# Parties disappointed

election and dialogues between the government and political parties will create further confusions among the people, as there was no specific indication for withdrawing the Emergency Power Rules (EPR), no indication of measures to deal with price hikes of essentials, and no men-

They also criticised the conditional lifting of the ban on 'indoor

tion of trials of war criminals.

At a meeting of the party's central working committee (ALCWC) yesterday, leaders said they need to rethink seriously whether to participate in the upcoming official dialogues with the government, with their party president still in detention.

The two-hour long meeting however did not take any specific decision of not participating in the dialogue, while deciding to observe Hasina's 'homecoming day' on May 17.

All leaders, who spoke at the meeting, suggested since the issue is 'very serious they should have elaborate discussions on the matter and analyse the situation in today's scheduled meeting

The meeting was held in detained AL president's political office in Dhanmondi with Presidium Member Sveda Sajeda Chowdhury in the chair, where AL leaders Abdul Mannan, Mahmudur Rahman Manna, Nurul Islam Nahid, Nuh-ul-Alam Lenin, Advocate Fazle Rabbi, and Latif Siddiqui severely criticised the head of the government's Monday speech to

Mannan, an organising secretary, told the meeting, when AL had an 'unofficial' dialogue with five government advisers, they assured the party of the CA's speech reflecting the party's five-point demand. "As nothing has been reflected in his speech, we will have to think deeply whether it will be logical to participate in the dialogues with the government again," he told the meeting.

He also asked the meeting to fix a date for exchanging views with grassroots level leaders. Mannan suggested the meeting to think of launching a massive signature collection campaign and token hunger strike across the country demanding release of Hasina.

Mannan also expressed his aston ishment at the CA's speech and told the meeting that the speech is not acceptable, rather 'insulting to politi-

"He has fixed a huge agenda in his speech paying no heed to our fivepoint demand," he told the meeting.

Mannan observed that reaching a national consensus is such a huge task that it will be impossible to hold an election with such a sprit in two or three months. "Such a huge agenda must be taken up by an elected parliament," he said.

Lenin told the meeting that trust between the government and political parties should be built before sitting for dialogues and prior to holding the election.

But the CA's speech failed to move towards creating such an environment, he told the meeting. The CA even attached some pre-conditions for the dialogues and the election, which should have been discussed

has disappointed the nation, "His speech is not acceptable," he told the

The meeting decided to observe the AL chief's 'home coming day' in a befitting manner, accepting Dr Abdur Razzak's and Dr Hasan Mahmud's proposal that ALCWC will be present at the gate of the special jail on the Jatiya Sangshad Bhaban premises on the day with bouquets of flowers as greetings for Hasina who has been kept detained there. PRO-KHALEDABNP

"He used many nice words but did not say anything about the issues significant to the nation," Khandaker Delwar Hossain said at a news briefing after a meeting of the party's central executive committee and front organisation leaders in his Nam

flat in the capital. He said release of detained party Chairperson Khaleda Zia and her sons was their main demand but the CA did

not mention the issue in his speech. While a 'famine like situation' exists in the country and the people are suffering due to price hikes of essentials, the chief adviser totally ignored the matters, he added. IP-ERSHAD

JP Acting Chairman barrister Anisul Islam Mahmud said the CA's speech failed to reflect the people's desire as there is no specific date for holding the election and no guideline for overcoming the existing economic crises plaguing the country.

It is also not clear on what basis the citizens' charter will be formulated," he said.

"Therefore, Jatiya Party is rejecting the chief adviser's speech entirely Anisul said at a news conference in the party's Banani office. "We are also expressing no confi-

dence in the caretaker government for its utter failure to run the country," he

"Jatiya Party will stage token demonstrations in all districts and at the capital's Diploma Engineers' Institute on May 20, protesting the govern ment's failure to run the country and the chief adviser's speech without any guideline," Anisul said. "On one hand, the chief adviser is

talking about restoring democracy; on the other, he is talking about conditional indoor politics...while conditional politics cannot establish democracy, Anisul said.

