Nurses missing

their inadequate numbers hinder good services to patients. The doctors and nurses also talked about the nurses' not getting promotion and the lack of quality training for them.

Recruitment of nurses in public hospitals is halted for last five years. In 2003, 1,034 nurses were recruited and since then no recruitments were made even though every year around 1,200 nurses graduate from government nursing institutes and approximately 10,000 nurses are unemployed at the moment.

"Here we do not get a nurse to give saline to a patient when we need them to do it," said Project Director of Burn and Plastic Surgery Unit of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) Shamantalal Sen adding that if the shortage of nurses continues, patients will die without getting proper care. He said it is not possible to provide good service to 234 patients on an average day at the Burn and Plastic Surgery Unit with only31 nurses.

It is very difficult to provide good service to such a large number of patients with only two nurses per shift working in one section of the unit, he said.

The unit has seven sections and at least 7-8 nurses are required per shift in each section to provide a reasonable service to patients, nurses told The Daily Star adding that the situation gets even worse in the afternoon and night shifts when only one nurse is available in a section.

They said 20 nursing posts are now vacant under the project as the decision of appointing nurses is not getting the go-ahead from the secretary concerned.

Around 2,000 patients receive indoor treatment at the 1,700-bed DMCH on an average day but only 559 nurses are there to take care of all patients including at the operation theatres, emergency wards and the out-door section, DMCH sources

It is a common scene across the country as the government remains quite indifferent to nursing issues,

they said. "As there is no strong professional body of nurses, their demands are often unmet. At the same time there is a lack of political will in developing nursing service in the country," said AM Zakir Hussain, former director of Primary Healthcare and Disease Control. He said posts have been created for doctors even at union levels but no nursing posts were created during the last five years.

Since most nurses come from less privileged class of the society, the level of their self-esteem is often low and their remuneration package is also not satisfactory, which are enough to hinder good nursing service in this country.

Division among the nurses is also an issue because of which their lone association has been inactive for

The Directorate of Nursing also has to work under pressure from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, which does not allow the nurses to have their own independ-

According to the report of Bangladesh Health Watch titled "The State of Health in Bangladesh, 2007" the country lacks at least 2.80 lakh nurses. The number of doctors is almost double the number of nurses, which should be the other way around

The number of registered nurses is only 22,555 and the nurse to population ratio now stands at 1:6342, according to Bangladesh Nursing Council (BNC) reports.

The international standard for nurse to patient ratio for general patients is 1:4 and for critically ill ones it is 1:1, which is not attainable under the present socio-economic

The 46 government nursing institutes along with 19 private institutes allow 2,280 nurse aspirants a year to study for diploma in nursing, which is quite insufficient,

Promotion of nurses is also very slow and a nurse has to stay many years just being a senior staff nurse before getting a promotion.

"It creates dissatisfaction among the nurses and gradually they lose their interest in work. A sense of deprivation among them is one of the main reasons behind the deteriorating service," said Deputy Registrar of Bangladesh Nursing Council Suraiya Begum. She said last year around 125 nurses were promoted after a long wait.

Even though the population and the number of patients have increased significantly, the number of nurses and nursing supervisors have not increased at all, she went on

According to the Directorate of Nursing, there are 729 posts of nursing supervisors and 153 of them are

A proposal was made in 1999 to create 800 new posts for nursing supervisors and the authorities had agreed to it but it is yet to materialise even though eight years have gone

Based on an ordinance, the Bangladesh Nursing Council (BNC) has been operating for more than 58 years and there is no distinct regulation at all for this autonomous body. It even lacks the manpower to take necessary action against any

Similarly, Directorate of Nursing neither has a complete structure nor the manpower. It has been running for the last 16 years with workforce sent there on deputation. It also does not have a fully-fledged director but

Promotion process is so sluggish at the Directorate of Nursing that many retire soon after getting the post of acting director of the directorate. In 2004 Khadijatul Kobra went into retirement only after working three months as the acting director of

the last 14 years to this end.

Nuclear tech

some involvement from Pakistan's security apparatus.

Musharraf's spokesman, Rashid said.

Khan has been agitating for an end to his virtual house arrest and backed off his 2004 confession that he was solely responsible for spreading nuclear technology to

made no mention of Khan's allegations, but said he would not quit the presidency as political opponents have been demanding.

