Most parties

"We expected that the chief adviser would say something concrete about the release of Sheikh Hasina which is a demand of the people and of all political parties," Zillur

He said the emergency was not lifted frustrating the nation 'even more'. He doubted the effectiveness of the countrywide withdrawal of the ban on 'indoor politics' since the relaxation is still quite conditional.

"We have been hearing about the parliamentary election by December for long now, there was nothing new regarding it in his

Zillur went on to say that the CA's address gave no directive regarding the country's prevailing crises including price spiral of essentials. "His speech also did not include anything about trials of war criminals and their participation in polls," the AL acting chief said adding, "There was nothing in his address except use of some nice words."

Rejecting the CA's address, Khandaker Delwar Hossain, de facto chief executive of pro-Khaleda faction of BNP also the chairperson appointed secretary general of the party, said the speech failed to reflect the desires of the people.

Regarding the CA's comment on forming a national charter, he said only an elected parliament may do it.

He condemned the conditional lifting of the ban on 'indoor politics', saying the move proves that the government is trying to implement its blue print'.

Brig Gen (retd) Hannan Shah of the BNP faction said the address brought no good news for political parties as the CA did not mention anything about the release of Khaleda Zia and lifting of the emer-

Meanwhile, terming the CA's speech 'timely' and 'reflecting hope' Maj (retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed, acting secretary general of Saifur loyalists in BNP, said the speech removed all public confusion about the upcoming election.

He, however, said they hoped that the CA would hint at lifting of the state of emergency. "The emergency should be lifted at least two weeks ahead of the election, so the election campaigns may be lively."

The leader of Saifur loyalists also said the CA talked about a qualitative change in politics, but initiatives of political parties is a must for implementing it, and the people hope that the parties will take necessary steps.

About the upcoming formal dialogues between the government and political parties, scheduled to begin on May 22, he said the dialogues are going to be very crucial for the country, and that is why they hope the parties will participate in it keeping partisanship behind.

Jatiya Partry (JP-Ershad) Acting Chairman Barrister Anisul Islam Mahmud in his reaction said "The speech failed to reflect the desires and expectations of the people."

"There was nothing new in the chief adviser's speech, it's a traditional one," the JP acting chairman said adding that the speech failed to dispel confusions about many things including the poll date and withdrawal of the emergency.

"There was nothing about economic matters, especially price hikes y of essentials, in the speech," he

JP Secretary General ABM Ruhul Amin Hawlader said the CA's speech will end up creating more public

confusions and disappointments. Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad

speech had no reflection of the government's good will regarding the upcoming dialogues and for holding a credible election.

"It is sad that nothing has been said about the release of Hasina and Khaleda and about the false charges brought against the political leaders," added the Jamaat leader.

Expressing similar views, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon said the CA did not speak about withdrawal of the state of emergency in a bid to continue the government's control over the upcoming election by holding it under the emergency. But no election will be successful if it is held under an emergency, Menon, a key leader in AL-led 14-party coali-

General Secretary of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), Mujahidul Islam Selim said there was nothing new in the CA's address to the nation. "The chief adviser's talk about a national charter is irrational and hints at a deep plot," he said.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haq Inu in his reaction said the chief adviser failed to build any effective public confidence through his speech.

Court to rule

FROM PAGE 16 proof against her.

> They also described to the media the observations that the former premier made while talking to them vesterday.

Hasina sought to alert her party colleagues to, what she said, a conspiracy against rule of law.

"Awami League has a long experience in mass movement. The senior leaders will work out how the movement should be steered home,' Hasina said.

She then added, "I will take part in the election and win it if it's held freely and fairly."

The lawyers representing her took seven sittings to complete their arguments on the discharge petition that began on April 3. Before that, the prosecution presented their points.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the case with Tejgaon Police Station on September 2 last year.

The other accused are former Power Development Board (PDB) chairman Noor Uddin Mahmud Kamal, Managing Director of Summit Industries and Mercantile Corporation Private Ltd Aziz Khan, Director Farid Khan, United Group Chairman Hasan Mahmud Raja and Director Abul Kalam Azad.

The charge sheet submitted on January 10 included Bangabandhu Memorial Trust (BMT) Curator Siddiqur Rahman as one of the accused.

