Baby dies as parents

FROM PAGE 1

unit [ICU] support during the 72hour post-operative observation period and negligence of the authorities," he said at a press conference in front of the Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) office after the DRU refused to give him space to hold a press conference.

"On December 27, the hospital authorities suddenly informed me at 11:00am that the oxygen supply to the ICU was interrupted and I would have to shift my daughter to another hospital. The problem, however, started at 4:00am," said Shafiqul.

"I made all arrangements for her shifting, but the hospital authorities kept my ill baby hostage for about half an hour until I paid all the dues worth Tk 7,740. When I took my daughter to another hospital the doctors there declared her

already dead," he said. When contacted, Coordinator of Labaid Specialised Hospital Mahbubul Hoque told The Daily Star over telephone that the child had congenital cardiac problem and was in a critical condition with lung infection.

The baby underwent tion on Monday night.

septrostomy, an invasive procedure, on December 25 and was kept in the ICU. As her condition was deteriorating gradually, we informed her parents of it and they agreed to shift the baby," he said.

He denied that the hospital authorities told the girl's father about an interrupted oxygen supply and said there was no trouble in the supply. Even an alternative system was ready and the moment the parents wanted to shift the baby, the hospital authorities initiated the emergency procedure to transfer the baby by an ambu-

lance, he said. The DRU authorities refused to let Shafiqul hold the press conference at its auditorium although he had paid the auditorium's rent in advance on Sunday.

DRU sources said Shafiqul applied for the reservation saying a press conference will be held on familial matters. But later, the DRU came to know that it was against an institution. The DRU authorities cancelled the booking for providing "false" information and informed Shafigul of the cancella-

also worked for her father Zulfigar

Ali Bhutto and brother Murtaza

One day 'Bash' [Bashir Riaz]

showed a picture on the cover of a

French magazine to his leader, in

which Benazir Bhutto was posing

with her son Bilawal. A happy

Benazir immediately asked for a

black marker and wrote a question

The question said, 'Dear Uncle

Bash, will you be my spokesman

when I will grow up? Benazir Bhutto

89'. Later on Bashir Riaz published

this picture with the remarks of his

leader in his book about the struggle

met then US president George HW

Bush, with his mother when she was

on an official visit to Washington.

Benazir actually followed the foot-

steps of her father Zulfigar Ali

Bhutto, who took his daughter to

India with him in 1972 where he

held talks with then Prime Minister

Indira Gandhi. Bilawal was only two

years old when Benazir's first gov-

ernment was dismissed by presi-

dent Ghulam Ishaq Khan after 20

o hero the child come ourselftom

was part of the establishment,

which hanged Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto,

but Benazir accepted him for the

sake of democracy and reconcilia-

tion. Unfortunately, she was

betrayed. Bilawal was five years old

when his mother became prime

minister again in 1993. This time

too, she was not allowed to com-

plete her five-year term and lost

power after three years. Bilawal

spent the next nine years in exile

without his father who was impris-

oned in Pakistan by Musharraf

regime. Half his life he has spent

without his father; now, the rest of

his life will be spent without his

mother. He and his two little sisters

are feeling to be betrayed by all

those who wanted the help of their

mother for bringing true democracy

will not only be the best revenge of

her mother's assassination but the

best way to complete her wish for

becoming a bridge between Islam

and the West. Only a true democracy

can become a common agenda of

cooperation between the two civili-

the problems of extremism and

Only true democracy can resolve

Bhutto had plans of an interna-

tional conference of world leaders

between the Muslim world and the

West in 2008. She even planned the

engagement of those forces, who

were blamed for her assassination

by the current regime. Both Bilawal

and Asif are determined to com-

plete the disrupted agenda of

Benazir Bhutto but they need lot of

cooperation from the party ranks

They need to convert their pain and

grief into a strength. Now, it will be

the PPP's duty to complete her

Benazir Bhutto said in the coming

book and must contribute posi-

tively to the restoration of democ-

racy and also for the grand cause of

reconciliation between the Islamic

world and the West. It is proved that

puppet leaders of the third world

cannot bring democracy to the

Muslim countries and cannot

become bridge between Islam and

the West. Only popular leaders like

Benazir Bhutto can do that but

unfortunately she was also betrayed

Hamid Mir: executive editor, Geo TV,

The PCBs and FCBs have

The PPP should not forget what

unfinished agenda.

by the West.

