The Daily Star

NEWS

a roadside bomb on the capital's

southern side at dawn Friday, said

medical sources at Yarmuk hospital.

capital, a mortar attack on an Iraqi

army barracks in Suleiman Beg

In further violence north of the

He added that four mortar rounds

Another mortar attack on a

convoy near Tikrit, 180km north of

Baghdad, destroyed a truck with

Turkish license plates, said police

sources in the area. The fate of the

itself out, Iraqi troops battled insur-

gents in their former stronghold of

Fallujah and five Iraqi policemen

ministry official said, without giving a

An AFP reporter said shots were

heard from the city's northwestern

As the political drama played

driver was unknown.

Jolan district.

Opposition names new Kyrgyz acting president

REUTERS, Bishkek

FROM PAGE 1

whole affair.

Kyrgyzstan's opposition, after seizing power in what the ousted leadership called a coup, on Friday named a new acting president and appealed for calm in the capital after a night of violence, burning and looting.

President Askar Akayev fled the White House on Thursday -- the seat of government in the mountainous state -- before it was engulfed by thousands of people demonstrating against a disputed parliamentary poll and years of poverty and corruption.

"God forbid anybody would have to have such a revolution," Felix Kulov, freed from jail by supporters

Some names have already been

Meanwhile, thanks to the

floated in the administrative and

political corridors, the sources said.

increase in the retirement age of

Supreme Court judges, it seems

settled that the immediate past

Chief Justice KM Hasan will lead the

next interim government. But the

extension has given rise to some

sharp political controversies. The

mainstream opposition parties

question the motive of the govern-

ment decision, alleging it was to

ensure that Justice Hasan becomes

the chief adviser to the next care-

Justice Hasan is biased to the ruling

BNP, as he once was involved in its

politics. They have been demanding

appointment of the interim govern-

ment chief through a consensus to

The five-year tenure of CEC Syed

and EC Safiur Rahman will expire

heard on the grapevine as under

consideration for the posts. They

include former secretary Fazlur

Rahman, Dr Akbar Ali Khan, former

EC secretary Faizur Razzak, former

home secretary Omar Faruk and a

at the highest government level and

the president will appoint the

and MA Syed, came from the civil

bureaucracy and the rest were

retired Supreme Court judges.

The final selection will be made

So far, only two CECs, Abu Hena

The mainstream opposition

parties have been demanding that

the government appoint the new

CEC through a consensus of all

political parties. But the government

so far has overlooked the demand.

A number of names have been

make him acceptable to all.

on May 22 and June 24.

High Court judge.

selected persons

The opposition leaders claimed

taker government

NEXT CEC

New chiefs of EC

on Thursday and appointed acting interior minister, told state television. "It was a rampage of looting, just like in Iraq."

United States called it a coup.

Impoverished Kyrgyzstan --

ship.

officer to head the army.

The Kyrgyz ambassador to the

"This ... is an anti-constitutional coup," Baktybek Adrisaev told CNN.

where the average person gets by on a dollar a day -- became the third ex-Soviet state in two years, after Georgia and Ukraine, where popular revolt after disputed elections has ousted the entrenched leader-

But it is the only one where the protests turned violent.

During the caretaker govern-

It is significant that two former

ment, the president looks after the

defence ministry and the army plays

army chiefs, who retired in recent

times, joined the two major political

parties. Of them, General (Retd)

Mustafizur Rahman contested the

last parliamentary election with

Awami League ticket and Lt Gen

(Retd) Mahbubur Rahman was

A number of senior air force officers

are lobbying to succeed the present

air force chief, Fakhrul Azam, who is

significant in domestic affairs includ-

ing the elections. Only a few air force

personnel are usually deployed

along with other law enforcers during

Back from Brunei

The role of air force is not that

elected a BNP lawmaker.

set to retire in April

order

tant a matter.

of staff of the navy.

FROM PAGE 16

NEXTAIR FORCE CHIEF

a vital role in conducting the polls.

Opposition leader Kurmanbek Bakiev, who played a central role in

Thursday's mass protests in the capital Bishkek where crowds took over the main government building, said he had been named acting president

"Parliament today appointed me prime minister and gave me the functions of president," he told supporters in Bishkek.

Parliament had initially appointed another opposition leader Ishenbai Kadyrbekov as acting president.

Analysts say there is little love lost between the key opposition leaders with Kulov, freed from jail by protesters on Thursday, seen as more popular than Bakiev.