JSD in its reaction said through his speech the chief adviser failed to build any effective public confidence and failed to dispel confusions over holding of the election. The confusion has rather been buttressed after the chief adviser's declaration of holding local government elections before the parliamentarypoll

CPB in its reaction said the people are disappointed at the chief adviser's speech as he did not address issues including price hikes of essentials unemployment, trials of war criminals and lifting of EPR.

Criticising the government's initiative to formulate a citizens' charter, CPB said the country's constitution, which the people earned in 1972, is the

with all before announcement, he democracy in the name of formulating

# 6 parties invited

the party offices.

On the very first day of their activities, almost all district level leaders of Awami league (AL) demanded the release of their party chief Sheikh Hasina before the upcoming elections. Similarly, the BNP district level leaders also demanded that their chief Khaleda Zia be released prior to

Many of the leaders expressed disappointment over the CA's address to the nation as the CA in his speech did not specify when the state of emergency would be withdrawn and address the issue of releasing the chiefs of the two major political

parties of the country. Our staff correspondent from Chittagong reports: Offices of all political parties including AL and However, political activities are yet to BNP in the port city turned lively with the arrival of leaders and activists in the morning yesterday following the

lifting of the ban on indoor politics. There was no sign of division within the Chittagong BNP and its leaders and activists gathered at the

party office in a festive mood. Chittagong city units of other political parties including Jatiya Party also opened their offices, hoping for a

continued democratic process. Our staff correspondent from Rajshahi reports: With no leader to organise them and having no active committee or an office in the city, the Rajshahi unit activists of BNP yestertheir demand of releasing their party day were seen gathering at different chiefs before the upcoming elections city points and roaming around said party insiders of the political private chambers and houses of

different district and student leaders. Out of five former lawmakers who used to lead the unit, one is behind bars, two are on the run, one fled the Netrakona and Chapainawabgani

country and the other is now incapable of leading the party due to illness. AL leaders in Rajshahi yesterday held their first meeting at the Kumarpara office of the party and criticised the government for an

impending disaster in the agriculture sector. They also demanded party chief Sheikh Hasina's release. Our staff correspondent from Sylhet reports: Political activists started their activities in the city

yesterday. After almost 16 months, a large number of AL activists gathered at the temporary office of city and district

AL yesterday afternoon. A milad mahfil was held there at 4:00 pm. Misbah Uddin Siraj, general secretary of Sylhet city AL, said, "We

will now put emphasis on our onepoint demand -- release our party chief Sheikh Hasina before the dialogues. Sylhet city BNP Secretary General Nasim Hossain said the party will arrange a workers' meeting at the house of its acting chief advocate

Noman Mahmud on Thursday after-

citizens' charter will hinder restoration Latif Siddiqui said the CA's speech of democracy, the communist party said at its presidium meeting in its Paltanoffice.

WORKERSPARTY The Workers Party of Bangladesh (WP) said the CA's speech on holding the national election and dialogues with political parties will create further public confusion.

It is clear that the state of emergency will not be lifted before the election, said WPleadersatapartymeeting. IAMAAT

Jamaat-e-Islami in its reaction said the CAgave the speech like that of an elected government with long-term plans without considering the responsibilities of an interim administration.

Terming the chief adviser's speech 'full of contradictions', Jamaat said on the one hand the chief adviser said there will be no particular agenda for the dialogues, while on the other he mentioned some important issues as agenda for the dialogues. BIKALPADHARA

Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury and its Secretary General Maj (retd) MA Mannan however welcomed the chief adviser's speech saying, it reflected the government's firm stand for holding the election.

LDP President Col (retd) Oli Ahmed also appreciated the chief adviser's speech and lauded the government's commitment to holding the election by the third week of December.

He, however, expressed dissatisfaction over the conditional lifting of the ban on 'indoor politics' and over not declaring any date for lifting the state of

### Nat'l charter

reporters yesterday while replying to

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, in his address to the nation on Monday stressed the need to adopt a national charter through consensus of the government, political parties, representatives of all groups and professionals to establish a proper and fair electoral framework "which will help launch a healthy and stable democratic process in the country". Expressing his firm belief that they

would reach consensus on important national issues during the political dialogue, the CA underscored the need to give the national consensus a moral com pulsion and permanent shape by signing a national charter. Talking to reporters at his ministry

yesterday, the communications advise brushed off any apprehension of the next parliamentary election's being farcical. "You'll see, the whole world will see an

election totally flawless which will not give rise to any question. It will be a fair election," Ghulam Quader said when reporter pointed out an allegation that the government is going to hold a farcical Asked whether the caretaker govern-

ment wants the old leadership of political parties to go, the adviser said, "Apart from those whose roles have come under question, anyone from the old leadership and new leaderships will participate. We wantajust society."

