NEWS

Security for cable

A gang of 50 to 60 armed pirates attacked the Chittagong Port-bound barge twice on Friday when it was crossing the Kutubdia channel on its way to the outer anchorage. The pirates injured 27 crewmembers and looted goods of little value, including ropes, sources said.

Following the attack the barge, a Singapore flag carrier, was taken to the Dry Dock jetty on Saturday morning. Crewmembers at the time refused to sail with the ship to Cox's Bazar, citing safety reasons.

Sources yesterday said the Prime Minister Office (PMO) has taken the matter seriously, ordering the Ministry of Home Affairs on Sunday to provide sufficient security measures so that the ship can soon sail.

"As per the home ministry's measure, we are receiving 10 ansars, five members of the Armed Police Battalion and a patrol ship from the coast guard for our safety, and will leave Chittagong at 7:00 am tomorrow morning with them and hopefully reach Cox's Bazar before dusk," said Parvez Ahmed, the managing director of the barge's local agent, Mutual Shipping Lines Ltd.

Parvez told The Daily Star that the foreign crew and other staff are now happy and convinced with the measures taken by the government. "I hope there will not be any further

trouble." he said. Fujitsu of Japan will install the

22.24 km-long submarine cable line on the seabed with assistance from Tyco Telecom of the United States of America and Otronix of South Korea. The installation work, originally

slated to begin today, will now begin on the morning of Thursday, April 7, after completion of a one-day field survey, and will take 15 days. Setting up a base landing station with all necessary equipment will require an additional

Alcatel and Fujitsu will finish the cable laying by the middle of August to connect Bangladesh with the highspeed global telecom network by October 2005. Alcatel will set up the equipment at the landing station while Fujitsu will set up the transmission equipment at the branch line.

Bangladesh will receive \$60 million

Three killed

FROM PAGE 16

yesterday for seizing firearms. When the police team reached

the spot, Janajuddha operatives fired on them and the police also retaliated, said the superintendent of police of Jhenidah. Shahid, accused in 15 criminal

cases including five for murders, attempted to flee during an hour-long shootout and died on the spot, he said. Three police constables --

Nazrul, Ibrahim and Motiur -- and Nayek Tamizuddin of ansar were wounded during the shootout, the

from the Islamic Development Bank under an agreement signed between the two sides in February this year for linking the country to the submarine

Bangladesh signed the 16-party consortium contract in Dubai on March 27 of last year for the transcontinental submarine cable, which will be around 20,000 kilometres long, including the main trunk line and branches, and cost about \$500 million to install.

BTTB, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Egypt Italy, Thailand, Algeria, Tunisia and France, along with Indian private carriers Bharti and VSNL, are memers of this consortium

HABIGANJ ATTACK

BNP expels Quiyum

UNB, Habiganj

AKM Abdul Quiyum, vice--president of Habiganj district BNP and prime accused in former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria murder case, has been expelled from the party.

The decision was taken at an executive committee meeting of Habiganj district BNP yesterday with its President Alhaj Syed Mohammad Faisal in the chair.

On March 19, police pressed charges against Quiyum and nine others for the January 27 grenade attack at Boiddyer Bazar that also left four others killed. Quiyum is now in Habiganj jail.

Younis

FROM PAGE 1

are proving to be the biggest factor in the one-day series. April is not the best time to play cricket in India.

"It's all a question of how you recover from games and how you manage your time on and off the field," India vice-captain Rahul Dravid told reporters after a team

"You have to leave enough in the tank to play the next game.

India opener Virender Sehwag, who scored 108 in Cochin, did not practice on Monday and Dravid who also scored a century, did not field in the first game.

Dravid said the toss would again be significant.

"It's not rocket science that you should bat first in such conditions, keep the other team on the field for 50 overs and then ask them to chase a big total after they're

India are expected to pick an unchanged side.

Govt will need extra

recommendations by next week The secretary committee is likely to recommend implementation of the new pay structure in three

phases over a period of three years.

The finance ministry review notes that if only the salaries of the civil and defence staff are increased in line with the recommendations of the pay commissions from January 1 this year, this will need an additional Tk 653 crore.

