Ex-BNP MP Hafiz

also approved submission of

charge sheets against Nasrin Khan,

wife of former foreign minister and

BNP leader M Morshed Khan,

Hedavetullah, son of former

Rahmatullah and Kazi Kamaluddin

Ahmed, deputy director of Dhaka

Medical College Hospital (DMCH)

for accumulating wealth and prop-

approved submission of charge

sheet against Nasrin Khan for

acquiring wealth worth Tk 1.67

crore beyond her known sources of

income and concealing informa-

Hedayetullah will be charge

sheeted for concealing informa-

lakh and acquiring wealth worth Tk

Besides, the ACC also approved

filing of a case against agriculturist

Javed Iqbal for not submitting

wealth statement to it within the

stipulated time, Col Hanif Iqbal

FOYSAL

the ACC.

ARREST WARRANTS AGAINST

Judge Mohammad Azizul

Haque of the Senior Special Judge's

Court issued the arrest warrants

against Foysal Morshed and wife

Shyma Shezan Khan in a case filed

for amassing wealth illegally and

concealing wealth information to

The court fixed June 24 for next

On June 16, ACC Assistant

Director Mohammad Talebur

Rahman, also the IO of the case,

submitted the charge sheet against

Magistrate's Court, showing 34

on December 10 last year with

ment. Foysal held back informa-

tion about property worth Tk 6.94

crore and accumulated a Tk 7.10

crore wealth beyond his known

sources of income. His wife was

accused for aiding and abetting

Gulshan Police Station.

The case was filed against them

According to the case state-

people as prosecution witnesses.

Igbal said the commission

FROM PAGE 16 presence of Hafiz.

The court also fined the BNP leader Tk 1 crore for the offences. He will have to serve one and a half year more in prison if he failed to Awami League lawmaker AKM pay the amount.

Meanwhile, Mafruza was also fined Tk 1 crore, in default of which, she would have to spend six, months more in jail. As she is ertiesillegally. absconding and was tried in absentia, her sentence will come into effect from the day of her arrest or surrender.

The former BNP lawmaker, was handed down 10 years' RI for accumulating wealth illegally and three tion about assets worth Tk 91.63 evears' RI for concealing informa- lakh. tion about his actual wealth to the ACC. The sentences will run consecutively since the day of his arrest tion of his assets worth Tk 12.72 in the case.

The court also ordered the 1.24 crore illegally, the ACC director authorities concerned to confiscate his illegally earned immoveable properties worth Tk 1.64 crore and Tk 4.73 crore in Fixed Deposit Receipts (FDR) and sav-

It also ordered confiscation of added. his wife's immovable properties worth Tk 1.90 crore and Tk 7.88 crore in FDR and savings account.

Other properties to be confiscated include one jeep, one private car and three CNG-run autorickshaws and taxicabs.

ACC Assistant Director Mohammad Ibrahim filed the case with Gulshan Police Station on May 8 last year.

In their wealth statements hearing of the case. submitted to the ACC, Hafiz mentioned his wealth worth Tk 6.80 crore and his wife's wealth worth

Tk 9.50 crore. CHARGE SHEET AGAINST the two to the Chief Metropolitan

Briefing newsmen at the ACC office, commission director general (Admin) Col Hanif Iqbal said that Altaf Hossain concealed Tk 55.60 lakh in his wealth statement submitted to the commission.

He said that the anti-graft body investigation also found Altaf's wealth worth Tk 1.53 crore, which is beyond the BNP leader's known sources of income.

The anti-graft body yesterday him in the offence.

FROM PAGE 1

Fazlul Karim Selim on July 2.

NIKO CORRUPTION CASE

the Special Judge's Court-2.

The High Court bench of Justice

Khademul Islam Chowdhury and

Justice Mashuque Hossain Ahmed

set June 30 for next hearing on the

The case is now pending with

The Anti-Corruption

Commission's (ACC) Deputy

Director SM Sabbir Hasan filed the

case with Tejgaon Police Station on

December 9 last year, accusing

Hasina and six other people of

corruption and abuse of power

gas fields to Canadian energy

company Niko during the Awami

the ACC did not follow due process

while sanctioning its official to file

former prime minister was not

person, Judge Md Ashraf Hossain

July 2 after studying the case docu-

Earlier on February 6, the High

the case within the purview of the

Emergency Power Rules. The

Appellate Division afterwards

overruled the HC order, allowing

the trial court to proceed with the

ment stated that the former prime

minister took around Tk 3 crore in

extortion from him in exchange for

awarding him work permit for a

power-plant project during her

The plaintiff in his case state-

the Supreme Court in this regard.