He is sure that true democracy

in Pakistan.

President Ghulam Ishaq Khan

The same year (1989), Bilawal

of Bhutto family.

on the picture with her autograph.

Benazir's dream

to market the book in February. The book's launch will accelerate the debate for the reconciliation between Islam and the West through democracy. The debate may give a new 'life' to Benazir, but keeping that debate alive will be the biggest challenge for the Pakistan People's Party in 2008.

And 2008 will throw tough challenges for the PPP's new chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari. Benazir Bhutto faced similar challenges in 1979 after her father Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was hanged. Then, mother Nusrat Bhutto took over the party as the chairperson and Benazir Bhutto was named the co-chairperson.

In 1979, General Zia-ul Haq postponed the general election indefinitely because he was aware that the PPP would benefit from the sympathy wave after the hanging of its founder-chairman. The PPP did not face the challenge of going to the polls in 1979.

The only big challenge was the party's political survival and they met that period with courage. Later on, it was the co-chairperson, Benazir, who led the party in practical terms and now her husband will lead the party as co-chairman in similar fashion.

In 2008, the PPP's new chairman and co-chairman face bigger challenges than in 1979. President Musharraf cannot delay the election for more than two months. Thus, the party will soon have to face elections. No doubt that PPP will benefit from the sympathy wave after the assassination of Benazir but keeping party united will definitely be a challenge after the election. Tracking down the mastermind behind Benazir's assassination is another challenge for the new leadership of party.

Making clear that he is not interested in any investigation by the incumbent regime, Asif Ali Zardari has already pointed fingers at the alleged suspects. Confident, he is more focused on the polls now. He would also be keen to arrest the assassins when his party comes into power. His son Bilawal is ready to participate in the campaign because he also wants to contribute to the 'revenge through democracy.' Most PPP workers and sympathisers are happy with Zardari's first press conference as the co-chairman. They say he showed confidence to carry on for initiating a grand dialogue with his wife's mission.

On the other side, many in the government were not looking comfortable when Zardari declared the pro-Musharraf Muslim League as the 'Killers League.' It is feared that if the PPP sweeps the polls, it will immediately start confronting the alleged suspects who are close to Musharraf.

There are no doubts that the New Year will be tougher for Musharraf. If PPP gets majority in coming elections then Zardari will try to impeach Musharraf with the help of Nawaz Sharif and if PPP will be denied a majority then Zardari will go for a mass movement against Musharraf. Some of Musharraf's close advisers are trying to find a way out through which they can avoid a direct confrontation with the PPP, but they also face problems. Zardari have refused to receive a Muslim League (Q) delegation at his Naudero residence, which intended to see him for condolence. Bilawal is not ready to forgive the killers of his mother like Benazir forgave many killers of her father in the larger interest of the country. Bilawal cannot forget the turbulent period his mother faced without her hus-

band in-exile. He is an eyewitness of all the sufferings his mother faced between 1999 and 2007 when Musharraf was in power.

Bilawal was only a year old in 1989 when his prime minister- costs. mother Benazir Bhutto clearly hinted that her son would be the already been asked to give a work next leader of the PPP. Bashir Riaz plan on how they would reduce was her press spokesman then. He their spread.

Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 1 freedom from corruption and labour freedom.

It said Bangladesh has extreme barriers to trade freedom and tariffs are prohibitively high. It is also weak in investment freedom, property rights, and financial freedom.

"Corruption is rampant," the Heritage Foundation said, adding that chaotic regulations and restricted market sectors also impede greater foreign investment in the country as does a haphazard and politicised approach to the rule of law.