Charge sheet

FROM PAGE 16

the First Information Report (FIR) filed on the evening of April 30, immediately after the incident.

They were -- CU BCL Science and Technology Deputy Secretary Jahidul Islam Jewel, Assistant Secretaries Razu and Sohel, and activists Idris, Asharful, Riyel, Aftarul, Tanjim and Rimon.

Investigation Officer (IO) of the case SI Delwar prepared the charge sheet exempting two -- Ashraful and Razu -- of the charge, sources said.

The BCL brought out the procession on the campus protesting Islami Chhatra Shibir activists' alleged modification of their graffiti at the CU Railway Station and on the

Mojaheed in his reaction said the shuttle train. Skilled workers' job

between 2001 and 2007, except in 2005 when it was 48 percent.

"The unskilled workers are vulnerable to exploitation and are not paid what they really deserve. The government has established some new science and technological universities, polytechnic and vocational institutes to increase the number of skilled, semi-skilled and professional personnel but the number is smaller than what is required to meet the demand," a

study said. Moreover, the quality of education provided by these institutes is not up to the mark in comparison to the institutes of other leading manpower exporting countries, said the study titled "Making Bangladesh leading manpower exporter: chasing a dream of \$30 billion annual migrant remittances by 2015" conducted by Indian Institute of Management Calcutta in 2007.

"Our analysis shows that in most of the countries Bangladeshi workers are earning much less than the average market-based estimates," the study says adding that poor bargaining skills of Bangladeshi agencies in negotiating salaries for workers is also

causing low wages. Even in the so-called unskilled categories there is need for a minimum acceptable proficiency which is rising across the globe. Therefore, Bangladesh needs to provide the unskilled workers basic training and grooming as the competition in this category is going to be severe with many LDCs from African and Asian continents joining the fray.

The study sponsored by the Royal Danish Embassy in Dhaka says skill certification requirements in the host country either prevent market access causing said.

rejection of work permits or visa applications or limit specific activi-

Unfortunately, there is no agency in Bangladesh to certify those who are trained up for working abroad.

"Nurses have huge demands in European and American countries, but there is no international certifying agency. A Bangladeshi nurse needs to go to India or Bangkok to face examination if she wants to go to a European country," said a recruiting agent.

Mentioning unimportant reasons the government even imposed various restrictions on the introduction of nursing education in private universities, said Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) Coordinator Prof CR Abrar.

He said there are many training courses that are outdated but they are still conducted at the government's technical training centres. "We must see exactly what the requirements are and then design

courses accordingly," he said. BMET Director General Abdul Malek said under BMET and expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry there are 38 training centres where the government has recently incorporated

new training courses. These centres have the capacity to train 26,000 individuals yearly. Twenty-seven percent of the trained people from these centres go abroad, he noted.

"Our foreign ministry collected list of the most demanding job sectors in different countries. We are also thinking about introducing international certifying agencies for different sectors so that our overseas jobseekers can get jobs with better wages and facilities," he

Concern over

FROM PAGE 1 "The senior journalists will wait for the Chief Adviser's (CA) address to the nation before taking any step," it

"The speakers alleged that military intelligence agency is increasing pressure on newspapers day by day, 'BBC added.

Two news editors of TV channels said they have become fed-up with the increased pressure put on them in the last few weeks.

They said they were given instructions over the telephone about which news will be broadcast and which will not, BBC said adding that they are also given instructions about who will attend talk shows in the television channels.

The government is now forcing them to broadcast its publicity programme.

Nurul Kabir, editor of The New Age, told the BBC, "An intelligence agency of the armed forces has started giving instructions to editors of different newspapers and television channels regularly about which news will be published or broadcast and which will not."

"They cannot take any decision independently. We are informed that if they refuse to follow the instructions they will have to pay the price," he said.

Commenting on the problems he faces in presenting a newspaper review programme, Editor of the daily Manabzamin Matiur Rahman Chowdhury said, "Instructions are given about who can be invited to the newspaper review programme. Sometimes we are instructed that the invited guest should not be allowed to attend the programme only 30 minutes before the show starts. I have been experiencing such embarrassing situation every day," he said.