AZAM J CHOWDHURY CASE

The case statement said the

while awarding three 'abandoned'

League government.

crore to the state exchequer.

for the alleged corruption.

the case.

Niko deal.

graft cases.

140 ex-BNP Mps FROM PAGE 1

Koko for not arranging their treatment abroad. The former lawmakers of the

national election". BNP Joint Secretary General and

former state minister Selima Rahman read out the statement at a press briefing at BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain's Nam flat.

among the signatories were present at the briefing. They are Begum Sarwari Rahman, Shajahan Chowdhury, Shamsuzzaman Dudu, Principal Sohrab Uddin, Khairul Kabir Khokon, Ashraf Uddin Nizami, Abdul Momen Talukdar, Nurul kabir Shaheen, Syed Mehedi Ahmed Rumi, Selim Reza Habib, Shirin Sultana, Fahima Hossain Jublee, Helen Zerin Khan, Saimum Begum, Rezina Akhtar, Nure Ara Safa, Rehana Akhtar Ranu

Ctg airport

He also said the situation is not too bad to close the runway. "But, if the situation becomes that bad, we will close the airfield or ask pilots to avoid the airport," he added.

The official said the SAIA has three fire-fighting vehicles, of which two are "problematic" while the other is partially unserviceable.

Group Captain M Naim Hossain, member (operations and planning) of the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh, told The Daily Star on Monday that the firefighting vehicles of SAIA are not fully unserviceable.

According to him, technicians are supposed to go to the SAIA today to repair the vehicles.

The problems could become serious if an aircraft does not have enough fuel to keep hovering in the

He said if the International Civil Aviation Organisation or the Federal Aviation Administration comes to know about the present condition at the SAIA, the airport's status as an international airport

Four international airlines--Thai Airways, Airarabia, RAK Airways and Oman Air-- operate

Hasina's counsels told the court

that they cannot take part in the charge-framing hearing in the absence of senior defence lawyer Shafique Ahmed who was at the time seeking the quashment of Niko graft case against the Awami League president at the High

The prosecution, however, opposed the defence bid, saying that the hearing could go ahead as counsels for other accused had made out their case.

Advocate Sahara Khatun was present in the court on behalf of Hasina, who had earlier been exempted from appearing at court in person in the case.

OMS of rice

"Procurement and the OMS cannot be done at the same time,' he said adding that the OMS programme does not impact the prices on the market and it is designed only to support people in

Stating that the case is false and Asked whether the announcefabricated, they said the case proceedings cannot continue as the involved in any corruption in the

the low-income group.

He also said there is no possibility of food shortage as the country As the Awami League president's saw a bumper harvest of rice this counsel advocate Sahara Khatun year unless a major natural disaster appealed for exempting Hasina

from appearing at court hearings in strikes the country. The government, in the wake of unprecedented hike in the prices of said he would give his decision on ments of the Appellate Division of

and it stopped the sale on May 10.

and also declared it illegal to bring ministry yesterday decided to sell rice at a cheaper rate among the low-income group in the country's labour-intensive regions

The meeting decided to request food department to start the sale of rice among the lower-income group in Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna regions.

take appropriate steps for importing lentil, edible oil, onion and sugar through TCB in a bid to keeping prices of essentials at a tolerable level during the Ramadan.

Representatives from commerce, home, agriculture, food and disaster management ministries Investigating officer (IO) of the and a number of other departments including local government department, TCB, office of the chief adviser, Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), DGFI, NSI, Bangladesh Statistical The IO said the body was sent to Bureau, agricultural extension department, agriculture marketing department attended the meeting.

anything happened to Tarique and

immediate-past ruling party clearly said BNP "will not participate in any election other than the

a lot of troubles in maintaining their service because of the present situation at the SAIA.

sky, a Biman high official said.

might be downgraded.

from the SAIA at present.

CA hopes

FROM PAGE 1

of work on general election and reform programmes undertaken by the caretaker government.

Bangladesh, according to CA's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim who was present at the meeting.

