FROM PAGE 1

tion) Col Hanif Iqbal confirmed the press yesterday afternoon about the approval of the charge sheets.

Investigating officers of the asbribe. cases filed the cases with Tejgaon Police Station on December 9 had submitted their probe reports in March this year after two months' investigation.

ACC Deputy Director Sabbir Hasan investigated the case against Hasina while ACC Assistant Director Shahidur Rahman investi- the case. gated the case against Khaleda. They will submit the charge sheets

the case against Hasina, the accused in collaboration with each other awarded gas extraction work at Chhatak, Kamta and Feni gas fields to Niko by cheating to gain

The charge sheet also mentions that the work was given to Niko in an illegal way without floating the backdoor. tender, allowing it to extract 1794 billion cubic feet (bcf) gas from a reservation of 2,834 bcf, which caused the country a loss of Tk 13,630.50 crore considering the then price of each million-cubicfeet gas at Tk 75.9783.

personal financial benefit.

accused cheated and abused power by showing the east part of Chhatak gas field--explored by Bangladesh but yet to be extracted--as marginal and abandoned.

The charge sheet will be submitted under sections 409, 109 and 511 of the penal code, section 15 of Emergency Power Rules (EPR) 2007, and section 5(2) of

The charge sheet in the case against Khaleda says the accused in collaboration with each other struck the anti-state "joint venture agreement" by abusing power and through corruption, causing a loss of Tk 13,777 crore to the state and a

The charge sheet will be submitted under sections 409 and 109 of the penal code, and section 5(2) of Corruption Prevention Act 1947.

Sources in the ACC said Joint Secretary and Petrobangla Director (Finance) Yousuf Hossain was indicted in the case for distorting notes on the Niko deal, concealing information to get the deal

Shafiur and Moynul were charged with preparing the framehelped Niko win the deal, while Giasuddin and Selim were indicted for being involved in bribery regarding the deal.

he received Tk 3 crore from Kashem Sharif as bribe and gave Giasuddin Tk 1.80 crore from it.

was indicted for his involvement May 10. with the whole process of awarding the deal to Niko.

tion report in the case against Khaleda proposed including the names of nine more persons in the charge sheet as they were also involved in the process.

Joint Secretary to the law ministry Noren Das is among them, sources added. But, he was not

# 105kg capsules

FROM PAGE 1 However, Sabbir Ahmed, chief chemical examiner of the DNC laboratory, said their tests were not complete and the official report

receiving the test report that would allow the customs authorities to estimate the market value of the seized drugs, customs officials said adding that the drugs might be

worth several crores of taka. The narcotics were seized inside the ZIA in five bags, brought in by US citizen Zebunnessa, 65, of Bangladeshi origin. She fled the scene after arriving in Dhaka from

sources said.

Abu Taleb, deputy director of DNC, told The Daily Star, "Methadone is used for various purposes, including as an antidote to heroin and a pain killer. Methadone is not usually used in Bangladesh [for this a vested quarter is opposing the purposel, but some NGOs have policy and trying to create anarchy been trying to import it to use it as a

"As a drug, it is far more powerful than heroin," he added.

CONTRABAND MEDICINES SEIZED Customs officials on Tuesday seized huge quantities of contra-

band medicines worth about Tk ously. 11.50 lakh and arrested two persons.

Sharif and Firoz -- were handed over to Airport police.

Pakistan.

tion employees in the incident is pro-convener of Durbar Network being suspected and a case was Rowshan Ara Benzir and treasurer filed with the Airport Police of Durbar Network Jesmin Khanam Station.

not directly responsible for award-

The ACC, however, proposed taking departmental action against him for taking a laptop from Niko

The involvement of the nine persons was found after the commission examined necessary documents and files and questioned a number of bureaucrats and officials of different ministries, Niko and other government departments in connection with

ACC Deputy Director Sabbir Hasan filed the case against Hasina while Assistant Director Mahbubul According to the charge sheet in Alam filed the case against Khaleda.

THEDEAL Disqualified by the government in the Second Round Block Bidding for oil and gas exploration in 1997, small Canadian oil company Niko had been trying to enter the Bangladeshi energy scene through

While the then energy secretary Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury promoted a Niko joint venture deal with the country's national exploration company Bapex, the Awami League government could not award the deal due to lack of legal framework.