The banking sector is plagued with similar problems, the founda-

tion observed. It, referring to Bangladesh's weighted average tariff rate at 55.8 percent in 2005, said barriers to trade include prohibitions and restrictions on imports, restrictive labelling requirements, and ineffectively operated customs proce-

Referring to "widespread corruption", the think tank said, "Corruption serves as a non-tariff barrier... It [corruption] is cancerous to all other economic freedoms, this is the key area that needs improvement.

"Starting of a business in Bangladesh takes an average of 37 days, compared to the world average of 48 days. Entrepreneurship should be easier for maximum job creation. Obtaining a business licence is relatively simple but closing a business is difficult.'

It said the overall freedom to start, operate, and close a business is relatively well protected by the national regulatory environment.

DU teachers

FROM PAGE 16

Morshed in his statement told the court that he had taken some photographs of a procession of teachers and students with a digital camera on August 22 last year and handed them to ASI Anis.

Anis, on the other hand, said he had downloaded the camera photos, which Sub-Inspector Sirajul Islam at Shahbagh Police Station later seized from him. Anis said he signed the seizure list.

The four teachers and the one student, now in jail custody, were brought to the court, and the magistrate allowed them to sit down on a bench during the hearing. The four teachers are Dhaka

University Teachers' Association President Prof Sadrul Amin, General Secretary Prof Anwar Hossain, Prof Harun-ar-Rashid, dean of science faculty, and Prof Neem Chandra Bhowmik, chairman of applied physics department.

The case was filed on August 22 against 4,000 to 5,000 unnamed students and teachers of Dhaka University and outsiders for violating the emergency rules, vandalising public and private property, obstructing police duty and assaulting law enforcers at the university and in the vicinity.

Police, however, pressed charges against four teachers and 15 students September 9 for instigating the violence on the campus and at Shahbagh on August 21 and 22.

Another court will today hear the other case against the same accused.

Sweeper colony

FROM PAGE 16 requested the residents to vacate their houses.

damage to the structure.

None was reported injured. Families said they went back to the building after city corporation engineers, who visited the spot, told them that the cracks caused no

They also said the engineers would visit the building today to further examine the cracks.

A DCC engineer, preferring anonymity, said the incident might have happened as the building was constructed on a ground which was earlier used as rubbish dump.

Sending Hasina

FROM PAGE 16

her physical condition... she is not helping us about her treatment.'

Hasina, who is under trial in an extortion case, could not appear before the court yesterday morning as her physical condition deteriorated. She fell ill during the hearing of the trial Monday.

"We provided four doctors for her treatment whom she selected. The doctors sought her cooperation for some tests but she did not cooperate with them," said Haider, adding, "As she did not cooperate with the doctors, her treatment would be provided according to the medical board's directions.'

The specialist doctors who were assigned to Hasina's treatment were Pran Gopal, Shaila Khatun, Modasser Ali and M Abdullah.

The DIG-prisons said, "As the jail code does not allow treatment facilities abroad for inmates, the former prime minister would be given treatment at any hospital or clinic in the country she chooses."

Talking to The Daily Star he said,

their concerns about Hasina's health. In another joint statement 308 doctors also expressed their concerns and urged authorities

Boost export thru

FROM PAGE 1 A total of 395 institutions, including 15 companies from abroad, are showcasing their products in the exhibition at five premier pavilions, 42 pavilions, five premier minipavilions, 36 mini-pavilions, 35 premier stalls and 262 stalls at the

city's Shere-Bangla Nagar venue. Entry fee has been fixed at Tk 10 for each adult and Tk 5 for children. The fair will remain open from 10:00am to 9:00pm on working days and from 10:00am to 10:00pm on holidays.

Finance and Commerce Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam, Commerce Secretary Firoz Ahmed, FBCCI Administrator Syed Manjur Elahi and EPB Vice-Chairman M Shahbullah also spoke at the function. Advisers to the caretaker government, diplomats, representatives of the international organisations, members of business community from home and abroad and distinguished personalities attended the inaugural function.

