power Development

rose high

500 MWs.

Sweat it out

FROM PAGE 1 Celsius a day before.

In Jessore, the temperature rose to 40.5 degrees Celsius, up from 38.8 degrees Celsius on Wednesday.

In Dhaka, temperatures jumped to 38.1 degrees Celsius yesterday, up from 37 degrees Celsius a day ago. Humidity in early morning in the capital was 57 percent, but dropped to 38 percent in the evening.

In Rajshahi, the temperature rose to 39.6 degrees Celsius and in greater Chittagong, Sylhet and Barisal regions they hovered between 35 degrees to 37

degrees Celsius. The Meteorological Department termed temperatures above 40 to around 44 degrees Celsius as intense, when doctors say people should stay indoors or avoid direct sunlight to escape sunstroke and drink more water and liquids to beat dehydration.

"The heat wave is intensifying because of a cyclone forming in the Arabian Sea and a rise in temperatures in India's Madhya Pradesh state and Ahmedabad,' said an official of the Meteorological Department.

He said the cyclone was likely to make landfall in the next 2 to 3 days, pelt much of the subcontinent with rains and bring relief from the soaring heats.

"Before that temperatures are set to rise further in the country," he

A rickshaw-puller, carrying passengers in between rests under tree shades, said he was charging higher fares.

"Don't you see the blazing sun. I cannot work the whole day. It is only fair if the passengers pay us more than the normal," said

On contractual appointments, the

On re-introducing a senior service

The system of hiring fourth class

There are also proposals on golden handshake of government employees, extension of retirement age and some other issues which the cabinet committee did not consider

quipped the finance minister.

FROM PAGE 12 in group and also individually.

the police helped the attackers instead of saving the students.

Prof Aftab however told The Daily Star that while he was in the meeting

Dhaka College and Titumir College yesterday blocked the front roads of the colleges demanding punishment to those responsible for the attack on the students on NU campus.

least five vehicles in front of the colleges. The students of Titumir College blockaded the front road from 12 noon to 1:00pm by burning tyres. They from a rally in front of the college threatened to go for tougher movement against the VC if the five-point demand and also the demand for punishment to the attackers were not met soon.

The Dhaka College students brought out a procession on the Mirpur road and put barricade at the Science Laboratory intersection. They held a rally on the college campus at about 12:30pm. From the rally they demanded punishment to the Personal Secretary (PS) to NU Vice Chancellor, proctor and the employees union president for attacking students on May 5. They also

May 5 when NU employees at Gazipur allegedly attacked students demonstrating in front of the VC Office following the failed negotiatiations over their five-point demand.

students to retake exams only for the subjects failed and give auto promotion to second year from first year, reformation of syllabus, formation of a question preparing committee by the teachers of NU-affiliated colleges, holding exams under specific guidelines and certain time-frame.

BJP gains

and 87-99 to others.

Zee News in collaboration with Taleem Research Foundation exit poll says BJP and allies are likely to end up with 267 seats, while Sahara News-DRS allows NDA to have 263 berths. The Zee News and Sahara News projected 187 and 183 seats for Congress-led combine.

supplies to different areas to that the NDA has made gains in the watts (MWs) amid growing penultimate phase of poll, espedemands in rising summer heats. cially in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and electorally-rich Uttar Pradesh that has the highest 80

After the exit polls, BJP central leadership held a meeting at the residence of its President M Venkaiah Naidu yesterday to review the progress and map out strategy for the final lap of election on May 10 when 182 constituencies go to poll across 16 states and federally-ruled

Emerging from the meeting, Naidu told reporters NDA is confident of victory with convincing

The outcome of the election is un-contested. The NDA under the leadership of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee will run the last mile like a marathon runner and register a spectacular victory."

believed then even in the best case scenario for Congress and allies, NDA will emerge as the biggest parliamentary group and could attract the backing of regional parties thriving on anti-Congress politics and some fence-sitters

Wednesday's race was very crucial for BJP in a region -- the Hindispeaking states -- which often determine which party will rule India. Of the 83 seats, 79 were in Raiasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

The five-phase elections that began April 20 will end Monday, with

5 killed in city

FROM PAGE 1 relative Mahboob, who was to teach

Police however said the killers and the victims are members of an organised criminal outfit led by one Chasha and Nazrul Islam, nicknamed NI.

