Southern US states mourn for tornado victims

Management told AFP.

In Arkansas 13 people were killed

by tornadoes that tore through the

state, injuring dozens and destroying

towns. Governor Mike Beebe declared

the night-long rescue effort as teams

searched house by house for trapped

town of Atkins in Pope County, where

The hardest hit appeared to be the

The same turbulent weather front

launch of space shuttle Atlantis from

Police arrested two more suspects

yesterday in the suicide attack that

killed opposition leader Benazir

Bhutto, and thousands of her fol-

lowers gathered at her tomb to mark

the end of mourning for her and

launch her party's campaign for this

Javed Igbal Cheema said the two

suspects were picked up in

Rawalpindi, where Benazir died in

a gun and bomb attack Dec. 27. He

declined to say whether the two

men were key figures in the assassi-

nation, which threatened to plunge

whether (the arrest) is important,'

Cheema told The Associated Press.

"After the investigation, I will be in

western Pakistan arrested two

other suspects, including a 15-

year-old boy who was alleged to

have been part of a backup suicide

squad assigned to kill Benazir if the

announced as a team of British

detectives from Scotland Yard

returned to Pakistan to report the

findings of their investigation of the

assassination. Their report is

expected to shed light on exactly how

Benazir died amid confusion over

whether she was killed by a gunshot

to release a summary of the report

invited Scotland Yard to conduct its

own inquiry after Benazir support-

ers alleged the government may

have been involved in her death.

Musharraf rejected calls from

Benazir's party for an independent

believe the assassination was

masterminded by Baitullah

Mehsud, an al-Qaida-linked com-

mander based in South Waziristan.

Pakistan, a coalition of Islamic

extremist groups fighting Pakistani

forces in the lawless tribal area

along the border with Afghanistan.

On Wednesday, Mehsud's coalition

announced an indefinite cease-fire

On government steps if the court

does not give directive in this

regard, he said, "It'll have to be

When reporters asked about the

future of other graft cases brought

under the EPR, he said that the

Appellate Division verdict on

government appeal against

Wednesday's HC judgement would

be applicable to all other similar

On lifting of the state of emer-

"It's obvious that you need to

create a congenial environment,

along with other conditions, to

initiate electoral process," he

for lifting of the state of emergency,

the law adviser said it is not possi-

decision of the government.

HAJJ MISMANAGEMENT

sought," he added.

The government has launched

investigation into the hajj misman-

agement to stop harassment of the

hajj pilgrims, the law adviser said.

"If needed, assistance of the (anti-

corruption] taskforce will be

sufferings" of the pilgrims in Saudi

Arabia, Hassan Ariff said there are

allegations of non-cooperation

and misbehaviour from the

Bangladesh hajj mission.

Mentioning the "indescribable

ble for him to give a timeframe, as it

Asked for a specific timeframe

gency by March as demanded by the

Law adviser

with Pakistani forces.

FROM PAGE 1

looked into later."

hold the polls.

Mehsud leads Tehrik-e-Taliban

U.S. and Pakistani officials

U.N. investigation.

British diplomats are expected

President Pervez Musharrat

or the impact of a suicide bombing.

The latest arrests were

Last month, police in north-

"I can't really comment on

the nation into political chaos.

a position to say more."

primary assassins failed.

Interior Ministry spokesman

month's parliamentary election.

2 suspects

AP, Islamabad

houses and businesses in a number of

AFP, Tennessee

Southern US states mourned yesterday after tornadoes wrought havoc across the region, killing 55 people and injuring hundreds, smashing buildings and flinging trees like disasters intencounties. matchsticks.

Dozens of tornadoes sliced across roads and power outages hampered the region late Tuesday and early Wednesday, leaving a trail of destruction in five states and deaths in four, in people. what US media called the deadliest US tornado outbreak in two decades.

an 11-year-old girl and her parents In hardest hit Tennessee, the death were killed. In Clinton, a town in Van toll rose late Wednesday to 31, with Buren County, two people were killed one other person presumed missing, and at least 50 were injured. the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency said. could delay Thursday's planned

Thirteen people were killed in Arkansas, seven in Kentucky and four in Alabama, and hundreds of people Florida's east coast. were injured in those states and in BENAZIR KILLING Mississippi, officials said.