After the inaugural speech, the chief adviser formally opened the DITF 2008 at its venue. He went round some stalls.

The CA said the government has taken up programmes to face the challenges of globalisation, which include further intensifying export diversification and involving country's huge population in these activities to generate employment opportunity and reduce poverty.

To attain the goal, he said the government is focusing on simplification of import-export process, increasing the standard of goods and productivity, application of modern technology in trade and commerce, expansion of export market and flourishing capability and establishing transparency and accountability in all spheres of the business arena. He mentioned the government

has formed Regulatory Reforms Commission and Better Business Forum aiming to improve the business environment and simplify the rules and regulations.

oil was selling at Tk 100 a litre yesterday. It has lately been in short supply The CA said the country will have to participate in the trade fairs of different countries on a large scale for expanding market of export goods

and exploring new markets. "If necessary, single-country trade fair for Bangladeshi products will have to be arranged in various prospective places, which will bring good results," he observed. Simultaneously, efforts will have

to be carried out for duty-free access to the markets of the developed countries. In this regard, he said it is imperative to take appropriate steps by the

ministries and the departments

concerned and the private sector for human resource development. "It is imperative to improve knowledge, strategy and efficiency to realise facilities in different international forums," he told his business

audience. Different business associations and research organisations have scope to make contribution in this regard, he said.

Besides, the CA said, country's interest will have to be upheld in regional and bilateral commercial discussions in the light of the multilateral commercial system of the

World Trade Organisation (WTO). Citing an impressive contribution of readymade garments to the nation's export income, he said all will have to be more active about increasing backward linkage of this sector, reducing lead time, development of infrastructure and compli-

He suggested enhancing the capability and productivity to face the situation after the lifting of European Union's embargo on import of Chinese garments from January 2008 as well as to utilise the opportunity in Japan and other potential countries.

He hoped that the Dhaka International Trade Fair 2008 would make a positive contribution to local and international trade arena, particularly increasing export trade.

Emergency needed

FROM PAGE 1

nation can publish all kinds of news amid emergency because we want cooperation from journalists to establish a corruption free nation,"

gural function of a 15-day massawareness raising programme styled "One year of Change under Present Caretaker Government" organised by the Department of Mass Communication (DMC) at the PIB auditorium. "We're in the government for a

short time but working to establish a permanent system," the adviser said. He also pointed out the difference between the previous and present caretaker governments, saying they have rounded up top politicians under a massive purge.

He mentioned the entire package of reforms taken up by them in the last one year like institutional reforms in the Election Commission (EC), Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), Public Service Commission (PSC), recruiting agencies for overseas employment, Chittagong Seaport shipment system, separation of the judiciary from the execu tive, and development in various service sectors like establishing the Citizen Charter, One Stop Service for police clearance certificate and

The law adviser also said they are working to establish a people' government through holding a free, fair and acceptable election after accomplishing various institutional reforms.

Terming the present caretaker regime a reformist and crisis management government, Mainul said they on priority basis have taken up some reform initiatives to strengthen the foundation of democratic system and establish good governance.

He listed institutional and economic reforms, service-sector development, food safety and supply situation and freedom of informa tion and mass media.

the government aiming at establishing an equitable society and fair administration for honest and competent people, he added. created an avenue for democracy,

anti-corruption drives and reform measurers. The adviser urged the civil society media representatives and the administration to work unitedly to

Presiding over the function Information Secretary Jamil Osman said the DMC is a responsible service institution and works at the grassroots level to disseminate necessary information through popular media

like bioscope, films, songs, discussion, meeting and street drama.

"These changes may cause prob-"Newspapers as the fourth state of a lems to some vested quarters, but the people will gradually get the benefit

Mainul was speaking at the inau-

passport related problems.

for a longer term," he observed.

