FROM PAGE 1

year, when it crossed \$100 a barrel for the first time. It now seems unbelievable that even in 1995-96 oil price hovered around \$12 to 15 a barrel.

According to experts in Petrobangla, the BPC and oil companies, the government should prepare to face the inevitable. It should not waste time in taking steps to better utilise its condensate resources--which is a by product of natural gas-- to produce both petroleum and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).

The government should also prioritise exploration of new gas resources and take legal steps for withdrawal of a court injunction on on-shore oil and gas exploration. Both Bapex and foreign oil companies should be encouraged to go for exploration and drilling of well for new gas resources.

In addition, the government should not further delay taking decisions on utilising the under utilised coal resources that appear to promise energy security of the country.

"Asia Energy's activities cannot be the reason for which the governcoal policy. If the Asia Energy deal was made wrongfully, it should be cancelled, and we should move ahead. If there was no wrong-doing, then also we should go ahead," said a Petrobangla official.

The country needs to reduce overall energy consumption by discouraging wastage of gas in domestic and commercial sectors. At the same time, compressed natural gas (CNG) network for the country's transport sector should also be expanded so that when oil price hits \$200 a barrel, this sector does not bog down, officials said.

"Bangladesh will have to think radically how to meet its energy demands," says an executive of an oil company. "Like many other countries, we should be pro-active. Most European countries are not leaning to alternative and renewable energy resources like wind and solar power, and the government is subsidising those sectors to help them grow. We should also utilise renewable energy resources on a larger scale."

He said that following India, Bangladesh should also go for plantation of Jatropa trees in fallow lands. Jatropa is a regional species, which is the source of bio-diesel. India meets 15 to 20 percent of its diesel demands from Jatropa.

High oil price has already done a lot of damage to the BPC. Its reputation has become so shaky that banks ask for three percent as confirmation charge on the value of letter of credit (LC) against any oil import deal. This situation will worsen in the coming months.

"First, let us be clear about this -there should not be any subsidy on any form of energy other than diesel. Again, subsidy on diesel should be offered only to farmers for farming, and public transports. To fix this subsidy, the government should analyse the previous data on consumption of diesel by farmers and public transports," said a BPC offi-

The government should launch an awareness campaign about the oil price situation, and the reality around the world. This awareness is required because the market price of petroleum products should now be totally opened. What is inevitable should be faced bravely. We have to increase oil prices in pace with the import price," he added.

BETTER UTILISATION OF CONDENSATE THROUGH NGL FRACTIONATION

When oil prices will sky rocket further, price of LPG --used for cooking in many areas of the country -- will be higher. This is why the government should utilise the country's condensation resources by installing NGL fractionation plant. Bangladesh produces more than 300,000 tonnes of condensate (6,768 barrels a day). By fractionating the condensate, it is possible to produce 80,000 tonnes of LPG, and the remaining can be used to make petroleum products.

Of the total condensate production, the Eastern Refinary now uses 1,30,000 tonnes to mix with crude oil and another 70,000 tonnes to fractionate and produce LPG. The old Kailastila fractionation plant also produces PG from condensate. A private firm named Super Refinery in Chittagong purchases 600 barrels per day for producing diesel and other petroleum products by wasting propane and butane of condensate.

The government had taken move to install four NGL fractionation plants many years back. During the four-party alliance rule, when the tender was floated, all big wigs of BNP wanted the four contracts despite their lack of qualification for the project. Their pressure ultimately produced nothing, except awarding of one contract secretly to Bashundhara group. But that bid also failed after the change of government

the matter for two years, the energy ministry has recently formed a committee to spearhead the fractionation projects.

