32 die as launch

victims could be ascertained as of 10:00pm last night.

They are Abdul Hakim, 40, Jarina Begum, 60, her granddaughters Kuheli, 3, and two-month-old Jonaki, their mother Minaki, 25, Arafat, 5, Anwara Begum, 50, Nayan Miah, 26, Ranjit Das, 50, Joynab Bibi, 35, Lipi, 32, Mohammad Helamini, 14, Beauty, 16, Sajeda, 50, Rokeya Begum, 50, Joynab, 26, Nazma, 22, Sri Krishna, 32, Aklima, 20, and Mohammad Alam, 32.

Aklima's brother Abdus Salam said she was a first year student of Eden Women University College and was on her way home in Munshiganj to visither ill mother.

Hearing the news of the accident, relatives of the victims started gathering on the bank of the Buriganga. Thousands of people from the locality and nearby areas also thronged the riverbank near Buriganga Bridge

A seven-member team of divers from the Fire Service and Civil Defence was searching for the missing passengers last night with assistance from Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), police and other law enforcement agencies.

But the divers could not search the cabins as their doors could not be opened because a part of the launch has dug into the mud on the riverbed," said Maj Sheikh Mohammad Shah Jalal, a director of Fire Service and Civil Defence.

member probe committee headed by Joint Secretary of shipping ministry MA Matin. The other members of the committee are the secretary of BIWTA, chief engineer of Department of Shipping, additional district magistrate for Dhaka and additional superintendent of police for Dhaka. The committee has been asked to

Bird flu

FROM PAGE 16 destroyed eggs stands at 1,458,967 since February 2007

Bird flu control room sources said the number of affected farms will start falling rapidly as temperature begins to rise.

culled and 2050 eggs were destroyed at National Hatchery Pvt Ltd of Akhter Hossain Babul in Gazipur on Wednesday night, bird flu control room sources said.

A total of 9,575 chickens were culled and 200 eggs were destroyed at Aqua Land Agro complex of Arifuzzaman Bhuiyan at Savarafterondune District and joint district judge's avian influenza virus was detected at the farm. Besides, 776 chickens were also culled at another farm at

chickens were culled and 122 eggs were destroyed at a farm in Natore on Tuesday night. Besides, about 3,340 chickens were culled at four farms in the district.

make recommendations on way to prevent such accidents.

Meanwhile, BIWIA salvage ship MV Rustom reached the spot from Narayanganj at about 9:20pm and started operation to salvage the

BIWTA Chairman Abdul Mannan Hawlader visited the spot. He said they would provide Tk 20,000 for each victim. Besides, Tk 2,000 will be given to each family of the victims to carry the bodies home.

However, many of the family members of the victims alleged that they were not given any money to take the bodies home.

Home and Communications Adviser Maj Gen (retd) MA Matin also visited the spot and asked the rescuers to intensify their effort.

He said the government would decide about giving compensation to the families of the victims later.

President Prof Dr Iajuddin Ahmed and Chief Adviser Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed in separate condolence messages expressed deep shock at the loss of lives and properties in the incident.

They also conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members of the

The CA directed the authorities concerned to ensure proper treatment of the injured and conduct speedy salvage operation.

In his condolence message, acting BNP Secretary General Hafiz Uddin Ahmed Bir Bikram also demanded punishment of the persons responsible for the accident. Gono Forum President Dr Kamal

Hossain demanded compensation for the family members of the victims.

Emergency

CIVIL COURTS IN CHT

Briefing on the status of the move to set up civil district and sessions judge's courts in Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachhari, the law adviser said the amendments brought in 2003 to the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation, 1900, which is the basis of justice in the hill districts, have yet to be implemented.

The government has been working to implement the amendments, he said, adding, "They will be implemented after a decision by the Nicar (National Implementation Committee for Administration Reform Reorganization)."

courts will be set up soon and the joint district judges will also act as sessions judges, he added.

He said due to the provisions of CHT Regulation, 1900, the locals now have to go to the divisional commissioner instead of a sessions judge to appeal a chief judicial magistrate's judgment.

Covert political talks

At the meeting, the leaders reached a consensus on war criminals, anti-

Party-Manju leader Sheikh Shahidul Islam, Gono Forum leader Commander Abdur Rauf, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal leader Mainuddin Khan Badal,

the organiser of the meeting said. Journalists were not allowed in the room while the meeting was

BNP Chairperson's Adviser Mofazzal Karim said the political

before reaching a consensus with political parties, it would have no meaning. regimes' activities, ratification of Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh all ordinance including promulgation of the state of emergency, fate of BNP and Awami League chiefs.