Responding to a criticism of the CA's speech because he made absolutely no Limited democracy or imposed | mention of price hike of essentials, Ghulam said, "What can be said? It cannot be brought down, that is the reality."

When reporters pointed out politicians' negative criticism of the CA's speech, Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman said: "We colleagues in the cabinet understand that there is no matter of taking decision immediately acting on each of the reactions, the key issue is that we have to move forward." Zillur said the government is now

focusing on the next step, holding politicaldialogue from May 22.

### He controls Ctg

produced before a Chittagong court for hearing of a case.

On his way to Chittagong in a prison van, the cops, who were entrusted to take care of him, took Nasir off the van and allowed him to meet his gang members at a Chittagong cityhotel.

The Shibir cadres, as per Nasir's instruction, came to Hotel Niribili at city's GEC intersection and held a secret meeting with their boss in presence of the police before he was taken to the court.

The notorious criminal was allowed to enjoy another such "privilege" by police some two years back when he had another brief meeting with his gang members at Hotel Kasturika in city's Chawk Bazar area.

Haling from Mandakini in Hathazari upazila of the district, Nasir was always loyal to Shibir politics and did everything from kidnapping to murder for its sake.

Although he had been mainly used by Shibir to maintain its control and supremacy over different educational institutions in Chittagong city and many parts of the district, Nasir also worked as a "mercenary" for some top BNP and Awami League high-ups in Chittagong for ensuring their ill interests in upazilas of Raozan, Rangunia, Hathazari and Fatikchhari.

To continue his criminal activities, Nasirin the early nineties built a den at | led to a heartrending sight as walltwo rooms of a hostel at Chittagong College, which is well known as a safe haven of the Shibirmen.

From there, he used to control and give orders for operations at nearby Mohsin College and even at Chittagong University, sources said.

Some of his infamous accomplices were Gittu Nasir, BDR Selim, Baittya Alamgir, Chhota Saiful, Yakub, Sajjad Khan and Habib Khan. Of them, Gitru Nasir, Baittya Alamgir and Yakub were killed in

encounters with Rab in the past couple of years while Chhota Saiful was murdered by Gittu Nasir in an intra-party feud around three years ago at his own house at Baluchhara under Panchlaish Police Station. Sajjad Khan, BDR Selim and Habib Khan are reportedly staying in the UAE at present and controlling the

businesses of Nasir with the help of few low-tier cadres in Chittagong, cials said most of around 8,000 sources said. motor vessels in operation lack These cadres are being backed by Lili, the elder sister of Nasir, they

The court also sentenced his wife Imtiaz Begum to three years' imprisonment for abetting him in

was fined Tk 1 lakh, in default of one more month.

The court also issued orders assets worth Tk 1,73,92,567.

run and they were tried in absen-

The court ordered that the verdict would come into effect from the day of their arrest or surrender before it. Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Deputy Director Sayed Igbal Hossain filed the case with Ramna police station on November 13, 2007, accusing Firoz and his wife of illegally accumulating Tk 1.47 crore. ACC Assistant Director

Jahangir Alam submitted charge sheet on March 23 this year while charges were framed on April 23. According to the charge sheet,

illegally amassed wealth worth Tk 87,87,677 was found in possession of Firoz and that worth Tk 86,04,890 in possession of his

most controversial figures during the rule of the BNP-led alliance by influencing postings and transfers of government officials and employees including police officials, and accumulated huge wealth through this mischief.