NAPHTA PROCESSING In 2007, the government signed a contract with Bangladesh-US joint venture Mobil Jamuna Fuel Company (MJFC) to set up a naptha processing plant in Chittagong, which will produce octane from naptha from 2009 at an investment

ofTk350 crore. This will help the oil importing country to save its foreign exchange for import of 1,20,000 tonnes of

refined octane worth Tk 450 crore (at \$100 a barrel) a year to meet the entire local demand. It will also help

best utilise naptha, produced while refining imported crude oil in Eastern Refinery. The refinery produces around 1,50,000 tonnes of naphtha while processing 14 lakh tonnes of crude oil. Since there is no

Sources said that the MJFC has acquired land for the project and it is hoped that this project will be completed as per schedule.

domestic demand for naptha, the

refinery sells it out to international

OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION Despite repeated promises by successive governments, Bapex never received any shot in the arm to conduct oil and gas exploration activities. The current energy scenario demands putting all out efforts to discover and develop new oil and gas resources.

"The government should award all the marginal gas fields to Bapex to re-invest and re-explore. Bapex can hire high end oil companies for data collection, and even drill wells," said an energy ministry

ment is sitting on approving the out that the government should DOHSwerementioned instead. take quick decisions about both offshore and on-shore gas exploration.

"Chevron has enjoyed a five year moratorium on Block-7 after signing a production sharing contract for the block seven years ago. After five years, it has conducted seismic survey. Now, it seeks extension of the contract for further survey. We should not entertain this kind of planning. Instead, we should ask Chevron to go for drilling in the next phase," he said, adding that Block-7 apparently offers large promises.

A Chevron official on the other hand said the 1,000 km line survey detected three potential hydrocarbon zones. For better understanding, Chevron wants further survey so that the future drilling programme is highly successful.

"Gas resources are depleting fast. We have to invest enough to see if we have more gas resources, we should not give up. Norway made a big breakthrough after many frustrating attempts," said another Petrobangla official.

COALRESOURCES There are five coal zones promising high quality proven coal reserve of 2,357 million tonnes (MT). Probable reserve in these five locations alone stands at 3,258 MT. If all of this coal is converted into power, it could generate 5,000 megawatts of power for up to 66 to 90 years. Sixteen million MT of coal can generate

5,000 MW power for one year. The coal issue however became controversial due to the Asia Energy deal for Phulbari coal mine from 2005. To resolve this problem, besides addressing other issues, a coal policy has been debated, drafted, finalised and re-finalised

but it is yet to be adopted. "In the context of ensuring energy security, we believe that the government must take some major decisions on using the coal zones, said a top Petrobangla official. Mentioning that Barapukuria underground coal mine is already operating and Jamalgani coal basin is too deep, he suggested that the government take decision on the other three coal zones -- Phulbari, Khalaspir and Dighipara.

Of these three, data and plan on Phulbari have been detailed out by Asia Energy.

"If Asia Energy does not qualify for Phulbari mine, let there be open tender through which competent companies may take up the project. The government has already taken a decision on Dighipara zone but it will take some time to plan on Dighipara because there has not been any study on it yet," the official

Khalaspir zone also needs detailed studies before a plan can be chalked out about it," he added.

Regarding the underground Barapukuria mine which aims at producing only 21 MT of coal in 30 years from a reserve of 389 MT. he said it is possible to increase the mine's production by investing a little more. The mine is now producing about 8,00,000 MT a year, most of which is supposed to be consumed by a 250 MW power plant. "If we can increase coal production to nine lakh tonnes a year, we can feed coal for another 125 MW power plant," he

"But given the country's situation, producing coal for a mere 125 MW plant is nothing. We need to produce coal in bulk for our power and other energy needs," the official

Technologies are available to produce synthetic petroleum from coalata cost of around \$30 a tonne.

FROM PAGE 1 with hockey sticks, iron rods and

blades, threatened him with life. He said he later got admitted to Mitford Hospital from where doctors referred him to Orthopaedic Sources said that after sitting on Hospital, adding that goons hired by Amini also tried to kidnap him from the hospital.

Amini, however, brushed aside the charges, alleging that the plaintiff suffered injuries while making off with a madrasa teacher's cellphone. He said a theft case has already been laid against Sharif with Lalbagh Police Station.