Secretary General Maj (retd) Abdul Mannan said, "What will we discuss with the government? The issues we will discuss with the government have to be decided in dialogues between political par-

Khan Menon said it is not expectable that the dialogue with the government would be held Not-so-large political parties under the state of emergency as people will not be able to express their opinion. The dialogue must be held under a free environment, he observed.

you'll find his columns which we'll bring to you exclusively, even before they appear on his own

Vittachi, an award-winning journalist and author, wrote the famous "Travellers' Tales" column in the Far Eastern Economic Review for many years, and has had regular slots on the BBC and CNN. The Times of London described his work as "endearingly wacky" and the UK Daily Telegraph as

"It's a thrill for me to be associated with The Daily Star," Vittachi said. "I have long believed that Bangladesh was one of the most beautiful and historic countries of Asia."

The Colombo-born author now lives in Hong Kong but spends much of his time travelling through Asia gathering material for his columns and books, which appear in multiple languages around the world. Many of Vittachi's humour columns have become viral emails, and have criss-crossed the globe.

"It's going to be a two-way column," Vittachi said. "I'll be delivering funny and amazing stories to the readers, but I expect to hear some great tales from them,

to get The Daily Star every morning and don't miss a surefire way to start your day with a laugh.

Khulna mayor

press briefing at its headquarter vesterday.

Police arrested Tayebur in connection with an extortion case filed with Khulna Sadar Police Station on November 2 last year. He is also on the last list of 35 corruption suspects published by the ACC in October this year

with notices are acting Managing Director of Rural Power Company Ltd Jahurul Islam Khan, Inspector of Customs Excise and VAT Harun-Ar-Rahman, and Nayek of Rajbari police line Yousuf Sharif. Meanwhile, former managing

director of Teletalk Obaidullah and former Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) president Enamul Haque Shamim submitted their wealth statements to the commis sion on Wednesday and Tuesday.

Obaidullah's declared wealth includes 121 decimals of land in Kushtia and a plot in the capital.

Former BCL president Shamim said his wealth includes a plot and a flat in Dhaka, shares worth Tk 50,000, a pistol, a revolver, and two credit cards.

FROM PAGE 16

Hamza Tarafder, Abdul Hamid, Mohammad Ismail, Lutfor Rahman, Ujjal Hossain and Mohammad Ali.

former deputy secretary ASM Mizanur Rahman, Samiul Abedin, Masud Rana Saiful, Abu Bakar, Shariful Islam Manik, Mohammad Shahjahan, Belal Hossain, Abul Hossain, Zaki Mahbub, Edward Roy, Debu Barua, Mohammad Solaiman, Abdul Halim, Sankar Chandra Dey and Mokshed from the list of accused as their involvement with the incident was not

During the investigation of the case, Amir Hamza, Monir Hossain, Abdul Hamid, Nikhil Chanda, Lutfor Rahman, Ujjal Hossain and Nurul Islam alias Nuru had given their confessional statements to magistrates.

before the court on March 29 for its acceptance.

The1500-year-old relics went missing on December 21 from the ZIA while awaiting shipment to the French capital.

Following the incident, Samar Chandra Paul, directorate general of National Museum filed the case without mentioning any name of suspects in this connection.

Law enforcers later recovered broken pieces of the Vishnu statuettes from different places on different dates.

ADB projects

FROM PAGE 16 facilitate systematic feedback from the private sector and other stakeholders on major issues and problems affecting private sector devel-

Expenditures in the current fiscal year are likely to increase beyond the estimated expenditures in the original budget and fiscal deficit is likely to shoot to 4.7 percent of GDP in FY08 compared to 3.2 percent in the pre-

ceding year. The ADB blamed the increase on post-flood and cyclone relief and higher import cost of food grains, fuel and fertiliser.

Hua Du told the journalists that continuous subsidy in energy sector has been cutting funds for infrastructure developments. She favoured adjusting the prices of petroleum products in line with

the international prices and at the

same time asked the government to

take steps so that poor people are not affected due to this. The government can introduce a system similar to that of the elderly citizens' allowances where poor people will receive kerosene allowances from the banks showing their cards, the ADB country director added.