Referring to accomplishing the gigantic task of preparing voter list with photographs of about 80 million voters in a short time, Barbara said, "Bangladesh will be very proud

the outer world for making democratic setup in the country.

Barbara said she will apprise her government of election roadmap and other positive sides of Bangladesh and the interim govern-

The CA said, "Bangladesh greatly values its close, friendly and cooperative relations with Canada." He recalled Canada was among the few countries that recognised Bangladesh after its independence in 1971.

6 JMB militants

FROM PAGE 16

but one, with a call for an Islamists' Jihadon August 17 of 2005.

In Chapainawabganj, the blasts rocked Biswaroad crossing, Old Judge Court Bhaban, Mahananda bridge area, New Market and the DC's office, and injured leaving three people -- Moti Saha, Rabi Saha and rickshaw-puller Rabiul Islam.

Rabiul later succumbed to his injuries at Rajshahi Medical College

Apart from a case for serial blasts, Sub inspector Abdullah Al Masud Chowdhury of Chapainawabganj Sadar police station also lodged a

tor M Hafizul Islam submitted the charge sheet in the murder case on November 14, 2005 accusing 10 people in both cases.

Later on October 11, 2006, he submitted a supplementary charge sheet in the murder case relieving Abdullah Al Mamun Nasim from murder charges.

JMB chief Shayakh Abdur Rahman, other Majlish-e sura members Siddikul Islam Bangla Bhai and Abdul Awal were also accused in the charges, but they were later relieved from the case after they were executed in 2006.

Meanwhile, the six militants and their other accomplice Abdullah Al Mamun Nasim were awarded lifeterm in the serial blasts case, by the same court, on January 31.

Aziz claims

FROM PAGE 1 board of directors of Asian Development Bank at the planning

"I can say for sure that the advisers and special assistants do not indulge in corruption. This is a major success," he said.

The adviser made the statement when reporters asked for his comments on TIB's report titled "National Household Survey on Corruption, 2007". The report said corruption in education, health, land administration and local government sectors and in different utility services increased in the first half of 2007 despite the caretaker government's anti-corruption drives.

Conducted among 5,000 households on incidents of corruption that took place between July, 2006 and June, 2007, the survey also revealed that corruption decreased, between January and June, 2007, in law enforcement agencies, judiciary, and in the power, banking and taxation sectors compared to the records of previous six months.

Asked about cutting down corruption at lower levels, the adviser yesterday said, "It is a time consum ing task. Different social and economic issues should be taken into consideration for this."

The TIB report said law enforcement agencies including the joint forces, police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) were found to be the most corrupt in terms of magnitude while land administration was found to be the most corrupt in terms of the amount of bribe that went into the sector.

Asked to comment on the TIB revelations, LGRD Adviser Anwarul Iqbal told reporters at Bangladesh Secretariat that he had asked TIB for a copy of the report and that he would comment on it after going through it.

Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman also declined to comment before reading the report. Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Director (admin) Col Hanif Iqbal said the commission is not

worried about the report of TIB. "The commission will be working following its own methods and will not be run by the planning of any other institutions," he said at his commission office yesterday.

He said the ACC is not worried as the survey of TIB covered a time between mid-2006 and mid-2007. He said, "The ACC believes that corruption cannot be uprooted

overnight using Aladin's lamp. About TIB's suggestions to strengthen ACC's anti-graft drives, he said the commission would try to incorporate the suggestions in its activities.

Replying to a question, he, however, said the ACC is not against the TIBreport

Agreeing to the report about corruption of Police, IGP Noor Mohammad said only advising is not sufficient to change police, it needs time as well as the mentality to change and for that purpose community policing programme

has been taken up. On continuation of this programme, the mentality of police will change and corruption may lessen, said the IGP speaking as the chief guest in a seminar held at the Barisal Auditorium yesterday.

He added that in comparison to the population of the country the number of policemen is very small.

Delwar asks EC

FROM PAGE 1 The statement came at a rally of the BNP-led four-party alliance in the city's Engineers' Institution where Khandaker Delwar and other alliance leaders echoed the BNP chairperson's renewed demand for holding the national polls by October 30.

The alliance organised the rally to press home their demands for the release of the detained political colleagues and denounce the EC's plan for announcing the schedules for the local government polls.