He was also an influential figure at Hawa Bhaban, dubbed as an alternative centre of power during the alliance rule. He used to lobby with high-ups at the Prime Miniter' Office and the office of the president with lists of people to get them posted or transferred.

several other cases. In one of the cases filed with Tejgaon police station on November 13 last year, ACC Deputy Director Iqbal Hossain accused him of using three vehicles of Essential Drugs Company Ltd (EDCL) and two vehicles of Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) for his private work and family purposes from June 2003 to October 2006, causing a loss of Tk 34.90 lakh to the national exche-Eramu Here and the

Moreover, the ACC on Monday approved filing of two more cases against him on charges of abus-

Sultan Ahmed, Deputy

Commissioner of Kishoreganj

district said the bodies were identi-

fied to be of eight-month-old

Opurbo, Shohag 8, Shohan, 9, and

Rita Akhter, 7, of Nikli, Arab Ali, 25,

Yeasin, 6, Ikra Akhter, 12, Sohel

Miah, 24, Jahangir, 35, Abdus

Sattar, 50, Parul, 30, Israil, 6, Jobed,

40, Helal Mia, 26, Nurjahan Begum,

50, Sufia Khatun, 40, Saiful, 35,

Dhiresh Chandra Das, 30, Sakhina,

55, Akash Chandra Das, 3, of

Mitamoin upazila in Kishoreganj,

Arfan, 10, Dulu, 35, Sadek Miah, 35,

Nowagazi,35, Dulal Miah, 65,

Golap Mia, 65, and Renu, 45, of

Bhairab upazila, Sanchita Rani

Das, 30, Israil, 70, Fatema, 22,

Mohon Saha, 24, Badal Sarker, 50,

Rajan Sarker, 45, Swapan Saha, 40,

Ratan Kumar Saha, 45, Taher

Uddin, 35, Pradip Kumar Saha, 37,

Ganesh Saha, 50, of Bajitpur

upazila, Siddiq Miah, 55, and Jabed

Ali, 65, of Narsinghdi, and Begum,

was calm and many passengers

were on the deck when out of the

blue a sudden rush of wind

pounded the Mitamoin-bound

moments after a massive jolt,"

Badal Chandra Saha, a cloth trader

"I don't know I got off the sink-

As the news spread, hundreds of

ing launch and swam ashore along

relatives of the missing ones gath-

ered on the riverbank early in the

morning. Whenever a rescue boat

came back with bodies recovered,

they rushed to see if the ones they

were searching were among those.

Each time a body was identified it

Ratna Begum, 22 of Ghorakanda

village of Nikli, has survived the

capsize but lost three of her kids--

eight-month-old Opurbo, Shohag,

gazing into space as her relatives

tried in vain to take her home, a

ing her husband, a small trader in

at the shipping department, 3,657

people died in 408 launch disasters

between 1976 and 2006. Around

250 died in 28 ferry accidents in

2005 and 60 died in 23 accidents in

basic safety standards.

The shipping department offi-

BIWTA yesterday formed a two-

walking distance from the scene.

Numbed with grief, she sat

Ratna was returning after meet-

According to statistics available

ing filled the air.

5, and Shohan, 9.

Narayanganj.

with around 40 others," he said.

from Bajitpur, told this correspon-

"The vessel turned over

launch from Kuliarchar.

According to survivors, the river

32, of Kuliarchar.

FROM PAGE 1

ing power in connivance with

others, and taking bribes. Firoz was among the 142 people barred by the National Board of Revenue from legalising undisclosed money. A graft suspect according to the ACC list, he was also among the 24 people whose account details in all banks were sought by Bangladesh Bank.

### CA's address

FROM PAGE 16

international development partners and the UNDP co-funded the project. Rainbow Vision Ltd made the billboard. UN Resident Coordinator and

information of the election. Nine

UNDP Resident Representative in Bangladesh Renata Dessallien said the people can feel confident after the chief advisor's address to the nation when he confirmed that the elections will be held before the end of 2008. She also said 80 percent of voters

have already been registered and hoped that the registration would complete by the deadline set in the electoral roadmap. Secretary to the Election

Commission Humayun Kabir and Director of the Voters Registration Project Shahdat Hossain Chowdhury were present on the occasion.

### Govt asked

FROM PAGE 16

These magistrates started discharging judicial duties as implementa tion of separation of the judiciary from the executive began on November 1 last year.