Top humourist | EC waits on BNP

NEWS

FROM PAGE 1

prompted the Khandaker Delwar Hossain-led faction, loyal to the party's detained Chairperson Khaleda Zia, to challenge the decision in the High Court.

The EC has not been able to hold even the first round of the talks with the BNP because of the legal tangle.

"We will be happy if the BNP is united...We do not want to see factions in political parties," Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda said during the commission's talks with a political party yesterday.

Huda hoped the EC would be able to sit with the BNP soon to discuss the electoral reform proposals. The caretaker government will

begin a national dialogue with the political parties after the EC wraps up its dialogue that began on September 12 last year. Participating in the second

round of the electoral reform talks, all other parties have asked the EC not to register Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh as a parliamentary political party and bar antiliberation forces from polls.

Even the Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ), another Islamist party and a partner of the immediate past BNP-Jamaat led four-party alliance government, said yesterday that they also want trial of the war criminals and the anti-liberation forces. 'We also do not want to see war

criminals and anti-liberation forces in the elections," IOJ chief Fazlul Haque Amini told reporters after the talks at the EC Secretariat conference room yesterday. But the war criminals must be

tried before declaring them disqualified from contesting the polls, he said. The IOJ also suggested that the

EC disqualify apostates and atheists for contesting the elections. In response, Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hussain requested the

IOJ leader to withdraw the proposal. "We do not expect such words from you. Leave the matter on Allah to decide who is apostate and atheist," he said. Refusing to withdraw the proposal, Amini said apostates and atheists have been defined in the

holy Quran. "We will keep using

these words and you will have to

tolerate it," Amini said. Later in the afternoon, Liberal Democratic Party President Oli Ahmed urged the EC to ask the caretaker government to prepare the list of war criminals soon to try

'The government had prepared a list of Razakars in 1972. The current government can prepare the list of notorious war criminals taking help from that list," Oli told reporters after the talks.

Veteran freedom fighter and Krishak Sramik Janata League (KSJL) chief Quader Siddiqui also demanded that the anti-liberation forces are barred from polls.

"The demand for disqualifying the anti-liberation forces from being registered with the commission has now become a demand of the nation. Muslim League, Jamaat-e-Islami and Nizam-i-Islam worked against the Liberation War of Bangladesh. Of

the basis of their purchase capac-

recommended allowing operation

of only one low-cost or budget

International Airport, Chittagong

to make more use of the airport's

Aviation experts welcome the

airline from each country.

The committee has however

"On the basis of the airline's

ity," it explains.

Low-cost airlines

them, Jamaat was the principal collaborator of the Pakistan occupation forces in looting and killings," he said. "So, Jamaat cannot be registered as a political party."

Most political parties opposed the EC move for demarcating the parliamentary constituencies, fearing that the task will make the polls uncertain. They also opposed the EC plan for holding the polls to four city corporations and seven municipalities next April--before the ninth parliamentary elections. The EC, however, assured the

political parties that the tasks would not hinder holding of the parliamentary election by end of this year as per its electoral roadmap. In response to the political parties' demand for announcing a

specific date for the parliamentary election, the CEC yesterday said it would take the EC a few more days to do so. Wrapping up the talks, the EC will prepare a comprehensive

report summarising the outcomes of the talks and finalising the electoral reform proposals. Barapukuria

FROM PAGE 16 made before charges were brought

against the graft suspects. BNP leaders M Saifur Rahman,

Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, M. Shamsul Islam, MK Anwar, barrister Aminul Haque, and Jamaat leaders Motiur Rahman Nizami and Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid are the accused former ministers still free.

Col Hanif said the accused might be held if the general arrest conditions apply to them. He explained that conditions warrant ing arrest include circumstances where a suspected offender attempts to destroy case evidence or leave the country.

Hosaf Group Chairman Moazzem Hossain, an accused in the case, has left the country a week before the case was filed, according to sources.

The ACC filed the case Tuesday for graft in awarding Barapukuria coal mine operation contract to a Chinese company causing a loss of over Tk 158 crore to the public exchequer. The charges were brought under sections 409/406/109/419/420 of the penal code and 5 (2) of corruption prevention act of 1947.