Curbing corruption from all strata

of society is one of the mandates of

He said the government has development and tranquillity in the country in the last one year through

check terrorism, corruption and

today (Tuesday)," Shafique told

Prosecution lawyer Shamim

Ahmed said, "We have met all the

demands of defence lawyers and

showed them all the documents and

pieces of evidence regarding the

Azam J Chowdhury, managing direc-

tor of Eastcoast Trading Pvt Ltd, filed

the case against Hasina and Selim

with the Gulshan Police Station on

included Rehana's name in the

charge sheet submitted on July 24.

Later, the investigation officer (IO)

In his complaint, Azam said

Russian company Techno Prom

Export (TPE) obtained work order for

missioning of Siddhirganj power

mentioned that Shiekh Hasina's

cousin former lawmaker Sheikh Selim

tried to be the local agent of the TPE

and on different occasions tried to

influence the TPE chief to serve his

started putting pressure, and Azam

met him at his Banani residence with

the proposal of appointing him as consultant for the second phase of the

work and told him that a large amount

of commission would be given to him

When all his attempts failed, Selim

In the FIR, Azam J Chowdhury

plant in Narayanganj in 2000.

THE CASE AND CHARGES

June 13 last year.

purpose.

journalists replying to a question.

Hasina's lawyers she could not appear before the court

minister Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, another accused in the case, was

Hasina's younger sister Sheikh Rehana, the other accused, was shown as absconding. The former premier's chief coun-

sel Shafique Ahmed told the press that after examining all the relevant documents and evidence, they are now convinced that charges cannot be framed against any of the accused in

Citing some 'baseless allegations' that contained 'inconsistencies' Shafique said they will submit a discharge petition before the court on Sunday and argue on it. Opposing the charge brought

against Hasina over awarding a power plant deal on turn-key basis instead of the first phase of building and comnon-turn-key, the counsel mentioned that units number-5 and 6 Ghorashal power plant took nine and seven years to be completed. The job was awarded on non-turn-key basis.

But Siddhirganj power plant deal awarded (when Hasina was premier) to Techno Prom Export, a state-owned Russian power generation company, on turn-key basis had a 28-month deadline for completion, and it saved \$ 61.67 million of public money, he

For these reasons, the charge of extracting toll by prolonging the work period is baseless, he argued. Moreover, the Russian company

and the state-owned Russian company, and he had nothing to do at any point in the process.

Sheikh Selim received over Tk 2.99

Hasina was the prime minister.

FROM PAGE 1

on the retail markets there. On the wholesale markets, per litre soya bean oil sold at Tk93 while it cost Tk 85-86 a week ago. Price of palm oil rose to Tk 80 from Tk 73 and that of a better quality (super palm) to Tk 84 from Tk 77. The latter is being

widely sold as soya bean oil by retail-

Prices of oil

Importers claimed their prices reflect the hikes on the international market. But wholesalers and retailers dismiss the argument saying that no consignment of soya bean or palm oil has entered the country since the recent global price spiral.

They pointed out that there are always reserves of edible oil that can meet the domestic need for at least a month. So, usually it takes more than a month for the global price hikes to affect the local markets. In the last few days, the price of

per tonne crude soya bean oil on the international market has risen to \$1,160 from \$1,100 on December 22. During the same period, the crude palm oil price has shot up to \$1,060, marking a \$65 rise, importers said.

But AKM Fakhrul Alam, country manager of Malaysian Palm Oil, said, "The global price hikes have nothing to do with the soaring up of price on the local market as the edible oil now being sold was exported long before December 22."

Oil prices should not rise further in the next couple of weeks as a shipment of 32 thousand tonnes of crude soya bean is scheduled to arrive at Chittagong port in a day or two. Another 25 thousand tonnes of crude palm oil would reach by the second week of this month. Both the consignments have been bought at previous international rates, he

Sensing that the retail price might see a sharp rise, unscrupulous traders have been hoarding soya bean oil said wholesalers at Moulvibazar in Old Dhaka, the largest wholesale market for edible oil.