"The murders are the result of an internal conflict and the killers have been identified," said Ashraful Huda, commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) after visiting the scene. Police said Monir was earlier arrested seven times on various

In another incident, police recovered the body of a young fruit trader from Bhagobati Banerjee Road in Sutrapur in the early hours of yesterday. Wrapped in a sack, the body was found beside the road and sent to

Mitford hospital for autopsy.

The victim, Haroon-ur Rashid, 33, used to run his footpath shop near Bangladesh Bank and lived at Konapara in Demra. His associates said he may have been killed by extortionists for speaking out against

Medical sources quoting forensic experts said Haroon was strangled and the body was put inside the sack and dumped at the spot.

In yet another incident, armed assailants shot dead a young workshop mechanic in Gulshan yesterday. Agang of four went to the residence of Mohammad Dulal, 25, at School Road at Badda and called him out of his house at 11:00am, according to the Dulal's wife China Begum Shampa

told journalists at the DMCH that Dulal was sleeping when local gang leader

Gaffar called him out. She saw Jewel, Saiful and Ripon standing outside their

"Half an hour later I heard my husband has been murdered," China

The killer pumped bullets in the abdomen, throat and head, China Sub-inspector Bhobesh of Gulshan Police Station retrieved the

The victim's mother said her son was a workshop mechanic and not involved in any criminal activities. Dulal's friends said he might have been killed by extortionists and that he

had moved from Biswa Road to

body and sent it to DMCH for autopsy.

School Road recently fearing attempts on his life In the other incident, assailants hacked a young man to death at section 12 in Pallabi in the early hours

Sources said Nasim Ahmed Chowdhury alias Russell, 27, came out of his residence for a walk with his ailing mother. After some time, he told his mother to go home and said he would be back soon.

He however did not return and the locals found him lying on his face on the road in front of his house.

Pallabi police recovered the body from the spot at about 5:30am and sent it to the DMCH for autopsy. The motive behind his death could not be known immediately.

There were marks of injuries caused by a sharp weapon on his shoulders and the back of his head, hospital sources said

Locals took the body from the hospital but his relatives did not come.

More photos emerge

FROM PAGE 12

SADISTIC ABUSE

More photos of Iraqi prisoners being abused by their US jailers have turned up among 1,000 digital pictures passed around among US military police who served at the Abu Graib prison, The Post said yester-

day.

The pictures show similar acts of that have. abuse and humiliation that have been seen around the world and touched off a major scandal that has led to investigations and expressions of disgust and disappointment by top US military and political leaders. President Bush went on Arabic

television on Wednesday vowing to punish US troops behind the abuse but stopping short of apologising The graphic images, taken by

several digital cameras, loaded onto compact discs and passed around among military police who served at the now notorious Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad, include a soldier holding a leash tied around a naked prisoner writhing on the ground. Another shows a group of three

or four naked prisoners tied together

on the ground outside their cells as US troops mill around them. Many of the prisoners are weartheir wrists, said the daily, adding that it could not rule out the possibility some of the pictures were

Other photographs include one of a naked prisoner wearing a black pointed hood handcuffed to the bars of his prison cell and another naked prisoner with a pair of women's undies over his head and face tied to the metal bunk bed in such a way his back is arched There are also images of soldiers

simulating sexually explicit acts with

one another and shots of a cow being skinned and gutted and soldiers posing with its severed head. There are also dozens of pictures of a cat's severed head, the

Finally, the daily said there are pictures of wounded men and corpses, one of which shows a soldier smiling and giving the "thumbs-up sign," leaning over a grey, decomposina corpse

Bangla Bhai

FROM PAGE 1

The DIG of Rajshahi Range hoped three to four thousand Sarbahara men would surrender by May 15 and urged people of Bhabaniganj, Taherpur and Habilkutsa in Rajshahi, the operational base of Bangla Bhai, to cooperate with the Meanwhile, talking to our Bogra

correspondent yesterday Bangla

Bhai claimed that 3,000 of 4,000 Sarbahara had already surrendered to JMJB and black badges were attached to their attires so that none A correspondent from Naogaon reports:JMJB men vesterdav alleg-

edly beat three outlaws to death at Depankar,21, died on the spot while Shaikh Farid Uddin, 46, and Saidur Rahman, 24 succumbed to their injuries at Rajshahi Medical

College Hospital. The JMJB, which waged its so called anti-extremist war in April in the region infested with the outlaws, has allegedly killed seven people and assaulted hundreds of others, describing them as Sarbahara men.