Similarly, if teachers and staff of educational institutions are given 50 percent of the recommended salary, this may cost the government an additional Tk 301 crore.

The government will need an extra Tk 200 crore if pensioners get 50 percent of the recommended pensions

EXTRA FUNDS NEEDED To fully implement the recommen-

dations of the two pay commissions. tional Tk 6,712 crore a year.

pension -- will be needed for the staff of the government and autonomous offices which are under the revenue budget.

Government staff working under development budget will need an additional Tk 166 crore for salary and allowances. Schools, colleges and madrasas will need Tk 1,609

additional expenditure of Tk 1,091

The secretary committee is pondering about the pay commission's suggestion to introduce a twoday weekly holiday on Friday and Saturday and reducing the annual casual leave to 15 days from 20

There are about one million civil staff and around 135,000 defence staff in the country.

PM urges public

Khaleda alleged a certain quarter is involved in tarnishing the country's image and destroying peace.

"We have to foil the conspiracy for our own interest and for the sake of the country's present wellbeing and its future." she said.

second of its kind, has been organised by the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI).

A total of 135 small and medium enterprises are taking part in the fair, which will remain open from 9:00am to 9:00pm till

Matiur Rahman Nizami, Commerce Minister Altaf

Hossain Chowdhury, FBCCI President Abdul Awal Mintoo, FBCCI Vice-President Kamal Uddin Ahmed and Director Enayet Hossain Chowdhury also addressed the function.

Ministers, MPs, diplomats and

The prime minister said utmost importance has to be laid on small

enterprises as they generate more employment with less

investment as well as provide backward linkage to export-

She asked the local producers to be more conscious, active and sincere in promoting their products in the global market. "We have to attain the capability of competing in the international market," she said.

The prime minister assured the entrepreneurs of small and medium enterprises of providing water, gas, power and telephone connections on priority basis.

alongside the government steps the entrepreneurs and the FBCCI would have to play an effective role for industrial growth to meet the demand in export market.

FBCCI President Abdul Awal Mintoo, in his deliberation, appreciated the government measures in improving the law and order.

Appreciating the formation of Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), the business leader said security of life is more important in ensuring human rights, which the elite force

is doing. The prime minister opened the

Ministry probing **NU VC's** scandal

Says education minister

The education ministry is probing alleged scandals involving National University (NU) Vice- chancellor (VC) Aftab Ahmed and sacked deputy registrar Begum Sultana Razia Jui.

Some newspapers recently reported that Sultana, who was a lecturer at a college, was appointed deputy registrar (academic) of the NU without any advertisement, application and interview for the post, in gross violation of the university rules.

"The ministry is concerned over the allegations and counter-allegations in the media concerning the vice-chancellor," Education Minister Osman Farruk told The Daily Star in response to query on the media reports.

"We are investigating...I have talked to the vice chancellor and asked him about the media reports. I shall talk to him again and take a decision," the minister said

The reports said Sultana lacks required experience to have the post of deputy registrar. The NU authorities dismissed her on March 15 on different allegations. The reports alleged that before her dismissal, she had illicit relationship with the VC.

The reports first came out in a vernacular daily. On Saturday, the parliamentary standing committee on education ministry discussed an eightpage appeal from Sultana to the VC to get her job back.

In her appeal, Sultana alleged that Aftab sacked her after failing to establish physical relations with her. She lodged a General Diary with Mirpur Police Station on Sunday alleging the VC is threatening her with

death if she speaks against him. Sources alleged the NU often violates appointment rules. Last year, it appointed a retired deputy secretary as controller of examinations, ignoring rules. It also appointed a newly promoted associate professor as inspector of colleges, a post requiring vast

experience in the field When contacted, Aftab termed the media reports 'concocted and onesided'. He said Sultana had 12-year teaching experience and was appointed on ad hoc basis. Later, the university advertised for the post and she was put on probation. Her service committee's recommendation was approved by the syndicate

The VC also said Sultana was suspended and later sacked after a high-powered investigation committee unearthed her corrupt practices. She took a bribe of Tk 5,000 from the teachers training college of greater Mymensingh, he alleged.