He said his opponents are using Sharif following disputes over the ownership of the madrasaland.

Officer-in-charge of Lalbagh Police Station said investigations into the two cases are underway.

Official car

FROM PAGE 16 When Nowfel asked PGCL to pay the second instalment of the premium, the company came to know about the "mistaken" registration and declined to pay the sum, saying the matter should be corrected first.

A few days later, a fire broke out in the company's garage, burning the microbus, a motorcycle and a jeep.

Later, when the PGCL claimed insurance money the insurance company refused to pay it saying the vehicle was damaged under the security measures and in the garage ofPGCL

PGCL Managing Director Saiful Islam Chowdhury admitted that there are allegations that the matter of registration was suppressed. The probe committee has also been asked to find out the cause of the fire,

Meanwhile, it is alleged that to suppress the incident Nowfel gave the then PGCL general manager Khandaker Nazmul Hauge a vehicle of the organisation for the latter's personal use in Dhaka. He also alleg edly kept a fake logbook to hide the private use of the vehicle and purchase fuel worth Tk 6 lakh for it.

Sources said the column for name and designation of the user of the vehicle was not filled in properly in the logbook and names of places like A Petrobangla official pointed | Dhaka, Bogra, Sirajganj, Nolka and Even after keeping such a fake

logbook, the former PGCL general manager had to pay Tk 86,000 at the time of retirement to adjust the expenditures. It is also alleged that there is no

trace of huge crockery worth Tk 12 lakh of the PGCL guesthouse and Nowfel was in its charge.

CA calls

FROM PAGE 1 function chaired by Secretary of the

CA's office Kazi M Aminul Islam. The CA distributed crests and certificates among the best seven

Special Olympics award winners. He said the glorious success in the country's sports history brought by the sportsmen and women in the Special Olympics has overwhelmed

The CA also appreciated the efforts of the family members of the mentally challenged sportsmen and women as well as their trainers organisers and organisations concerned in helping them attain the global standard.

Referring to various government steps taken for the welfare of the physically and mentally challenged, Fakhruddin said the government is always ready and will remain so in the future to do whatever necessary for their welfare despite the country's resource constraint.

The CA said he will ask the minis try concerned to provide playgrounds exclusively for the retarded sportsmen and women.

He thanked Grameenphone, the country's leading cellphone operator, for extending financial and other supports to the Bangladesh team that participated in the

Shanghai Special Olympic games. The participants in the Shanghai Special Olympic Games, sport organisers and sport personalities were also present at the function.

SC to publish

brief descriptions of judicial ser-

vice commission and judicial service pay commission. Most of the highest court author-

ities all over the world publish detailed annual reports, the sources

Lawyers of the SC congratulated the authorities for taking the initiative to publish the annual report of

Barrister Rafique-Ul Huq, a senior SC lawyer, yesterday told The Daily Star that once the SC report is published, people including lawyers and judges will be able to have an overview of the functions and

activities of the judiciary. Barrister Shafique Ahmed, president of Supreme Court Bar Association, said the SC move to publish the report is undoubtedly a praiseworthy effort as it will help ensure transparency and speed in the judicial system, provided that the information and data about judges, vacant posts, pending cases and activities of the judiciary pub-

lished in the report are correct. The annual report of the SC will be published in a ceremony where Chief Justice Md Ruhul Amin will be the chief guest and Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Adviser AF Hasan Ariff will be the special guest Judges of both Appellate and High Court Divisions of the SC, judges of subordinate courts and diplomats

will also attend the programme. Iktedar Ahmed, registrar at the SC, said the report will be published with financial assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) under its good governance

The SC intends to continue publishing its annual reports every year from now on, he added.