BNP meets Tuesday

FROM PAGE 1

BNP sources said seven party leaders already purchased nomination forms for Dhaka-10 seat and 20 for Munshiganj-1 seat till yesterday.

The two seats felt vacant following the resignation of retired major Abdul Mannan (Dhaka-10) and Mahi B Chowdhury (Munshiganj-1) from parliament and also from the BNP. Both later joined former president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury's "alternative political stream".

BNP insiders said some important candidates, including Political Secretary to the PM Mosaddak Ali, are likely to purchase and submit nomination papers on the last day today.

Highly placed sources within the ruling BNP said the party high command has almost finalised its choice of Mosaddak Ali for Dhaka-10 and Momen Ali for Munshiganj-1 seats. Nomination seekers for Dhaka-10

seat include city BNP General Secretary and former deputy mayor Abdus Salam, Adviser to the Commerce Ministry and Juba Dal President Barkatullah Bulu, former general secretary of the DUCSU and Organising Secretary of Juba Dal Khairul Kabir Khokon and Dhaka City Corporation ward commissioners Chowdhury Alam, Arifur Rahman. Anwarudzzaman Anwar, L Rahman and M Ruhul Amin Chishtv.

Earlier, another Political Secretary to the PM M Harris Chowdhury had also sought nomination from Dhaka-10 constituency but sources said he is not in the race now.

Nomination seekers from Munshiganj-1 constituency include Momen Ali, Anwar Hossain Ujjal, Lebu Kazi, Ali Akkas Nadim, Shafi Bikrampuri, Mir Sharafat Ali Sapu, Shawkat Ali Bhuiyan, Mainuddin Ahmed, Haji Abdul Jalil, Mahbub Anam and Ajmeri Begum Chanda. Meanwhile, the alternative political

has declined to contest the by-polls but Mahi B Chowdhury will contest for

May 12 as the last date for submission of nomination papers, May 13 for scrutiny of nomination papers and May 20 as the last date for withdrawal of nomination papers.

Cop 'rapes'

husband came to Khulna on May 2 and was staying in the house of a

appointed the Investigation Officer (IO) of the case recorded under the omen Repression Act. Medical test of the victim was

completed at noon yesterday.

Muralı

string Zimbabwe side were skittled

Walsh played his last Test in April 2001 against South Africa. Muralitharan has taken his wickets in 89 Tests, compared to

Empty pledges million imports.

The government has refrained from separating the judiciary

Hasina

FROM PAGE 12

Wednesday, Hasina said massive rigging, capturing of polling stations. preventing voters from going to centres and attacks on Awami League leaders and workers marked the elections which, she alleged, cannot be happened without government backing.

"They (BNP-Jamaat) have created an alarming situation across the country...the international observers who had given certificate of fair election should now see what the government will do in the next general elections if they can make such a situation in local body polls," Hasina said.

She also cited some incidents that took place in Meherpur, Munshiganj and some other parts of

Asked whether AL lawmakers were going to join the House to either save their membership or perform their responsibility as parliament members, Hasina said they (AL) wanted to perform their responsibility, but they were not allowed to do so.

"BNP does not want us in parliament. They urged us for joining the House on one hand and prevented us from speaking in the House on the other." she said.

Hasina said her her party's women workers were taken on remand and tortured, which was never seen in country's history. "We don't know what example of Islamic values has been created by this (BNP-Jamaat) government," she

Referring to the by-polls in Munshiganj and Dhaka-10 constituencies. Hasina said. "What's the use of participating in such elections? Let them play with it."