"Announce the schedule for the national polls, it's the core demand of the people," Delwar said amid cheers and slogans by thousands of

alliance activists. He repeated the demand for lifting of the state of emergency by June 30 to pave the way for holding the national elections by October

He said there will be no election keeping BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Jamaat chief Motiur Rahman Nizami, Tarique Rahman and Arafat Rahman Koko behind bars.

Delwar asked the government to send Tarique and Koko abroad for medical treatment in line with the recommendations of the medical board.

In his speech, Jamaat Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid said the four-party alliance will resist any move for holding local government polls before the national polls.

He accused the Election Commission of taking up a plan for "selecting people" in the name of election.

BNP leaders Chowdhury Tanvir Ahmed Siddiqui, Selima Rahman, Nazrul Islam Khan; Jamat leaders Abdul Kader Molla and Rafigul Islam Khan; BJP Chairman Andalib Rahman and Secretary General Shamim Al Mamun, IOJ Secretary General Maulana Abdul Latif Nezami, Khelafat Majlish Secretary General Anwar Ahmed Kader also spoke on the occasion.

Violent politics

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh, of a level electoral playing field with a fair referee. It is then up to the teams to play their part," Malik said.

He said all political stakecally elected government".

Asked for his opinion on former premier Khaleda Zia's detention when another former premier, Sheikh Hasina, has been released, Malik said although due process and equal treatment are essential, Britain cannot interfere in

He also said the state of emergency must be relaxed in order to let political parties campaign for

the elections. The government is due to relax the state of emergency today in areas where local polls would be

"Emergency at any point of time

anywhere is not ideal, so it would have to be loosened if elections were to be considered credible,' said Malik.

The British under secretary of

state for international development also praised Gen Moeen and the military for their work on preparing the voter list with photographs. Asked if Britain's aid is tied to the type of government, political

stability or level of corruption, Malik said development assistance would continue regardless of any political change.

"The people who need the assistance should not suffer if politicians do not do their job," he

British development assistance to Bangladesh would rise to \$300 million a year by 2010 while about \$960 million has already been given in the last four years.

City elections

Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet--and nine municipalities--Manikganj Sadar, Chuadanga Sadar, Shariatpur Sadar, Naohata in Rajshahi, Dupchanchiya in Bogra, Sripur in Gazipur, Phulbaria in Mymensingh, Golapganj in Sylhet and Sitakunda in Chittagong--might be held by the end of July or early August.

After these, the EC will conduct election in Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and some other municipalities in tion while many of the ward September. Then it will organise polls for 482 upazila parishads in run from law enforcers. phases from October.

On completion of the parliamentary election in the third holding local government polls week of December, the commission will begin holding polls for over 4,000 union parishads from organising the latter. mid-January or early February.

upazilas and municipalities will be slotted in between the union election is their top priority. parishad polls, said senior officials at the EC Secretariat. The EC in its electoral saying that city corporation and

polls in January 2008 and continue till the parliamentary polls in December.

But it had to back down on the plans due to the state of emergency and voter listing. Terms of the Dhaka, Rajshahi

Mayors of the city corporabeen detained for quite a long time now on charges of corrup-

commissioners have been on the Major political parties have carrying more than two passengers been opposing the plans for will have to pay Tk 1800 for the first two passengers plus Tk 500 for before the parliamentary election, fearing further delay in

The commission, reconstievery additional passenger. tuted in February 2007, has been

Hossain Zillur

FROM PAGE 16

thinking about holding advisory council meeting on the sidelines of the regional dialogue.

Replying to a question about the participation of BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami in the dialogue, the education adviser said invitation has been given to the parties and they were waiting for their reply. "Government efforts are continuing to bring all to the dialogue."

Regarding the much-talked about releases of detained former prime minister BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and her two sons, the adviser said the government is monitoring the matter closely and examining the legal process. He hoped there would be a "positive solution".

Speaking at the joint briefing, Khelafat Majlish Secretary General Maulana Yusuf Ashraf said they proposed holding the parliamentary election in October, two months ahead of the tentative timeframe, so that all hajj pilgrims could cast their vote.

The Khelafat Majlish opposed the Election Commission-set conditions for political parties' registration terming it contrary to the constitution.