Alamgir Mahiuddin, the editor of the daily Naya Diganta, alleged that three journalists of the newspaper working outside the capital had been harassed during the state of

The editors reached a consensus that they would make a unanimous announcement of rejecting all the instructions given by the government intelligence agency.

But, they would wait for the CA's address to the nation before taking any decision on the issue.

"We want to listen to his (CA) speech first. We want to know whether the state of emergency wil be relaxed or not. We shall look for solutions to the problems we are facing right now," said Ataus Samad, editor of the daily Amar Desh.

"We shall sit again tomorrow and make a decision after examining possible solutions to our problems headded.

The BBC also reported that 'the time of the meeting will be announced later.'

FROM PAGE 16

I never heard the name of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) before," Sumon told CID personnel yesterday, the first day of his five-day remand.

They said Sumon has been trying to misguide them by hiding the truth.

On May 6, CID inspector Delwar Hossain, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, had shown Sumon arrested in the case and sought his remand saying that if Sumon is placed on remand important information could be extracted from him.

Sumon has already given judicial statement to a magistrate in connection with the bomb attacks on Pahela Baishakh programmes at Ramna Batamul on April 14, 2001.

Earlier, Huji boss Mufti Hannan his brother Mohibullah alias Mafizur Rahman, Huji leader Sharif Shahidul Alam alias Bipul and several leaders of the outfit were shown arrested in the CBP rally blast case.

Chevron

FROM PAGE 16 work that could disturb the flora

and fauna of the forest. About the allegation of cracks in the houses alongside the areas where the survey was going on, he said he is aware of such an allegation. "But I should not comment before investigation," he said.

Some villagers, however, alleged that the cracks on their houses developed after the blasts.

Supreme judicial

FROM PAGE 1 full bench hearing by the apex court, and fixed May 15 for the hearing.

He did not stay the HC order. The president promulgated an ordinance titled "Supreme Judicial Commission Ordinance 2008" in March this year for constituting the

commission as part of government

measures to do away with

politicisation of appointment of SC

and HC judges. Advocate Idrisur Rahman, a SC lawyer, on April 28 filed a writ petition with the HC challenging validity of the ordinance. An HC bench comprising Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Farid Ahmed stayed for three months functioning of the commission. It also issued a rule on the government and the SC registrar to explain within three weeks why the

ordinance shall not be declared unconstitutional. Attorney General Fida M Kamal appeared for the government yesterday while Dr Shahdeen Malik represented the writ petitioner.

Odhikar wants

FROM PAGE 16

different intelligence agencies had called a number of the lawyers and enquired about several issues including reasons behind the delay in hearing of cases.

The Odhikar report says, "Despite repeated pronouncements, there are lingering doubts about the holding of general elections pursuant to the so-called roadmap." It said the EC has already missed a number of its selfset targets.

Odhikar said it is alarmed by the number of recent rulings of the Supreme Court Appellate Division which has serious implications for individual rights and principles of

Criticising remarks of a few European heads of missions give the impression that the development partners could be satisfied even if mainstream political parties do not participate in the upcoming elections, Odhikar said. It said such remarks created apprehension among people that the election days. and handing over of power to a civilian government have become the primary concern of some of the development partners.

It called upon all development partners of Bangladesh to work for an election participated by all.

The human rights body was also very critical of the continued government attempt to interfere with the media and extra-judicial killings by law enforcement agencies. It also opposed the promulgation of another anti-terrorism act.

Between January 12, 2007 and May 11, 2008, 207 people were reportedly extra-judicially killed by law enforcement agencies, it said.

During the 16 months of emergency, freedom of expression, especially rights of the workers of jute mills and garment factories were ignored and they often received brutal response from the government, the report further added.

Odhikar strongly recommended the lifting of the emer-

gency and demanded the draft o the proposed Anti-terrorism Ordinance be revealed to public

released. It also asked the government to follow the due process of law in the trial of corruption suspects.

and all political prisoners be

Rice prices

FROM PAGE 16 This increase in price has impacted the retail markets where sellers are

raising the price of rice by Tk .50 per Retailers are saying that the price

hike will continue for the next few Wholesalers are however saying that the price of coarse rice has been more affected by the government

procurement than the finer rice Mohammad Nizamuddin, secretary general of Badamtoli-Babubazar Rice Wholesale Association, while talking to The Daily Star confirmed the price hike across the country over the last two

He said that because farmers are only selling to the government at present, they are unable to meet the demand in the market, in price rise in the open market. The situation would improve within a few weeks, headded.