"We've never seen anything like this. It will take 15 years to clean everything up. But the people here will never be the same," said Barry Newberry, a town constable in Lafayette, Tennessee who arrived to help neighbors along a road where everyhouse was destroyed.

"Everybody was running around like they were drunk. They were just dazed and devastated. It was dark and everybody was hollering," he said.

"I've seen tornadoes on the ground and I've seen them in the air, but this was different. This one was wide, a massive funnel," Jean Byrd of Mason, Tennessee, a town of just over 1,000 residents, toldAFP.

With a sigh of relief, Byrd added: "It touched down just after it passed our house. We were lucky."

It took only two minutes for one twister to turn a commercial center southeast of Memphis into a horrific wreck and leave behind three dead.

It looked like a bomb hit the main building: the front was torn away and the roof collapsed, with glass and tiles spilled across the ground.

"It swept through in a matter of one and a half, two minutes. Boom, boom, over," said Memphis police officer Roderic Cunningham, who said looters had quickly followed the storm's destruction.

The worst barrage of tornadoes in recent memory in the region left up to 35,000 people around Memphis powerless early Wednesday and facing up to a week for power to be restored.

Rescue teams were going from door to door across the countryside to check for injured and survivors, as thousands of people picked through the debris of flattened homes, hoping to recover some valuables and mementos.

President George W Bush offered prayers and disaster relief for the victims.

"Prayers can help, and so can the government," Bush said Wednesday. "I do want the people in those states that the American people are standing with them."

In northern Alabama, where a mother, father and their teenage son died together in Lawrence county, elderly Gibbson Hill resident Mary Files said she was sound asleep when the storm hit, tearing out the walls and

roofofherhome. "It woke me up when the stuff in the house went to falling in. I got my daughter up and we went to the end of the hall by the heater and that's where

westayed. Students at Union University in Jackson, Tennessee, heroically rescued classmates trapped in the dead of night after two campus dormitories collapsed, university president David Dockerysaid.

Fifty-one students were treated in hospital, including some with extensive injuries. But no one was killed, even though 1,200 students were on campusatthetime.

"It's an amazing thing," Dockery told reporters.

The campus has already been rebuilt once after a 2002 tornado caused 2.6 million dollars in damage. Now, "we are estimating that the damage is at least 15 times what that

chief election commissioner for holding local government elections, was at that time," he said. Hassan Ariff said the restrictions on In neighboring Kentucky, three bringing out processions, holding people were killed in a trailer park in meetings and indoor politics under Muhlenberg County, and four others the EPR should go for creating a died in Allen County, Buddy Rogers of congenial atmosphere needed to the Kentucky Division of Emergency

beyond his known sources of income. His illegal wealth includes a plot in the capital's Mohammadpur, Tk 1.25 crore in 10 bank accounts,

He was first arrested on April 5 needs to come from a consensus last year after a court issued an arrest warrant against him in a case filed by the ACC in 2003. But, he was released on bail.

The joint forces arrested him again at a hotel in the city on May 28 last year.

Many Titas staff

FROM PAGE 1

The task force investigation found that former Titas sales assistant Abdul Kadir Mollah, whose salary was only Tk 4,000 a month when he voluntarily retired, owns wealth

worth about Tk 2,100 crore. According to the task force investigation, at least 80 percent of 2,800 Titas staff accumulated crores of taka through corruption.

Hasina wants

FROM PAGE 1

High Court ruling that also adjudged illegal the government's having the extortion case under the emergency power rules, she said it has in fact upheld the constitution.

"The constitution comes before everything else. What is there in the constitution must be obeyed and laws contradicting those are bound to be [declared] void," Hasina said, citing constitutional articles enshrining different rights of the

"The emergency law must be in line with the constitution," she Downed power lines, trees across

"We have brought this government to power through movement. And now it is bypassing the constitution at will and harassing people by filing false cases," she contin-

"If there is no extraneous pressure and bias, I will win in every case," the AL chief said, maintainingher innocence.

She said it was during her rule when for the first time the country had electricity generated in private

"There is no question of corruption. Being involved in corruption, one cannot take such a good decision so fast to solve the problems confronting the people," she con-

"And now cases are being filed on the basis of lies. Sometimes those in power forget that Allah is omnipresent."

Mentioning rice selling at Tk 40 akg, she said, "When the price stays at Tk 40, the government cannot say it is stable. The thing is, it has gone out of people's reach."