The Islamist party put forward a 21- point demand in the dialogue. The demands include the lifting of the sate of emergency and all restrictions on activities of political parties, and strengthening the anti-corruption drive with caution so that innocent people are not

harassed. On the National Women Development Policy 2008, the party demanded clear stand of the government and immediate implementation of the recommenda-

tions of the review committee. Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed along with the advisers concerned was present at the

meeting. Communications Adviser Maj Gen (retd) Ghulam Quader, LGRD Adviser M Anwarul Iqbal, Khelafat Majlish leaders Ashraf Ali, Abdur Rab Yusufi, Nizamuddin, Toffazel Huq, Reazul Karim Jalali and Mahmudul Huq were present at the dialogue and the joint press briefing.

AL to sit with govt

FROM PAGE 1

other like-minded parties to forge a common stance on vital issues, to be placed at the July 3 dialogue.

Later, Ashraf told reporters that final decision regarding AL's taking part in local government elections would be taken at a meeting of its central working committee.

Hasina vows

FROM PAGE 1

family members will leave Boston for Washington today. She will go to Orlando in Florida for ear treatment after undergoing eye check-

up in Washington. AL chief's personal aide Dr Hasan Mahmud, and party leaders Abdus Sobhan Golap, Dr Siddiqur Rahman Khan, Dr AKA Momen, Syed Basharat Ali, Abul Mansur Khan, Sazzadur Rahman Sazzad, Nizam Chowdhury, Mujibur Rahman Mia, Abul Kashem, Khosruzzaman Khosru, Mamotaz Shahana, Amena Parvin, Shamsuddin Azad, Bakhtiar Ali Shah, Abdus Samad Azad, Faruk Ahmed and Jahangir Alam, among

others, were present. Motor vehicles

FROM PAGE 16 passengers is now Tk 3600 and those less than four passengers is

Tax on vehicles, which are not for hire, carrying goods not exceeding 3500 kg is now Tk 3500. Tax on vehicles carrying goods over 3500 kg but less than 7000 kg will be calculated at Tk 3500 for the first 3500kg and Tk 500 for every addi-

tional 500 kg. Updated taxes on goods transport vehicles carrying 7500 kg is Tk 7500, those carrying over 7500 kg but less than 12500 kg will pay Tk 7500 for the first 7500 kg and Tk

1100 for every additional 500 kg. Those carrying over 12500 kg will pay Tk 17500 as tax and Tk 1200 for every additional 500 kg.

The annual tax on vehicles transporting goods for hire and carrying less than 3500 kgs is Tk 2000 and those carrying over 12500 kg will pay Tk 8500 for the first 12500 kg and Tk 500 for every additional 500 kg.

The increase will see taxes for

light motorbikes at Tk 500 and Tk 1000 for heavy motorbikes. For motorbikes, taxes have to be paid for 10 years at a time to BRTA, according to a BRTA official. Annual tax for tri-cycle motor vehicles carrying not more than two passengers is Tk 1800, those

every additional passenger after Tax on vehicles carrying more than two passengers and not used for hire is Tk 2500 and those carrying more than four passengers have to pay Tk 5000 plus Tk 500 for

The government targeted an increase of revenue up to Tk 2289 crore out of NBR in the next fiscal, which is 12 per cent more than the revised budget of current fiscal.

Sigma, Mir Helal

FROM PAGE 16

months' ad interim bail. The case against Sigma and her husband was filed by the ACC with Dhanmondi Police Station on March 21 last year under the Emergency Power Rules (EPR), stating that the couple received Tk 2.4 crore in bribe from the proprietor of a construction firm. The corruption watchdog pressed charges against them on June 4 the

same year. Later that year, on August 27, a special court sentenced Sigma to three years' simple imprisonment and Nazmul to seven years' rigorous imprisonment for their involvement in the bribery.

The case against Helal and his father Mir Nasir was filed by the ACC with Gulshan Police Station on March 6 last year under the EPR. Helal was accused of abetting his father while the father was accused of amassing wealth illegally.

On July 4 the same year, a special court handed down three years prison term to Helal for helping his father conceal ill-gotten property by withdrawing Tk 5.64 crore from a joint bank account of his family and depositing the amount into the accounts of his wife and motherin-law.

Nasir was given 10 years' rigorous imprisonment for amassing wealth illegally and three years' simple imprisonment for concealing wealth information worth over Tk 6.72 crore to the ACC.