Asked if the case might be brought under the Emergency Power Rules (EPR), 2007, Hanif said had the commission wanted to do so it would not have filed the case now with the appeal against the High Court verdict that declared illegal the government's having the Tk 2.99 crore extortion case against Awami League President Sheikh Hasina under EPR awaiting the Supreme Court ruling.

The ACC has decided not to file or bring any case under the emergency rules until the apex cour disposes of the matter.

Meanwhile, UNB reports that Jamaat Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami yesterday described the graft case as politically motivated. It all came at a time when the caretaker government is preparing to hold dialogue with political parties,

ministry told The Daily Star.

lounge, he noted.

Besides, the government will

The feasibility report submitted

also earn revenue from the airlines

usages of airport's offices and

to Civil Aviation and Tourism

Secretary Syed Mohammad Jobaer

on Tuesday says: "The low cost

carriers will play a very significant

role to carry Bangladeshi passen-

gers of low income groups who

travel to various destinations for

Bangladeshi jobseekers flew to

different countries, especially to

Malaysia and the Middle East in

offer airfares lower by \$100 to \$150

than that of the legacy carriers. This

is because of using same category

aircraft and crew, low maintenance

and fuel cost, short-haul flights,

curtailment of onboard services

like food and beverage, restrictions

on baggage weight, online booking

system and non-refundable tick-

ets. The services onboard are how-

Currently Air Asia, Air India,

ever available on demand.

Low-cost airlines are able to

Besides tourists, over 6.5 lakh

Bashar dropped

FROM PAGE 16

innings. It is for the first time in his career that the most successful Bangladesh Test batsman has been dropped from the squad.

State-run Bangladesh Television and satellite channel Super Sport 2 will beam live coverage of the match from 10am from the purpose-built venue in the port

Rajin Saleh, who did not play in the first Test which South Africa won by five wickets, replaces Bashar. The match also sees spinner Abdur Razzaq come in for young paceman Sajidul Islam. It is likely that the Tigers might play two left-arm spinners after the bitter experience in the first Test where they enjoyed a first innings lead but eventually paid the price of using three and a half bowlers on a slow and low wicket.

Chittagong has always been a happy ground for the Tigers and the crowd would not only be expecting local lad Tamim Iqbal to play a big innings on his home debut but also would love Rafique to take two more wickets to sign off with a century of Test scalps under

South Africa are yet to decide on their 12 for the game but skipper Graeme Smith said fit-again speedster Andre Nel could make it into the starting line-up. Nel missed the

Smith said the tourists had realised after the first Test that they needed to bat with patience on the

Saitur-Delwar

FROM PAGE 16

upholds the EC's invitation to me, said Major (retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed, standing committeenominated acting BNP secretary general.

there is no alternative to unity. Petty differences can be removed when the two leaders, Saifur Rahman and Khandker Delwar, sit across the table," Hafiz told newsmen at his Banani residence yesterday after-

"Hopefully, the two will meet soon," he added.

Hafiz welcomed the fresh move for unity initiated by Brig Gen (rtd) ASM Hannan Shah, adviser to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia. Shah on Wednesday said they are

of the nation. Hafiz said BNP is a major political party having roots among the masses. "Even if the current move does not succeed, necessity in the

nation will compel us to unite before the election," he said. BNP will contest the polls unitedly under the leadership of

Chairperson Khaleda Zia, he added. Replying to a question, Hafiz said their reform proposals will be placed before the next council council with Khaleda Zia in the

running the party in absence of the chairperson. That is why we had proposed for reforms in the party, said Hafiz.

He demanded election within this year in accordance with the roadmap announced by the Election Commission.

government can be formed in consultation with political parties if the election is delayed for unforeseen

Public servants

FROM PAGE 16

Servants (Conduct) Rules, 1979, the public servants are to submit wealth statements to the government at the commencement of their service and every five years during their employment. However, the rule has long been ignored with an excuse that many officials have already been filing tax returns with the National Board of Revenue (NBR), said sources.

During a visit to different ministries, departments, directorates and other government offices in Dhaka yesterday, this correspondent found a large number of employees busy filling out their wealth declaration torms.

A number of government officials, however, still appeared to be reluctant in submitting the wealth statements, fearing that their confidential information might not be stored at the ministry with adequate security measures.

A mid-level official said, "Besides we've submitted our tax returns to the NBR a few months ago."