China fights

FROM PAGE 16 thousands of buildings toppled or

in danger of collapse. Since the quake, the most pressing priority has been to rescue those trapped amid the mass of twisted metal and concrete. Six more people, including a German tourist, were pulled out of the

rubble on Saturday. After 124 hours, a 31-year-old woman was rescued from the rubble of a building in Deyang city, while around the same time a 33year-old worker was hauled out of a phosphorous mine in Shifang city,

Xinhua news agency reported. A third man was also saved about the same time. The three were the people known to have survived the longest in the debris since Monday's quake.

Gatco case

FROM PAGE 16

in the immediate past BNP-led coalition government, said he had no involvement in any corruption. "My only offence is I was a member of the purchase committee. I have no other offence."

Last Thursday, a metropolitan court issued arrest warrants against 12 'absconding accused', including Nizami and four other cabinet ministers of the four-party alliance government, in the Gatco scam case.

Nizami said his name was not in the FIR but later he was included. "What is most painful is I was shown absconding in a disgusting way. This is a blatant falsehood, which does not suit the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC)."

He noted that corruption originates in falsehood. "If the ACC takes recourse to falsehood to arrange a case against a person, how the corruption could be curbed by such an institution. Rather, it becomes an instrument of repressing politicians, which is damaging for the ACC," he said. Nizami said none could raise

the allegation of corruption or irregularity during his 20 months as agriculture minister and 40 months as industries minister. A corrupt person cannot run a ministry so transparently. Even such charge came 16 months into the state of emergency.

He said different agencies and media tried to detect irregularities by looking through microscope but they failed. Similarly, there is no evidence of corruption against Jamaat Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid who was the social welfare minister.

Asked when he plans to go to court, Nizami said he will act on advice of his lawyers. Asked whether Jamaat would go

for movement alone or with other

said all past movements were launched unitedly whenever an unelected government was imposed on the nation blocking the road to democracy and people's voting right.

parties if he was arrested, Mizami

Asked about Jamaat's stance on the government-proposed dialogue, Nizami said there is no instance from the government to create an enabling environment to make the dialogue fruitful through participation of all parties.

Rather, he alleged, the government, having failed to realise the present political reality, is taking steps to spoil the pre-dialogue atmosphere. "Our party view is that this

government is backed by the army Army is the symbol of the nation's independence and sovereignty Failure of this government will have far-reaching effect." Nizami said, "We apprehend a national disaster if there be any

deviation from holding credible elections according to the roadmap and handing over power to elected representatives." The Jamaat chief said, "It is no one's expectation that the armybacked government should face off

the people. But it seems that the

government is pushing the country

towards that end. Nizami said the only responsibility of the caretaker government is to hold a credible election to parliament with the participation

By realising the reality, he said the government should release all political leaders, including the two top leaders--Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina.

of all political parties.

He said the government must refrain from arresting politicians afresh. Otherwise, it would not be possible to hold an election participated by all.

AL, BNP yet to get

FROM PAGE 1

Nazrul Islam Khan also said last night that the letter did not reach them as of 8:00pm.

When contacted over telephone Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman declined to make any comment on the parties' not receiving the government letter for the dialogue.

Meanwhile, the dialogue itself seems to be in trouble because of what some politicians termed the "preconditions" set by the government and the leadership crises in the political parties. The policymakers of both the AL

and BNP are in serious dilemma over taking part in the dialogue with or without their party chiefs. Unlike other invited parties, they are facing difficulties in working out strategies for the dialogue with the government led by the chief adviser. Dozens of major political figures,

including AL President Sheikh Hasina and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, have been put in jails while a few more senior leaders may soon follow them. Many others are on the run to avoid arrest. All these have caused a vacuum in the parties' leadership

Party insiders said their leaders are busier trying to survive the government's anti-corruption drives than doing politics -- a situation that, they fear, would continue to thwart the dialogue.