A vested quarter is conspiring against him to tarnish his image, the VČ said.
On Sultana's allegation of death

threat by him, Aftab said "She is a threat Sultana could not be contacted

despite repeated efforts.

Martians

FROM PAGE 1 scientist Dr Amitabh Ghosh disclosed this during his visit to Kolkata.

Nasa sent 'Pathfinder' in January 2004 to the Mars to search for life 'Rover', a component of 'Pathfinder', also collects information or weather, time and so on.

Dr Ghosh said life has not yet been discovered in the Mars, but once there was an environment conducive to life there. Nasa will send another mission to the Mars in 2011.

Wasa to resume

FROM PAGE 1

near now defunct Beauty Cinema in Mirpur to Horirampur Ananda Nagar to Dhaka-Paturia highway. The Kha branch stretches from Mirpur Mazar Road to Tolarbagh behind Bangla College to Dhaka-Paturia highway.

The Wasa has identified scores of illegal structures on the two branches that include mainly tinshed and bamboo houses, said the sources. They added that they will make a public announcement today so that the land grabbers can move their valuables.

On public support of the Thursday's drive, Wasa Managing Director ANH Akhter Hossain said, "We're getting wide public support for removing encroachment on the canals.

This drive will continue until May this year to free eight city canals, selected on a priority basis, from encroachment, he added.

A Wasa official said the drive requires involvement of several departments such as police, district administration and other relevant organisations and also eviction equipment, which slows the process.

The Wasa will also conduct similar drive against encroachment on the Begunbari. Mohakhali and Zirani canals in Rampura, Katashur and Ramchandrapur canals in Mohammadpur, Ibrahimpur canal and a cross-dam barrier on the Gulshan-Banani lake.

A high-powered eviction implementation committee headed by a joint secretary of the home ministry is taking care of the canal recovering drive. The city had once 43 canals in

and around it and 26 are now recognisable. Of the 26, 19 still have lean flows despite encroachment and the rest have partial existence. Besides, the authorities have

constructed box culverts on Dholaikhal, Segunbagicha, Arambagh, Rayerbazar, Gopibagh, Panthapath and Paribagh canals and also built roads on them. However, the move proved to be less effective for drainage than open canals

Opposition to take

accept the reform proposals, though Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has rejected the demands outright.

The month-long agitation programme of the main opposition Awami League (AL) and its Left allies has just come to an end with the enforcement of the latest hartal and chances are very slim for them to go for a combined street agitation in the remaining days of this month, as the parties will try to give a final shape to their electoral reform

The AL, 11-party left alliance, Communist Party of Bangladesh, Workers Party and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal have already placed some draft proposals at separate roundtables and discus-

Besides, Jatiya Oikya Mancha led by Dr Kamal Hossain and Bikapla Dhara Bangladesh of former president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury are also working on the issue and will place their draft proposals shortly, sources said.

experts over the last few weeks have come up with a wide range of electoral reform proposals. They are also suggesting that the president consult major political parties on the appointment of a person acceptable to all parties as chief adviser, as the Constitution stipulates that those who run the interim administration will be non-partisan.

the powers of the president and the chief of the interim government have to be clearly defined and charges of the Armed Forces Division should be given to the chief adviser and the Armed Forces should not have the magistracy

The appointment of the chief election commissioner and other

ernment and the Election Commission will be the main agenda of the opposition parties in the next course of the antigovernment agitation," JSD

President Hasanul Hag Inu told The Daily Star. "If there are no reforms, there will be no election," he said.

If the government goes to next election setting aside the proposed reforms to the caretaker government system and the Election Commission, the mainstream opposition will take a hard line and may not participate in the poll, AL

Though the AL is yet to take a formal decision, a number of its senior leaders have publicly announced that the party will not contest the next election if the proposed reforms are not imple-AL's legal wing is now drafting

some recommendations on electoral reforms. "We have given a number of options on reforms in the draft proposals and will submit it to the Awami League leaders once the draft is done," Barrister Amir-Ul-Islam, chairperson of the subcommittee assigned to formulate the proposals, told The Daily Star.