"There seems no end to people's sufferings. They are hungry and facing acute hardship. The children will suffer from malnutrition in the coming days," said

She said she wonders how voter listing takes so long when it did not take more than nine months even to liberate the country.

Tk 6,000cr

The budget has already allocated Tk 1,200 crore as bonds to pay the previous dues of the BPC.

Sources said the government may go for price increase of petroleum products at the end of current Boro season to reduce losses of the BPC. "Besides, the BPC will try to borrow money from its sources, one source said, adding, the BPC will get about Tk 3,000 crore from the government.

The budgetary allocation for diesel and fertiliser under the agriculture sector was Tk 2,250 crore. But the revised import target of urea and non-urea fertiliser in the current fiscal by the agriculture ministry will need another Tk 1,765 crore subsidy.

The government allocated Tk 300 crore subsidy in food items for the current fiscal year. But finance ministry estimated that Tk 346 crore more subsidy is required for food as a result of price spiral food and loss of food production due to devastating floods last year.

The food subsidy will increase more as the country witnessed losses of food production in cyclone Sidr and there was a crisis of food in the local market.

"The government has failed to procure rice from local sources that means it will have to depend on international market and prices of rice in the international market is increasing," said a finance ministry official.

The power sector got allocation of Tk 600 crore subsidy in the budget, but it needs an additional Tk 586 crore subsidy as the government did not adjust the power

In the budget there was no subsidy for natural gas, but it is nov required Tk 700 crore as subsidy due to under pricing of gas.

"We are selling gas to the people at a lower price than the price we buy it from the international oil companies in Bangladesh," said a source.

Poultry birds

FROM PAGE 1

said the chickens died of bird flu. Sources said 19,903 fowls were culled at Mizanur's farm and other farms of the town after receiving the reports. At least 677 free-range chickens within a square kilometre

area have also been culled. Meanwhile, Dinajpur livestock officials received Tk 3.37 lakh as fund for compensating owners of 43,978 fowls that were culled since March last year. However, the department had culled at least 64,558 fowls since March last year.

Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury yesterday said his ministry was working closely with ministries concerned and foreign partners to assist the government and the poultry industry address the avian flu issue, UNB reports.

He said this when a delegation of Bangladesh Poultry Industries Association met him and apprised him of various problems the country's booming poultry industry is facing.

The association's President Mohammad Kaiser Rahman, Technical Adviser to Bangladesh Poultry Industries Association MM Khan, Director of Aftab Bahumukhi Farms Shah Habibul Haque were present at the meeting.

FROM PAGE 1

the investigation officer (IO) of the case to submit the probe report by March 9.

detain their client for so long.

The prosecution argued that investigation of the case is going on and it is not a mandatory provision to produce any detained person before the court on scheduled court dates. Moreover, there is a security matter to be considered when

On September 5 last year, the ACC filed the case with Tejgaon Police Station against Khaleda,

They were charged with breaching tender conditions in appointing Global Agro Trade (Private) Company Ltd (Gatco), an indenting house, for container handling at the Dhaka Inland Container Depot (ICD) and at the restricted area of Chittagong Port ICD yard despite its inexperience and lack of skill.

ex-chairmen of Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) commodore

Condoleezza Rice.

Harijans asked FROM PAGE 20

ernment and they are even excluded from the census, he pointed out.

under threat and their heath and sanitation conditions are also very miserable," Dr Askari said adding that the Harijans are not well aware of their fundamental and constitutional rights.

The convention was addressed, among others, by Mahfuz Anam, editor of The Daily Star, advocate Salma Ali, executive director of Bangladesh National Women's Lawyers' Association, Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, Dr Md Moslem Uddin, registrar of Islamic University, Abdul Kaiyum

Mohammad Kibria, deputy general manager of Basic Bank Limited, Selim Toha, associate professor at the Department of Law, Islamic University, Nirmal Chandra Das, secretary general of Bangladesh Harijan Oikya Parishad (BHOP), advisers of BHOP Rajkumar Bashphore and Kailash Das Hela, and former joint-secretary general of BHOP Sajan Ram.

In his speech, Mahfuz Anam observed that the underprivileged communities in Bangladesh are not looked after by the government as is expected.