A section of traders are using brokers to collect oil from local market with the motive of selling those at much higher prices. "Importers and distributors are

selling oil at high rates instead of supplying us with it as per our demand. And it all forces us to increase prices," said Kamal Hossain, a wholesaler at the capital's Karwan Bazar. He also said the government

should intervene in the market

situation to make sure prices of the

products bought at previous international rates do not increase.

India allows

FROM PAGE 1

exporters in the morning. The meeting also decided that the consignments of rice under the LCs opened after December 27 would be exported to Bangladesh at the rate of \$ 500 a ton, said Nirmal Shikari, Indian rice

exporter. On December 27, the Indian government decided to raise the export price of rice from \$ 425 to \$ 500 perton.

Following the government decision, the Indian customs authorities on December 3 stopped allowing consignments of rice below \$ 500 per ton through Petrapole land port in India, causing tailbacks of trucks loaded with rice consignments to Bangladesh.

Earlier on Monday, rice prices in Bangladesh saw a sharp rise as consignments of rice from India reached the Benapole land port under an increased rate of \$ 505 a The price of coarse rice hit ar

all-time high on Monday with Tk 30 a kg in the capital and elsewhere in the country.

UNB adds: Asked if the govern ment would buy rice from India at the enhanced price, Food Adviser Tapan Chowdhury yesterday told reporters, "We are considering rice import from other countries like Thailand, Myanmar and Pakistan. We are also examining the quantum to meet the domestic demand.

India on December 27 jacked up the minimum export price of rice at \$500 per ton, third time in less than a year, from \$315 a ton in February last year.

In November, India withdrew the ban on rice export to Bangladesh in view of the difficulties caused by the devastating cyclone. But later, it imposed number of conditions and finally raised the minimum price to \$500 on December 27.

Tapan Chowdhury said the government has taken a move to change the rice import policy to facilitate import from other coun-He said India had promised to

export 5 lakh tons to Bangladesh.

"We hope they will sell to us at the previous price," he added. He said traders favour import from India because of low trans-

port cost, but they will now look for alternative sources.

the campaign through a discussion

the fields concerned.

Bangladesh Betar will also broadcast talk shows to review the progress and successes of the

Pak govt makes

FROM PAGE 16

Cheema's comments made at a news conference a day after Bhutto was assassinated at Liaquat Bagh in Rawalpindi on December 27, came after TV channels aired privately shot photos and video footage which showed a gunman shooting at

The Pakistan People's Party leader is seen in the footage falling through the sun-roof before the suicide bomber detonated his explosives. The briefing by caretaker Prime Minister Mohammedmian Soomro was also attended by the foreign, interior and information ministers and senior officials.

"Editor after editor lambasted the government for its non-serious attitude towards the tragedy, specially the statement that Bhutto had died by hitting the lever and not (due to) a bullet or shrapnel," The

News reported. During the briefing, an editor asked why spokesman Cheema had said that a lever on the sun-roof had caused a fatal injury when the manufacturers of the car and Benazir's husband Asif Ali Zardari had stated that there was no metallic lever that

could have caused the wound. Khan said the spokesman's comments may have been a mistake as "we are Faujis (soldiers) and we are not so articulate to present our views as you journalists can". Both the interior minister and spokesman Cheema are retired army

officers. "I am sorry if that happened and please forgive us and ignore the comment," he told the editors. Earlier, Prime Minister Soomro tried to defend the interior ministry's spokesman, saying he was just relaying facts that had been told to him, especially about the cause of

"We are conducting an investigation and all TV footage, all evidence, that would be available will help in reaching a definite conclusion, Soomro told the editors. But the editors asked more

questions, especially with reference to the medical report of doctors of Rawalpindi General Hospital who treated Benazir. They "emphatically pointed out that the report quoted by the

spokesman never mentioned the cause of the head injury" to Benazir. The report only said there was a skull fracture which caused cardiopulmonary arrest, the editors pointed out. Soomro then referred the issue to Interior Minister Khan. He explained in detail the security measures taken and asserted that Benazir had a bulletproof vehicle which could not be damaged by a

bomb or bullets. Once she was inside it, she was secure and police vans were trying to keep her car clear of other vehicles. But when she emerged from the sun-roof she exposed herself to an attack, Khan said.

