defaulter and award Orion Group the work," said the DCC source, adding. "A few top men of the DCC made quick cash out of the deal.

The task force sources said they are still investigating the

The DCC floated a tender on May 11, 2003 asking for design and financial proposal for a tower on the DCC land. Five companies took part in the bid.

GBB Ltd in its project proposal offered DCC 40 percent of floor area of its 26-storey tower on the city corporation's land. Al Amin Ltd offered to give DCC 30 percent of a 34-storey building and Belhasa offered only 21 percent of a 37-storey building.

The two other companies that participated in the bidding were announced defaulter for not submitting proper designs of been convicted in the Oriental

protest the DCC decision," the case involving the Oriental Bank source said, adding that the high- from where he siphoned off est bidder was not even asked almost Tk 600 crore during the of the total floor area if it were asked to build a 37-storey build-

contacted the company it came to learn that the company was ready to offer 40 percent of floor area if it were asked to build a 37storey building, the source added.

Belhasa got the work order within just 19 days of advertising the tender in newspapers although it offered the DCC less share.

On May 19, 2003--just after eight days of floating the tender, the DCC officials evaluated the proposal. They sat to evaluate the financial proposal on May 25 and handed over the work order to Belhasa on May 29, the source

Citing the taskforce investigation, the source said if the DCC more floor area worth at least Tk source.

in City Centre and neighbouring

space, the skyscraper is planned

to have a convention centre, a

restaurant, a business lounge and

a gymnasium. Ten of its floors

would be dedicated to car park-

ing while a helipad built on the

director could not explain what

caused the walls to develop

directed the construction work-

ers to hammer onto the affected

parts of the walls to cover up the

withstand even a 240-kilometre-

an-hour tornado and an earth-

quake measuring 7 on the Richter

DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain

Scale," he observed.

building and take picture.

chinks.

cracks.

Asked, the Belhasa project

Locals alleged that he had

In addition to providing office

buildings were evacuated.

The total floor area of the City Centre with its 33 floors, the ground floor and three base-

The DCC technical committee comprised the then project director Engineer Ashiqur Rahman, then chief engineer Dr Golam Kadir, additional chief engineer Idris Miah and superintendent

Of them, Golam Kadir went to the USA in 2004 and never came back. Engineer Idris Miah and Lutfar Rahman are now in retirement and Ashiqur Rahman was suspended recently for his involvement in corruption in the

Orion chief Obaidul Karim, who has been absconding since January last year, has recently Bank forgery case. He is also the "These companies could not main accused in another forgery whether it could offer 40 percent rule of the alliance government. Obaidul is also accused in a case regarding ill-gotten wealth and another for evading import duty

> Task force sources said investigations into different bank forg-

The Anti-Corruption Commission is investigating Obaidul's ill-gotten wealth under a case for failing to submit his wealth statement.

Besides, the task forces are investigating different largescale deals the Orion boss bagged during the alliance government's rule. These include the Jatrabari-Gulistan flyover project and the

"It will take time to complete all investigations because all these projects are big and some involve foreign investors. But there are huge corruption in each had got 40 percent floor area of the projects and there will be instead of 21 percent, it would more cases against Obaidul have gained 81,000 square feet Karim in near future," said a

official seeking anonymity.

Police investigators said investigators that he received Tk arrestee Saiful, a security guard of Max Automobiles, sub-contractor

He said he assisted in stealing as a member of a professional gang of thieves led by Liton. He could not say where the stolen clips were.

Police arrested Saiful at Banani but could not glean any information from him as of 8:00 last night. They also arrested Liton and were

The other arrestees are Abul Hossain and Jamal. All five were arrested from Tejgaon Railway

"Swapan admitted his involvement in the theft but we are yet to recover any stolen goods," Officerin-charge of GRP Police Station Mahbubur Rahman told The Daily Starlast night.