The society is organised in such a hierarchical manner that those who are on top of the society, enjoy all kinds of privileges and those every kind of abuse, he said.

and be united to fight for their rights. director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, asked people from all

tudes towards the Harijans. She also urged the Harijans to send their children to school, which

walks of life to change their atti-

The convention was presided over by Tofazzel Haq, chairman of FAIR and also an assistant professor at Southeast University, Dhaka, while Dewan Akhtaruzzaman, executive director of FAIR, gave the welcome address. Kushtia Deputy Commissioner Md Nurul Islam inaugurated the programme.

(retd) Zulfigar Ali and AMM Shahadat Hossain, ex-director (transport) of CPA AM Sanwar Hossain, former chief finance and accounts officer of CPA Ahmed Abul Qashem, former CPA

director Luthful Kabir, son of former shipping minister and BNP leader Col (retd) Akbar Hossain, Ismail Hossain Saimon, Gatco directors Syed Galib Ahmed, Syed Tanveer Ahmed and AKM Musa Kajol and Akbar's wife Jahanara Ansar and one Ehsan

Yusuf. CASE AGAINST ZAHID

ACC Assistant Director Helal Uddin Shahrif, the IO of the case, submitted the charge sheet against the three before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka showing 23 people as prosecution witnesses.

The IO prayed for issuance of arrest warrants against them and the order to attach their properties as they have been absconding since the case was filed against

On October 3 last year, ACC Assistant Director Nasiruddin lodged the case with Ramna Police Station against the couple and their accomplice lawyer in connection with hiding information worth over Tk 2.12 crore.

Zahid's wife and Mujahid were accused of assisting him conceal the wealth.

UK foreign

with US Secretary of State

The British foreign minister will hold a seminar at the British Council today on the future of Bangladesh, with a particular focus on democracy, climate change and militancy.

One of the most prominent voices on actions to mitigate the ill effect and adapt to climate change, Miliband will also visit Sirajgan tomorrow to review climate change adaptation projects.

Britain has been one of the strongest backers of the present government and is deeply involved in mediating between the govern ment and political parties. British High Commissioner

Anwar Choudhury has been very vocal about Britain's support for the government's reform measures and actions. Recently, British Deputy High

Commissioner Duncan Norman shuttled between Awami League and BNP leaders urging them to participate in the planned elections later this year.

DU students

Hassan have been absconding since the case was filed. The court

has already issued arrest warrants against them.

Charges were earlier dropped against Muhammad Ibrahim, KM Mahbub Alam Shyamol, Enamul Haque, Golam Azam Khomeni, DU correspondent of Banglabazar Patrika Kased Ali, Chanchal Karmakar, ABM Shamsuddoha, Siddique Nazmul Alam Kamruzzaman, Sohel Rana Tipu, Abdul Karim, Manabendra Dev, Liton Mahmud, Arifuzzaman, Delwar Rahman Dipu, Mizanur Rahman, Rashedul Mahmud and

Sarwar Alam. On January 7, Sub-Inspector Asgar Ali Khan of Shahbagh Police Station, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in

An army man has filed a similar case separately against the same students with Shahbagh police on August 26 for torching of his vehicle and assaulting him at Shahbagh

On January 22 last the same IO submitted the final report in the case filed by the army man.

ACC won't file cases

FROM PAGE 1 the Supreme Court, seeking stay on the HC order.

Asked about the commission's role in dealing with cases brought under the EPR although the offences were committed before the promulgation of the emergency rules, Hanif said, "If the final verdict of the court has any such direction, the commission will

bring changes in the process of filing cases. The ACC yesterday also decided to issue a notice on former BNP parliamentarian Sardar Shakhawat Hossain Bakul and former adviser to prime minister (Khaleda Zia) Prof Jahanara Begum. Both are on the fourth list of 35 graft suspects published by the commission on October 4 last year.

The commission also approved filing of separate cases against Rajshahi City Corporation Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu, Sylhet City Corporation Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran and former CBA leader Molla Abul Kalam Azad on charges of misappropriating relief items including rice, corrugated sheet iron (CSI) and amassing illegal wealth beyond known sources of income.

Minu and seven others will be charged with misappropriation of CSI and rice meant for relief. Kamran and his wife Asma

Kamran will be charged with accumulating wealth worth Tk 2,16,17,822 illegally beyond their known sources of income.