"Nothing would have happened to her even if every one in the world had wanted to hurt her," the Minister added. Soomro was repeatedly asked whether he would allow a foreign investigation into the murder but he asserted that Pakistani experts were competent to do the job.

His denial raised questions from the editors about the offer made by President Pervez Musharraf to British Prime Minister Gordon Brown to consider foreign help in probing the assassination. Meanwhile, the advertisement

issued by Punjab's Home Ministry included two photos of the suspected assailant and the severed head of the suspected bomber. "The public is hereby informed that the two individuals in the above

photographs are the accused terrorists in the Liaquat Bagh, Rawalpindi terror attack, which resulted in the death of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and others," it said. "The government of Punjab has announced a cash award of Rs 1 crore for lead information and any

solid evidence." The advertisement

said the names of persons providing

any information would be kept "strictly confidential". It also sought the cooperation of the people for "dismantling of terrorist network" Earlier a Pakistani election official said Tuesday "it looks impossible" for the country to hold elections as scheduled in the wake of the violence that followed the assassi-

nation. However, a final decision would not be made until Wednesday, after the Election Commission consulted all the political parties, commission spokesman Kanwar Dilshad said. Critics have said the commission is stacked with officials loyal to President Pervez Musharraf.

The commission was to make the announcement public later in the day but was holding an urgent meeting Tuesday morning to review security reports from around the country before deciding on the Pakistan, India exact date, the official said.

"We want the delay to be minimal. But the election commission needs a realistic amount of time to get things back on track," he said.

The parliament vote is seen as the next step in a transition to civilian-led democracy in Pakistan under President Pervez Musharraf, a veteran general who only stepped down as head of the army after being re-elected in October. A wave of violence, arson and

paign rally on Thursday, fuelled by outrage over her death and disbelief at the government explanation of At least 58 people were killed, most of them in the southern prov-

looting swept the country after

Benazir's assassination at a cam-

Rampaging demonstrators ransacked election offices in several places across the province, destroying voter lists and hampering prepa-

"The situation in Sindh is vola-

election staff to move around." The election commission held an emergency meeting on Monday before Musharraf held four hours of consultations with top aides at the Camp Office, his former military office in the garrison city of

tile," he said. "It is very difficult for

Rawalpindi adjacent to the capital. Several top officials confirmed that the commission decided on Monday to delay the vote, but wanted to assess the security situation in the provinces before deciding how long to postpone it, the

Election commission spokesman Kanwar Dilshad told AFP that the commission was reviewing the provincial reports and would give its assessment later in the day. While daily life has been return-

ing to normal, the nuclear-armed Islamic nation is still feeling the aftershock of Benazir's killing. Share prices were down 3.8 percent on Tuesday morning after shedding 4.7 percent on Monday. The United States, which counts Musharraf as a key ally in the fight

against al-Qaeda and Taliban extremists, said a delay would be acceptable if the major political parties approved. It was not immediately known if they would do so. Benazir's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is the country's largest. Her untested 19-year-old son Bilawal

has taken over as chairman, with his father Asif Ali Zardari as co-Zardari said Monday that the PPP would invite other parties to take a "joint stance" in the event of a

postponement. "If it so happens, this will not be the first time that the dictator runs away from elections," he said.

Public anger at the death of Benazir, a pro-Western politician with a huge popular following, has mounted since the interior ministry denied her attacker -- clearly seen in videos firing a gun at close range -had actually hit her. It said the former prime minister

died banging her head on her car's sunroof but also that the shooting, followed by a massive suicide attack, had been orchestrated by al-Qaeda. The PPP has demanded an inter-

national inquiry, but officials have said that is out of the question. Abbas, Nasir

FROM PAGE 16 The IO said the two arrestees need to be placed on remand so that vital information about the theft could be

conspiracy to harass them.

extracted. The defence lawyers, however, submitted a bail petition along with the cancellation of the remand prayer saying their clients were implicated in the case as part of a