Investigators and railway sources suspect involvement of low-level serving and retired railway staff in the stealing, as they believe such a massive job could not have been possible without

"It is taking 50 workers two days to install the metal clips. It is hard to believe that without the involvement of railway staff, such thing could happen," said an investiga-

Chief Engineer of Bangladesh Railway Abul Kashem, however, said investigation is going on and proper action would be taken against the offenders, whoever

Railway officials said there is over 2,800km of railway tracks across the country. There are ing five to seven kilometres of track each. They examine the lines for faults during the day. There is no way to oversee the lines after dark. **ENQUIRY COMMITTEE**

A three-member enquiry commit tee headed by Abul Kashem was formed late on Friday.

to submit its report with recommendation within three days. The two other members of the committee are Bangladesh Railway's Chief Engineer (Eastern region) Noor Mohammad and Chies Commandant (Eastern region) Faruq Ahmed.

headed by Assistant Superintendent of Railway Police Rakhal Chandra Sutradhar was formed to investigate the incident. The committee was given 10 days to submit its probe report.

War criminals

forces AK Khandker said, "This country is an unsuccessful state as it has failed to try the war criminals

Khandker, also president of the Sector Commanders Forum, urged the present caretaker government to form special tribunal and start the process of trying the war criminals without delay.

He strongly demanded banning of political activities of those parties that acted as auxiliary to the Pakistani occupation forces in

"The next election would not be free and fair if the war criminals and anti-liberation elements are not barred from taking part in it, the war veteran observed. He said they had taken the vow to win in the "battle" of bringing the war crimi

Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, former vice-chancellor of Jahangirnagar University, said the government must recognise the nation's demand for the trial of the war

criminals. No one would blame this government if it cannot end the process of trying the war criminals, he added, stressing the need for start

Lt Gen (retd) Harun-ar-Rashid, chief coordinator of Sector Commanders Forum, expressed surprise that the war criminals and anti-liberation elements dare to speak against the country's Liberation War even when freedom

fighters are still alive. "We have got honour and independence at the cost of lives of freedom fighters but we could not yet bring the war criminals to justice even after long 37 years of

Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, Col (retd) Shawkat Ali, Shahriar Kabir, Gazi Muhammad Rahmatullah, martyred subedar Ilias Khan, Dr ABM Zafar Ullah, Joynal Abedin, Golam Kuddus, Advocate Habibur Rahman Shawkat, Muhammad Ali Chowdhury Mangal, Advocate Dhali Moazzem Hossain, Abir Ahad, Prof Momtaz Begum, Dr Makhduma Nargis, Farida Khanam | refrain from any move that may

Saki, Fazlul Haq, Borhan Uddin hamper the dialogue process and it Taher Hossain Bhuiyan, Gazi | nation," Ashraful said. asked the caretaker government to

> exchange views with divisional level leaders of the party to know

Electoral reforms accused of corruption are being brought to justice under the norma

> new law for trial of the corruption suspects. He further said the government is also trying to find out ways to curb corruption by taking preventive strategies like simplification of rules and regulations and posting those on public domain. He also mentioned the setting up

Le, Editor-in-Chief of Vientiane Regulatory Reforms Commission and Better Business Forum. Razmountry and director, Media The CA said the government also wants to strengthen local government system to strengthen the were among others, on the delega-

Information Act, constitution of the

Chief Adviser's Press Secretary He said the government also is carrying out efforts for socioeconomic development and hoped ties that the Election Commission is Bangladesh would be able to about to finalise the electoral become a middle-income-group country in the near future.

On business and investment, he said the government will play regulatory role transparently for fast growth of private sector.

month-old regime the chief adviser said the caretaker government is a constitutional government and he was sworn in according to provision of the constitution.

Rice price

FROM PAGE 1 price. A wholesale trader said price of rice will drop when locally produced rice enters the market in

Waheeduzzaman told The Daily Star that Bangladesh has food reserve for three months and Boro rice will start entering the market soon. The international food crisis and the Indian price hike will not impact Bangladesh, he said.

Mohammad Tipu Sultan, a rice importer, said hiking export price to \$1,000 per tonne indicates that the Indian strategy is not to export

from the local market from April 15," he said.

for one and a half month, said Tipu Sultan, adding, "Therefore, there is no reason for immediate price hike

Bangladesh Economic Association President Prof Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad said the Indian price hike proves that food crisis has become a global issue. It may not influence Bangladesh

market immediately since there is food in reserve but the problem is the already high price of rice. People of low and limited income group struggle to buy food, he said. "Price hike of rice in such a way

would not have happened if the government had recognised the problem on time and imported food when its price was low, Kholiquzzaman said.