Highway robbery

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Increased highway robberies in

the South-Western regions have made transportation of passen-

gers and goods especially at night

like installation of close circuit

cameras and intensified patrol by

law enforcers, robbers are con-

ducting daring hold-ups, leaving

passengers and drivers utterly

During the last three weeks, ten

daring highway robberies were

Despite the anti-crime steps

No foreign government has yet recognised the new leadership.

on rise in

isky.

nelpless.

South-West



A human chain at Shahbagh in the city yesterday demand of the government to shift the grave of Birsreshtha Flight Lt Matiur Rahman from Pakistan to Bangladesh

Anti-smoking law

FROM PAGE 1

committed in the region, police said. On March 12 night, robbers looted a truck-full of rice, money and wrist-watches from the driver, helper and rice trader. The same night, the gang looted Tk 15,000 from a filling station at Kaliganj in Jhenidah district.

the polls to help maintain the law and On March 13 night, armed robbers snatched a Khulna-bound So, the appointment of a new air mustard seed carrying truck, injurchief is not being seen as that imporing the driver, helper and a trader at Agmundia near Jhenidah town. The same night, armed robbers looted Meanwhile, the government money, gold and other valuables recently has appointed a new chief worth over Tk 5 lakh from a Dhaka-

bound passenger bus on Jhenidah-Maqura road. On March 16, at noon, nine passengers of a Khulna-bound coach at Khajure on Jessore-Magura highway came under attack by armed rob-

Besides, there is a plan to set up

through legal documents he paid bers. An anary mob caught hold of six robbers and gouged out their eyes 1,10,000 Singapore dollars (about while four robbers of the same gang Tk 36 lakh) to Caresan Realty and escaped with 30 cell phones, 30 tolas Management, a company regisof gold ornaments. Tk 50 lakh and tered in Brunei, for providing jobs 88 other valuables, leaving nine passen-Bangladeshi workers in a construcgers injured. To contain highway robbery,

tion firm in 2001 But at the final stage of the propolice patrol has been intensified, cess, Paradise International, said a senior officer of Khulna another Bangladeshi recruiting police. agent, illegally gained the contract paying Caresan Realty and police camp every 40 kilometre on Dhaka-Khulna road, he added. Management a higher sum, Rahman alleged.

Galib He told journalists that he filed a

station buildings, bus terminal buildings, ferries, cinema halls,

owned children parks.

transport under the law.

Motor vehicles, buses, trains,

passenger ships, launches, all

mechanised vehicles and

aeroplanes are referred to as public

prohibit smoking in open space,

containing tobacco products, publi-

bills, billboards, newspapers, etc.

The law also said that other

existing laws related to anti-

smoking would also require compli-

ance. Other laws include, a) The

hotels and restaurants and parks.

The law, however, does not

Railway Act, 1890, b) The Juvenile Smoking Act, 1919, c) The Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi covered exhibition centres, thea-Metropolitan police ordinances. tres, shopping centres, public The law also prohibits donation

toilets, and government and private of any tobacco products, sponsoring in any ceremony or sports tournament and sponsoring scholarship to individuals by tobacco producers. Violators of this clause of the law

> may be liable to three months' imprisonment or a fine of Tk 1000. The law also prohibits installation of any vending machine from where

The law suggests that the owner, tobacco products can be purchased caretaker, controlling authorities through an automatic system. and management of public places All packets or containers of and public transport could have an tobacco products must display, at area within designated as smoking least on 30 per cent of the total area, any of the health warnings: Smoking It prohibits advertisement of leads to death; Smoking can cause tobacco products in cinema halls,

stroke: Smoking can cause heart government and private TV chandiseases; Smoking can cause lungs nels, sale of films or videotape cancer; Smoking leads to respiratory problems; Smoking is bad for cation of tobacco advertisements in health books. magazines. leaflets. hand-

Meanwhile, to encourage tobacco farmers to cultivate alternative crops, the government has decided to provide them with soft loan support.

leaders will visit the port city to

Mohiuddin, attaching due impor-

tance to his ideas, as he had

contested and won the last two

committee to monitor the election

The sub-committee headed by AL

Presidium Member Suranjit

Sengupta will visit Chittagong on

March 28 to examine the pre-polls

scenario. "We will [then] make a

report on what should be done,"

Sengupta told The Daily Star

ing in the local government elec-

tion, alleging it was from an ill

motive to influence the election by

The EC next month will hold a

using the state machinery

EC'S SECURITY PLANS

situation. EC sources said.

500 polling centres.