The parties have been saying they would not participate in any dialogue with the government is conditions were imposed. They want to sit in the dialogue to discuss openly which, they say, is only possible if the government shifts

from its present stance. The letters sent to six political parties on Tuesday said, "The chief adviser's address to the nation will give directives about the agenda of the dialogue." This also caused concerns among the major political

"How can the chief adviser's address be the agenda of the dialogue when it disappointed most political parties?" said a senior AL leader, who was doubtful about the success of the dialogue if takes

It seems that the government will not shift from its position, a few political leaders speculated.

Sources said parties invited to the talks would be busy holding meetings in the next couple of days to decide whether to participate in the dialogue.

Many, however, believe that the dialogue will be successful to bring

an end to the ongoing crisis. Meanwhile, Jamaat-e-Islami and the pro-Khaleda faction of BNP have demanded release of both Hasina and Khaleda as a precondition for the dialogue. The AL is also pressing for Hasina's release and her presence at the dialogue.

There are also pressures on the AL from its leaders and supporters for not participating in the dialogue

Power plant case FROM PAGE 16

the case with Tejgaon Police Station, accusing Hasina and six others of helping a foreign company and its local partners win a deal for setting up three 100-MW barge-mounted power plants at Haripur, Khulna and Shikalbaha, depriving the lowest bidder. The co-accused are former

energy secretary Towfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, former Power Development Board (PDB) chairman Noor Uddin Mahmud Kamal, Managing Director of Summit Industries and Mercantile Corporation Private Ltd Aziz Khan, its Director Farid Khan, United Group Chairman Hasan Mahmud Raja and its Director Abul Kalam

keeping the two top leaders behind

The four-party alliance will hold a meeting in a day or two to decide on attending the talks. Sources said the alliance will place a set of conditions, including release of the AI and BNP chiefs, for the dialogue.

"To make the dialogue a success there is no alternative to releasing Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina said BNP chairperson's Adviser Brig (retd) Hannan Shah. He said the two leaders could be given parole to participate in the dialogue.

Jamaat Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed also does not consider the atmosphere to be congenial for such a dialogue "Hasina and Khaleda must be set free and the case filed against Motiur Rahman Nizami has to be withdrawn before the dialogue starts," Mojaheed told The Daily

Jamaat has received the letter for the dialogue.

Nineteen parties have been invited to the dialogue to be held at the chief adviser's office from May 22. The schedules for the parley are yet to be announced.

Reformists

FROM PAGE 1

"There is no need to hold discus sions to reunite the party as the party is already united under the leadership of Khaleda Zia," he told the leaders of Jhalakathi Bar Association at his Nam flat in the

capital yesterday. Meanwhile, Lt Gen (retd) Mahbubur Rahman, standing committee member and pro-Saifur leader, yesterday told The Daily Star: "The October 29 meeting decisions will automatically expire when a joint announcement is made public. Besides, the spirit of the meeting is already lost as Saifur

Rahman is no more with us. Terming Delwar's attitude only obstacles to reuniting the party, he said: "I think he is not aware of the consequences of the party remaining divided."

Hinting at the proposal for a joint declaration over unity made by pro-Saifur leaders, Delwar however said there is no need to make a joint announcement or statement, as there is no division in

the party. "Why should I make a joint declaration? If they [pro-Saifur leaders] are sincere, let them admit their mistakes," he said, adding, they should have the ability to realise their mistakes like Saifur

Rahman did.

them," he said.

recognised."

The October 29 meeting attended by some standing committee members last year at Saifur's house made him acting chairman and Maj (retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed acting secretary general of the party.

On the recent process of bringing unity, Delwar categorically said this is not a party decision but a private effort by some mainstream leaders to discuss party affairs with the reformists. He said some gentlemen who

split BNP influenced by a certain quarter under a special circumstance, but the people did not accept them. "They [pro-Saifur leaders] have to do something so that the party leaders and workers can trust

Delwar urged the lawyers to

hold posts in the party had tried to

establish the rule of law, human rights and democracy in the coun-He also asked the local leaders, activists and supporters to work to strengthen the party at the grassroots level. "Those who have worked for the party in difficult

times would be evaluated and

RU students ransack provost's office

RU CORRESPONDENT

Several hundreds students of Shaheed Ziaur Rahman hall of Rajshahi University ransacked the hall provost Jahangir Kabir's office late Friday night and set fire on furniture, demanding Kabir's removal from office.