The only way out for the govern ment is to give special emphasis on food production, he said. He suggested allocating more money in the next budget for agriculture, providing farmers with agriculture loans and buying food early from local and foreign markets. RICE PRICES IN CITY

Prices of Indian rice in wholesale markets in the city dropped by T 10 to Tk 20 a mound, just over 37kg

Tk 10 to Tk 20. A mound of these rice was selling vesterday between Tk 1,160 and Tk 1,180.

AL to observe

Secretary Syed Ashraful Islam declared the mass hunger strike, saying the planned hunger strike is the beginning of the future "con-

structive movement"

The meeting strongly demanded unconditional release of Sheikh Hasina and other party "Earlier, we had sent an applica-

tion to the chief advisor with a request to release Sheikh Hasina and arrange her proper treatment in US. But, the government didn't pay heed to our demand ... Now we strongly demand her unconditional release," Ashraful said.

The meeting approved the signature campaign programme announced by the City Awami League and Jubo Mohila Awami League and hailed the organisations for taking such programme aiming at releasing Sheikh Hasina. Awami League called for start-

ing proposed dialogue between the government and the political parties ahead of the parliamentary election but cautioned that if the war criminals are invited to the dialogue, the party will boycott it. "We want bilateral dialogue 'ike

that of the Election Commission and we hope the government will will not bring any good for the The central working committee

lift the state of emergency and ban on political activities across the country to create congenial atmosphere for holding the elections. The meeting decided to an elected government and for this

planned mass hunger strike, the grams like wearing black badges and hoisting black flags across the country and forming human chain to speed up the movement on the street. At the central committee meet-

ing, some leaders expressed their student wing Bangladesh Chhatra League. They suggested reconstitution of the Chhatra League to make it effective. The leaders underscored the

any cost, shunning differences of opinion.

Security upped

FROM PAGE 16

Gen Zakir Hassan however told The Daily Star that they do not have any such information. Besides, he added, they always maintain strict security surrounding the VIP

FROM PAGE 1 would raise the number of OMS outlets to 6,530 across the country next month. Currently 2,730 OMS outlets are in operation, and 3,800 more will be set up.

Of the total OMS outlets, 510 will sell rice in six city corporations, 580 will operate in 58 districts and the rest will be activated at upazila levels and at places with many industrial units.

ministry cannot appoint new dealers at places, the Directorate of Food will continue sale in those places by sendingtrucks. A total of 1.2 lakh tonnes of rice

will be sold through OMS, and the food ministry will increase per head sale to five kg from four kg while dealers' commission will be enhanced to Tk 1.5 per kg from Tk 1 At present, the government has

Monga (famine like situation) affected districts and it will bring another 37 districts under this programme, the food secretary mentioned. "The government will provide

additional 54 thousand 463 tonnes of rice to expand the VGF programme in April, "Wahiduzzaman said. The government will not increase

the existing 15 kg rice per head for

Foreign envoys FROM PAGE 16 National Press Club yesterday, held

to launch the organisation. Former energy adviser and

executive chairman of the Board of Investment Mahmudur Rahman is the convener of the organisation. Farhad Mazhar, columnist and poet, Ataus Samad, adviser of Daily Amar Desh, professors Talukder Moniruzzaman and Razia Akhter Banu of the Political Science department of Dhaka University, Sabihuddin Ahmed, a former ambassador, Dr Anwarul Azim vice-chancellor of Dhaka University of Engineering and Technology (DUET) and MA Hannan, rector of the Engineering Staff College are the members o the newly floated organisation.

They condemned the govern ment for inviting Indian war veterans of 1971 to the 38th Independence Day celebrations terming the move disgraceful and against the sovereign interests o the nation.

Mahmudur Rahman, convener of NIG, in his speech said the independence, sovereignty and dignity of the people cannot be protected if interference by foreign envoys in the nation's internal affairs is not

Farhad Mazhar said the Indian Army personnel might have been invited to the Victory Day celebrations, but they had nothing to do with the Independence of the

Other NIG members echoed his sentiments, saying India did not take part in our liberation war to help us but rather in their own

NIG will publish a quarterly report on 'interference by foreign diplomats in the country'

Akbar Ali

FROM PAGE 16

was submitted to the PSC chair man on March 6. The report discussed in details the existing quota system and recommended reforms.