The home ministry with the

help of local police administration

The AL also has formed a sub-

canvass for their candidate.

1100 fake mobile phone cards seized in Jessore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Police on Thursday seized 1100 pieces of fake mobile phone cards from Eden Market in the town and arrested four people. The arrestees are Shahidur

Rahman Khokon, son of Tofazzel Hossain and Kamaluddin Rana, son of Hasan Ali of Shankarpur area in the town, Parvez Khan, son of Kader Khan of Karbala area in the town and Anisur Rahman, son of Raushan Ali of Chalnahati village under Monirampur upazila

Acting on a tip--off, Kotwali police nabbed Anisur Rahman at a shop in the market at around 11:00am and seized the fake mobile phone cards from his bag.

On his statement, police later arrested the other three from BD Tel Sat.com Internet office at Garikhana road in the town.

EU asks Israel to stop expansion of settlement

AFP, Brussels/ Washington

EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana voiced concern at Israeli plans to expand settlements in the West Bank and urged Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to freeze construction, in a statement issued Friday.

Solana expressed "concern following the Israeli decision to grant a building permit for (expansion plans) at Maale Adumin," a key settlement just east of Jerusalem.

"This decision runs counter to the commitment by parties involved to abstain from any unilateral action which could affect a final solution" to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, he added.

It emerged at the weekend that Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz had approved the building of more than 3.500 new homes in Maale Adumim, the largest Jewish settlement in the West Bank.

"The European Union expects the Israeli government to abide by its obligations as set out in the road map, in particular relating to the freezing of settlements," Solana added.

Despite calls by the US State Department to stop the settlement construction. Sharon has ruled out a freeze, and is also pressing ahead with building work at two other settlements. Gush Etzion and Ariel.

Meanwhile, a top US diplomat denied Washington has reached an accord with Israel over the final status of large Jewish settlement blocs in the West Bank, as Israeli troops yesterday maintained a lockdown on the Palestinian territories for the Jewish festival of Purim.

Dan Kurtzer, the US ambassador to Israel, turned down Israeli claims "understandings" with of Washington over a comprehensive future agreement with the

Suicide attacks

FROM PAGE 16 In Baghdad, nine Iraqi soldiers checkpoint in the east of the city, 68 were wounded when their patrol hit

miles west of Baghdad, at around 7 p.m.

Checkpoints were established at entrances to Ramadi last month to try to crack down on guerrillas who have mounted frequent attacks in the city

killed one soldier and wounded a "These terrorist attacks will not man who had come to visit one of his deter the soldiers and Marines from soldier sons, said an army spokesaccomplishing their mission," said man. Brig. Gen. Joe McMenamin, assistant commander of the 2nd Marine fell on the camp at about 7:00 am (0400 GMT) causing heavy dam-Division.

"This was an attack on Iraqi security forces who have sworn an oath to protect the citizens of Iraq,' he said.

In an attack on Friday in Iskandariya, in a lawless area just south of Baghdad, a bomber blew up his car beside an Iraqi army convoy, killing three soldiers and wounding six, soldiers at the scene said

Earlier five Iraqi cleaning ladies and soldiers died in a friendly-fire working on a US base southeast of incident on Thursday. Baghdad were killed when their car Violence carried on Thursday as came under gunfire, an interior bullets flew in the former rebel ministry source said yesterday. stronghold of Fallujah, a Sunni town west of the Iraqi capital, a defence

Gunmen travelling in a vehicle opened fire on the women in the Mashtal neighbourhood, east of the capital, on Thursday at 3:00 pm (1200 GMT), said the source, who asked not to be identified.

Family members of the women Elsewhere, a friendly-fire incisaid they worked on a base in dent near the Syrian border Rustumiyah between Iraqi police and army left

The US military could not be five dead. immediately reached for comment Iragi police and army traded fire Contractors, translators and other Iradis suspected of working

Rabia, 130km northwest of Mosul, leaving three soldiers and with US forces are the frequent two police dead, Major General Mohamed al-Jaburi told AFP

Independence Day

target of insurgents.

After many years of political and economic exploitation, the Bangalees' nationalist sentiments paved the way for the massive victory of the Awami League led by Bangabandhu in the 1970 Pakistan national elections.

The Pakistani junta in the then West Pakistan however refused to hand over power to the then East Pakistanis. They stalled installation of the newly elected parliament and started ethnic genocide aimed at extinguishing all signs of Bangalee nationalist movement.