Another member of the committee said they will submit the report to AL President Sheikh Hasina when she returns from abroad tomorrow.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jail told The Daily Star they plan to finalise the recommendations by the month-end for placing before the nation a common proposal of all

"Our plan is to thrash out the proposals accepted by all parties," he said.

Awami League presidium member Tofail Ahmed said it would be suicidal if the opposition goes to election without seeing the necessary reforms implemented. "The president is theirs (ruling alliance's), the chief adviser is theirs ... in such a situation how can one expect an impartial election?" he said

Saber critical

arena with the ultimate objective of protecting those under whose instructions this crime was perpetrated by means of a sham investigation." said Saber commenting on foreign ministry's explanation over the statement of three US legisla-

sent letters to the US and Bandladesh governments, urging an independent, impartial and transparent enquiry into the January 27 grenade attack that killed Kibria. Talking to BDNEWS, he said.

"The government has said that it has concluded its investigations and the nernetrators have been taken into custody and charge-sheeted. On the other hand it is saving that FBI are conducting their own investigations"

Saber said that there are now concerns that the government might be "using the good name of FBI to

lend credence to their eyewash." Saber said. "We have seen nothing in the public domain from the US Embassy to confirm that FBI are indeed conducting their own independent investigations as asserted by the government and neither has the government delivered on its public promise to issue a joint statement with the FBI on status and findings of these appar-

ent FBI investigations. "The government investigation, as well as FBI's so-called independent enquiry, is shrouded in mystery. If the Government really has nothing to hide, why this absolute and conspicuous disregard for transpar ency?" questioned Saber.

"Rule of law demands a transparent and comprehensive investigation that will bring to justice the actual perpetrators of this crime, their political masters and also the sources of funding for the grenade used in the attack," Saber observed. Saber said, "Why is Bangla Bhai

vet to be arrested despite the prime minister's apparent instructions? Why have hundreds of citizens of this country been the victims of custodial deaths and extra-judicial killings under the present BNP-Jamaat Government and why has the government failed to invest arms hauls including the one in

Chittagong?" "It is shameful that yet again the government's rhetoric does not square up with reality and its words and deeds continue to drift discon-

certingly further apart," he said. "The current situation is so alarming that even old friends and well-wishers of Bangladesh now publicly state that permissiveness of at least some within the government has allowed acts of political terrorinvestigate these attacks has created a climate of impunity," he

added. government complicit in acts of political terrorism against progressive and secular forces be expected to conduct real investigation into the

Deputy secretary

Hussain, prepared the list of the senior assistant secretaries on Sunday after a series of earlier meetings.

The officials selected for promotion include those from the 1984 batch and a few others from the 1985 and previous batches, the sources said. Around 500 officials have qualified for promotion to the rank of deputy secretary but the government is

of shortage of vacancies. According to official sources, the civil administration has a total of 830 approved posts of high officials, 263 of which are currently lying vacant.

unable to elevate all of them because

Establishment ministry sources said the SSB faced tremendous pressure from the officials of different batches, particularly from the 1985 batch, during the selection. The 1985-batch officials had

qualified for promotion long ago but the

government could not promote them keeping the promotion of the officials of 1984 and previous batches pend-The SSB this time selected a good number of officials from the special and regular batches of 1982, who

were previously superseded. Besides, the SSB included several officials of the 1985 batch in the promotion list in the face of pressure from the government policymakers, sources said.

A state minister, who was also a

allegedly recommended promotion of his batch mates.