Soon after the BNP-led alliance government came to power, Niko pushed its deal again using many BNP bigwigs and its legal adviser Moudud Ahmed. The controversial Niko-Bapex deal was signed in 2003 although Petrobangla experts had repeatedly said it was being done violating national policy and compromising national interest.

The then prime minister Khaleda Zia held the energy minister's portfolio. In this deal signed secretly, Niko was awarded gas exploration and extraction work at an unused gas field showing it as a marginal or previously used gas

Any oil company seeking exploration rights to an unused field must be qualified and win it through a competitive bidding.

## OMS extended

FROM PAGE 1

Director General of the Food Directorate Pias Costa told The Daily Star yesterday that the OMS programme would remain open three days a week in the districts where the price of a kilogram of coarse rice remains above Tk 33.

He said that the programme is likely to resume from May 4 or 5 and some areas will get OMS for three days a week and others for four days.

The decision to extend the government programme was taken Selim told the investigators that yesterday following information from the 64 deputy commissioners (DCs) on the situation, Costa said. He added that further decision on Sources also said Kamal Uddin extension of OMS will be taken after

Sylhet City Corporation will be

out of the purview of the extension. The government launched the nationwide OMS programme on January 9 to sell rice at the subsidised rate of Tk 25 per kg in the wake of unprecedented price hike of rice in the country.

Meanwhile, the price of Boro rice has continued its fall in wholesale markets.

Fine Boro rice including Miniket. BR-28 and Parija, released into the market recently, which sold at Tk 1320 - 1550 per maund two weeks ago, is selling for Tk 1200 - 1450 per maund at present.

The price of coarse rice has remained stable over the last three

## Govt asked

policy arises, then the government should discuss it with the women's rights organisations.

They demanded the immediate implementation of NWDP 2008. Begum Shamsun Nahar, convener of Naripakkha and Durbar Network, said that it is surprising

that the government has formed a review committee headed by the Khatib of the Baitul Mukarram mosque who placed recommendations under the pressure of a religion-based political party that is always opposing women's rights in the country.

The NWDP 2008 is the result of a 30-year struggle by the country's women and a way to ensure women's constitutional rights. But in the country to bar its implemen-

The women leaders also said roadmap. that the National Women Development Policy has been drafted on the basis of equal rights and the rationality of its amendment should be considered seri-

They pointed out that equal | and movements by political parrights for women are being implenations. The government should take initiatives to overcome the

Among others convener of The involvement of civil avia- Naripakkha Rowshan Ara Baby, also spoke at the press conference.

## RMG workers

FROM PAGE 16 Sheikh Mujib road for about two and a half hours, reported our

Police said around 500 workers of Expo Worldwide staged a sit in on the DIT Road at about 10:45am as the factory management did not pay them two months' salaries and overtime bills.

The management earlier had assured them of paying their due salaries by yesterday morning.

The garment workers, however, lifted the blockade after 45 minutes and joined work as the factory owner promised them to pay their dues after 4:00pm following intervention

Jahidur Rahman, officer-incharge of Khilgaon Police Station, said the factory owner paid the workers their due salaries in the afternoon.

Meanwhile, about 400 workers of Chowdhury Apparels in the port city's Ashkarabad area put up barricade at Dewanhat intersection at around 12:00noon demanding payment of three months' salary arrears.

Rina Akhter, a worker of the garment factory, said the authorities on three different dates this month had assured them of paying their salary arrears but failed on all the occasions.

The factory authorities at a meeting on April 23 assured them of paying their due salaries by yesterday morning, said Rina. But the factory owner and other

senior officials left the factory in the morning without paying the workers compelling them to demonstrate on the road, she added. The barricade resulted in a long

metres from Wasa intersection to Barik Building crossing. On information, policemen from nearby Double Mooring Police

to remove the barricade. The workers lifted the barricade at about 2:30pm after Deputy Commissioner (DC) (Port) Habibur Rahman went to the scene and assured them of taking necessary steps in this regard.

Later, the factory authorities started paying the workers in presence of law enforcers and BGMEA leaders at about 4:00 pm.