The army spokesman declined to respond Friday and could not

Khan is regarded as a hero by many in Pakistan for his key role in giving it the Islamic world's first nuclear bomb in 1998, seen as a deterrent against historic archrival

After his 2004 confession and a televised statement of contrition, Khan was pardoned by Musharraf but has effectively been kept under house arrest at his spacious villa in

Islamabad. Since a new civilian government took power after February elections, eclipsing Musharraf, the retired scientist has increasingly spoken out in the media. He had not previously implicated anyone or explicitly said that the army was

aware of nuclear shipments. His comments Friday appeared to stem from his growing frustration over the restrictions on his movements. Khan and his wife have appointed an attorney to petition the Islamabad High Court

for an end to his detention. Khan said he took sole responsibility for the nuclear proliferation because he had been persuaded that it was in the national interest. Khan said that in return he had been promised complete freedom, but "those promises were not questioning of Khan.

condition of Bangladesh.

vacant since 2006.

wrongdoings of nurses, sources said.

an acting director.

the directorate. Even though the National Plan of Action in 1994 recommended complete independence of the directorate, no steps were taken in

Khan and questioned him over

reports that North Korean nuclear

experts had arrived at his laborato-

ries for secret briefings on centri-

fuges. Khan denied it, according to

Musharraf.

Qureshi, rejected Khan's claims. "I can say with full confidence that it is all lies and false statements," he

Musharraf recounts authorizing a raid on a charter aircraft going to North Korea for conventional missiles after receiving reports it would be carrying some "irregular" Iran, North Korea and Libya. cargo on Khan's behalf. Khan's In a speech Friday, Musharraf people were tipped off before the raid and never loaded the cargo,

Musharraf wrote. It was not clear if he was referring to the same shipment as Khan. Musharraf's suspicions over Khan prompted him to remove the immediately be reached Saturday. scientist in March 2001 from his

position as head of Khan Research Laboratories, Pakistan's main nuclear lab named after him. Pakistan says it has taken extra steps to tighten control of its nuclear assets since Khan's network was uncovered in late 2003 But Khan's bald accusation that the

military establishment was in the know adds to widespread skepticism that he could have exported nuclear technology under the radar of Pakistan's pervasive security apparatus.

Political and military analyst Talat Masood said it made sense that the effort was coordinated by more than one person.

"If the requirement of an aircraft was there, the requirement of dealing with another country was there, it's not just one man who could have done it," Masood said. "Whether they were doing it individually or collectively or as a state policy or informally that needs to be determined."

Pakistan has refused to let outsiders question Khan, including from the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency, but says it have to be hung on the wall of the has shared the findings of its own

Wildfires still raging along US coast

AP, BIG SUR, California

Weary firefighters got no rest during the holiday weekend as a pair of out-of-control wildfires roared across the landscape along California's central coast at opposite ends of the arid Los Padres National Forest.

Despite lower temperatures and lighter wind, one stubborn fire that already had forced the evacuation of Big Sur inched closer to historic vacation retreats.

Farther south in the national forest, wind up to 40 mph fanned a wildfire near Goleta in Santa Barbara County. About 5,000 homes were under evacuation orders, while residents of 1,400 other homes were warned to pack up and be ready to leave on short notice, said county spokesman Jim McClure.

"The fire is expanding and presenting some very complex challenges because of the terrain and the fact that it hasn't burned in over 50 years," said Capt. Eli Iskow of the Santa Barbara County fire department. "And it's close to all the valuables like homes and people."

Authorities planned an aggres sive air attack on the Goleta fire Saturday, including drops from a huge DC-10 air tanker that made a single pass over the blaze on Friday.

Water bodies

Water Development Board and district administration, meant for

reducing water-logging. Proposing that the theme of the 400th anniversary of Dhaka City should be protecting its water bodies, Bapa President Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said, "We're talking about climate change and its impact on nature, but we do not see what we have done to our own city by damaging its drainage

He said the uniqueness of Dhaka had been its canals, but unplanned development and excessive greed of some developers have made many of the canals nonexistent, causing miserable waterlogging.