The agitating students claimed the provost had been ignoring their demands for improvement of hall facilities for long.

Meanwhile residential students, at a press briefing yesterday, threatened to go for a tougher movement against the hall provost if their demands were not met within two

Residential students allege that they have on several occasions informed the hall provost about problems at the hall, including issues regarding dining facilities, quality of food, TV room and poor lighting at the hall.

The hall provost always assured the students of looking into the matter but this never happened, students allege.

Campus sources said a student called Salim Mia talked to the hall provost Kabir and informed him about these problems over

mobile phone on Friday night. Salim later claimed to the media that in response to his complaints, Kabir scolded him for disturbing the provost at night and threatened to cancel Salim's residential seat in

Salim informed other students of the provost's threats and they brought out a procession at around 11.30 pm demanding the hall provost's removal.

Gatco graft case FROM PAGE 16

former chief finance and accounts officer Ahmed Abul Qashem, former CPA chairman Commodore (retd) Zulfigur Ali, former CPA chairman AMM Shahadat Hossain,

former CPA directors AM Sanwar Hossain, Luthful Kabir, Gatco managing director (MD) Syed Galib Ahmed, Gatco director Sved Tanvir Ahmed, and Akbar's son Ismail Hossain Simon are behind bars while the rest were shown absconding.

The other fugitive accused are former shipping secretary Zulfikar Haider Chowdhury, Gatco directors AKM Musa Kajol, Ehsan Yusuf, Shahjahan M Hasib, former member of Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) AK Rashid Uddin Ahmed and former shipping minister and late BNP leader Col (retd) Akbar Hossain's wife Jahanara Ansar.

Sources said arrest warrants for BNP leaders Saifur, Bhuiyan, Shamsul Islam and Amir Khasru and Gatco official Musa Kajol were dispatched to Gulshan Police Station while those for Nizami, MK Anwar, Ehsan, Zulfikar, Jahanara Rashiduddin and Hasib were sent to Ramna, New Market, Khilgaon, Kafrul, Dhanmondi and Uttara

police stations. Saifur, who is also the top leader of the pro-reform BNP faction, is in Singapore now for treatment. Amir Khasru left the country immediately after the army-led joint forces launched the crackdown on corruption suspects.

Clarification

FROM PAGE 16 percent skilled and semi-skilled workers out of total demand for recruitment abroad, said the clari-

fication issued on May 13. It said the government has also taken a number of initiatives to provide skill development and technical training in various trades. Twenty-three trades have already been identified as the potential trades in the overseas employment market on the basis of the reports

from various missions abroad. A training centre under Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) is being converted into a centre of excellence to provide international standard training under Korean technical

assistance. The ministry has also taken initiatives to upgrade the curriculum of different training courses to cope it with international standard. BMET has also increased the number of technical training centres from 12 to 38 during last five

Storm kills

FROM PAGE 16 Meanwhile, our Benapole correspondent reported that at least 20 people were injured and 40 houses

Crops on vast tracts of land were also damaged in the storm.

were damaged in a storm that lashed

Sharsha upazila yesterday after-

Import scandal FROM PAGE 1

of corruption and inefficiency, crippling honest businesses, holding back the economy and depriving the government of thousands of crore taka a year. This was no small time scam, but a criminal empire involving businessmen, government officials play a role in the movement to and the very institutions, Customs and the National Board of Revenue, that were supposed to spot the wrong doing.

> In a four part series staring tomorrow, The Daily Star reveals the extent of the rampant criminality and corruption that has plagued the import trade and still costs the country dearly.