## Cng-run bus

representatives of the bus/transport owners are the committee members. The government will take a decision in this regard after reviewing the recommendation, said an official

announcementWednesday. The government has already refixed the fares of taxicabs and CNGrun autorickshaws following price hike of the fuel. CNG-run buses were plying with the fares fixed for dieselrun buses and the fare was not separately fixed for the CNG buses.

"But, it is being observed that some bus owners and transport companies, violating the rules, are charging extra fares at their sweet will. Measures are being taken by the BRTA through conducting mobile court and special drives," the release further said.

The BRTA said that bus/transport owners and the BRTA chairman had a meeting on April 26 and the committee was formed on April 29 for fixing/re-fixing the fares.

## 4 JMB cadres

FROM PAGE 1

Hossain's courtroom on the ground floor of Chittagong Court Building. People present there caught the two while they were fleeing and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) later caught Jabed Iqbal.

Sources said the three gave confessional statement admitting their involvement in the bomb attack. Charges in the case were pressed on May 8, 2006, accusing six. Five witnesses gave their depo-

Public Prosecutor Quamrul Islam Sajjad stood for the state in the trial while the militants refused to have any lawyer for them.

### HC seeks

FROM PAGE 1 for hearing yesterday, saying the written reply of the EC does not have information about when it will complete the voter listing job

and hold the national election. After his submission the court asked EC counsel Dr Shahdeen Malik to inform the court about these matters. The court also enquired if the omissions were a mistake or done intentionally. In its reply to the rule, the EC

mentioned its roadmap announcing that it would hold polls by December this year after preparing a fresh voter list and identity cards and having discussions with al political parties. The court asked the EC counsel

to explain on what authority the commission has deferred the election beyond 90 days since dissolution of parliament and its legal basis for preparing the According to article 123 of the

constitution, a general election shall be held within 90 days after parliament is dissolved. The EC was recast after the then election commissioners stepped

down in the wake of controversy The petition read, "The reconstituted Election Commission has violated the constitution by failing to hold the election within 90 days

from taking office. "It has no legal authority to extend the period beyond 90 days for any reason...where there is a clear and direct constitutional obligation which must be followed by the Election Commission and the commissioners who owe their very existence to the constitutional provisions," the petitioner said.

# Cyclone Nargis

FROM PAGE 1

and the Office of Chief Adviser will remain partially open today and tomorrow during May Day and the weekend, with some officials and employees concerned assigned to monitor the situation of cyclone Nargis with readiness to take care of any emergency. An order of special duties was issued for the staff of the chief adviser's office yesterday, with a roster of duties for 9:00am to 12 noon, and 4:00pm to 7:00pm.

Nargis, the first cyclonic storm since deadly Sidr, is likely to be intensified further, the met office

An official of the meteorological department said, "Probably it is going to hit Bangladesh-Myanmar coast," adding, it is still too far away to exactly predict the

The met office said it will be able to say today what will be the possible time and place of the landfall.

On Tuesday, the met office declared Nargis as a severe cyclonic storm after its wind speed had crossed 89kmph. If the storm will be categorised as 'very to be ready for any emergency. severe', and if it crosses 150kmph it will be labelled as 'hurricane wind', met office sources said.

Maritime ports in Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla have been asked to keep hoisting distant signal no 2. The met office warned that the

sea will be rough over the North Bay while advising all fishing boats and trawlers to stay close to the coast until further notice. Bangladesh Inland Water

Transportation Authority in a news release last night asked all passenger launches to stop operating near coastal areas until further notice. Over 3,000 people were killed in

cyclone Sidr in November last year leaving over a thousand still missing. The cyclone with a wind speed of 210kmph also caused damage to an enormously large amount of assets and crops leaving millions Director Abdul Qader Zilani.

of people without any livelihood, with many of them yet to rebuild

their homes. Meanwhile, panic gripped many people as soon as they heard about the oncoming cyclone,

Nargis. Our Khulna correspondent reported that people from all walks of life took shelter in schools and cyclone centres at Southkhali on Tuesday night fearing a strike by Nargis, recalling the horrors of

Fishermen from the Bay of Bengal and officials and employees of the Sundarbans Forest Division also took shelter in safe places the same night.

dreadful Sidr.