Wholesalers are however saying that because the government procurement is at a fixed price, farmers are holding back their stock to sell it at a better price in the open market, once the government procurement is over. That has caused the shortage in supply, they say.

Director General of the Food Directorate Pias Costa told The Daily Star that the rice procurement of the government started in mid April and the food directorate's warehouses is are already being stocked up for the past few days.

Meanwhile in the markets, price of Miniket has leapt to Tk 1,380 to Tk 1,390 from Tk 1350 to Tk 1360 per maund while IRRI rose to Tk 1,100 to Tk1,120 from Tk1,070 to Tk1,080 two days ago.

A maund of chapal is selling at Tk 1,160 to Tk 1,170, up from Tk 1,120 to

Over 8,500 killed

FROM PAGE 1

The quake, with a magnitude of 7.8, struck close to densely-populated areas of Sichuan province including the capital Chengdu.

It swayed buildings in Beijing and Shanghai and was also felt in Hong Kong, Hanoi and Taipei, residents said, and even in the Thai capital Bangkok, 1,800 kilometres (1,200 miles) from the epicentre.

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao called it a "major disaster" and urged calm.

Facing disaster, the most important thing is calm, confidence, courage and strong leadership," Wen told China's CCTV television on a flight to the heart of the quake-hit zone.

"We will definitely overcome this major disaster".

Xinhua earlier reported up to 900 students were feared buried when a high school collapsed in Dujiangyan, northwest of Chengdu.

At least four children were confirmed dead there, Xinhua said, and a local official in the city said "rows of houses" had been demolished.

Another four children died and more than 100 were injured when two primary schools crumbled in the sprawling metropolis of Chongqing.

President Hu Jintao urged an "all-out" effort to rescue victims. Military troops were ordered to help with the disaster relief work.

It said its reporters in Juyuan township, about 60 miles from the epicenter, saw buried teenagers struggling to break loose from underneath the rubble of the threestory building "while others were crying out for help."

Two girls were quoted by Xinhua as saying they escaped because they had "run faster than others." The international airport at

Chengdu was closed and air traffic disrupted elsewhere. An Olympic spokesman said none of the 31 venues for the Beijing Olympics in the capital and

other host cities had been dam-"They are earthquake proof to a high degree and no damage was done," said Sun Weide, deputy director of the Olympic media and

communications office. The civil affairs ministry, cited by Xinhua before the estimate toll from Beichuan County, said that as at 6:00 pm (1000 GMT), 107 people were confirmed dead and 34 injured in Sichuan and neighbouring Gansu and Yunnan provinces.

from Chengdu, a city of more than 12 million people, and some 260 kilometres from Chongqing and its 30 million. The State Seismological Bureau located its epicentre in Wenchuan County, a mountainous region

home to the Wolong Nature

Reserve, China's leading research

and breeding base for endangered

The quake struck 93 kilometres

giant pandas. Xinhua quoted an official saying the landmark Three Gorges Dam in Sichuan province had not been affected. However, buildings shook in

Beijing and Shanghai, residents

reported, with many people evacuating tower blocks and rushing onto the street. There were no immediate reports of damage Both the Chinese seismological

bureau and the US Geological Survey, which use different scales, measureditat7.8. The quake struck shortly before

2.30 pm (0630 GMT), according to the USGS, at a depth of just 10 kilometres. A series of aftershocks continued to rock the region, including

The phone network there and elsewhere around the country appeared to suffer a meltdown as people tried to find out what happened. Two residents near downtown

one of 5.8 near Chengdu measured

by the USGS.

phone said they felt a violent shaking that tossed glassware to the floor and toppled street lights. The quake was felt in the Taiwanese capital Taipei, where buildings swayed for half a minute

Chengdu whom AFP contacted by

and in the southern Chinese terri tory of Hong Kong. In Hanoi, residents said some high buildings shook for around five minutes but there were no

reports of damage. One of the biggest quakes ever recorded was in China in 1976

which killed 242,000 people. That quake, centred in the northern city of Tangshan, lasted for 15 seconds and flattened 90 percent of buildings. The death toll out of a population of one million, made it one of the world's deadliest

in the 20th century. In 1920 and again in 1927, separate quakes in northwestern China each left some 200,000 dead.