In the face of this, the inevitable declaration of independence came on March 26

Bangalee policemen and paramilitary and army personnel had defected from the West and trained the general oublic, who took up arms to fight for freedom.

They had fought without proper food, shelter, training and arms and ammunition. But it was their determination to free the motherland and the all-out support of the people that had dav led to victory.

But for the last three and a half President lajuddin Ahmed, Prime years, Jamaat-e-Islami, which had Minister Khaleda Zia and Leader of the opposed the Liberation War and Opposition Sheikh Hasina in separate helped Pakistani military forces kill messages have paid deep respect to freedom fighters and intellectuals, has the martyrs of the Liberation War. been enjoying the state power. The president in his message Even two of its leaders, known to be involved in anti-liberation activities urged all to work selflessly from their respective positions to fulfil the public's in 1971, are now in the cabinet. PROGRAMMES basic needs such as food, clothes,

patriotic songs at different city points to entertain the public. Army band will perform at the Crescent Lake point, Navy at the Farmgate and Airforce at the Second National Stadium. Mirpur point from 3:00pm to 5:00pm

A number of navy ships will remain open to public at Sadarghat in Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Mongla port and Barisal from 2:00pm to 5:30pm.

To mark the day, the ruling BNP has taken up a 10-day programme that includes placing wreaths at the national memorial and mazar of late president Ziaur Rahman. The BNP also brings out an Independence Day rally from its party office at 4:00pm

The Awami League (AL) will bring

Other political parties, social and cultural organisations have chalked out separate programmes to mark the

shelter, education and healthcare to

The prime minister recalled with

gratitude the supreme sacrifices of the

freedom fighters and contributions of

other people at home and abroad

She called upon all to be united to

The opposition chief said the desire

for achieving political and economic

freedom and ensuring justice and

democracy has grown among the

people after the nation achieved

reedom under the leadership of

"But the misrule of the BNP-

Jamaat-led alliance government is

taking the nation towards a disaster,"

Hasina, also Awami League chief,

said. She called upon all to come

build a happy, prosperous, peaceful

during the Liberation War.

and free democratic society.

Bangabandhu.

ment 'misrule'.

make independence meaningful.

MESSAGES

today out an Independence Day rally at 3:00pm in front of its party office on

Bangabandhu Avenue.



the past, too alone chose all the CECs, ignoring the opposition demands.

The tenure of two other election commissioners. M Munsef Ali and AK Mohammad Ali, will also end soon, in April next year, which means a new EC is going to conduct the next parliamentary elections likely to be held at end of 2006 or early 2007. **NEXTARMY CHIEF**

The three-year tenure of Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Hassan Mashhud Chowdhury ends in June.

Army sources said a number of major generals are in the race to clinch the top military job. They include Moeen U Ahmed, Abu Roshde Rokonuddawla, Fazle Elahi Akbar and Jamilud Din Ahmed.

A number of senior army officers also consider Maj Gen Jahangir Alam, now director general of the BDR, as a potential candidate for the post. "It may also happen that the

government will appoint a low-profile but well educated senior officer who is not in the race." a senior army officer told The Daily Star wishing anonymity.

Another option is also being considered, that is, to extend the term of the incumbent army chief by one vear. But, government defence

policymakers said the possibility of an extension is very slender, as it may cause resentment and adverse reactions in the forces. Besides, it will not be possible to provide the incumbent chief with two extensions to enable him to carry on until the next general polls, sources pointed out.

They said the government highups are searching for a 'reliable'

BSF guns down FROM PAGE 1 traders and shot them dead.

Some people of Gazipur, a frontier village under Satkhira Sadar upazila, said they found the two bodies lying in the beel (water body).

When contacted, Major Nomani acting commanding officer of 41 Rifles Battalion, told this correspondent that the bodies of the two cattle traders were found lying inside the Indian territory, 500 yards off the zero point.

"We have sent a protest letter to the BSF authorities asking them to return the bodies," the commanding officer said

case against the company with a magistrate court in Brunei and appealed to the Bangladesh High Commission there and Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training in Dhaka to look into the

matter. "But I was given no solution, no compensation; on the contrary, Paradise International continued its business without any interruption,"

Rahman said. Rahman eventually left manpower business and began a

department store in Brunei while running the case. "Since then I have always helped the Bangladeshi workers there and have been vocal against the malpractice of recruiting agencies, for which other recruiting agencies now consider me as their enemy," he added.