On December 13 last year, the HC granted bail to Sigma and Helal in the two cases following their separate petitions. This year on March 6, the ACC

appealed to the Appellate Division

against the HC orders, seeking cancellation of the bail orders. The Appellate Division in its ruling on March 6 said that appellate courts, including the HC, do not have the jurisdiction of grant-

20 Ruet students

FROM PAGE 16 Furniture, computers, fans, books

and other belongings in around 50 rooms were damaged. The JCD men then went to Hamid Hall and beat up four Chhatra League men and set fire to

their rooms. JCD cadres on their

way to Selim Hall beat up BCL

activist Sajib at Ziaur Rahman Hall

and ransacked his room. Angry BCL men then vandalised the provost's office at Shaheed

Students at Selim Hall complained that they repeatedly called the hall provost and Students' Welfare Adviser Prof Sayed Abdul Mofiz during the attack but he did not respond. The provost reached the spot with police nearly one and

a halfhours later. Police detained 13 BCL activists at Selim Hall after the provost asked police to bring the situation under control, Al-Amin, an injured BCL activist said.

The 13 students are Nabil

Hasan, Rony, Tuhin, Junayed, Saidur Rahman Sayed, Reza, Rubel, Arifur Rahman, Shamim, Munna, Chhotan, Asraf Hossain and Mehedi Hasan, police said. Students were seen leaving halls

yesterday morning fearing further violence. Additional riot police were deployed on the campus. Ruet Chhatra League condemned the incident at a press

conference at the Rajshahi City

Awami League office. In their six-point demand, they demanded the unconditional release of arrested students, ensuring security to students on campus and the resignation of Provost

Meanwhile, Public Relations

Office of Ruet in a press release

ing bail to individuals convicted by special courts, trying cases filed under the EPR. The apex court, however, said

that an appellate court may grant bail on three grounds: if the appellant was given short prison terms, if their appeal against the special court's sentence was not disposed of in the stipulated 90 days or if a duly constituted medical board certified that the appellant was ill.

Both Sigma and Helal had filed the bail petitions on the ground that the court can grant them bail since their appeals against the conviction order were not disposed

of in the stipulated 90 days. Advocate Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed represented Helal while barrister Rafique-ul Huqrepresented Sigma yesterday.

Joj Mian

FROM PAGE 16

seven years' imprisonment in 2005 in a case filed in 1998 under the Explosive Substances Act," Deputy Inspector General (Prisons) Major Shamsul Haider Siddiqui told The Daily Star last night.

The investigators of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) had implicated Joj Mian in the deadly grenade attacks on an Awami League rally in 2004 and arrested him at Senbagh in Noakhali in June 2005.

Later, the then CID investigators managed to persuade Joj Mian in giving a confessional statement before a magistrate.

However, the CID recently submitted the charge sheet of the case mentioning that they did not find Joj Mian's involvement in the incident.

Gaza truce

FROM PAGE 16

fighting that has killed seven Israelis and more than 400 Palestinians many of them civilians since the Islamic militant group Hamas wrested control of Gaza a year ago.

It also obliges Israel to ease a

punishing blockade of the coastal

strip. The sanctions were designed

to pressure Palestinian militants to halt their rocket and mortar fire on southern Israel, but have driven ordinary Gazans even deeper into destitution and confined them to their tiny seaside territory. "I want to be able to sleep without the sound of shelling or warplanes," said Eman Mahmoud, a

22-year-old Gaza university stu-

dent. "We have been living a night-

mare. ... I am not sure how long it is going to last, but my dream is that this calm will continue. As if to underscored just how fragile the agreement would be, intense Palestinian rocket and mortar fire and Israeli air reprisals raged Wednesday. Shortly before the truce took hold, a Hamas militant was killed in an Israeli airstrike

in central Gaza that the military said targeted a rocket squad. Hamas, the Islamic militant group that has ruled Gaza for the past year, reported that the Israeli navy fired four shells into the waters off Gaza City minutes after the truce began. But the shells fell about 500 yards from shore and there were no apparent targets in the area, witnesses reported, suggesting the shells might have been fired as part of a military drill. The military said it had fired warning shots into the air after Palestinian

fishermen entered Israeli waters.

no other reports of fire.

Hours into the truce, there were

If the quiet holds, Israel will ease

its blockade on Sunday to allow

larger shipments of some supplies.