Prime Bank

byitself

FROM PAGE 16 assist in the excavation at Wari Bateshwar -- an excavation to discover the country's past, Shahjahan Bhuiyan said.

He also assured the project of

University. He embarked on the

Wari-Bateshwar in 2000.

also attended the programme.

Mustafizur led seven excava-

while The Daily Star, Asiatic Society

2002, 2004 and 2005 respectively.

excavations in 2006 and 2007.

May 20 for hearing on the rule. further assistance in future saying The government, Antithe bank's move stems from a Corruption Commission (ACC) sense of social responsibility and Special Court-1 on the Jatiya Thanking Prime Bank for its Sangsad Bhaban premises trying assistance, Sufi Mustafizur the case are respondents in the

Rahman also called on other private organisations to come forward Hasina's counsel Barrister to help the research saying that it is Rafique-ul Huq yesterday submitnot always possible for the governted before the HC that as per ment to fund such programmes all Section 6(A) of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 1958, trail pro-"We want to set up an outdoor ceedings of any criminal case have and an indoor museum at the site, to be completed within 60 days said Mustafizur, also an archaeolafter a court takes it (case) into ogy professor at Jahangirnagar cognisance. But in this the special

court did not do so. mission to "dig into the roots" at "The Special Court took this case into cognisance for trial on Sabur Khan and Inam ul Haque, January 13 this year, and the period two trustees of Oitihya Onneshan, of 60 days has already passed. That is why trial proceedings of this case have become functus officio tions at the site. In 2000, (infructuous), and no court now International Centre for Study of has jurisdiction to try the case," he Bengal Arts funded the excavation

of Bangladesh and a private citizen, Sunday filed the writ petition Captain Imam Anwar, funding it in challenging legality of trial proceedings of the case filed by the Grameen Phone funded the ACC. Barrister Fazle Noor Taposh filed the case on behalf of her.

The Awami League chief on

Politicos start

FROM PAGE 1

BRTC boss

Dhaka Auto-tempo, Auto-rickshaw

and Auto-truck Owners' Sramik

Oikya Parishad, Haji Mohammad

Fazlul Haq, convener of Auto-

tempo Owners' Sramik Oikya

Parishad and Utpal Kanti Saha,

Of them, Taimur and Mokles are

On August 19 last year, Hanif

now in jail. Fazlul Haq is out on bail

Khokon, general secretary of

Dhaka Auto-rickshaw Sramik

Union, filed the case with Paltan

Police Station against Huda,

Taimur and eight others in connec

tion with misappropriation of Tk 1

crore by allotting 200 CNG-run

auto-rickshaws illegally to 33

a good election by the end of this

mats' comments that elections

could be credible through major

parties' participation, Choudhury

said if there is a good voter list, if the

field is level, if there is no influence

of money and muscle, or any inter-

ference, everybody should partici-

However, he said, "If field is

In reply to a question, the envoy

Describing the Bangladesh-

Britain bilateral relations as spe-

cial, Choudhury said the bilateral

relations between the two coun-

tries reached a new height and it

would be further deepened in the

work together in the international

arena, including the UN and other

world bodies, as he said both the

envoy's optimism, the foreign

adviser said Bangladesh and

Britain enjoy a "strategic relation-

ship, which will further deepen and

constituencies after completing

more than 70 percent of voter list

preparation, and that is why the

gazette notification issued by the

EC on April 29 for delimitation of

133 parliamentary constituencies

is unconstitutional and illegal,"

He alleged that in the name of

delimitation of constituencies,

the EC is killing time before hold-

ing the next parliamentary elec-

that there is no necessity of

delimitation of constituencies

Additional Attorney General

Salauddin Ahmed countered

their arguments saying that no

case can be filed with court

against demarcation of constitu-

encies until objections in this

tion, anybody can submit objec-

tions to the EC against demarca-

tion of constituencies, and no

one can move to court against

demarcations until the objec-

not killing time by redrawing

filed the writ petition as a public

interest litigation (PIL) challeng-

ing legality of the gazette notifi-

cation issued by the EC on

redrawing 133 parliamentary

constituencies. Advocate Nurul

Islam yesterday filed the writ

capsized in Ghorautra river in Nikli

upazila. The news agency quoting

ASP Asaduzzaman said 25 passen-

gers swam ashore while the rest

Power plant case

comprising Justice Md Iman Ali

and Justice Emdadul Haque fixed

petition on the same ground.