As the court sat yesterday morn ing for hearing the case, Attorney General Fida M Kamal presented before it some papers detailing the government's actions in implementing the court order. But, seeing very little progress in

complying with its earlier order, the SC expressed disappointment saying it is unfortunate that the government is yet to provide staffs and transports for judicial magis The apex court told the attorney general that judicial magistrates

the last six months, and they need transports for their security. The AG said only the Almighty can ensure security to one, and ir spite of this the government wil

have done a tremendous task by

disposing of over three lakh cases in

He also submitted that the government has appointed 390 assis tant judges/judicial magistrates in courts across the country following separation of the judiciary.

### SC lawyers

FROM PAGE 16

lawyers have unanimously decided about the protest programme at a general meeting of hundreds of awvers

"Khondker Mahbub Hossain's statement and press conference were not SCBA decisions. Those were his personal views. The SCBA members will observe the programme as per the earlier announcement," he

Mahbub Hossain told the press conference at the hall room of the annex building of the SCBA a vested quarter has recently started delivering statements and announcing court boycott programmes tarnishing the image of the court for their own interest. "The SCBA cannot be a platform

of any political party. But we have noticed that recently some SCBA officials are announcing anti-people programmes with a view to establishing political ideology," he said.

"We think such activities will damage the image of the judiciary and it is a move to foil the long expected independence of the judiciary."

He said if anybody becomes aggrieved with any the judgement delivered by the Appellate Division, they can file a review petition as per Article 105 of the Constitution to reconsider the judgement.

"Controversy has been created with two recent judgements which were unanimously delivered by all seven judges of the Appellate Division. So there is no scope of expressing angry reactions against only the chief justice," he observed.

He said the peace loving lawyers cannot agree with the "unconstitutional and undemocratic" decision of SCBA.

He urged all including the lawyers to remain aware and conscious so that the image of SC cannot be dam-

Advocates ABM Nurul Islam, Abdul Mannan, Atiar Rahman and Helaluddin, among others, were present at the press conference.

### 60 dead

FROM PAGE 16

India throughout its history, and authorities appealed for calm in the wake of Tuesday's attack.

Shortly after the bombings, authorities put New Delhi, India's capital, and Mumbai, the country's financial center, on high alert along with several other cities. Security was also quickly stepped up at airports and railway stations across the country.

The blasts began around 7:30 p.m. (1400 GMT), and one hit a market near a temple dedicated to the Hindu monkey god Hanuman, Tuesday is the day of worship set aside for Hanuman, and the temple was packed with people offering prayers on the way home from work.

Another blast took place near the Johari Bazaar - the city's jewelry market, a popular destination for tourists. The tourist season, however, ended in March member committee headed by its and there were no immediate indications that foreigners had been caught in the explosions.

Parikshit Bhandari, who saw the attack near the jewelry market, said there was "blood all around and wounded people crawling on the ground." Television channels showed

footage of mangled bicycles, damaged cars and overturned bicycle rickshaws, the most popular mode of transport in the crowded lanes of Jaipur. The city is one of the major

attractions in Rajasthan, a desert

region dotted with palaces and

temples that draw hundreds of thousands of Indian and foreign tourists every year, from bargainhunting backpackers to celebrities like Mick Jagger. While no foreigners appeared

to have been caught in Tuesday's attack, "We are all nervous. We will get Tk 20,000 while those with don't want Jaipur's economy to go down," said Manoj Sharma, a New Delhi travel agent.

Still, it'll be months before temperatures in Rajasthan dip below 100 degrees and the high season for tourists begins. By then, he hopes, fears will have faded.

### Journalists

FROM PAGE 1

a committee to overcome the situation. The meeting was held at

National Press Club, chaired by prominent journalist Ataus Samad. Meanwhile, supporting the initiatives, four veteran journalists

KG Mustafa, ABM Musa, Nirmal

Sen and Kamal Lohani -- said in a separate joint statement that they would actively join any further initiatives to ensure freedom of the press. They said they had flirted with many ordeal, especially during the

reign of several military and auto-

cratic governments, in their career

as journalists which spans more than half a century. They said they had succeeded in fighting off every direct and indirect autocratic regulations in their times and wished the same success for today's journalists.