Terming the present system faulty, Akbar Ali Khan said, "Quota system for civil service recruitment cannot continue for an indefinite time. There should be a mechanism for rearranging the system. Otherwise there may be an impression that those recruited are not competent."

Percentage of recruitment under quota system should never be higher than that of recruitment on the basis of merit, he said. But cancellation of quota system fully might create social unrest, he said. adding that the system therefore should have legal basis.

The RRC chairman said under the present quota system, children of poor people do not get jobs rather children of those comparatively rich get jobs.

Of the 55 percent quota for recruitment in civil service, 30 percent is reserved for freedom fighters, 10 percent for district level candidates, 10 percent for women and five percent for indigenous communities while 45 percent appointments are made on the basis of merits.

"As a freedom fighter, I support quota system for children of freedom fighters but there is a question how this can be justified by the constitution. If children of freedom fighters are considered people of | codes dating back to British colodissatisfaction at the activities of its backward sections, they may be nial rule that contribute to its Saturday. given the benefits of quotas," Akbar Alisaid.

Terming the recommendations for reducing quota positive, and more appointments on the basis of merit, the PSC chairman said they will hold discussions outside Dhaka to seek public opinion on

Others who spoke at the seminar included PSC member Mohammad Nurunnabi and secretary Mohammad Abdus Sattar, acting law secretary KH Awal, former secretaries Kazi Rakib Uddin Ahmed and Mahfuzul Islam, women's rights leader Ayesha Khanam, Bangladesh Observer Editor Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Maj Gen (retd) Amin Ahmed Chowdhury, PSC former member Prof Khandkar Bazlul Haque and former ambassador Mohammad Afsarul Kader. Saadat Hussain moderated the seminar.

Arab summit

reporters ahead of the two-day gathering. "Their aim is to divide

"There will be a very successful summit," he added. Several Arab officials have

expressed frustration at the West's "interference" in Arab affairs. "There has been US pressure on Arab countries to reduce their participation," Libyan Foreign

told reporters in Damascus on Saturday. "We as Arabs do not interfere in European summits. It has become a farce and this situation must be remedied by a joint Arab effort," he

Egypt sent a junior minister, while powerhouse Saudi Arabia and Jordan were represented by their ambassadors to the Arab League.

"There will be no trace of the United States on the summit's work or agenda," Muallem told his counterparts on Thursday in a preparatory meeting for the sum-

Lebanon has been without a president since the end of November and has been mired in political crisis for more than a year because of feuding between the Western-backed parliamentary majority and the Hezbollah-led opposition, backed by Syria and

"Lebanon has had a presidential void for more than four months.

end of Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war, is widely seen as an extension of the conflict pitting the United States and its regional allies against Syria and Iran. On Thursday, Muallem urged

solve the problem. "Saudi Arabia must use its

influence over the majority in larique

Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2004, section 109 of the Penal Code and section 15 of the Emergency Power Rules, 2007.

"The charge sheet is likely to be submitted tomorrow. If not, it'll be submitted on Monday," a competent source told the news agency.

the submission of charge sheet Rahman and mother-in-law Iqbal Mand Banu for acquiring wealth worth about Tk 2.75 crore illegally and concealing information of

assets worth over Tk 2.16 crore. Twelve cases have been filed against Tarique Rahman since his arrest in the early hours of March 8.

Lebanon to help find a solution,"

he said. The summit is due to re-endorse an Arab League initiative for Lebanon which calls for the election of army chief General Michel Sleiman as president, forming a national unity government in which no single party has veto

power and a new electoral law. On Thursday, Arab foreign ministers also agreed to re-endorse the 2002 Arab initiative for Middle East peace but expressed their frustration at Israel's refusal to follow up on their plan.

Violence

FROM PAGE 16

and perpetrated by the separatist forces for "Tibetan Independence" both in and outside China.

The statement said the incident has again exposed the separatist nature of the Dalai clique, as well as the hypocrisy and deception of their claimed "peace" and "nonviolence."