4 drown

remained missing.

FROM PAGE 16

FROM PAGE 16

He also argued that the EC is

Abdul Mannan on Sunday

tions are disposed of," he said.

"As per the gazette notifica-

regard are disposed of.

constituencies.

now due to time constraints.

Advocate Nurul Islam argued

Moving for the government,

Reciprocating the British

countries share same values.

HC rule

FROM PAGE 16

he argued.

tions.

Bangladesh and Britain will also

said he is leaving Bangladesh with

huge optimism and a song in his

ready and if referee is ready, it is up

to the players to play the match."

Asked about some EU diplo-

Emergency

FROM PAGE 1

pate in the polls.

future.

deputy general manager of BRTC.

while Utpal is on the run.

FROM PAGE 16

League (AL) started chalking out political programmes demanding release of two former premiers and their party chiefs, Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina, and were waiting for instructions from their central leaderships.

Presence of BNP and Jamaat leaders and activists were, however, thin at some local party offices.

Due to many frontline BNP leaders being in jail or in hiding to evade arrest, some BNP leaders who are still free said they will observe the situation for sometime and then announce their next course of action.

"We will now be able to sit with our leaders and activists for planning organisational activities. It will help us increase organisational strength, said Chittagong city AL leader MA Mannan.

Former law secretary of Chittagong city unit of AL Advocate Ibrahim Hossain Babul said they will clean the party office today and hold a Milad Mahfil after the asr prayer on Wednesday to formally open the office on Thursday.

All four members including the convener of BNP Chittagong city unit are currently abroad.

Our staff correspondent from Rajshahi reported that AL workers there started gathering at the city office in Kumarpara around 6:00pm while BNP, Jatiya Party (JP) and

Jamaat refrained from any activity. There is no BNP office in Rajshahi now as the ones the party had earlier were evacuated for being illegally set

Rajshahi City BNP President Mosaddek Hossain said they will rent an office soon after observing the situation for a few days and they will submit a memorandum to the authorities and go on a hunger strike on Friday demanding release of their chiefKhaleda Zia.

Jatiya Party and Jamaat offices there were seen closed yesterday evening.

Our staff correspondent reported

from Sylhet that political leaders and activists were getting prepared last night to chalk out political programmes within a day or two following instructions from their centralleaders. Sylhet District AL President ANM Shafique told The Daily Star, "We will

or two to discuss the overall situation and decide on the ways and means for raising demands including immediaterelease of Sheikh Hasina. Sylhet City BNP General Secretary Nasim Hossain said they will sit with their ward committees and front organisations immediately to chalk out the next course of action and will

sit with different front organisations

and upazila committees within a day

the party chief Khaleda Zia. Our staff correspondent reported from Bogra that party offices of AL,

submit a memorandum to the

authorities for immediate release of

Jamaat-e-Islami, and Jatiya

Bangladesh Navy **FROM PAGE 16** attendance by the Chinese technical team and ship staff," said an

ISPR release. This is the first instance BNS Osman, commissioned on May 4, 1989 as the only missile frigate, fired long-range ship-to-ship C-802 missile, which is capable of destroying any target within 120

kilometers. Chief of the Naval Staff Vice-Admiral Sarwar Jahan Nizam expressed his heartiest thanks to the government of China as well as all Chinese delegation members on behalf of the Bangladesh govern-

Principal Staff Officer Lt Gen Masududdin Chowdhury said the upgradation programme is "part of

the government policy". Commodore Commanding of BN Flotilla Commodore HR Bhuiyan, Commodore Superintendent Dockyard Commodore Jasim Uddin Bhuiyan, and Chinese Defense Attache senior Colonel Ju Dewu, among

Samajtantrik Dal were seen open at

8:45pm yesterday. There was however nobody present in the district office of BNP. A supporter of BNP said such absence of party leaders and workers might be attributable to the fact that BNP District President Rezaul Karim Badsha and General Secretary Saiful Islam are currently evading the handsoflaw.