The AL chief will leave London for Miami today (Friday). Awami League presidium member Kazi Zafar Ullah MP, Assistant Private Secretary to the Opposition Leader Alauddin Ahmed Chowdhury and Hasina's personal aide M Awlad Hossain will accompany her. Hasina is scheduled to return home on May

Niko, Bapex mulls FROM PAGE 12

Sadar Police Station, now the joint venture is planning to produce 10-

15 MMCFD. The joint venture agreement between Niko and BAPEX was signed in October last year for developing the abandoned gas field. Niko has invested \$15million in

Bangladesh Gas Fields

Company Limited, another subsid-

doned it in 1996 as its well-2 turned

one on January 8, 1995 by the then prime minister Feni is the first operation of Niko under the joint venture. The

Under the joint venture agreement, initially Bapex will be owner of 20 percent of gas to be produced from Feni. Later, its ownership will

But Bapex is not spending a single penny neither for Feni nor for Chhatak. It is also getting service charge from Niko

Niko had been pleading for a Joint venture agreement with Bapex for Feni and Chhatak gas fields and the government last year allowed it considering its vast experiences on marginal gas field development.

JS should be

human rights as an issue to the government at various forums. The provision of aid flow does not prevent us from bringing the issue

Speaking on greater political and economic clout in the world after the expansion of EU membership from 15 to 25 countries Kentrschynskyj said, "The EU will continue to promote the interests of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in multilateral institutions

"The EU will also try to enhance Bangladesh's trade negotiations in the WTO," Kentrschynskyj added.

Referring to the interest of

LDCs, German Ambassador

Dietrich Andreas said. "With the

expansion of EU membership, the

Bangladesh during tough economic times.'

assistance aimed at strengthen-

ing the trade capacity of

Among the heads of EU member-country missions in Bangladesh who were present at the session were Michel

Pakistan to try

FROM PAGE 12

was very excellent in reaching complete understanding on all issues.

Asked about the prospect of Bangladesh's candidature for the post of secretary general of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) since Turkey and Malaysia are also in the race, he said although it is a difficult situation for Pakistan having 'brotherly and friendly relations' with all these three countries, Islamabad clearly supported Bangladesh's candidate

In reply to a question, Khokar said it is the obligation of Pakistan to bring about a consensus as "certainly we will not like to see all these three countries will be shooting over the post.'

He hoped that alongside Pakistan, other countries particularly Saudi Arabia would make a constructive role

On the progress of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) since the holding of its 12th summit in Islamabad in January this vear, he said the foreign ministers will meet in Pakistan in the third week of July to examine the progresses so far made. Besides, he said Pakistan prime

minister and current Saarc Chairperson Jamali will be visiting the Saarc countries in two phases--Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal in the first leg and Sri Lanka, the Maldives

about India's frequent allegation against ISI activities against India from the soil of Bangladesh as well as Pakistan's reported hand behind the recent arms haul in Chittagong.

He said, "I think, allegation is not

worth commenting on. It's laughable,' he said, adding that Pakistan and of any of its entities or organisations will never do anything that will undermine the sovereignty and integrity of Bangladesh and its people. Any such absurd allegations from any country or neighbours are only to undermine the Pakistan-Bangladesh relations".

"ISI has better things to do than what has been suggested," he told a

In the afternoon, Reaz Khokar made a courtesy call on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office and said that Pakistan would extend all-out cooperation in successful holding of the 13th Saarc summit in Dhaka in January

Responding to the Pakistan foreign secretary's gesture, Khaleda said she would visit Pakistan at a convenient

During the meeting, matters of mutual interests and regional issues were discussed. International issues of common concern also came up at the meeting for discussion.

Bashundhara first

teledensity which the country badly needs," Murshed said.

"I believe this would help quadruple the number of fixed phones as we plan to award more licence to the private sector." There will be multiple operators in a zone, the BTRC chairman added. He said the commission plans to

consider other applications for

PSTN in its next meeting. Around

seven private companies have pre-

qualified for licence to set up land-

line phones in four zones since the telecoms regulator started receiving applications under an open licensing system. Most of the operators have shown interest in the Sylhet and

Chittagong zones as their commercial viability is comparatively greater than others Some leading business groups, ncluding Rangs and Bangla Phone

Limited, a joint venture among Nitol

Group, Technohaven Company Ltd.