AL to discuss

FROM PAGE 1

Talking to reporters there, Amu said they would decide in consultation with members of the 14-party combine and on getting Hasina's nod whether to sit with the govern-

Except AL, the parties in the alliance however have already decided to participate in the formal dialogue with the government, said sources close to them. While AL wants to ensure its

dialogue, its allies are not in favour of setting Hasina's release as a condition for their participation in the talks with the caretaker administration. They believe the issue is an internal matter of the party. Besides, leaders of the 14-party components are reluctant to go for any movement at this time, whereas

detained chief's presence at the

AL plans to launch a united movement to force the government to free Hasina before the dialogue. They however said they look forward to having a unified stance on issues like announcement of electoral schedule, lifting of the state of emergency and trial of war

criminals. But for this, they believe, they would have to ensure coordination within the combine for lack of which ties between AL and the others have

already loosened. In the last few months, relations between AL and Gono Forum of Dr Kamal Hossain have reached the

lowest level. Hasina has criticised Dr Kamal on a number of occasions for what she said was his pro-government stance. AL acting president Zillur Rahman has said they do not consider Gono Forum as their ally

Dr Kamal, on the other hand, has taken a swipe at Hasina and others for what he said were their "misdeeds" in the past.

anymore.

Insiders said AL still attaches great importance to its relations with the rest of the combine. It seeks to bridge the gap with them. At the same time, it wants to work in unison with the other like-minded parties including Communist Party of Bangladesh and Bikalpa Dhara

Bangladesh. Tofail Ahmed has been assigned to communicate with the parties and lay the groundwork for the talks beginning tomorrow at Zillur Rahman's Gulshan residence.

Talking to The Daily Star recently, leaders of the 14-party said AL used to take decisions in consultation with them before the state of emergency was promulgated on January 11 last year. But now it takes decisions unilaterally.

Workers' Party General Secretary

Bimal Biswas said, "Definitely, Awami League will have to take the initiative in minimising its gap with others in the alliance. Ganotantri Party President Nurul Islam observed that AL's mistakes in giving nomination for

have in fact led to its present distance with others. "There is still time to be united again on national issues," he told

the stalled parliamentary election

The Daily Star. About the demand for Hasina's release and presence in the dialogue, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal General Secretary Syed Zafar Sazzad said it's their demand and they would have to press it home. The combine will seek to implement

war criminals will top our agenda," he told The Daily Star. HOMECOMINGDAY

Hundreds of party activists and supporters waited for hours in a queue stretched up to Asad Gate to hand flowers and sweets to the jail

authorities for the AL president. On behalf of the AL central committee, presidium member Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury and acting general secretary Syed Ashraful Islam handed a bouquet shaped like a boat, the party's election symbol, to the jail authorities for Hasina.

Motia Chowdhury, Mukul Bose, Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Abdul Mannan, Mahmudur Rahman Manna, Akhtaruzzaman, Abdur Rahman, Major Gen (retd) Subid Ali Bhuiyan, Sahara Khatun, Abdul Mannan Khan, Nurul Islam Nahid, Habibur Rahman Siraj, Dr Abdur Razzak, Col (retd) Faruk Khan, Capt (retd) ABM Tajul Islam, Yafes Osman, Dipu Moni, Abu Sayeed and Abdul Latif Siddiqui, among others,

were present at that time. A huge number of law enforcers were deployed in and around the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban to ward off

anything untoward. Barricades put up on different roads leading to the sub-jail were removed after 11:00am, allowing the AL leaders to gather at the

entrance. There, talking to reporters, Sajeda Chowdhury said the charges against Hasina are "false and baseless", and she should be released immediately in the interests of the

Amu said they would participate in the dialogue and the parliamentary elections under Hasina's lead-

Razzak said they must launch a movement to continue in parallel with the legal battle to ensure her release. SECRETARY-LEVEL MEETING

A secretary-level meeting of AL

yesterday suggested holding the

extended meeting of the party for at least two days so that grassroots level leaders from across the country can speak on various issues including the formal dialogue with the government and Sheikh Hasina's release.