When asked why the government does not access the government officials' wealth information at the NBR, the establishment secretary said, "We can see it anytime we want, but it [the submission of wealth statement) would create a mental pressure on the employees as their wealth can be checked anytime [from now on].

In line with anti-corruption drives in different sectors, the government asked the establishment ministry to seek wealth statements from the public servants.

signed by Joint Secretary (Admin) Main Uddin Khondoker issued an order on August 28 and another letter signed by the establishment secretary on December 10 asked the public servants to declare any purchase or sale of valuable property, construction of building and their wealth through the proper channel by December 31.

The date was later extended till February 28 due to Cyclone Sidr.

Jalil improves slightly

FROM PAGE 1

Star at about 9:00pm. The ailing AL leader has been undergoing treatment at the hospital for the past couple of months.

Dr Matiur Rahman, who is also the chief of the medical board formed for Jalil's treatment, said that they have reviewed the medications of Jalil and changed those last night.

A blood test is done to find out about the patient's kidney functions, the doctor said adding that if the result is positive, then it is good, otherwise the AL leader would need to undergo dialysis.

Dr Matiur said that there is no need to send Jalil abroad for treatment right now and they did not make any such suggestion to government.

However, highly placed sources said that the government might consider sending the AL leader to Singapore if his medical board recom-

Jalil will be under close observation till Sunday when a board of doctors would examine him and decide whether he requires dialysis or transplant, Dr Matiursaid.

Nawaz Sharif

FROM PAGE 16 or not," Nawaz told ARY Oneworld

news channel "We will only become part of government when Musharraf quits

the office of president," he said. Another report says Musharraf faces the threat of being impeached if the two major parties--PPP and PML-N--which have joined hands to form the next government get the support of independents, a top US intelli-

gence official has said. The official said even though the two parties do not have the numbers Musharraf cane be arraigned since PML-N leader and former premier Nawaz Sharif had "an agenda to impeach President Musharraf".

The Director of National Intelligence Michael McConnel told the Bush administration that the PPP and PML(N) "do not have the votes to do that(impeach), but if they had independents join them, they could possibly have the votes".

The ruling coalition needs a twothird majority in a House of 272 to successfully carry out any impeachment. The PPP (88) and PML-N (66) together have 154 seats. The Awami National Party (ANP) which has 10 members and an unspecified number of independents have also extended support_

"We are watching very closely now to see how the coalition is formed, who the members will be and who the prime minister might be," McConnel said

On being asked by the Chairman of Senate Armed Services Committee Carl Levin about the fairness of the polls, he said "all the reporting I saw was they were reasonably -- by Pakistani standards, they were reasonable and fair. The numbers of people voting were a little higher than anticipated and a little higher than average for Pakistan. It was over 40 per cent".

Responding to a question that if the polls were a repudiation of Islamic extremism, he said "What I would highlight is those Islamic extremists that had been serving in the assembly were defeated in this election. So at that level, the parties that won are more secular. So there is some level of repudiating extremism".

(PTI, AFP)

Thaksin out

FROM PAGE 16

While he could face up to 15 years in prison, Thaksin's return was a triumphant re-entry to centre stage of Thai politics despite 17 months in exile in which the country's most powerful institutions, including the military, tried to eradicate his legacy and keep him at bay.

Although he has pledged to stay out of politics, his critics don't believe him and say he already has been exerting influence from behind the scenes.

Just hours after arriving, Finance

Minister Surapong Suebwonglee said that government would consult Thaksin, who is legally banned from all political activity for five years, for economic advice. "We can't appoint him to any official position, but we'll ask him for

advice on the economy," Surapong told reporters. Police Lt Gen Prung Bunpadung said about 1,000 police were being deployed at the airport, along Thaksin's route of travel and places

he is expected to visit during the day. Before boarding the plane in Hong Kong for the last leg of his journey home, Thaksin said, "I believe in the Thai justice system, especially the court system. Normally in justice systems everywhere, a person is innocent until

proved guilty." He said that he was a "little bit" concerned about his security. But he added that there was little chance his return would spark violence.

Thaksin repeated his pledge that he wouldn't seek to regain his politicalpost. "I'm finished," he said. Thaksin returns home several

weeks after a government sympathetic to him replaced a militaryappointed interim regime. The People's Power Party, which

is packed with Thaksin allies, won Dec. 23 general elections and now leads a six-party coalition government. Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej, who heads PPP, won widespread support by campaigning as Thaksin's proxy and pledging to clear his name.