"Water-logging would be longer, rendering the city unliveable it we don't save the rivers and canals in and around the city," he said.

Taking a swipe at Dhaka residents, Prof Muzaffer said they do not feel the throes of the city. The residents should speak out and put pressure on the government to act,

Drainage system covers only 60 percent of the city, leaving the other parts to canals and other Dhaka Wasa Kazi Muhammad Shish said. "But we've filled up those canals, which has created water-logging.

Saying some 27 canals out of the city's 36 have been filled up, he said the city could well be abandoned soon if the canals are not restored immediately.

There is also no plan to protect the wetlands where the canals and the city drainages empty into, he

Bapa Joint Secretary Iqbal Habib said, "Dhaka remains waterlogged for 12-24 hours with only 50 mm of rain. If immediate actions are not taken, water can stay for up to 60 hours."

Nasim

FROM PAGE 16 minister was brought to LabAid Hospital on June 24 following brain haemorrhage at Kashimpur Jail. He is now undergoing treatment under a seven-member medical board headed by Dr MH Shahriar Sabet, a neurosurgery consultant.

Human chain

FROM PAGE 16

apparently stalled. General Secretary of the BNP youth front Abdus Salam Azad in a written statement criticised the government for filing Zia Orphanage corruption case. He alleged the government is trying to destroy Zia family in the name of

creating level playing field. Jubo Dal will also form human chains in Chittagong, Rajshahi Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet on July district and divisional representatives from July 20 to July 30.

The press conference was also attended, among others, by Khairul Kabir Khokon, Abul Hossain Khan, Abu Ashraf, Mahbubul Huq Nannu and Meer Newaz Ali.

Local polls

FROM PAGE 1 requirement was not followed in

The present Election Commission would apply the article properly, he said.

Sakhawat said presiding officials would count the votes at vote centres in presence of the candidates' agents and would give them certified copies of the results.

One copy of the results would vote centre so people could view them, he said.

Pricey essentials

FROM PAGE 1 35% of the government expendi tures while it is only 5% at the moment covering hardly 10% of

the poor. "This demands both lateral expansion and improved operational efficiency of the SSNP," the report suggests.

Although the average gross amount received by the surveyed beneficiaries was Tk 576, the net benefit stood at Tk 510 after deductions of associated costs and system payments, according to the report.

The deductions were relatively higher for the beneficiaries of Food for Work Programme under income. Rural Infrastructure Development of primary education stipends.

While 61 percent of the beneficiaries had to travel less than an hour to reach SSNP benefit delivery venues, 42 percent reported wastage of an hour or less in waiting at the delivery points, and 37 percent said the waiting time for them was 2 to 3 hours.

and for 24 percent it was Tk 51 to Tk 75. About 12 percent of the beneficiaries incur a travel cost of Tk 76 to Tk 100 to receive the benefits from designated delivery

Although 63 percent of the surveyed beneficiaries said their selections for SSNP was fair and based on pre-defined criteria, 35 percent said they had to approach union parishad or NGO bosses for their selections.

Instances of bribery was poorthroughout the country. reported by 2% of the beneficiaries and lobbying through friends and relatives was reported by 4%, which indicate some degrees of processes, the report says.

About 55 percent of the benefi ciaries reported that the benefits they received met their 81 percent to 100 percent food requirements in the previous month, while about 11 percent said they met their 61 to 80 percent food requirements with what they received Venus

FROM PAGE 16

set in 53 minutes.

when it counted.

give her sister a hug.

champion.

Saturday.

she said.

standard throughout in blustery

conditions, but Venus had the edge

sprayed a backhand into the tram-

lines but her celebrations were

muted as she approached the net to

you're in the final against Serena, five

seems so far away. She played so

awesome so it was really a task," said

Venus, now a seven-time Grand Slam

five, especially with some of the

injuries that I've had. To know every

time I come back I have the chance to

Venus now needs one more

"She was a little better today. It

"It's a great celebration for our

didn't work out the way I planned,"