School students of Southkhali did not attend their classes out of panic, and their classrooms were turned into shelters for panicstricken people.

Most of the people are still panicked about Nargis as the sea remains very rough. Meanwhile, coastguards and

Bagerhat Red Crescent Society took all precautionary measures to face Nargis. All upazial nirbahi officers of

wind speed crosses 120kmph, the Bagerhat district have been asked

## ACC forms

departments, in the submarine cable maintenance, Teletalk and the transport division of the ministry to determine the loss caused by

ACC Director General (Admin) Col Hanif Iqbal told the journalists about the matter at a press briefing in the afternoon.

The commission has already sent a letter to the secretary of the ministry to extend cooperation to the task force through assigning an official, allocating a room for it as well as providing files and documents as per its demands.

The members of the task force are ACC Deputy Director Nurul Islam, Assistant Director Sayed Ahmed and Deputy Assistant

# End monopoly

FROM PAGE 16 logical reason for rise of MS rod price by 55 per cent in the last four months, which forced the construction sector to come to a stand-

Sources pointed out that a cartel of about 20/22 businessmen control the market of MS rod.

The April 17 meeting formed the probe body to find out the 'unexplained reasons' for abnormal price rise of the major construction material, which adversely affected economy. It was asked to submit its report with recommendations by

April 30. ited several ship-breaking yards in Chittagong and talked with scrap ship traders, re-rolling millers and rod traders before finalising its

depends on import, the probe committee has asked for immediate steps to ensure competition to control on the whole market," Hossain Zillur said yesterday.

related recommendation suggested steps for keeping the price

rational.

or demands by any party in this regard. But we're dealing the matter with a professional approach. We will not impose price forcibly

The April 17 meeting decided to commercially open up the busithe Annual Development ness of scrap materials and the Programme and the country's ship-breaking industry to create a competitive market.

The adviser that day said steps would be taken to import the "60 The committee members vis- grade finished rods" for making the market competitive. Some businessmen said rod

prices will not come down if supply of raw materials cannot be ensured at a reasonable rate. They stressed

break any monopoly that leads to the highest price of MS rod at Tk 62,000 a tonne as the price rose to Besides, a taxation policy- 50,000 in January. Most shops selling MS rod remained closed in the wake of drives by law enforcers to implement the government The adviser said, "We won't decision. And this further deep-

# Rivers dying

FROM PAGE 1 industrial areas including Tongi, Gazipur, Savar, Narayanganj and DEPZ areas. Increasing Wasa's sewage coverage for up to 75 percent of the city, and bringing industrialists under a broader commit-

include Wasa's sewage coverage for 100 percent of the city, implementation of Buriganga River flow projects, bringing all industrial units under CETP coverage, maintaining navigability of the

mended that a river cleaning authority should be set up under the auspices of the Office of Chief Adviser.

concerned from different departments spoke at the open discus-Dr Rashidul Hasan, director Bangladesh Army suggested forgeneral of the Department of

the polluting industrialists. make a change, we really can make formed. that happen," he said.

Other officials from DoE said director (technical) of DoE, they had snapped gas and electricity supplies to polluter industries, but the utility agencies concerned Bangladesh, river navigability re-connected those again. Dr Ainun Nishat, country direc-

Conservation of Nature -- IUCN said everybody actually knows what to be done to mitigate river pollution.

powerful body which can implement decisions to save the rivers, he said. Prof Muzaffer Ahmad urged the government to mark the areas of river banks which were encroached

upon by dumping soil into the rivers, and to remove those parts of the banks to give back the rivers their original shapes and sizes.

ful body instead, to save the rivers. Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed said only a few industrialists are polluting the rivers, adding, "Their days will end soon." have reached consensus on sev-

Brig Gen Hakim of the

mation of a river engineering brigade in the army. Nayeemul Islam Khan, editor of he said, adding that there was no January to 3,228, according to the mal talks.