Communications International Inc. are among the applicants, BTRC officials said.

The commission has segmented

the country into four zones -- Dhaka multi-exchange area (city); Sylhet, Chittagong and Comilla; Barisal and Khulna; and Rajshahi and Rangpur -- for private-sector landline telephone service. However, Dhaka city has been kept out of the open licensing regime as the WorldTel Bangladesh Limited served a legal notice on the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications in early January, pre-empting any move to

open its area of operations to other companies. The ministry awarded licence to the WorldTel in July 2001 to run fixed-line phones in the capital under a duopoly along with stateowned telecoms monopoly, Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board, and that too only for four years from the date its

Cabinet reshuffle

BNP, was made minister without portfolio from the Ministry of

Textiles Information Minister Tarigul Islam was given the portfolio of environment and forest, while M Shamsul Islam was transferred to the information ministry from the

land ministry. Shamsul was at the helm of information ministry under the previous BNP government.

Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, who was holding the portfolio of disaster management and relief, was given the responsibility of the food and disaster management ministry.

fisheries and livestock. He held the same portfolio in Khaleda's previous government.

Abdullah Al Noman, who held the

food portfolio, was made minister for

Shajahan Siraj was transferred to the textiles and jute ministry from the environment and forest ministry. State minister in-charge of the

was given the portfolio of NGO affairs ministry, which was long under the PMO. The state minister in-charge of the fisheries and livestock ministry, Ukil Abdus Sattar, was given same

jute ministry M Lutfor Rahman Khan

BNP policymakers talking to the 3 GIs

"The people of the Middle Euphrates are eager for a return of

status at the land ministry.

normal life. They are going to have it." Bremer told a news conference. The appointment of al-Sharifi was seen as part of a strategy to marginalise Sadr, who has been holed up in Najaf since Bremer issued a warrant for his arrest in March and declared him an outlaw in connection with the killing of a rival cleric last year.

Soon after the appointment was made. US tanks, armoured vehicles and troops gathered about five kilometres (three miles) northwest of the city, apparently braced for an attack on insurgents, and one US soldiers said the road had been blocked. A little later, explosions and gunfire

were heard inside the city. Earlier in Baghdad, witnesses said a suicide bomber sped his car around a roundabout where civilian contrac-

tors were lining up to cross the heavily

fortified July 14th Bridge, used only by

the military and employees of the US-

led Coalition Provisional Authority. The military later said that two US soldiers had been killed and two others wounded in another bomb attack in Baghdad late on Wednesday.

The attacks followed fierce clashes between US forces and militiamen loyal to Sadr in which 10 insurgents were killed overnight in slum districts of

press in the wake of the reshuffle praised the downsizing of the ministries, but expressed dissatisfaction

positive result as the government did not drop ministers with allegations of corruption. They said 'removal of the corrupt' should take precedence over other

The eight ministers and state ministers, whose portfolios were changed, were better performing than most of their colleagues, they

the foreign ministry after removal from the office of state minister of the same ministry. In her second cabinet reshuffle on May 22 last year, Khaleda

reducing her 60-member 'iumbo cabinet' to 53 The first shuffle took place on March 11, 2002 that saw changes in

Municipal polls

Dhunat municipality.
Our Patuakhali correspondent says: The AL-backed chairman candidate Sultan Ahmed Mridha and other candidates submitted separate memorandums to the returning officer alleging casting of false votes in favour of four-party coalitionbacked candidate Mostaq Ahmed.

Our Mymensingh correspondent adds: Law enforcers arrested 24 people for attempts to cast false Our Rangpur correspondent

casting false votes. primary report said false votes were cast in different polling centres under

(Fema), in a report yesterday said the polling centre at Adarsha Madhyamik Balika Biddalya and College was forcibly occupied by supporters of the ruling alliance-backed chairman candidate in Barguna

The report said impersonation

Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority said frequent power cuts caused the water-supply

Picasso painting The painting went under the hammer at 93 million dollars, to polite

million dollar mark.

and 80 million dollar levels but each time a new bidder came in to boost the competition. "I was thrilled to be the one that held the gavel for the most expensive picture in the world." said auctioneer Tobias Meyer, who said he gave bidders more time than

usual to decide whether to raise

"Bangladesh urges that the con-

applause. A substantial buyer's

premium pushed it beyond the 100

Offers faltered at the 70 million

Dhaka slates

cerned authorities should take all necessary measures immediately to avoid repetition of any such

criminal act by anyone anywhere in Iraq, or elsewhere, and that innocent Iragi prisoners be released without any delay," Morshed said. ballot-counting to start May 13.