family, we're really happy. I've been

working really hard and I'm so happy at

Serena in a Grand Slam final since the

2001 US Open, and levelled their

Supreme Judicial

in the form of public interest litiga-

tion (PIL), told the news agency

yesterday that the bench was consti-

tuted by the chief justice as the mat-

ter involves constitutional interpre-

Earlier, the bench in its sitting on

July 1 appointed a seven-member

panel of amicus curiae. They are

Barrister Shafique Ahmed, TH Khan,

Dr Kamal Hossain, Khondaker

Mahbub Uddin Ahmed, Barrister

Rafique-ul Huq, Mahmudul Islam

On April 28, the High Court

responding to the writ petition,

issued a rule on the government and

the SC registrar to explain why the

impugned ordinance "should not be

initiative in view of a strong public

demand as all the successive govern-

ments in the past had allegedly

appointed judges to the apex court

'on political considerations' sans

academic qualifications, profes-

sional skills, honesty and reputation.

formation of a nine-member com-

mission headed by the chief justice,

the High court.

Appellate Division.

FROM PAGE 16

in Asia Cup finals.

Bangladesh time.

run-fest on Sunday.

which will recommend names for

The commission will also recom-

mend names of eligible candidates

drawn from the HC Division for

appointment as a judge of the

Sunday will be their sixth meeting

satellite channel STAR Cricket will

show the match live from 4:00 pm

have been a constant throughout

the tournament, and the teams to

survive have been the ones which

have utilised these conditions

better than others -- India and Sri

Lanka have easily been the best

batting teams of the competition.

Both have settled line-ups, with

most of their top order in superb

form, which points towards another

With both teams in such excep-

tional batting touch, the difference

in the final could be a key spell from

one of the bowlers, or some inspira-

tion in the field. Nine matches have

already been played on the same

square at the National Stadium,

suggesting that spinners might have

something to look forward to. Sri

ground-fielding has been erratic,

and in a crunch game, these factors

do. There are still five major faults in

was 2.5 lakh tonnes of unsold hard

rock worth Tk 8.3 crore at the mine's

stock yard. However, the Roads and

Highways Department was inter-

\$158 million dollars. An Investment

The mine is costing the nation

ested to buy 1.6 lakh tonnes of rock.

Maddhapara

could well be critical.

Bangladesh Television and

The excellent batting pitches

Asia Cup final

The ordinance prescribes the

The interim government took the

and Ajmalul Hossain, QC.

declared unconstitutional".

It was Venus's first win over

leastone of uswas able to win.

head-to-head to 8-8.

FROM PAGE 16

tations

make history... Ilove this place."

Navratilova (9) ahead of that.

"It's unbelievable that I have won

She sealed victory when Serena

"I can't believe that it's five. When

from SSNP. Respondents in some areas said they received their quarterly instalments of benefits after six months or even later.

Due to procedural bottlenecks in getting beneficiary cards, sometimes the beneficiaries have to abstain from work for three days, -facing consequential loss of

Pointing out insensitivity to Project, and for the beneficiaries regional specificities and seasonal adversities like monga and river erosion in the programmes, the report suggests expanding the duration of vulnerable group feeding (VGF) schemes in monga prone areas of northern Bangladesh from three months to five months.

While the amount of VGF sup-The cost of travelling to deliv- port needs to be increased in riverery points was Tk 25 or less for basin areas, especially during about half of the beneficiaries, monsoons, food for work scheme can be considered as a viable option during other months, the report adds.

On steps to check quantity leakage and maintaining qualities of in-kind deliverables, the report quotes surveyed people as suggesting pre-weighed, packed food grains in airtight plastic sacks.

On the inadequacy of SSNI coverage, the report says the surveyed people argued for lateral expansion to cover more of the

In the budget for 2008-'09 fiscal, Tk 16,932 crore or 2.8 percent of GDP has been allocated for SSNPs while it was 11,467 crore or irregularities in the selection 2.1 percent of GDP in the last fiscal's revised budget.

City elections

would not accept any elections

before the parliamentary polls. They also warned disciplinary measures against those who would run in the elections to four city corporations and nine munic-

ipalities. But despite party instructions not to join the electoral race, at least 10 local BNP leaders have filed nominations for mayoral race while over 100 have registered their names as candidates for councillor's posts.