Sultana will be charged with amassing illegal wealth worth Tk 17,09,000 and Tk 1,65,23,287 beyond known sources of income. Azad will also be charged with concealing information about Tk 23,92,287 in his wealth statement submitted to the ACC. The commission approved filing of the case under the EPR besides the sections of the ACC Act and the Penal Code.

approved pressing charges against former housing and public works minister Mirza Abbas, former lawmaker Mosaddek Ali Falu, former lawmaker Mokbul Hossain, former jute minister Shajahan Siraj, and Bangladesh Medical Association leader Dr AZM Zahid Hossain and some of their family members in five cases filed for abusing power, concealing wealth information and amassing wealth illegally

Democratic

FROM PAGE 20 to vote for whomever they chose.

Many have already promised to back one candidate or another, "and most of the others will at some point before the convention," said Michael Tanner, a political analyst with the Cato Institute.

"The chances of them changing their mind at the last minute is not likely," he said.

The power given to the party bosses, not earned through the ballot box, strikes some observers as undemocratic.

For years, the Democratic nominee was chosen through deals and bargains made by party bosses. In 1960 John Kennedy emerged as the party nominee with the help of "patron" mayors Richard Daley or Chicago and Charles Buckley of NewYork After support from more radical

wings of the party lead to the disastrous nomination of George McGovern in 1972, who lost every state but Massachusetts and the capital Washington to Richard Nixon, the Democrats put in rules to avoid such contention. "There was a belief that they

would not want candidates who were dramatically out of sync with the rest of the party," explained William Mayer, a political scientist at Northeastern University.

The superdelegates were designed to be "sort of a safety valve," said Democratic party leader Elaine Kamarck who teaches at Harvard University.

Most US media reports that Hillary will be the biggest beneficiary of the superdelegate system, but Obama is not so sure.

"The superdelegates, they're flexible ... If we come into the convention with more pledged delegates, I know we can make a very strong argument that our counstituencies have spoken," he has said.

Mayer agreed that the party leadership would be likely to support whoever earned the most

"Do the superdelegates have the capacity to resist the choice of the overwhelming majority of primary voters and caucus participants? The answer, I think, is a clear 'No."

8 Bangladeshis FROM PAGE 20

The relatives of the convicts said the Bangladeshi workers challenged the Egyptian worker on April 28 last year when he tried to escape stealing electric wires from the hostel where they lived.

Egyptian youth, other Egyptian workers of a factory near the hostel swooped on the Bangladeshi workers prompting them to retaliate. The Egyptian man was killed in

the clash. Saudi police filed a case

while one remains on the run. Death of the Egyptian man is totally unexpected, said Shjahan, brother of one of the convicts, Shafiqul. He also urged Foreign Adviser Dr Iftekhar Ahmed

Mamun's mother Hazera Khoazuddin, Faruk's father Jamal Uddin, and Matiar's brother Din Islam, among others, were present.

FROM PAGE 1 Advocate on record of Hasina's writ petition Moulvi Wahidullah told the court he could not inform Hasina's senior counsel Barrister Rafique-ul Hug to take part in the hearing for lack of time.

On this ground he prayed for time and the court fixed Sunday for The HC division bench of Justice

Shah Abu Naveem Mominur Rahman and Justice Shahidul Islam on Wednesday declared illegal the government approval of bringing the Tk 2.99 crore extortion case against Hasina under EPR and scrapped it.

The verdict came following Hasina's writ filed on July 29 last year. The HC bench of Justice Naveem and Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury had issued a rule on the government, asking it to reply why its approval for bringing the case under EPR should not be declared illegal.

the government hold the next election at any time between April

that due process is being followed during the trials as the trials are open and the accused have the right to defend themselves.

"You see, these are public trials not camera trials. The defendants definitely have the right to defend themselves. They can go to the High Court if they wish to and later to the Appellate Division. Some got bails this way," Ariff said Talking on the steps taken by the

said the US supports the caretaker government as it has been implementing the election roadmap. "We welcome the chief adviser's commitment to the elections." "There must be elections that will allow people to select their

Bird flu spreading

FROM PAGE 1 The workers at the poultry outlets do not practise any hygienic method while plucking and processing the poultry. After processing, they dump the animal wastes anywhere they please. Above all else, the stall owners do not even provide the workers with facemasks and gloves -- the two items most essential for their own