Ailing agriculture FROM PAGE 12

He mentioned that the country's population will rise to 180 million in 2020 and food requirement will be around 40 million tonnes. "We should also keep in mind that our cultivable land is gradually shrinking. It was 9 million hectares 10

years ago but now it is 8.29 million hectares," he said. Fertility of soil has also been affected seriously due to lack of balanced use of fertilisers and crop rotation, the minister said. He admitted that in many cases government policy was responsible for such a situation as subsidies on all fertilis-

ers excepting urea were withdrawn in mid-1980s Against this backdrop, Anwar stressed immediate steps for agriculture sector.

Uttam Kumar, research fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), suggested subsidy on TSP fertiliser to help increase soil fertility and facilitate

Amjad Khan Chowdhury, presi-

dent of Bangladesh Agro

balanced use of fertilisers.

Processors' Association, said it is not possible to alleviate poverty without developing agriculture and agro-processing industries. Monowar Hossain, president and Nurul Hasan Khan, general

secretary of the ERF also spoke at

NUVC ordered

"The VC threatened us to damage our academic career by showing our registration cards," he said adding that

with the students' representatives, the demonstrating students outside began to damage the windowpanes of his office and attacked the employees. Second year (honours) students of

The agitating students damaged at

demanded promotion of the students who passed at least in two subjects or got 25 percent on average. The rally announced a token sit-in programme in front of the college for tomorrow. At least 50 students of different colleges under NU were injured on

The demands include allowing

FROM PAGE 12 Congress and allies 167-179 seats

But all the exit polls suggested

territories.

Analysts say if exit polls are to

The battle for 83 seats in

stream has not yet finalised nomination for the two seats.

Sources said retired major Mannan

Inspector Matiur Rahman of Detective Branch (DB) has been

FROM PAGE 12 six for 45 off 24.2 overs as a second-

in some aspects.

iary of Petrobangla, had discovered Feni gas field in 1981 but abanand US-based Bengal The first well was opened on September 24, 1991 and second

Canadian company will also

be 42 percent in phases.

made

of human rights to the agenda."

such as the WTO."

market for LDC has also expanded and promises greater opportunities for them." On the future of Bangladesh's garment industry in Post-Multi ibre Agreement regime, Kentrschynskyj said, "We have discussed the matter with the government on several occasions and assured it of trade-related

Bangladesh enjoys a trade balance surplus in trade with the EU with US\$3 billion exports to EU countries against US\$ 700

Lurnmaux, ambassador of France, Pietro Ballero, ambassador of Italy, Borje Mattsson, ambassador of Sweden, Niels Severin Munk, ambassador of Denmark and Robert Gibson, acting British high commissioner.

Some top-rung BNP leaders said the reshuffle might not bring any

over non-reduction in the cabinet

On March 25. Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhurv was removed from the commerce ministry and Reaz Rahman was made adviser to

dropped seven ministers and changed the portfolios of 11 others,

portfolios of four ministers.

Election observer Brotee in a

Fair Election Monitoring Alliance

election. Twenty-four people were arrested in Bandarban on charge of impersonation, 2 in Ghatail, 2 in Thakurgaon, 4 in Patuakhali and 25 in Muktagachha paurasabhas. Some of them have been fined or jailed for a short period by mobile courts.

reports: Police arrested 25 people from different centres on charge of

Rangpur and Syedpur paurasabhas.

was a major feature of yesterday's

paurasabha.

Former West Indies pace bowler

FROM PAGE 1 Civil Code, and prison reforms a year ago. While it made some progress in these areas, it still lags

despite its repeated promises and it did not set up the promised office of an Ombudsman. There has not been any progress in setting up a National Human Rights

Munshiganj-1 seat. The Election Commission has set