SAIFUR FACTION'S UNITY

PROPOSAL Meanwhile, Major (retd) Hafiz sources, former chief engineer of | Uddin Ahmed, acting secretary general of pro-Saifur faction, yesterday said they are ready to cancel the decisions of October 29 standing committee meeting for

the sake of a united BNP. He said there would be no obstacles to reuniting the party if both the factions could sit to

resolve their differences. In response to Hafiz's comment, Khandaker Delwar said there is no need for a 'formal or informal' dialogue since everyone can work for the organisation

from his/her position. The BNP standing committee at a controversial meeting on October 29 last year appointed M Saifur Rahman as acting chairperson and Hafiz as acting secretary general of the party.

DELWAR TO DINAJPUR BNP LEADERS

Leaders of Dinajpur district BN and its front organisations yester day met Khandaker Delwar Hossain at his residence in the capital.

During the meeting, the secretary general urged the party leaders to be on alert to guard against conspiracies against BNP and the coun-

Criticising the caretaker govern-

ment, he said, "They are the opponent of BNP and the nationalistic force and that is why they are keeping the BNP chairperson and her sons behind bars." Standing committee member

Chowdhury Tanveer Ahmed Siddique, Joint Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan, acting office secretary Rizvi Ahmed, among others, were present.

Jagannath Hall

FROM PAGE 16 construction of the building could have been done without felling the

Earlier in June, a Bapa team during a meeting with the DU authorities had urged them to undertake a minor deviation in the 'service centre' section of the pro-

posed design for saving the trees. The team also urged the authorities to seek expert assistance from Bangladesh Architecture Sangsad to save as many old trees as possible during the construction of the

EPR amendment soon

FROM PAGE 1 government permission to apply the section will be incorporated.

The government formed a 10member experts committee last month to review the EPR provisions, especially those related to bail, and five of them are working in a sub-committee to find ways to

relax them, said sources. "We are planning to bring some amendments so that a co-accused in a graft case can get bail. All coaccused including those who have already been convicted will benefit from it," said an official involved with the EPR review process.

Although most top ministers and leaders of major political parties have been arrested on graft 10 and exchange of views with charges, some of them are not the main accused in those cases. Former ministers including

Mannan Bhuiyan, MK Anwar, Khandaker Mosharraf, Shamsul Islam and Nizami are co-accused in the Niko graft case in which detained former premier Khaleda Zia is the principal accused. Following the amendment a co-

accused can get bail from the court

if they are not named as the prime

accused in any other case. "Our main concern is to relax the 'no bail provision' without hampering the ultimate goal of the war against corruption," a member of the committee told The Daily Starseeking anonymity.

He said the essence of the move is to relax the bail provisions for the co-accused family members-spouses and children--of many prime accused. Mir Mohammad Helaluddin,

son of former state minister Mir

Mohammad Nasiruddin, and

barrister Sigma Huda, wife of for-Lanka have the clear advantage in that department, with Muttiah mer communications minister Muralidaran and the exciting Nazmul Huda, got bail from the Ajantha Mendis leading the way. High Court in a graft case at the end The other aspect where Sri Lanka of last year. The Anti-Corruption have the edge is in the field. India's Commission appealed against it exceptional batting has masked with the Appellate Division of the their generally sloppy fielding Supreme Court which cancelled throughout the tournament. the High Court bail orders. Catches have been missed, the

But in its observation the Supreme Court said the appellate court may consider the matter of granting bail in an appeal against short sentence not exceeding three years on two grounds: if the appeal could not be disposed of within 90 working days for no fault of the appellant; and if an appellant is seriously ill which has to be certified by a duly constituted medical

One member of the EPR review committee said, "We will also take into consideration this observation of the Supreme Court." There has been a strong debate

will stumble," said one source.

in the court.

Earlier, a convict could contest

elections with the appeal pending

Committee in 2005 identified that among those involved with the EPR \$120 million has been invested in the review process that the EPR is being relaxed to let graft convicts Of this sum, Bangladesh paid more than \$71 million though it is the participate in the upcoming elecborrower, while lender North Korea tions. But the group against letting gave \$49 million. But as the project the convicts contest elections was going nowhere, MGMCL has seems stronger, said competent conditionally taken over the unfinsources. ished mine in May last year. "If the convicts are allowed to

The mine was supposed to procontest the elections, the ultimate duce 16.5 lakh tonnes of rock annugoal of the anti-corruption drive ally or 5,500 tonnes daily since 2000. Instead, it is now producing 1,100 tonnes a day as some work remains According to the EPR, no conunfinished. vict can contest any election even if The country annually consumes they appeal against the verdict

60 to 70 lakh tonnes of imported rock, but MGMCL's rocks are failing to attract even the government-owned buyers.