Our Sirajganj correspondent reported that workers of BNP and AL there joined hands to wash their offices last night, after hearing the chief adviser say that the countrywide ban on 'indoor politics' had been lifted.

Our Kushtia correspondent reported that although party offices there were not opened yesterday, leaders and workers of BNP and AL were seen moving around the offices. A BNP leader said they will open their district office today.

Special team

FROM PAGE 16

The special team will have the authority to visit any office, department or branch of the ministry or directorate to conduct investiga-

The ACC had earlier formed such special teams to investigate graft and irregularities in Dhaka City Corporation, Roads and Highways Department (RHD), Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University and post and telecommunications ministry. CASES AGAINST FIROZ

In one of the two cases, Firoz will be accused of causing a loss of Tk 24 lakh to the national exchequer with the connivance of Anisur Rahman, former executive engineer of LGED, and by constructing roads and digging ponds for personal and family benefit. The second case will be filed

against him for taking Tk 1.33 crore

from the contractors of LGED and Tk 14 lakh from the contractors of RHD in bribe. Meanwhile, senior vice president of First Security Bank SAM Salimullah and former Rupali Bank director Mohammad Hossain

submitted their wealth statements

to the ACC on May 8 JS polls

FROM PAGE 1

the parliamentary polls. "They [EC] have plans to hold upazila elections as well," said the chiefadviser.

He however assured that in no way would those polls hamper the parliamentary election.

Nepal

FROM PAGE 16

the monarchy would be scrapped during the first sitting of the assem-The ex-rebels overturned all predictions in the April polls, winning 220 of the 601 seats in the constitutional assembly -- more

than twice the number of their nearest rivals and pre-election favourites, the Nepali Congress. "The prime minister has sent letters to all the participating political parties calling for the first meeting of the constituent assembly on May 28," Aditya Baral,

Prasad Koirala, told AFP. King Gyanendra's fall from power will mark the end of the world's only Hindu monarchy, which has been on the throne for 240 years.

adviser to Prime Minister Girija

Gyanendra, who is seen by supporters as a reincarnation of the Hindu protector Vishnu, has endured a traumatic and short reign. He took the throne in 2001 after

massacred nine members of the royal family and then killed himself, after being forbidden from marrying the woman he loved. Already unpopular, Gyanendra's popularity hit rock bottom when he

sacked the government and took

direct control of the impoverished

a drunk and drugged crown prince

nation in February 2005. others, were present. Politics freed further

sources said.

issued a fresh notification cancelling the earlier one, and allowing 'indoor politics' all over the country from today, the ministry

According to vesterday's notification, which relaxes the provisions of EPR further, a maximum of 200 leaders and workers of political parties or of any other legitimate organisation, or the same number of individuals may meet at a time indoors, by informing proper authorities 48 hours in advance. For any meeting of over 200

commissioners in metropolitan areas, and from other proper authorities outside the metropolitan areas, 72 hours in advance. The earlier notification of September 9 last year had allowed

people, permission will have to be

taken from metropolitan police

only a maximum of 50 leaders or workers of only political parties to meet at a time, while the right had not been extended to any other organisation. According to the latest relaxation, a political party or an organisation may hold meetings in its

offices, auditoriums, hotels, restaurants, conference centres, in resi-

from the notification. But, a government handout circulated yesterday said live broad cast of the 'indoor' meetings on any electronic media will not be allowed, although the news and

details of the meetings will be

allowed to be disseminated through

news reports on all media. Use of

etc but it will not be allowed to hold

such meetings in any open space, a

home ministry source said quoting

equipment, that may carry the sound of the meeting place outside the premises, will not be allowed, the handout added "The home ministry through a notification, after a few months, may again allow political parties to hold meetings in open spaces, when they will be ready for holding their national councils," the home minis-

try source said.

electoral laws, political parties seeking to contest in parliamentary elections will have to hold their national councils to amend their constitutions and to elect new committees for being registered with the commission. According to EPR, violation of

According to the EC's proposed

the newly relaxed restrictions is punishable with prison terms of two dences of organisation members, years to five years and fines.