Engineer Abul Kashem of BIWTA, Reba Pal of Water Partnership expert Commodore (retd) Shafiqur | nation.' Rahman, and environmentalist

The advisers wrapped up the

Bangladesh, UK FROM PAGE 16 "I believe time will judge the

success and failures of my tenure," he added saying, "The UK-Bangladesh relation is in a high position now. Trade rose by 20 percent while aid got a 50 percent rise during the last few years. These will go up further."

"Yet there had been enough scopes for investments here in Bangladesh, but things remained unexplored for unknown reasons. Now the time has come to wake up and to unveil things. A UKbased organisation has recently identified 14 important sectors for investment in Bangladesh,' Choudhury added.

Every year, about 6,000 Bangladeshi students go to the UK for education and it is on the rise, the envoy said adding that a 5-year-long special programme styled 'English in Action' will be introduced soon for teaching English to college and school students in Bangladesh. The 100million dollar project will improve the standard of English here, he hoped.

The Working Holiday Maker (WHM) scheme had not been suspended, it was rather paused as 8000 applications were filed in just a week, the high commissioner said. The programme was launched by the UK government for temporary migration of young professionals from countries including Bangladesh last The British high commis-

sioner earlier visited a voter registration centre at Syedpur Aliah Madrasa in Jagannathpur upazila in Sunamganj. Election Commissioner Sohul Hossain accompanied him. Talking to locals, Choudhury

said, the authorities have done a unique job with the task of registering voters with photos and it will help holding fair elections in the near future. Later, Choudhury visited his ancestral village home at Probhakarpur and talked to

villagers and relatives. He took a

tour of the nearby Probhakarpur

Government Primary School,

where he had his elementary schooling. The high commissioner later visited Sylhet Heart Foundation Hospital and inaugurated a privately owned 5-star hotel on Upashahar Road in Sylhet city.

Ahad Uddin, a non-resident Bangladeshi (NRB), and his sons own the Tk 125-crore venture named Hotel Roseview. The leading NRB and his sons own seven restaurants in the Surrey area in the UK.

# SSC structured

FROM PAGE 16 The system will be introduced in Madrasa equivalent to SSC and technical education system from 2011 and in HSC and equivalent Madrasa and technical educationrelated public examinations in

The National Curriculum and Textbook Board and the Dhaka

Education Board will jointly prepare a question bank. The latest announcement would take effect immediately, the

### handout said. CA to address

FROM PAGE 16 Quader told reporters yesterday

afternoon. Asked when the address might take place, he only said "very

He was talking to reporters at the Secretariat after briefing Fakhruddin on the outcome of five advisers' recent meetings with political parties in the lead up to the formal electoral reform dialogue between them and the

government. Yesterday the advisers were scheduled to submit their report to the chief adviser on the recommendations of the political parties, civil society, business community and union parishad representatives.

Quader, LGRD Adviser Anwarul Iqbal and Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman met with the chief adviser yesterday morning for briefing him Professor Nazrul Islam, chair- before finalising their report of the 22-day pre-dialogue talks starting on April 7.

> submit the report to the chief | ments and it is lucky that more adviser later in the day. Replying to a query, Quader | the LTTE peace secretariat said. said they and the political parties

Adviser Zillur told reporters

eral issues during the predialogue talks. "The necessity of political parties' reform was perceived," disagreement during the infor-

Asked about the parliamentary elections and the state of emergency, Quader said, "The chief adviser will talk about on elections, the state of emergency--in his address to the areas.

the conflict, one of Asia's longest running wars.

# 1b people in Asia

FROM PAGE 16

increased investments in agricultural infrastructure such as irrigation fuel. systems, farm to market roads greater support for rural finances," headded.

will hit 5.1 percent in 2008, its highest level in ten years due mostly to the rise in food and fuel costs.

"We believe this is the greatest policy challenge which we face," Nag

on higher energy and fertiliser costs, greater global demand, droughts, the loss of rice farmland to biofuel plantations and price speculation.

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on Tuesday ordered a top level task force to take on the global crisis caused by rising food prices and urged key producer nations to end export bans.

Nag said the the problem was more the inability of the poor to buy foodrather than a lack of supply.

"Supply is tight no question about it. Stocks are the lowest in decades but I think we should be very focused that we need to look at the price issue which is keeping a lot of people in a very vulnerable range," he said.