The statement said the violent crimes committed by the Dalai clique aroused grave indignation and strong condemnation among the people of all ethnic groups in The competent authorities of

dealt with the incidents in accordance with law to maintain social stability and the sanctity of law In a televised address on Friday and safeguarding the fundamental interests of all ethnic groups. It said the law enforcement personnel exercised maximum restraint during the whole pro-

cess. Now the situation is Lhasa

has calmed down and law and

the Tibet autonomous region have

order has returned to normal. "The Chinese government is fully capable of maintaining law and order in Tibet and protecting the fundamental interests and security of the people of all ethnic groups in Tibet," the statement

The embassy said it is univer-

sally recognised by the international community that Tibet is an inalienable part of the Chinese territory. The position of the Chinese government on the Dalai question has been widely understood and supported by countries and people upholding justice. "The Dalai question is not an

issue of ethnicity, religion or culture, but a fight of secession versus anti-secession," it said, adding since the democratic reform in 1959, earth-shaking changes have (m) been witnessed in Tibetana

The statement said it is the common aspiration of all ethnic groups in Tibet to maintain national unification, ethnic solidarity and social harmony.

stands firm in building a stable Tibet that is progressing, and ensuring the safety of life and property of all ethnic groups there.

"The development and progress of Tibet is irreversible. Any attempt to split the motherland is definitely to be opposed by the Chinese people of all ethnicities, including the Tibetan compatriots, and is doomed to failure," it

Terrorism first priority

eight years of military rule under Musharraf.

of Pakistan's political landscape, lawmakers on Saturday gave a unanimous vote of confidence to Gilani, a loyalist of assassinated

concerned that Musharraf's decline could result in an easing of Pakistan's efforts to counter al-Oaeda and Taliban militants entrenched along the Afghan border, he announced that "fighting terrorism" was his government's "top priority."

"The war against terrorism is our own war," Gilani told lawmakers, who repeatedly thumped their desks in approval as he outlined his

"ready to hold talks with those who will lay down their arms" in order to restore peace. Gilani promised to develop the

pared to negotiate with hardcore militants blamed for a wave of suicide attacks in Afghanistan and, increasingly, in Pakistan. Deputy US Secretary of State John Negroponte cautioned on

tought. Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan save Musharraf. People's Party and that of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif fin-

parliamentary elections, trouncing Musharraf's political allies. The country faces gathering economic problems, including double-digit inflation, electricity shortages and deteriorating state

including restricting the size of cars driven by ministers.

But Sharif and Asif Ali Zardari, on a politically explosive pledge to restore Supreme Court judges ousted by Musharraf.

Gilani said his government would "work for" that goal, but achieved.

lenges to his re-election as presi-

dent the previous month. Musharraf retired as army chief

only in November. Sharif, who was ousted as prime minister and exiled after the 1999 coup, is pushing hard for But he also said authorities were Musharraf's resignation. Party lieutenants say parliament could

> "Musharraf is part of the problem in Pakistan, and he can't be part of the solution," Chaudhry Nisar, a leader of Sharif's party, told reporters outside parliament on

> on the road to prosperity and democracy ... Under no condition are we prepared to work under Pervez Musharraf, "he said.

"Only after his removal from

US in its war on terrorism, appears increasingly isolated.

Negroponte promised after that some militant groups were talks with Pakistan's old and new leaders that Washington would not

> US-allied forces in the Pakistan-Afghan border region. Osama bin Laden and other al-

Story of a skewed deal 5 held

FROM PAGE 1

matter.

their proposed building.

When the task force recently

ments is 4,79,500 square feet.

engineer Lutfar Rahman.

Jatrabari-Gulistan flyover pro-

for a luxury car.

ery by Obaidul are going on.

Meghnaghat power project.

Motijheel skyscraper construction and weight experts examine the gracks, "said Ashfaq. The DMP commissioner said the law enforcers have been

> directed to keep 280 feet-radius around the building sealed off. On hearing the news, those who have purchased office space in the building rushed to the spot. They were quite anxious about the developments. "We have paid Tk 44 lakh in advance for 1,700 square-feet on the 26th floor," said

Abul Hashem, an employee from Rajanigandha Shipping. "I don't know what's awaiting us," he added.