Besides, a good number of the 1985 batch officials were selected for their involvement in the politics of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, ruling BNP's student wing, during 1980s, they added. Sources said the latest promotion

of the senior assistant secretaries was due from early last month but it was delayed due to incorporation of the 1985 batch officials. An official of the establishment ministry on condition of anonymity said

interest rate in line with different though many officials, who were superseded previously, have been included in the new promotion list, many other officials will be superseded When contacted, a highly-placed source at the PMO told The Daily Star

posts of deputy, joint and additional

secretaries will take place throughout

that the PMO will further verify the SSB list and it will need three to four days' time for the PM's approval. 113 plots He said there are chances of the PM's approval on Thursday or early the meeting while its members next week. More promotion to the Mohammad Alamgir Haider Khan,

the vear. Mahmud Babu and Mohammad The official said some six acting Abdul Mottalib attended it. secretaries may be promoted to the rank of full-fledged secretary within a

AL leader **Abdul** Mannan passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Veteran Awami Leaguer (AL) leader and a leading organiser of the Liberation War Abdul Mannan died at his city residence yesterday after suffering from old age complications. He was 75.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, served the post-Independence Awami League government as home minister and later as health minister. He was elected Member of

Mannan, a close aide of

Parliament in 1973 and 1996. Abdul Mannan left behind his wife, five sons, a daughter, political col-

leagues and a number of well-wishers to mourn his death. The first namaj-e-janaza of the late leader was held yesterday at Aeroplane Mosque on Elephant Road and the second one in front of the AL

He will be buried at the family graveyard at Paradise Para in Tangail this morning after a third namaj-eianaia there. Born in Tangail in 1929, Mannan

central office on Bangabandhu Avenue

after Magrib prayers.

played an important role during the Liberation War. He administered the oath-taking programme of the Bangladesh government on April 17, 1971 in Meherpur. He founded the weekly newspaper 'Joy

Bangla' during the War of Liberation. Mannan was also one of the main accused in historical Agartala Conspiracy Case and in his 59 years of political career, he was involved in Language Movement of 1952, sixpoint movement of 1966 and the mass upsurge of 1969.

He served the Awami League as its presidium member and was member of the party's Advisory Council till his Leader of the Opposition and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina in

a statement yesterday expressed deep shock at the death of Abdul Mannan. She recalled the long political career of the late leader and prayed for eterna peace of the departed soul. UNB adds: Prime Minister Khaleda Zia expressed deep sorrow at the death of AL leader Abdul Mannan. Recalling the late leader's contribution

in the country's Liberation War and

democratic movements, she prayed

for the eternal peace of the departed

soul and conveyed her sympathy to the

UK praises

FROM PAGE 16 Briefing newsmen after the meeting. officials said the diplomat also rated highly the measures and success so far achieved in the investigation into the killing of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria.

that the transparent measures of the present government will help the authorities bring the culprits to book," the Bangladeshi-born British envoy was quoted as saying. During the meeting, cooperation

"The British government hopes

in various fields, including British assistance for training Bangladesh policemen. also came up for discussion. The prime minister and the high

commissioner also discussed other

matters of bilateral interest and issues of common concern. Bear mauls

FROM PAGE 16 and Zakir Hossain, two local villag-

After receiving news of the bear attack, the BDR and the Parshuram than police started searching for

Four of the eight injured were

admitted to the Parshuram Health Complex In the end, the bear crossed back into Indian territory through Muhurirchar border after being

JS body

chased by the villagers

the animal

FROM PAGE 16 Chowdhury told journalists they made the suggestions on humani-

The meeting did not however state clearly as to how the land evacuated by the Biharis will be The committee asked the author-

ities to evict an illegal occupant --

Abdus Sattar -- of some eight plots in Mirpur Section B-11. The meeting also suggested implementing the housing and public works ministry's recommendations to activate the interest rate on payment for Rajuk plots after all preparations for these plots are complete. It also called for imple-

menting the recommendations of

reviewing the present 17 percent

financing institutions. The committee discussed the Purbachal project and decided to visit Rajuk to have a comprehensive idea on the project. The housing ministry informed

the meeting that 13,000 abandoned plots were sold to people. The meeting discussed the remaining Shajahan Chowdhury chaired

Nur-e-Alam Chowdhury (Liton),

Zainal Abedin, Mohammad Sultan

The secretary of the ministry and chairman of Rajuk were also

Pope's funeral

FROM PAGE 1
Elio Toaff, who had hosted John Paul during his historic visit to Rome's central synagogue in 1986,

viewed the body Monday. He raised his arm before the body in a gesture of tribute. The current chief rabbi. Riccardo Di Segni, viewed the body