Asked if Jalil would be allowed to go to Singapore for treatment, Deputy Inspector General (prisons) Major Shamsul Haider Siddique said, "It isn't possible according to the jail code. However, they [doctors at Labaid] are trying to ensure the best

treatment for him [Jalil]." AL acting president Zillur Rahman yesterday demanded the caretaker government immediately release party general secretary Abdul Jalil on humanitarian grounds without any condition.

Jalil needs to be sent to Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore without delay, where he used to have treatment earlier, for saving his life, Zillur said in a press statement.

kidneys stopped functioning properly. As a result, his face, hands and legs have swollen, doctors said. The 67-year-old AL general secretary was detained on May 28, 2007 on

high blood pressure, diabetes, kidney, neurological and eye ailments. On December 18, 2007, a case was filed against him. However, the case did not make any mentionable prog-

ted to the hospital with heart disease,

Survived

must not give up; she got to give it a try for the sake of Redwan, her only kid. She summoned all her courage and started pushing him up towards the surface.

moments, she succeeded throwing him out of the sinking vessel. And that was the last thing she could remember.

to be spotted and rescued by local boatman Abdur Rahim. Rahim, who ferries people

in the pitch-black Buriganga. He was at a tea stall by the waterside when the launch was going down 100 yards off the shore. "At once I ran to my boat and started rowing it as fast as I could towards the

Redwan was rushed to a local Later, he regained senses to see some anxious faces lit up. One of them was his 20-year-old mother who too made it to the shore.

Earlier in the morning, Rita and her mother-in-law came to Dhaka all the way from Munshiganj Sadar. They went to a hospital so Redwan who has long been suffering from asthma could be checked by a specialist doctor.

Star. "I'm afraid my mother-in-law could not make it," she continued as her eyes brimmed over with tears. Her fears came true as later at

recovered. Doubling over with insurmountable emotional pain, Abdul Karim could only wail that he too might have saved one or two of his family

man his entire family. His wife Minaki, 25, three-yearold daughter Kuheli, two-month-old daughter Jonaki and mother-in-law Jarina Begum were on board the illfated vessel on their way to a wedding

and daughters were scheduled to return home at Shahidnagar under Lalbagh Police Station tomorrow. Rashed said they were on the

evening. He was not alone. Many others were seen taking the bodies of

theirnear and dear ones.

FROM PAGE 16

William and meet General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Eastern Command Lieutenant General KS

will host a dinner in honour of the Bangladesh army chief this evening. On Saturday morning, General Moeen will place wreath at the monument constructed in front of the Eastern Command Headquarters' in memory of the martyrs of Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971.

visit on February 24 and had a series of meetings with Indian top politicians and army officials including External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee, Minister of State for Defence MM Pallam Raju and his counterpart General Deepak Kapoor.

During his tour, General Moeen visited the Indian Military Academy at Dehra Dun, Taj Mahal, the Ajmer Sharif shrine and then the coastal state of Goa. The Telegraph in Kolkata

and the Bangladesh army chief are expected to explore issues that Moeen might suggest to the interim government on his return to Dhaka.

The AL leader's condition became

critical since last week as both of his charge of violating emergency power rules. A few days later, he was admit-

ress till the date.

After some long agonising

Lady luck did not let her down as the baby boy kept afloat long enough

between the banks, could not believe his eyes when he saw the tot floating

scene," he said. hospital as he lapsed into unconsciousness immediately after rescue.

"We were returning home after seeing the doctor," Rita told The Daily

night her mother-in-law's body was

members if only he were with them. The launch capsize in the Buriganga yesterday has cost the 32-year-old

Karim of the accident that shattered his world for ever. Karim said his wife

festival at Saperchar in Munshiganj.

Minaki's brother Rashed, 13,

however, managed to swim ashore

from the sinking craft and informed

lower deck of the launch at the time of the capsize. Karim received the bodies in the

Gen Moeen

The Eastern Command chief

The army chief began his India

reported that the chief minister

at Postagola.