Shahara Khatun and Qamrul Islam ing. They stayed there for nearly an

"She is not fit to come out of the

trying to create barrier so that in connection with the Khulna newsmen could not enter the barge-mounted power plant deal case," Shafique said. Hasina's nuclear scientist hus-Khoka, Dhaka Metropolitan band Dr Wazed Mia also met her at Police Commissioner Nayeem the hospital and stayed there for Ahmed and DCC Chief Engineer nearly one and a half hours. He was Colonel Asfaqul Islam visited the accompanied by grandson

enacting new laws to ensure opportunity for women and their immovable property.

took to the streets to protest the asked to attend the meeting," he policy, clearly violating the emer- said. gency rules. told Islamic scholars at the said the meeting was arranged Islamic Foundation that the hurriedly

urged people not to criticise a before going through it.

Mufti Mohammad Nuruddin, acting khatib of Baitul Mokarram

development.

Hasina

Yes, I had given them the FROM PAGE 16 direction and it was not risky for the structure," said Nurul Islam. met her at the hospital and con-"The building will be able to sulted her on the cases she is fac-

hospital for appearing before the Workers of the Belhasa were special court tomorrow (Sunday)

Shamim and granddaughter "I cannot say anything before Shamu.

control on earned movable and Earlier, several advisers, including the law adviser himself and Women and Children Affairs Adviser Rasheda K Choudhury, made it clear on several occasions that the new policy contains nothing that goes against the rule and spirit of Islam, but a

interim government would not pass any law on inheritance. The next day Adviser Rasheda progressive" document like the But Islamist organisations

National Mosque, was made convenor of the review commit-

the meeting and not even after the committee was formed," top official of the ministry told The Daily Star on condition of Since the ministry played the key role in formulating the policy

The law adviser on March 11 ers of the four advisers' offices policy. We need to know whether

> Saying that all the deliberations over the past few years on formulating the policy appear to have been absolutely meaningless after the government's bowing to the pressure of "those who are talking against the constitution", Sultana Kamal added, "I can't help asking who is running the government?"

Law Adviser Hassan Ariff No official from the women declined to comment on the issue

arrestee Swapan admitted his involvement in the theft. He told 1,000 for the job from another of Chinese company which was awarded the job of converting the metre-gauge lines to multi-gauge

from Joydevpur to Dhaka.

interrogating him.

Station and Banani areas yesterday.

their knowledge.

torseeking anonymity.

they may be. employees responsible for examin-

The committee has been asked

Earlier, another committee

nals to justice.

ing the trial.

independence," he said. The 25 freedom fighters and dignitaries given reception are

over by Shajahan Kabir, president of Bangladesh Muktijoddha Nou Commando Association.

their opinion about the elections

the government should announce election schedule immediately, Ashraful said. After the observance of the party is likely to announce pro-

need for keeping party united at

inmates.

Govt to supply

the Arab world." The food secretary said if the

Minister Abdel Rahman Shalgham

VGF programmes in 14 Sidr and

ahead of the summit, Lebanese Prime Minister Fuad Siniora said his government had decided to boycott the meeting because of Syrian meddling in his country's

Before and during that period Syria played a leading role to exacerbate the crisis ... interfering in Lebanon's internal affairs and blocking the election of the consensus candidate to the presidency," he said. The crisis, the worst since the

Riyadh to use its influence to help

FROM PAGE 16

The ACC on Thursday approved against Tarique, his wife Dr Jobaida

The Chinese government unswervingly upholds state sovereignty and territorial integrity. It

FROM PAGE 16

former premier Benazir Bhutto. In a gesture to Western nations

priorities.

economy and abolish criminal isolation. However, he gave no indication office, can Pakistan move forward whether his government was pre-

impoverished frontier region's

Thursday during a visit to Pakistan "irreconcilable" and had to be

ished first and second in Feb. 18

Underlining the transformation Benazir Bhutto's widower and political successor, also want the new government to deliver quickly

> didn't explain how it would be Musharraf declared emergency rule and purged the court last November to forestall legal chal-

impeach him if he doesn't resign.

Musharraf, a stalwart ally of the

interfere in the country's politics to Still, he was cautious on the new government's hopes to talk peace with some of the pro-Taliban militant groups battling Pakistani and

Qaeda suspects are believed to be hiding in the frontier region, which finances. Gilani announced a has seen a spike in US airstrikes in government austerity campaign, recent months.