John Paul's body appeared to have been touched up or embalmed overnight Up to 2 million mourners are

expected in Rome to pay tribute to the Polish-born prelate who reigned firmly over his flock for 26 years with unbending loyalty to its ancient precepts, resisting calls from modernisers for the church to adapt. In St. Peter's Square, lamp posts were covered with impromptu

memorials to John Paul, including

flowers, hand-written messages

and children's drawings pinned up with multicoloured candle wax. The Vatican's Swiss Guards who normally wear gaily coloured uniforms, were clad in black cloaks Monday as the official mourning

period for the pope continued.

As tens of thousands of the faithful file past John Paul's bie above the traditional site of the St. Peter's tomb, the cardinals in their first preparatory meeting were dealing with the practical arrangements of disposing of the pope's mortal remains before they get ready to choose who will inherit his

John Paul himself set an imposng agenda for the cardinals in instructions he drafted in 1996, including the reading of any final documents he may have left for them. That could include directives on where he wanted to be interred, whether in the crypts beneath St Peter's Basilica as has been done with most popes, or in his native Poland.

In addition, the cardinals were expected to arrange the destruction of John Paul's Fisherman's Ring and the dies used to make lead seals for apostolic letters formal gestures meant to symbolise the

KIBRIA KILLING

'Govt keen on transparent probe'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Habigan

Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury, Bangladesh's ambassador to the US responded to the three US lawmakers who sent a letter to Bangladesh urging a transparent probe into the January 27 grenade attack in

"I told the senators in my letter that

the government is sincere in its effort

to carry out a transparent investiga-

tion into the Kibria killing and that

some measures have already been taken to that end. " Chowdhury told the BBC Bangla Service last night. Referring to his letter to the US senators, he said the government is

pledge-bound to bring Kibria's killers "In the Jativa Sangsad, our prime minister condemned the killing of Kibria and pledged to carry out a transparent probe into the incident,

Chowdhury told the BBC, quoting his

The letter also said the arrest of

letter to the US senators.

individuals belonging to the ruling party who were in charge of Kibria's killing proves the government is properly undertaking its investiga-Chowdhury denied that the letter

of the US senators is a form of pres-

sure, insisting that the government is

conducting a transparent probe of its Federal Democratic lawmakers Edward Kennedy and John Kerry, as well as Republican lawmaker Barney Frank, sent letters on Saturday to the US and Bangladesh governments urging an independent and transparent probe into the January 27 grenade attack, which killed former finance minister SAMS Kibria and

Bombs hurled

FROM PAGE 1

four other persons.

No one, however, was hurt. "We don't know who hurled the combs," said a BSS staff. He also said the criminals might have disappeared in the bustling crowd of Paltan.

rushed for safety. Police and intelligence men later collected splinters and other evidence. Two policemen deployed at the

After the explosion, BSS staff,

local traders and pedestrians

office were inside the building during the incident. A case has been filed with the Motijheel Police Station in this connection.

Since the BSS office was attacked, earlier in March, police have been deployed to keep watch round the clock.

death toll among the militants remained unclear as security person-

FROM PAGE 16

8 militants killed

nel had yet to enter parts of the complex where they were holed up in the northern town of Al-Rass. They said at least three militants had been killed since the gunbattle erupted early Sunday but Saudi-

owned media put the toll as high as

"The operation is continuing. The security forces have surrounded them. There is still gunfire from the besieged building," interior ministry spokesman, Brigadier General Mansur al-Turki,

forgeries.