Malaysia door opens

Both players maintained a high FROM PAGE 16

Commission in Kuala Lumpur. Many of the abused workers staged demonstrations in front of the Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur seeking repatriation and compensation.

After an estimated 2,000 of the mistreated workers made it back home, some received compensation while a large section of them are still being subjected to harass-

It is alleged that the recruiting agencies that sent the returnee workers to Malaysia have been ignoring instructions of the government to be present at hearings of complaints filed by the returnee workers with Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET).

Wimbledon singles title to match International Migrants Alliance Billie Jean King's record of six, with (IMA) Research Foundation in a only Steffi Graf (7) and Martina report said on behalf of 442 cheated workers, the IMA has so far filed 42 She had lost to her younger sister complaints against 31 recruiting in their two previous Wimbledon agencies with the BMET. Till date, finals in 2002 and 2003, but Serena the BMET succeeded to make the admitted Venus deserved victory on agencies pay compensation to 258 workers and 23 more complaints

> are still pending. Tenaganita, a Malaysia-based migrants rights organisation, in an investigation report said it was the "outsourcing system" that was responsible for the exploitation of the Bangladeshis. The organisation demanded cancellation of the system to put an end to worker

exploitation. Under the system, outsourcing firms hire workers and deliver them to principal companies. But, Tenaganita, in its report alleged that these outsourcing firms most of the time hire excessive workers against a particular number of order for workers placed by the principal companies, leading to

Asked to comment on whether Bangladesh has approached

(Baira), said Malaysia's labour market has a huge potential for Bangladesh as Malaysian employers prefer Bangladeshi workers for

ness to work longer hours. "The government therefore should've been extra careful about handling the issues before it even started sending the workers. The problems arose as the high commission in Kuala Lumpur attested job demand letters without

inspecting the factories," he added. for protecting workers' interests."

According to BMET, around 3.36 lakh workers were issued emigration clearance so far while about 3 lakh already left for Malaysia.

Afghan MP shot dead

pick-up vehicles," Nuristani told AFP. Two doctors and a female nurse were also dead, he said. But the coalition said Friday and

again Saturday the dead were militants who were escaping after attacking an Nato-led military base in the rugged area. "The insurgents then entered two vehicles and began travelling

Ground forces called coalition attack helicopters for support," it said in a statement Saturday. "The attack helicopters then destroyed the two vehicles, killing

away from the firing position.

It said it was aware through the media of allegations of civilian casualties and was "engaging with Afghan officials on this matter." There was some angry reaction in the province with the head of the

more than a dozen militants."

government's provincial council there, Rahmatullah Rashidi, warnappointment as additional judges to ling the body would stop work it "such killings continue." The seven-year internationally supported campaign to fight a bloody Taliban-led insurgency has seen several incidents in which civilians were killed, as well as

claims of civilian casualties that have proven untrue. Such incidents are most often

impossible to independently verify, as was the one in Waygal. In more violence Friday, two unknown attackers shot dead legislator and tribal leader Habibullah Jan as he was driving in his troubled home district of Zharai

in Kandahar province, authorities The legislator, aged around 55, was also the head of Kandahar's prominent Alizai tribe and a former commander of the 1979-1989 anti-

Soviet resistance. A spokesman for the Taliban, who are active in Zharai and have carried out several targeted killings, said it was not involved. "This is not our work," spokesman Yousuf Ahmadi told AFP by tele-

phone. President Hamid Karzai and the UN representative strongly con-

demned the killing. "The enemies of Afghanistan's people, by killing of another son of this land, have tried to silent the voice of the Afghan nation," Karzai

said in a statement 48 rebels killed

FROM PAGE 16

yesterday, the ministry said. Two LTTE cadres were killed and another injured by troops in the

same area later in the day. Meanwhile, two tiger rebels were shot dead when troops launched an attack in Kiriththivu in Mannar yesterday, the military

Rebel spokesman Rasiah Ilanthirayan could not immediately be reached for comment.