#### At least 8 killed FROM PAGE 1

Fire Service and Civil Defence

(FSCD)-sources said one of their vans from Ashuganj unit was taking part in the rescue operation. Sources in the capital's

Kamalapur Railway Station said Noakhali Express left Dhaka for Noakhali at 8:10pm while Upaban Express left for Sylhet at 10:00pm Tuesday.

## Rescue workers

FROM PAGE 16

just north of the Sichuan provincial capital of Chengdu in central China, tearing into urban areas and mountain villages.

Earthquake rescue experts in orange jumpsuits extricated bloody survivors on stretchers from demolished buildings

Some 20,000 soldiers and police arrived in the disaster area with 30,000 more on the way by plane, train, trucks and even on foot, the Defence Ministry toldXinhua.

Aftershocks rattled the region for a second day, sending people running into the streets in Chengdu. The US Geological Survey measured the shocks between magnitude 4 and 6, some of the strongest since Monday's quake.

Zhou Chun, a 70-year-old retired mechanic, was leaving Dujiangyan with a soiled light blue blanket draped overhisshoulders.

"My wife died in the quake. My house was destroyed," he said. "I am going to Chengdu, but I don't know

where I'lllive. Zhou and other survivors were pulling luggage and clutching plastic bags of food amid a steady drizzle and the constant wall of ambulances.

Just east of the epicentre, 1,000 students and teachers were killed or missing at a collapsed high school in Beichuan county a six-story building reduced to a pile of rubble about two yards high, according to Xinhua. Xinhua said 80 percent of the buildings had collapsed in Beichuan alone.

At another levelled school in Dujiangyan, 900 students were feared dead. As bodies of teenagers were carried out on doors used as makeshift stretchers, relatives lit incense and candles and also set off fireworks to ward away evil spirits. Elsewhere in Gansu province, a 40-

car freight train derailed in the quake that included 13 gasoline tankers was still burning Tuesday, Xinhua said.

Gasoline lines grew in Chengdu and grocery stores shelves were almost empty. The Ministry of Health issued an appeal for blood donations to help the quake victims.

"concrete" steps to resolve the

to restore the judiciary to the posi-

tion of November 2 (before emer-

gency rule), we will revert to our

party's central working committee

to seek advice given the changed

"Our ministers may rejoin the

Pakistan People's Party chief

Asif Ali Zardari has convened a

meeting of his party's parliamen-

tarians and legislators on Tuesday

to take stock of the political situa-

tion after the PML-N's decision to

withdraw from the ruling coalition.

abroad, has said the PPP will con-

tinue talks with its ally PML-N to

get it to reverse its decision to quit

PML-N's withdrawal from the

cabinet was not "the beginning of

political uncertainty, although

Sharif insisted on Monday that his

party would continue to support the

government of Gilani, who had not

yet accepted the resignations,

(PPP) of slain former premier

Benazir Bhutto, the senior partner

in the coalition that swept into

power following February general

elections, said it hoped the PML-N

matter," Gilani told the outgoing

ministers, saying Pakistan was in the

nation out of the crisis, with the

cooperation of our allies," state

media quoted him as saying,

"Let's wait and try to resolve the

"We are determined to take the

ministers would soon return.

grip of a "serious crisis."

The Pakistan People's Party

Zardari, who is currently

The PPP has also said that the

The move is likely to trigger

circumstances," he told AFP.

cabinet if so advised.

the federal cabinet.

the end for the coalition"

according to state media.

"If the PPP takes concrete steps

Fifteen missing British tourists were believed to have been in the area at the time of the quake and were "out of

reach," Xinhuareported. Expressions of sympathy and offers of help poured in from the United States, Japan and the European Union, among others.

The Dalai Lama, who has been vilified by Chinese authorities who blame him for recent unrest in Tibet, offered prayers for the victims. The epicentre is just south of some Tibetan

Beijing Games organisers said the Olympic torch relay will continue as planned through the quake-affected areanext month.

The Chinese government said it would welcome outside aid, and Russia was sending a plane with rescuers and supplies, the country's Interfax

#### Shibir cadre

raid on Hotel Al Madina in city's Chawk Bazar area under Kotwali Police Station. The law enforcers also held Md Oli Ullah at that time.