The hearing of the case was scheduled for June 16 to 20 this year. "Sensing that the verdict would go in my favour, the Brunei immigration. in connivance with Caresan. compelled me to come back home without giving any reason," he alleged

The immigration even detained him for at least five hours, he said. "The Bangladesh Mission in Brunei did not provide me with any help despite my appeal."

MM Rahman demanded that the government take immediate measures and help him recover the huge financial loss.

lata FROM PAGE 1

region," Ratan Tata told reporters on the sidelines of an extra-ordinary general meeting of the company in Mumbai on Thursday.

He said the Tata Group had undertaken a study for investments in Bangladesh and evinced keen interest in setting up fertiliser, power and steel plants in that country. "The investment plans would be finalised after we complete the study and submit it to Bangladesh government

steady availability of raw materials

merely to source them from there.

FROM PAGE 16 with strict security and police protection.

Professor of Arabic department at Rajshahi University, Galib was brought to the district jail here from Gaibandha on the night of March 19. A number of robbers, who were arrested in the Kotalipara Brac office robbery case on January 17,

admitted that they were the followers of Dr Galib. On their confessional statements, Galib was implicated in the case, police said.

Bring Matiur's FROM PAGE 16 main entrance to the airbase, he

added. "There are numerous examples of relocation of graves in our country--late president Ziaur Rahman's

arave was shifted from Chittagong to Dhaka," Golam Kibria, coordinator of Bishwa Shahitya Kendra, reasoned. "If we cannot shift Matiur's grave

from Pakistan, it will be a great shame for the nation as well as all freedom fighters of the country, reedom fighter Abul Kashem said The speakers also placed emphasis on publishing a complete

biography of the seven Birsreshthas nationally. Shahjahan Mridha Benu, AKM

Maksud, advocate Abul Kalam Azad, environment activist Subrata Das. Binov Mandal and Robin Biswas also spoke at the rally.

Pak score

India, who lead the three-match

Paceman Lakshmipathy Balaji

got India off to a dream start again

on Friday, striking with his first

Balaji, who had removed opener

Shahid Afridi with his first ball on

Thursday, trapped Inzamam Ibw

delivery.

knock

FROM PAGE 1 Youhana (37) Off-spinner Harbhajan Singh

finished with six wickets for 152. including the scalp of Younis. series 1-0, were 55 without loss at the close with Virender Sehwag lashing a 33-ball 39, including five fours and huge straight six off Danish Kaneria

and they get back to us," he added. The Tata Group chairman, whose proposed two billion dollar projects in Bangladesh would depend heavily on supply of natural gas, emphasised the importance of

like iron ore and coal and said Tata Steel was eyeing to own properties abroad for raw materials and not CCC elections acid test

leader said.

CCC polls.

yesterday.

fair election.

FROM PAGE 1

zone.

city better if they are elected to the office

The EC is monitoring the situation and giving the necessary directives to the election officials concerned to conduct the polls in a free and fair manner. It is also considering taking unprecedented security measures through the home ministry to ensure a credible election, sources said.

They said the EC will hold a high-powered meeting next month to review the law and order situation and chalk out the security plan for the polls.

COALITION'S PLAN

The four-party coalition has decided to extend all-out support to its mayoral candidate and asked the local leaders to work for him, sources said.

They said a number of senior coalition leaders are expected to visit Chittagong ahead of the polls to campaign for Mir Nasir.

Nasir has set up his main election office at Nasiman Bhaban and formed a number of cells and committees to monitor and conduct the election campaign in a planned way.

The components of the coalition however are squabbling over candidature for the ward commissioners' posts.

"If the bargaining is settled peacefully then the coalition will be in a positive condition to face the candidate of the opposition combine," said a local BNP lawmaker wishing anonymity.

Besides, the internal feud in the local BNP will be a major problem for the coalition candidate, though the party has initiated steps to resolve the crisis, he added

AL'S PREPARATIONS

A body named United Citizens' Committee has been formed to drum up popular support for Mohiuddin, the Awami Leaguebacked mayoral candidate, twice elected as CCC mayor.

came in just enough to beat the bat. That was the only time Inzamam, the fifth player to score a century in to thwart any bid to rig the elechis 100th Test, was comprehensively beaten during his 264-ball tion

The city corporation has over Party sources said frontline AL 11.40 lakh voters.

Kurtzer's comments, in a meetng with a group of Israeli trainee diplomats, were published in the top-selling Yediot Aharonot daily.