Based in Manila, the ADB is owned by its 67 member countries --48 from the Asia-Pacific region, and 19 from elsewhere around the world.

Last year it approved 10.1 billion dollars (6.5 billion euros) in loans, 673 million dollars in grant projects and technical assistance amounting to 243 million. UN OFFICIAL WARNS AGAINST

'KNEE-JERK' RESPONSE TO

BIOFUELS

The senior UN official charged with heading up the new task force on the global food crisis warned Wednesday against a "knee-jerk" response to the growing use of biofuels, AFP adds from Geneva.

"I think we should avoid a knee-

jerk response," UN under-secretary

general for humanitarian affairs John Holmes told reporters. Holmes was tasked by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to coordinate a new task force to tackle the crisis of soaring food prices, which have sparked fears of malnutrition and political unrest in many

developing countries. Billions of dollars have been poured into developing ethanol and biodiesel to help wean rich economies from their addiction to carbonbelching fossil fuels, the overwhelming source of man-made global

Heading the rush are the United States, Brazil and Canada, which are

# Students clash

FROM PAGE 16 When policemen obstructed them,

the students started pelting the law enforcers with brickbats leading to a 45-minute-long clash. Police lobbed eight rounds of tear-gas canisters to disperse the

agitating college students who damaged two passenger buses and two private cars during the clash. Later, the students returned to the campus and gathered at the

Another clash between the students and law enforcers ensued after the students started hurling brickbats at policemen near Chandrima market.

college Shaheed Minar.

Later, the agitating students clamed down as the college authorities after holding an emergency meeting announced that they will request the government to meet the demands of the students.

The students have placed several demands including putting up a speed breaker in front of the college, not allowing any policeman to enter the college without prior approval from the authorities concerned and ensuring medical treatment for the teachers and students injured in

Tuesday's clash. The meeting also formed a fivemember committee led by Rukhsana Quadri, a teacher of the college, to inquire into Tuesday's

violent incidents. Five platoons of police were deployed in front of the college in

### the morning. Lankan troops

FROM PAGE 16 been fighting government troops since 1972 for a separate state for minority Tamils.

military of shelling a civilian settle-

ment in the north on Wednesday

However, the LTTE accused the

killing a 52-year-old man and critically injuring a 32-year-old woman. "Two hours of incessant shelling around 1:30pm that they would | was directed at the civilian settle-

> The Tigers also said unidentified gunmen shot dead a Tamil medical student in Jaffna on Tuesday night.

people were not killed or injured."

number of rebels killed since defence ministry, which says 234 soldiers have died in the same

vary widely and cannot be independently verified as Colombo these--the government's stance | bars reporters and rights groups from travelling to the embattled

eagerly transforming corn, soy beans and sugar cane into cleaner-burning

"Biofuels were developed in response to a very serious problem, which is the effects of climate The ADB predicts inflation in Asia change, the need to mitigate the effects of climate change and reduce

emissions," Holmes said. "They weren't invented just for

However, "clearly this is something that needs a new look in pres-The food price rises are blamed ent circumstances," he added, calling for a "careful, sophisticated and

differentiated" approach. The United Nations' independent expert on the right to food, Jean Ziegler, has called biofuels a "crime against humanity" and urged a

moratorium on their production. In recent months, rising food costs have sparked violent protests in Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Haiti, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Mauritania, the Philippines and

other countries. In Pakistan and Thailand, army troops have been deployed to avoid the seizure of food from fields and warehouses, while price increases fueled a general strike in Burkina Faso.

### Parties asked

FROM PAGE 16 religion-based political parties in

the country. WCFFC has said it expects a statement from the OIC on its stand regarding the genocide in Bangladesh in 1971 and the trial of war criminals. The demand for trial of war criminals has turned into a national demand, the statement signed by the convener of the

committee MA Hasan said. The committee has urged all political parties strengthen their movements to bring war criminals

# Hasina misquoted

FROM PAGE 1 yesterday stayed the procedure of returning Hasina's passport and

Metropolitan Magistrate Abdullah Al Mamun delivered the order after submission of a report by Sub-inspector Julfiger Ali of Dhanmondi Police Station. The investigation officer in his

report submitted before the magis-

other materials seized by police

from her Dhanmondi residence.

trate mentioned that as it is a subjudicial matter, it is not possible to return the passport. The court however fixed May 26

as the next date of hearing on the Earlier on July 16, Dhanmondi police seized the passport and other materials from Hasina's residence and filed a general diary.