On October 28 the same year,

police submitted the charge sheet in the case accusing the two and charges were framed against them on June 15, 1997. Among a dozen important

prosecution witnesses (PWs), statements of six, including a magistrate, were recorded in the case. Shibir Nasir has been accused in

a total of 35 cases, including murder, since late eighties, but none of the witnesses in those cases appeared before the court since 1990 to give their depositions fearing reprisal by his gang, sources As a result, he got released in

most of the cases, they added. Judge Ekramul on April 28 this

judgment after the completion of

Sharif's party quits appealing to the judiciary to show

"some flexibility" to stave off political upheaval. Gilani also spoke to Sharif by telephone, who told him that the decision to pull his party from government was "painful," and that he

Musharraf, who came to power following a coup in 1999, deposed chief justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry and dozens of other judges in November when it appeared they might overturn his re-election as president the month

decree issued by Musharraf granting amnesty to political leaders charged with corruption. PPP cochairman Asif Ali Zardari, Bhutto's widower, himself is a beneficiary of

to put them back on the bench. A series of crunch talks between

the two sides failed to resolve the stalemate.

FROM PAGE 1

They were waiting outside as of filing this report at 1:30am.

the afternoon. Former finance minister M Saifur Rahman, another accused in the case, is now in Singapore for treatment. He left the country a

flew abroad shortly after the state of emergency was declared.

reached the Prime Minister's Office.

Khaleda took initiatives to award

Meanwhile, the BNP chief and three

detained former ministers were

shown arrested in the Barapukuria

Magistrate's Court in Dhaka per-

mitted the investigation officer (10)

of the case to quiz the four at the jail

arrested in the case are Khandaker

Mosharraf, AKM Mosharraf and

Khaleda and 15 others including 10

former ministers from BNP and

loss of over Tk 158.71 crore to the

state coffers by awarding a Chinese

company production, management

and maintenance contract through

Rahman, Mannan Bhuiyan, M

Shamsul Islam, MK Anwar and

Barrister Aminul Hug while ex-

Jamaat ministers are Ali Ahsan

Mohammad Mojahid and Nizami

were members of the cabinet pur-

Of the former ministers, nine

The other accused are former

Former BNP ministers are Saifur

The ACC filed the case against

The 16 were accused of causing a

Altaf Hossain Chowdhury.

Jamaat-e-Islami.

abuse of power.

Additional Chief Metropolitan

The three ex-ministers shown

BARAPUKURIA COALMINE

coal mine graft case yesterday.

the deal to Gatco.

## Khaleda, BNP

the public exchequer by striking the container-handling deal with Gatco despite the firm's lack of experience

The charges also include misuse of power and collusion among the accused in violating the tender

ACC investigation found Koko and Simon to have received Tk 2.19 crore from Gatco to help it win the

Power Rules-2007, and Section 5(2) of the Corruption Prevention Act

Khaleda and Koko were charged with influencing the tender process

were members of the cabinet purrecommending Gatco for the job.

shares to Akbar's wife Jahanara, five percent each to Gatco directors AKM Musa Kajol and Ehsan Yusuf before contesting the tender, said the FIR.

container handling.

Simon, Arafat influenced his mother to help Gatco win the deal. Soon after the tender documents Hossain.

would continue to cooperate with the government.

The judges were also to rule on a

Sharif and Zardari agreed in March to restore the judges, but differences quickly arose over how

#### Arrest

There, guards told them that they had seen people in plain cloths moving around since late in

couple of days back. Former commerce minister Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury

conditions.

The charges were made under sections 409 and 109 of the penal code, Section 15 of the Emergency

THECHARGES

while the CPA officials with helping Gatco win the deal ignoring the tender evaluation committee's report that described the firm as unfit. The eight former ministers, who

chase committee, were accused of Simon contacted Arafat to seek Khaleda's favour in closing the deal. Gatco provided 41 percent of its

Since the company did not have the equipment and experience required for the job, it showed Shahjahan S Hasib as its director, claming that he has experience in

acting secretary to energy and

are among the accused.

chase committee.

mineral resources ministry Nazrul Islam, former Petrobangla chairman SR Osmani, former Petrobangla director Mainul Ahsan. former managing director of On an understanding with Barapukuria Coal Mining Company Ltd (BCMCL) Sirajul Islam and Hosaf Group Chairman Moazzem

## also opened yesterday.

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member and a pro-Saifur leader. told The Daily Star yesterday. He also hoped that leaders from

Khandaker Delwar Hossain Khaleda-appointed secretary general, however said last night, "Party is already untied under the leadership of Khaleda Zia and they (pro-Saifur leaders] except those expelled can return to their own positions in the party."

begin organisational activities as per government decision.