The government formed a five-

submit its report by seven days and

At least 11,383 chickens were

Ashulia. Meanwhile, 295 bird flu infected

liberation war forces and militancy Awami League leaders Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Abul Hasan Chowdhury, BNP leaders MK Anwar, Gayeswar Roy, Mofazzal Karim, Mohammad Shahjahan, Jatiya Party leaders Anisul Islam Mahmud, GM Quader, Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh leader Maj (retd) Abdul Mannan, Workers Party leader Rashed Khan Menon, Communist Party leader Mujahidul Islam Selim, Jatiya

Ganotantri Party leader Nurul Islam, Samyabadi Dal leader Dilip Barua were present at the meeting. A number of senior political leaders like Dr Kamal Hossain, Hasanul Haque Inu and some BNP leaders, however, did not attend the meeting on personal grounds,

Sources said Editor of Amader Shomoy Naimul Islam Khan organised the meeting and placed a 11point agenda including electoral system and reforms in political parties and key state organisations, balance of power between the president and prime minister, role of the armed forces and formation of national security council, comprehensive national consensus and its long-term regional and international support, unanimous irreversible indemnity for present

mously agreed that political parties should formally hold inter-party dialogue ahead of the dialogue with the caretaker government. including Workers' Party, Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh, Gono Forum, latiya Samajtantrik Dal, Samyabadi Dal, are already having inter-party

However, sources say the lead-

ers could not discuss these as the

agenda was provided to them at the

eleventh hour. The leaders unani-

talks and would continue to do so. These meetings were held for possible formation of a government of national consensus if for any reason the next parliamentary election is not held in time and meaningful reforms for a "really free, fair and credible election to

establish a meaningful democ-

Talking to reporters after the

meeting, the leaders said the main

racy" could be carried out.

BRIEFING

government.

agenda of the meeting was to reach a consensus in holding a dialogue between political parties to achieve unanimity on important national issues including the holding of a free, fair and credible election and restoring a meaningful democracy. Awami League presidium member Tofail Ahmed called upon the

government to lift ban on political

activities so that they could receive

opinions from the grass-roots level

leaders about dialogue with the

BNP pro-Khaleda Zia faction Joint Secretary General Gayeswar Roy said the war criminals and militants should be tried and it has no relationship with politics.

parties have to decide on these Jatiya Party acting President Anisul Islam Mahmud and presidium member GM Quader said inter-party dialogue is necessary to finalise strategies on how the country would be run after the election. They observed that if they hold dialogue with the government

Workers Party President Rashed

the only place in Bangladesh where

"extremely funny"

From Monday March 3, be sure

FROM PAGE 16 The commission disclosed this at a

The three others to be served

Charges pressed

The IO dropped the names of

The charge sheet will be placed

performance in operation from Chittagong, it'll be allowed to operate five to seven weekly flights from Dhaka," an official commented He said the committee put the condition of operating three lowcost flights first from Shah Amanat

> recommendations saying Biman and other legacy airlines had been opposing favouring the budget airlines to protect their own inter-Operation of budget airlines will enhance service standard and help reduce airfares that were increased

facilities.

sure, they observe. Considering transport of only 10 percent passengers on Dhaka-Dubai and Dhaka-Kuala Lumpur routes in weekly 12 flights of two low-cost airlines, the government may earn extra around Tk 20 crore from aeronautical, nonaeronautical and ground handling sectors, the report says.

On the other hand, taking into

account \$100 lower airfare for each

passenger on these two routes, the

country would annually save

around Tk 44 crore in foreign cur-

Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong,

Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and

Bahrain routes will surely increase

the government's revenue income

and save huge foreign currency,"

an official of the civil aviation

"Calculation of Dhaka to

rency, it adds.

by airlines due to passenger pres-

Express, Air Arabia and Jazeera Airways of Kuwait are pursuing the government for operating low-cost carriers from Zia International Airport (ZIA). Air Arabia is already operating such flights from Shah Amanat International Airport.

Bangladesh. ZIA has the capacity of handling yearly 85 lakh passengers, but according to an analysis on last five years' traffic, it handled only 32 lakh passengers, meaning that the airport can accommodate many more airlines, an official said.

his illustrious belt.

first Test with a hamstring injury. low and slow wickets.

"We are now fully convinced that

ready to sit with the reformists to unite the party in the greater interest greater interest of the party and the

session. He is hopeful of holding the "There had been no direction for

Hafiz viewed that a national

circumstances. "But we will always prefer elected government."

Bangladesh has bilateral air An establishment ministry order service agreement with 44 countries, but only 19 airlines from 15 nations operate flights from