Mohammad Fazley Rabbi Mondal, a veterinary surgeon at livestock office in Savar upazila, admitted to The Daily Star that none of the ten kitchen markets in the upazila has adopted any biosecurity measure. Meanwhile, when this correspon-

dent drew the attention of the DCC authorities to the issue, they said they are unable to take any legal steps against the poultry stall owners who do not conform to biosecurity measures because most of them do not possess any tradelicence. "We cannot take any legal steps

against them as 90 percent of the poultry traders have no licence. Taking advantage of this, they have been selling poultry by either going door to door or by setting up stalls here and there," said Ajmat Ali, veterinaryofficerofDCC

He, however, said, "In July last year we had a meeting with the poultry traders to increase awareness among them and started monitoring in this regard."

Poultry traders at Karwan Bazar alleged that the DCC officials visit the market to collect "toll", but they never provide them with any informative message about recommended safety practices.

said, "No DCC official ever asked us to wear masks and gloves. They do not even supply disinfectants to us for spraying in the poultry cages. Instead, a private poultry farm sprays disinfectants in the cages every morning." Anwar, a salesman working for BM Poultry Farm at the same market, said

although he is aware of the bird flu

threat, he does not wear facemask and

Humayun Kabir, a poultry trader,

gloves as "it would create problems during conversing with customers." "We have been selling poultry for more than 32 years and bird flu is

leachers protest

FROM PAGE 1 concerned to take actions against the teachers who instigated the Islami Chhatra Shibir activists on Wednesday.

Shibir activists at the college dormitories and houses in Lalbag area. Police Superintendent Hasif Aziz said security measures had been tightened on the college

The law enforcers arrested 68

"Police arrested 68 leaders and activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir and we are trying to detain others who were involved in the vandalism." he said. Islami Chhatra Shibir staged

campus following the incident.

demonstrations protesting the caretaker government's decision of establishing an autonomous university in Rangpur instead of upgrading Carmichael College to university. Meanwhile, members of civil society and professional bodies

yesterday protesting the incident. They also hailed the caretaker government's decision to establish an autonomous and full-fledged university in Rangpur and hoped that it will take necessary steps to establish the university as early as possible.

formed a human chain and held a

meeting at the district press club

nothing extraordinary. Every year during the winter time some poultry die of different diseases," said Ismail, a domestic poultry trader at New

Market kitchen market. Admitting that the poultry traders are yet to adopt biosecurity measures, DCC's veterinary officer Ajmat Ali told The Daily Star that the poultry traders are reluctant to wear gloves and masks fearing that their customers might get the impression that the seller who is wearing gloves and

masks is selling sick chickens. "The DCC recently has formed ten regional committees and a central committee that started monitoring the city markets from yesterday. The DCC has decided to formulate a committee in every kitchen market and there will be a slaughter corner where slaughtering and plucking of poultry will be done," Ajmat said adding that the designated poultry processing places in each market will

be implemented within a week. According to Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), long-term financial and political commitment from a government is required to contain and eradicate the H5N1 virus that is responsible for the Avian flu. Modifying or changing the production and marketing practices in the high-risk poultry industry to ensure its safer supply is also recom-

mended by the FAO. The Avian flu outbreak was first detected in the country in March last year. Since then, more than 4.5 lakh fowls, ducks and pigeons were culled and around 4.5 lakh eggs were destroyed in 37 districts.

Hannan Shah

FROM PAGE 1

During the hearing, the BNP leader told the court that he did not make any statement violating the EPR. On November 7, 2007, Hannan

Shah was arrested on charge of violating the Emergency Power Rules. On January 30, the High Court upon a writ petition declared his detention illegal and the Appellate Division upheld the HC decision on February 3.

Polls within 2008

FROM PAGE 20

would be used in the next election. "As far as voter registration is concerned, we are right on time in spite of so many obstacles," he said. During the discussion, he also

said, "We are getting no indication

from any quarters about not holding the election. On the parishad's call for replacing the deputy commissioners as district election officers, CEC said, "It is not possible at this stage, we do not want to make experiments in this regard ... And we hope that they (district election officers) will act in

a neutral manner in line with the ongoing reforms." On polls observers, Huda said, 'We don't need a large number of

election observers." He informed the parishad delegation that there would be a publication on the dialogue between the

ECandpolitical parties.