It was not possible to independently verify the military reports because journalists are banned The meeting identified that there | from the northern jungles where much of the fighting takes place. Each side commonly exaggerates its enemy's casualties and

downplays its own. Fighting has escalated on this Indian Ocean island in recent months, with the military stepping up ground assaults and airstrikes on rebel-held territory. The government has pledged to crush the insurgents by the end of the year.

The rebels have been fighting since 1983 to create an independent state for ethnic minority Tamils, who have been marginalized by successive governments controlled by ethnic Sinhalese. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the conflict.

defeat the rebels.

vice president Faimuddin Sarker. The government had vowed to end the insurgency by the end of this year, but army chief Lt Gen Sarath Fonseka told reporters Monday it may take another year to

unemployment of the additional

Malaysian authorities about reevaluating the effectiveness of the outsourcing system, expatriates' welfare secretary Chowdhury said it is still a matter of debate. "Some say the outsourcing is even better." Ghulam Mustafa, president of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies

their hard work and their willing-

Now that Malaysia started issuing new job approvals again, the high commission should be very cautious. "I also asked recruiting agencies to visit the factories before sending workers because they are also equally responsible

"But they must understand that such brutal and anti-Islamic acts can never stop people reaching peace," he said. UN representative Kai Eide said

the attack "underlines the risks

faced by dedicated parliamentari-

ans as they work tirelessly to forge a new future for the people of Afghanistan." Jan was the 10th member of the lower house to be killed since Afghanistan's first democratically chosen parliament was elected in 2005, four years after the ouster of

led invasion. In neighbouring Helmand province police said 10 rebels were killed late Friday when a mine exploded as they were trying to plantitin a road near Musa Qala.

The town was a key Taliban base

the Islamic Taliban regime in a US-

for 10 months until December last year when Afghan and Nato-led forces routed the rebels in a dayslong operation Seven Taliban were killed in fighting with Afghan and foreign troops in the eastern province of Paktika late Thursday, while three

others died when a mine they were planting exploded prematurely, the defence ministry said. About 10 other militants were killed and wounded after ambushing an Afghan army patrol in Helmand's Marja district the same

day, the ministry said in a separate

Quake in Assam

FROM PAGE 16 and lasted 5-7 seconds. There were no reports of casualties or damage to properties. The epicentre was 290km

northeast of Dhaka near Dispur of Assam, said Meteorologist Monirul Islam at Dhaka Met office. Chapainawabganj, Rajshahi, Natore, and Naogaon were the districts where the quake was felt the strongest. People of those areas rushed out of their homes and

shops on to streets in panic.

Ershad

FROM PAGE 16 correct one, Ershad said his party will participate in all polls before the national elections as JP does not believe in the 'politics of hartal, parliament boycott, or damaging

public property.' "I introduced Upazila Parishad to ease sufferings of general people," he said. JP will secure the highest num-

ber of seats in upazila polls as people were happy during the rule of his party, he said. The former president said he took initiatives to construct the Jamuna multipurpose bridge for better communication between the northern region and other parts

of the country and also smooth supply of gas and electricity in the No such development work in the northern districts except Bogra had

been done after that, Ershad said. "If JP wins the parliamentary elections, it will carry out development works in five northern districts and also ensure gas supply in

the region," he said. He urged the people to boycott the corrupt persons and criminals in the upcoming polls. The JP chairman hoped that the

ence of black money and muscle Around 2,000 JP leaders and activists from Rajshahi, Natore, Chapainawabganj, Joypurhat and Naogaon took part in the convention presided over by district JP senior

upcoming local and parliamentary

elections would be free from influ-

JP Secretary General Ruhul Amin Hawlader, former Rajshahi City Corporation mayor Durul Huda, and former JP lawmaker Abul Hossain, among others, were present.

that its army or government knew Khan's proliferation activities about Khan's proliferation activiare alleged to have begun in the late ties. Still, Khan's allegations matches expert assessments that In his autobiography, "In the running such a network would Line of Fire," Musharraf says that in have been very difficult without 1999, a year after becoming army chief, he became suspicious of