Jamaat-e-Islami reopened its office at the city's Kudrat Ullah mar-

ket in the afternoon and held a dowa

reports: Offices of major political parties except BNP in Rangpur, Kurigram and Lalmonirhat opened yesterday. Rangpur AL office was being cleaned up so its leaders and activists

The district BNP office remained

Our correspondent from Rangpur

Islam Miju, secretary general of the unit, said they would take a decision after observing the situation for two or three more days. Our staff correspondent from Dinajpur reports: Party offices of BNP and AL opened yesterday morning.

closed throughout the day. Shohidul

could gather there in the evening.

take place there as the offices were still being cleaned up. Thakurgaon AL office remained closed yesterday while Panchagarh and Joypurhat offices of both AL and BNP were also closed.

Our correspondent from Pabna reports: Leaders of the major political parties got together at their party offices yesterday. Our correspondent from Tangail reports: Leaders and activists of major political parties including AL and BNP on the first day of indoor politics stressed the need for launching of a movement to press home

Offices of most political parties in Bogra, Khulna, Kurigram Brahmanbaria, Nilphamari Sirajganj, Gaibandha, Mymensingh

Leaders of BNP

both the factions would jointly participate in the formal dialogue with the government

Meanwhile, after a meeting of leaders on the party central working committee and those of front organisations last night, Delwar told newsmen that they have already instructed party leaders across the country to reopen party offices and

# Firoz jailed

accumulating wealth illegally. Judge Tanzina Ismail of the Special Judge's Court-6 on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises also fined Iqbal Tk 10 lakh, in default of which he has to serve jail term for another year. His wife which she has to be in prison for

for confiscating their ill-gotten Firoz and his wife are on the

Firoz had become one of the

Firoz is also an accused in

Death toll in launch

provide security for them.

Mohammad Hossain to investigate the capsize. The committee has been asked to submit report within a week. The other member is shipping department magistrate Tabibur Rahman. BIWTA Chairman Abdul Mannan Howlader said members

of the probe committee have

already reached the spot and

started their work.

senior Deputy Director

He said they dispatched two divers half an hour into the accident. Later, four divers from the fire brigade joined the two and launched the rescue efforts a 6:00am

BIWTA officials said the author ities have already announced compensation for the victims families as per its rules. Families with at least one victim

#### more than one will get Tk 30,000 Besides, they will be given Tk 2,000

Rice, edible The wholesale prices of different varieties of rice rose between Tk 10

and Tk 20 per maund (37.32kg)

while retail prices of different variet

A number of the wholesalers

ies of rice rose by Tk 1 yesterday.

told The Daily Star that the supply of course rice is poor as government procurement of rice is inspiring rice-mill owners to sell rice to the government instead of them. During the last two days prices

of edible oil rose by Tk 20 to 40 per

maund in the city's wholesale

markets. This rise is yet to have an

impact on the retail markets. Soya bean oil was selling between Tk 4,030 and 4,040 per maund yesterday; it was between Tk 4,000 and Tk 4,020 two days ago. Palm oil (super) was selling between Tk 3,730 and Tk 3,740 per maund; it was between Tk 3,700 and Tk 3,710 two days ago. Palm oil (ordinary) was selling between Tk 3,670 and Tk 3,680 rising from Tk

#### FROM PAGE 16 engaging in any other political The electoral laws and the

Indoor politics

Representation of the People Order 1972 also recognise the constitution's definition of a political party. According to the constitutional

other.

provision, political parties in Bangladesh conduct their activities with names distinctive from each

mountain areas that saw antigovernment protests earlier this year.

## news agency reported.

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year fixed yesterday for delivery of

arguments of both sides.