The pope's funeral will include pageantry reserved for the highest prince of the church and in the presence of many of the world's

end of his reign and to prevent

. secular and religious leaders. The pope died Saturday of septic shock and cardio-circulatory collapse, but had been struggling with

declining health for many years. He "Even if we fear we've lost a point of reference, I feel like everybody in this square is united with him in a hug," said Luca Ghizzardi, a 38year-old nurse among the throng in St. Peter's Square, with a sleeping

bag and a handmade peace flag at his feet. On Sunday, John Paul lay in state in the Vatican's frescoed Apostolic Palace, dressed in crimson vestments and a white bishop's miter, his head resting on a stack of gold pillows. A rosary was wound around his hands and a staff was tucked under his left forearm. A Swiss Guard stood on either side as diplomats, politicians and clergy

paid their respects at his feet. "Our Holy Father looks very much at peace. It was very satisfy ing for all of us to see him so serene," Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles said after paying his

"His life is finished and he gave up his spirit," he said. Around the world, bells tolled and

worshippers prayed in remem-

brance of the man who reigned for longer than all but two of his predecessors and was credited with helping bring down communism in Europe and spreading a message of peace during his frequent travels around the world. As they begin a series of prepa-

ratory meetings, the cardinals quietly will be sizing up each other for the task of electing the 265th successor to St. Peter, the first The conclave, held in utmost

secrecy with all cardinals seques-

tered until a decision is reached, must begin 15 to 20 days after the pope's death. John Paul was 58 when the cardinals elected him in 1978 as the first non-Italian pope in 455 years. He appointed all but three of the 117 cardinals entitled to attend the secret conclave electing the new pope, but there is no guarantee that

his legacy of conservatism will continue into the new reign.

8 killed

FROM PAGE 1 A northern region-bound bus collided head-on with a Dhaka-bound bus at around 8:30pm at Koddar crossing while passing a truck, said Superintendent of Police (SP) of Siraigani Shahadat Hossain, The truck had stopped on the road due to

engine malfunction, he added. Of the injured, 50 people were rushed to different hospitals in Sirajganj, the SP said, adding that several of them are in critical a

condition. The number of deaths may

increase, police said. **Embarrassed**

govt

bers are appointed for a four-year "If the government initiates any step at the moment, people may think the government is interfering in the commission. The government is aware of it," the policymaker said.

"Although the government had

members before expiry of their

tenure." he added. The ACC mem-

no role in the commission's present situation, people will see it as a failure of the government," he said pointing at the commission's failure to start functioning effectively since its formation in last November. The government and an ACC commissioner pointed out on several occasions that a few decisions

Justice Sultan Hossain Khan, were not made in accordance with the ACC Act. ACC Commissioner Prof Maniruzzaman Miah officially pointed out such controversial

decisions and asked the chairman to

and steps, especially some unilat-

eral moves by ACC Chairman

take steps in line with the act. When asked whether ACC's performance reflects government and public expectation, Moudud said: "People of the country have a huge expectation from them (ACC) And. I think, they will be able to fulfil

that if they go by the ACC act.'

that the ACC Act has some flaws, the law minister said: "I don't think there is any fault in the act.' "The commission has not pointed out what that fault is," said Moudud. "If there is really any fault and if they

Asked to comment on ACC

chairman's point made on March 23

"We formulated the act and formed the commission with high hopes. People also hope that this commission will work effectively to combat corruption at all levels of the society, especially at the high level, he noted

Although the policymakers are

saying they cannot interfere in the

commission, the ACC members

inform us about it, we'll look into the

already had several rounds of discussion with them, well-placed sources said. Prof Miah discussed the commission's problems when he called on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in January although it was termed 'a

personal meeting'.

Besides, the commission chairman and two commissioners have met Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman. The ACC chairman is also trying to meet the PM and the president to discuss the situation at the commission, sources

An extra Tk 3.846 crore -- Tk

The 12-day-long SME Fair,

April 15. Minister for Industry Maulana

entrepreneurs from home and abroad were present on the occa-

1,567 crore in salary, Tk 1,488 in

The defence staff's salaries will need an additional Tk 448 crore, allowances Tk 474 crore and pensions Tk 169 crore totalling an

oriented industries

She, however, stated that

fair cutting the ribbon and went round different stalls.

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

The opposition leaders and legal

According to another proposal,

commissioners will have to be made in consultation with the major political parties. The Election Commission will have to have the power to tailor its budget on its own and appoint staff who will run the election instead of the employees deputed from the administration

Three US legislators recently

ism to take place and the failure to

The AL leader asked. "How can a