A week later Israel is to further ease

restrictions at cargo crossings,

which in recent months have been termed the violence a small inciclosed to all but humanitarian aid dent and claimed that the situation in Ruet is now peaceful. and limited fuel supplies.

56 militants killed

been cleared.

FROM PAGE 16 wounded during the offensive and also confirmed that the district had

Nato civilian spokesman Mark Laity said the operation, which was led by Afghan forces and involved Canadian troops, was an effective response to Friday's jailbreak in Kandahar.

"Nobody is complacent, but so

far it been highly successful," Laity

told reporters. "After the recent incident, the ailbreak, there was concern about our capabilities. This was a fast and very effective response, I think something that all Afghans can take great heart from," Laity added

The joint forces were now "in the closing stage of the operation," codenamed Operation Doar Bukhou, or Turn Around, ISAF military spokesman General Carlos Branco told the same news conference.

He accused the Taliban of lying about their numbers in the district, adding: "The insurgents were there, but they do not have the numbers or the foothold that they have claimed.'

The Taliban's build-up in Arghandab posed a fresh challenge to President Hamid Karzai as he seeks to tackle the bloodiest phase. of an insurgency launched after the hardline movement was toppled in

The rebels viewed the district as a strategic stepping stone towards their goal of retaking Kandahar, the city where the movement rose to power in 1996. The Taliban said in a statement on their website that a group of

"martyrdom attackers" had

entered Kandahar city to target

Canadian and Afghan soldiers and

Afghan officials, the SITE Intelligence Group said. With nearly 70,000 foreign troops in Afghanistan, Karzai has come under growing pressure from his Western allies to improve security, but the Afghan leader has faced a series of setbacks including

Karzai responded by threatening to launch attacks on militants on Pakistani soil, sparking a war of words with Islamabad. In the Pakistani border town of Chaman on Thursday, hundreds of

Friday's mass prison breakout.

people chanting "Death to Karzai" burned an effigy of the Afghan leader in protest at his comments, an AFP reporter witnessed. The Arghandab operation began as the deaths of the six Nato

soldiers were announced elsewhere in Afghanistan. Four were British, including the nation's first female casualty in Afghanistan, in the southern province of Helmand.

Boy's body FROM PAGE 16 Rahman Biswas filed an unnatural

death case in this connection with Gulshan Police Station. case Moinul Faqir said, "We recovered the hanging body. None of the

thing about the incident." Dhaka Medical College morgue yesterday for autopsy.

family members could say any-

Niko graft case premiership. MiG-29 CASE

The trial court of the Azam J Dhaka Divisional Special Judge M Chowdhury case will also pass its Golam Mortuza Majumder judgment on the bail petition filed deferred the hearing after the by former health minister Sheikh defence petitioned to that end.

Niko deal caused a loss of Tk 13.6 FROM PAGE 1 The ACC filed charge sheet on then decide whether to sell rice May 7, indicting two more people under the OMS." Hasina's counsels barrister Rafique-ul Huq and barrister Shafique Ahmed told the court that

> ment of budget triggered the recent spate of price increase, Mirza Aziz said there is nothing in the budget that may trigger the price hike.

essentials, launched the OMS programmes on January 9 this year UNB reports: An inter-Court dismissed the extortion case ministerial monitoring committee during a meeting at commerce

The meeting also decided to

Over 30 former MPs from

and Arly Sultana.

FROM PAGE 1

Biman pilots said they are facing

Thanking the chief adviser for his appreciation, high commissioner Barbara assured continuation of the Canadian government support for socioeconomic development of

of it...the country can do many The envoy also appreciated the chief adviser's personal role in upholding Bangladesh's image in

He said Bangladesh is committed to promoting peace and stability and alleviating poverty in South Asia through regional cooperation.

murder case in this regard. Detective Branch police inspec-

holders, including the political parties, must commit to holding elections because "the people of Bangladesh deserve a democrati-

Bangladesh's judicial system.

and Khulna city corporations ended in May 2007 while those of Barisal and Sylhet in November and December the same year. tions excepting the DCC have

Both the caretaker govern-Elections in the remaining ment and the EC however have maintained that parliamentary

roadmap unveiled on July 15 last municipality polls would give it a year announced that it would chance to see how the new elecstart holding local government toral rules work