Rab completes

"We don't want to be defeated FROM PAGE 1 in this poll, as it will be the last Sultana Kamal of Ain o Salish showdown before the next parlia-Kendro told the BBC Bangla mentary elections," a senior AL Service, "Which of the crimes will we accept when one is curbed by The party will finalise its elecanother?" tion plan in consultation with

As many as 150 people have so far been killed in Rab 'crossfire', she said

State Minister for Home Lutfozzaman Babar yesterday told the BBC that the question of human rights does not come up when a criminal kills eight to 10 people on an average.

Even the question of human rights does not arise when 30 to 35 policemen are being killed on an average in the hands of criminals every year, he added.

"But questions of human rights He criticised the ruling coalicome up when those criminals are tion candidate for not resigning being killed in encounters with the from the cabinet before participat-Rab," Babar said.

However, Abdul Jalil, general secretary of the main opposition Awami League, alleged the force is being used for political purpose, mentioning the death of a witness to AL lawmaker Ahsanullah Master killing in Rab custody.

meeting with the law enforcement He alleged the Rab kills criminals agencies to review the law and in the name of crossfire within 24 order situation. It will also ask the hours of their arrests. "Crossfire government to deploy army pertakes place when both sides trade sonnel to help conduct a free and fire, but this crossfire is one sided," the BBC quoted Jalil as saying. The security plan will be final-

ised just before the election day, taking into account the prevailing **BNP** man

FROM PAGE 1 A former chairman of Habiganj Zila Parishad, Mobin was an MP for three times from the Jatiya Party.

Later he joined the BNP, contested in the last parliament election and was defeated to slain Awami League lawmaker Shah AMS Kibria. Meanwhile, advocate Chowdhury Ashraful Bari Noman, a former Habiganj district general secretary of the party, is likely to collect nomination paper today,

sources said. exceed Tk 50 lakh, of which a The interview of BNP's nominamajor portion will be allocated to tion seekers will be held on March maintain law and order at around 28 in Dhaka.

The last date for filing nominations for the constituency is March 29

The day's celebrations begin with 31 gun salutes at dawn.

President lajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will lead the nation in paying tributes to the martyrs of the Liberation War by placing wreaths at the National Memorial in Savar early in the morn-

ing. Leaders of the ruling and opposition parties, socio-political organisations, freedom fighters and people of all walks of life will then place wreaths at the memorial.

The national flag will be hoisted atop public and private buildings. Important public buildings will be illuminated tonight to give them a dazzling look

The president will take salute at a ceremonial march-past by contingents of freedom fighters, armed forces, BDR, police, BNCC and Ansar-VDP at the National Parade Ground in the capital at 9:00am. The prime minister will also attend the function.

Armed forces' bands will play

forward unitedly against the govern-(More on metropolitan page)

5 joint venture hospitals

FROM PAGE 16

of poor patients," Health Secretary A F M Sarwar Kamal told The Daily Star.

The hospital with US doctors heading all its wings and nursing staff also from that country is likely to operate by the yearend, sources said

Another 200-bed hospital is likely to open by mid-next year at Nikunja, Uttara, jointly managed by Escort Hospital of India and Japan-Bangladesh-Friendship-Hospital. Foreign and local investment for the project is estimated at about Tk 80 crore.

When the joint venture hospitals equipped with high-tech new generation equipment and apparatus start functioning, Bangladeshi patients will for the first time get treatment directly under foreign doctors, surgeons, physiotherapists, nurses and experts in various fields, sources pointed out.

Under strict foreign management, the joint venture hospitals will

offer services ranging from simple medical consultation to complex brain, spine, bone, kidney, eye, heart and even plastic surgeries by foreign doctors, enabling many Bangladeshi patients to avoid costly and troublesome trips to neighbour

Foreign doctors would also train local doctors to transfer technology in accordance with the new regulations laid down by the health minis-

"We have to ensure quality medical education. The focus is mainly on producing more trained manpower for healthcare," the

health secretary said.

ng countries for treatment.

The health ministry recently constituted an 'accreditation board' to approve employment of overseas personnel in the joint-venture hospital projects to ensure quality service

and a congenial atmosphere. services from these hospitals. We are allowing such projects also to encourage technology transfer in

will identify the vulnerable polling stations and take appropriate security measures in line with the EC's recommendations, sources at the ministry said. "We'll do every thing in our power to hold the election in a free and fair manner," Election

Commissioner AK Mohammad Ali told The Daily Star. Officials at the EC Secretariat said the budget of the polls will

with a good-length delivery that Mohiuddin also plans to set up number of committees to keep watch on the polling centres