Huda asserted that the EC would take steps to ensure that no vote rigging takes place. The parishad in its seven-point recommendation urged the EC to remove all confusion over holding

the election according to the It also urged the EC to ensure that war criminals cannot take part in

Pakistan to hold peace

the election.

FROM PAGE 20

but I cannot give you any timeframe in this regard.' The move is likely to be greeted with scepticism by Pakistan's Western allies, who have seen previous peace pacts in the tribal areas collapse after giving militants time to regroup and extend their

in militant-related violence this year, much of it in fighting between Islamic militants and troops in South Waziristan, the stronghold of Mehsud. Mehsud's fighters occupied a

paramilitary fort in the region

More than 300 people have died

during January. Nawaz said however that negotiations were the only way to achieve peace in the troubled region, identified by US officials as a safe haven for Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network.

elders, influentials and government representatives in the process of forming the jirga," Nawaz "There are so many things involved. If we look at the past,

"We will have to involve tribal

several peace agreements were signed with militants but they violated all of them. "However, there is no doubt that negotiation is the only way to convince these people to give up

arms."

The Pakistani government and the US Central Intelligence Agency have accused Mehsud of masterminding Benazir's assassination in a gun and suicide bomb attack in the garrison city of Rawalpindi on December 27. Pakistani officials say he is

linked to the al-Qaeda network and is responsible for a string of suicide bombings around the country.

Meanwhile, Pakistani investigators arrested two "very important alleged terrorists" yesterday in

connection with the assassination of opposition leader Benazir Bhutto, officials said.

the garrison city of Rawalpindi, where the former premier was killed in a gun and suicide bomb attack on December 27, interior ministry and security officials said. The arrests, described by Pakistani officials as a "major

breakthrough," coincided with the

return to the country of British

The men were held in a raid in

detectives who have been helping with the inquiry. "I can confirm two people have been arrested in connection with the probe into Benazir's murder and they are being interrogated by the joint investigation team,"

Interior Ministry spokesman Brigadier Javed Cheema told AFP. A statement by a Pakistani investigation team created to probe her killing said it had "arrested two very important alleged terrorists, Hasnain and Rafaqat, this morning from Rawalpindi with

A senior security official however said that the two men arrested in Rawalpindi had ties to Mehsud. "It is a major breakthrough. These two men were involved in

the assassination and they are from

the help of Rawalpindi police."

a militant group which is relatively new," the official said. "Their tentacles are from the tribal region and Baitullah Mehsud."

The Scotland Yard team helping to investigate Benazir's death is due to present its report today. Benazir's Pakistan People's Party has demanded a United

Nations probe into her death but

the government has rejected this. Tens of thousands of her supporters gathered outside Benazir's tomb in southern Pakistan yesterday to mark the end of the official 40-day mourning period for their late leader.

Sylhet mayor

and several plots in Sylhet.

To whether inclusion of the law secretary in the Supreme Judicial Council would secure an authority of the executive in recommending candidates as judges, Hassan Ariff said, "There is not the least possibility.

Gatco case

court day (monthly court day during a case investigation) of the case. However, the court asked

In the petition submitted Wednesday, defence lawyers said Khaleda was arrested on September 3 last year and since then she was not produced before the court. There is no provision in the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) to detain any person in jail custody for a long time. They said it was illegal and inhumane to

producing a VIP before the court.

Koko and 11 others.

The co-accused in the case are

the safety net facilities of the gov-"Their only profession is also

who are at the bottom, suffer from The Daily Star editor urged the Harijan people not to be frustrated Shaheen Anam, executive

will help bring change in their lives.

Azad and his wife Kohinoor

The anti-graft body also caretaker government, Geeta Pasi

When they were quizzing the

against 14 Bangladeshis for killing Of them two fled to Bangladesh

Chowdhury to take necessary steps for seeking amnesty of the eight Bangladeshi workers from the Saudi government. Khatun, Shafiqul's father

SC hears

hearing the government appeal

Zillur FROM PAGE 1

> There is no alternative to holding polls as early as possible, he Meanwhile, key leaders of AL's six divisional headquarters and president and general secretary of US unit of Bangabandhu Foundation, Sajeeb Wazed Joy and

M Fazlur Rahman, yesterday

demanded Sheikh Hasina's imme-

diate release. Bangladesh

leadership," she said hoping that the government would establish institutions needed for holding free, fair and credible elections.