Women Policy

women development policy the advisory council approved paid no heed to her call. They Parishad. accused the government of trying to implement an anti-Shariah policy in the name of women's

ree. It will submit its report within 21 days identifying the "inconsistencies in the policy from the perspective of the Islamic rules". and children affairs ministry was over the phone.

present at the meeting that

and will have to implement it, it is surprising that neither the minissection of the religious leaders try's adviser nor any official was When asked about this, staff-

the policy," said Ayesha Khanam,

When contacted last night,

formed the committee, said "We were not informed before

"It seems to be a two-pronged forming the review committee is the decision of the four advisers or the government as we know president of Bangladesh Mahila

Ahmed, Jagadish Chandra Biswas, Muhammad Delwar Hossain, Ahmed Ullah, Abdur Ranim, Mofizuddin, Selim Bhuiyan and Abdul Kadir. The programme was presided

(Malaysia) NG Poh Tip, Deputy law of the land. The present care-Managing Director of the China taker government did not enact any Daily Zhou Li, Deputy Editor of the Straits Times (Singapore) Felix Soh, Editor- in-Chief of the Korea Herald (South Korea) Choi Nam-hyun, Editor and Managing Director of the Statesman (India) Ravindra Kumar, President of the Nation (Singapore) and Executive Director, ANN, Pana

group editorial adviser of the Star

Times (Laos) Savankhone

Programme, Asia Kornad Adenauer

Foundation Werner Vom Busch,

Syed Fahim Munaim was also pres-

The CA told the media personali-

reforms through discussion with

political parties, civil society and

taken as per demand of the people

including a recast of the Election

Commission, Anti-Corruption

Commission, and Public Service

Commission and separation of the

judiciary for sustainable democracy

Regarding fair and neutral elec-

tion, he said numerous questions

were raised in 2006 about the stalled

election scheduled for January 22,

2007. Accuracy of voter list is one of

the preconditions for free, fair and

equipped with independent secre-

tariat, has been working to this end,

he told the eminent journalists of

He said preparation of voter list

with photographs is going on in full

swing. The Election Commission

has completed 50 percent of the task

and the EC is confident about com-

Regarding the ongoing anti-

corruption drive, he said those

Barakat was speaking at a

roundtable titled "Women

Empowerment in Bangladesh'

organised by BEA at its auditorium

He demanded the government

provide sufficient health care for

women and special loan facilities

for women entrepreneurs at five

percent interest to recognise

women's contribution to the econ-

Kholiquzzaman Ahmad said the

state itself has to take the responsi-

bility to establish the rights of

women and improve women's

clear stance on implementing

In her keynote paper, Prof

women's policies to ensure a sus-

Hannana Begum observed the

allocation for women development

in the national budget is very poor

and rests underutilised every year

Khatun observed that women are

widely discriminated against in the

country. They receive poor health

care and low wages in jobs that

men do. She blamed the govern

ment for not taking stronger steps

to the national economy. So, the

government should seriously think

about proper framing and imple-

Khondoker Ibrahim Khaled,

chairman of Rupali Bank, said the

government should not surrender

to any kind of agitation while fram-

ing the policy for developing

women and increase the quota for

women in government jobs.

mentation of the women policy,

she added.

"Women do not contribute less

against crimes against women.

In another paper, Mahmuda

due to lack of proper planning.

tainable economy," he added.

"The government should have a

President of BEA Qazi

pleting it within next few months.

The Election Commission, now

and good governance.

neutral election, he added.

the Southeast Asian region.

Barakat

FROM PAGE 16

in the capital.

He mentioned reform measures

media people.

Janviroj, Editor, Political Section, of Rasmei Kampuchea (Cambodia) of the national human rights com-Serath Nguon, Deputy Editor-inmission, formulation of Right to Chief of Vietnam News Nguyen Tien

> foundation of democracy is working to this end.

About the locus standi of his 14-

mid-April Food Secretary Mollah

"We can start collecting rice Private traders have rice reserve

A mound of Indian rice was selling vesterday between Tk 1,180 and Tk Prices of locally-produced coarse rice, however, increased by

and the movement. "The only task of the caretaker government is to hold general elections and hand over power to

untoward incidents," Deputy Inspector General (prisons) Major Shamsul Haider Siddique was quoted as saying by private television channel Ekushey TV yester-Inspector General (prisons) Brig

create a situation that might lead to