Later on March 12, Hasina's

#### lawyers appealed before the court for return of these materials and the court also ordered in favour of

the appeal.

Sharif, Zardari FROM PAGE 16

A PPP aide later confirmed the talks had begun. Sharif told reporters before leaving for Dubai that he wanted the "coalition to stay together" but warned of "disastrous consequences for democracy and

restored. Zardari -- the widower of assassinated former premier Benazir Bhutto -- is staying with his two children in Dubai.

had agreed on the text of the reso-

Party sources said the two sides

Pakistan" if the judges were not

lution, but the PPP was still pressing for constitutional changes. "In addition to the agreement on the resolution, we have to work out modalities for implementing that resolution in line with the constitutional requirements," PPP spokesman Farhatullah Babar told

to depose the judges ahead of a decision by the Supreme Court on whether to overturn his re-election as president.

a bloodless military coup in 1999,

took the unprecedented decision

Musharraf, who seized power in

If the chief justice is restored, he could take up fresh challenges to Musharraf. Political sources say Zardari is under heavy pressure from the United States and Britain, which regard Musharraf as a key ally in the "war on terror", not to destabilise

the president's position.

and a number of political parties that boycotted general elections on February 18 are threatening to launch a protest movement if the judges are not restored. The PPP won a majority of seats in parliament but not enough to

form a government on its own. The

The Pakistani legal community

polls however dealt a crippling blow to Musharraf's supporters. Sharif, whose PML-N secured the second largest number of seats in the polls, said his party had won The latest figures raised the a mandate from the people for its stand for the restoration of judges.

Sharif's trip to Dubai came after

the apparent failure of talks between his younger brother Shahbaz, who is the PML-N's Casualty figures from both sides president, and Zardari in Dubai on Monday and Tuesday. "The nation has counted each moment until now and today the

day has arrived," senior party leader Javed Hashmi, who led the Tens of thousands have died in PML-N while the Sharifs were in exile, told lawyers in the central Pakistani city of Multan.

# Khaleda, Hasina

ing the deal. ACC Director General (Administra-

to the trial court soon.

The ACC also alleges that the

Corruption Prevention Act 1947.

loss of 1,744 bcf gas.

approved, and trying to influence his department officials. work of understanding (FoU) so technically and signing it that

The sources said the investiga-

indicted as the law ministry was

could be ready by Sunday. However, "we initially found contraband drugs (in the seized capsules]," he added. A case would be filed after

Kuwait on a Kuwait Airways flight. Police and intelligence agencies are now hunting for Zebunnessa,

tation, other speakers said. heroin antidote."

The arrestees -- Mohammad mented in different Muslim The consignment of 42,000 factors limiting the implementacapsules, 10,360 tablets and 27 tion of the policy instead of overinjections were smuggled in from looking the problems, they said.

Chittagong correspondent.

of the law enforcers.

tailback stretching over four kilo-

Station rushed to the spot but failed

Buriganga River.

Environment (DoE), said the go 'ernment has to take strict decisions

tor of the International Union for Mihir Biswas also spoke.

or target any individuals." He hoped the steps will have a positive impact on the market and price of MS rod will come down and remain stable. Asked about the steps, Zillur said he would disclose those to the media next week.

"Since the business mainly breaking the cartel in shipbreaking industry to keep rod prices at a reasonable level. The government recently fixed Tk 75,000 in early April from Tk

# accept any irrational explanations ened the crisis.

ment for overall pollution control. Long-term recommendations

River experts, environmental workers, and government officials

"What we need is to establish a a

The discussion also recom- man of University Grants Commission, said there are 38 river related government bodies. He suggested establishing one power-

regarding what it wants to do about a vernacular daily the Amader Shomoy, said a movement dedi-"If the government wishes to cated to saving rivers needs to be Among others Dr Riazuddin,

pre-dialogue talks on Monday.