Earlier on May 14, the AL Central

Working Committee announced

that an extended meeting would be held on May 26. This would be the first in eight years. Chaired by acting general secretary Syed Ashraful Islam, yesterday's meeting also proposed

exchanging views with professional

bodies. Besides, organising secretaries and other central leaders were assigned to communicate with the grassroots level leaders to make the 'mass hunger strike' on May 20 successful.

The meeting held at AL presi-

dent's political office in Dhanmondi

recommended that the Netrakona district AL president and Pirojpur unit general secretary be disciplined for their involvement in antiorganisational activities. Talking to The Daily Star, AL Organising Secretary Mahmudur

Rahman Manna said they would

ask the grassroots level leaders to come up with a detailed organisational report. CU Correspondent reports: Chittagong city AL yesterday held a

discussion at the local press club to mark Hasina's homecoming day. The participants demanded

Chuadanga jailbreak

Her family informed police around 8:45am and a police team

Police claimed on their return of the vehicle and tried to run away near Chaighoria field with his handcuffs still on. Police fired three

Sadar Hospital for treatment. Superintendent of Police Mafiz Uddin said police and other law enforcement agencies have

quizzed the outlaw and gleaned

the jail two months ago. hole in the wall of the cell they were put into. They kept the hole hidden with old newspapers and blankets, police said. They used their blan-

Hamid also told police the other three escapees left him at Belgachhi in Sadar upazila around 6:30pm Friday. He told police they had plans to leave for India.

Aktaruzzaman Sohag, 38, Jorap Ali, 32, and Ashigur Rahman Tagar, 36. Hamid and Tagar were gang leaders, while Sohag and Jorap were cadres of outlawed Banglar Communist Party (BCP-Laltu). Police and Rapid Action One of the two committees formed to probe the prison break submitted its report yesterday. The committee headed by

(DC) of Chuadanga. The report blamed prison employees' neglect of duty and weak construction of the prison DC Mokhlesur Rahman said the

overall improvement of environment in the jail. The other committee is to sub-

mit its report tomorrow. JAILS ON ALERT All jails in the country were put on

alert after the prison break. "We have asked officials at all jails to check that prison cells confining dangerous convicts are in good shape," Deputy Inspector General (Prisons) Maj Shamsul

told to verify that all inmates are present every evening. On the security of the two sub-

prime ministers, Haider said apart from jail guards, intelligence officials are always on red alert there. The jailbreak in Chuadanga prompted prison officials in nine other districts of Khulna Division to tighten security, reports our staff

jails at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban

Complex, detaining the two former

Superintendent of Jessore Central Jail Partho Gopal Banik said all the jails in the division have been on red alert since Friday as the prisons have hundreds of cadres of underground organisation and dozens of activists of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh and other

only the decisions taken by it. "We have already decided to sit for the dialogue with the governimmediate release of the now ment where election, withdrawal of the state of emergency and trial of detained former prime minister.

Islam around 7:30am and asked for shelter. He told Sirajul's wife Romeja that he is sick and the police are after him. Romeja agree-

ing to provide shelter locked him in

led by Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Chuadanga Police Station Rabiul Islam cordoned off the house. Hamid surrendered around journey to town, Hamid jumped off

shots to stop him. Hamid got shot twice in the leg. Police admitted him to Chuadanga

information from him. He said Hamid claimed that they had made the plan to flee from They used a part of an abandoned broken handcuff to make a

kets to scale the 18-foot-high jail

The prisoners on the run are

Battalion (Rab) are conducting special combing operations in 10 districts of the region.

PROBE COMMITTEE REPORT

Additional District Magistrate (ADM) of Chuadanga Subhas Chandra Saha and Magistrate Dipankar Kumar submitted their report to the deputy commissioner

probe body made a seven-point recommendation regarding the

Haider Siddiqui told The Daily Star vesterday. He said jail officials have been

militant outfits.

correspondent in Khulna.