Anwara Begum was placed on a three-day remand and another accused former deputy secretary SM Mizanur Rahman was sent to jail in the same case. Seven arrestees who confessed to

their complicity are Amir Hamza,

Monir Hossain, Abdul Hamid, Nikhil

On Sunday, former lawmaker

Chanda, Lutfor Rahman, Ujjal Hossain and Nurul Islam alias Nuru. Fourteen other arrestees are Samiul Abedin, Masud Rana Saiful, Abu Bakar, Shariful Islam Manik, Mohammad Shahjahan, Mohammad Al Shamim, Belal Hossain, Abul Hossain, Abdul Halim Babul, Zaki Mahbub, Edward Roy, Debu Barua, Mohammad Solaiman

and Sankar Chandra Dey. Emergency

FROM PAGE 1 Sohul firmly reiterated the EC's promise to hold a free and fair election under a voter list with photograph by the set timeline, that is, by December 2008 according to the EC- announced election roadmap.

The only objective of the EC is to

hold a free, fair and transparent

election and facilitate the people of the country in casting their vote without any impediment, he said. As to when the EC will sit with the government to discuss the matter of creating electoral atmosphere, Sohul said they will apprise the government of the matter one

month before the city-corporation elections, and that might be in February or March next. Asked how the national elections would be held, under the state of emergency or relaxing it, he told the newsmen to wait. "Let's see what can be done... The time has not yet come to say how the national elections will be held," the

election commissioner said

each other's foreign ministries in

Mostly Muslim Pakistan and

New Delhi and Islamabad, it said.

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their respective nuclear installations and facilities," the Pakistani foreign ministry statement said. Officials handed over the lists at

mainly Hindu India have fought three wars since independence from Britain 61 years ago and conducted tit-for-tat nuclear tests The agreement on handing over

details of their atomic facilities came into force in 1991 and the first exchange was on January 1, 1992. The rivals launched a slowmoving peace process in January 2004 after coming close to another

war two years earlier over the dis-

puted Himalayan state of Kashmir.

In October 2005 they formalised an agreement on pre-notification of ballistic missile tests. They have also set up a tele-

phone hotline aimed at preventing accidental nuclear conflict.

Islamabad during the phase, the complainant in Dhaka while its audiovisual units "The medical board would be was supposed to inform the ministry will carry out the publicity drive at Private banks Angry at the proposal made in July constituted within a day or two. concerned every month about progdistrict and upazila levels. 2000, Selim threatened to stop the ress of the work with photographs and The jail authorities with the help of how she died. Department of Films and video footages, the counsel menwork with the help of Sheikh Hasina if FROM PAGE 1 experts would select the medical Publication (DFP) will screen the commission was not paid, the FIR Bangladesh the rate is 6-7 percentdocumentaries through TV chanboard members." said, adding that meetings for a nego-The defence lawyers also said that age points, and in June 2007 it was Meanwhile, 41 intellectuals, nels while the state-run tiation over payment of the money Azam J Chowdhury was merely a sales 5.93 percentage points. Bangladesh Television (BTV) will poets, educationalists, authors, agent of the Russian company and he continued at Selim's residence.

rations for the election, the official

ince of Sindh, the seat of the Bhutto family's political dynasty where she BB sources said they have initiwas laid to rest Friday at a funeral telecast talk shows to be particijournalists and cultural personalihad no role in striking the deal with In the FIR, Azam also mentioned attended by hundreds of thousands pated by the advisers to the careated steps to reduce the spread of ties in a joint statement expressed that his company Eastcoast Trading the company. The deal took place of mourners. taker government and experts in banks in a bid to decrease business Private Ltd was appointed the local between Power Development Board agent of the Russian company when

> "Medical report shows that Hasina crore in eight cheques between concerned to send Hasina abroad government in different fields in is suffering from high blood pressure, October 24, 2000 and March 14, 2001, for treatment if required. eye and kidney diseases and as a result the FIR added. the past year.