Ramadan begins

FROM PAGE 1 the limited income group, expressed their resentments over yet another hike in prices of essentials.

They held the government responsible for failing to ensure market

Price of green chilli climbed up to Tk 80 to Tk 100 a kilogram (kg) yesterday although it had been selling for Tk 60 to Tk 70 just two days ago. Most of the traders however sold green chilli

for Tk 100 a kgyesterday. Price of aubergine, fried slices of which is a popular iftar item, fluctuated immensely yesterday as traders sold a kg of aubergine for Tk 35 to Tk 70, two days ago which had been Tk 30 toTk40.

A trader in Karwan Bazar was seen selling aubergine for Tk 45 a kg yesterday while another trader in a nearby shop in the same market was seen selling the same quality aubergine for Tk 50 while some others were selling it for Tk60 even.

The same quality aubergine was selling for Tk 32 to Tk 38 a kg in a nearby wholesale market just 30 yards away in earlier hours of the day.

Prices of both local and imported varieties of onion jumped up by Tk 2 a kgin the last two days. The imported variety was selling

for Tk 25 to Tk 29 a kg yesterday while the local variety was selling for Tk 32 to Tk 37 a kg compared to the local onion prices of Tk 30 to Tk 35 a kg and imported onion prices of Tk 23 to Tk 27 a kg two days ago.

Prices of different qualities of cucumbers rose by Tk5 to Tk10 a kg in the last two days, which were selling for Tk 20 to Tk 30 a kg yesterday while prices of lemons increased by Tk 1 to Tk 3 for four pieces, selling for Tk 8 to

Prices of different qualities of puffed rice jumped by Tk 4 to Tk 5 a kg, selling for Tk52 to Tk85 a kg.

Although prices of chickpeas had come down by Tk 2 to Tk 3 in wholesale markets over the last week, some retailers were seen selling those for prices which are higher by Tk 2 to Tk 3 compared to the prices of two days ago. Akg of different qualities of chickpeas was selling for Tk 52 to Tk 60

Price of sugar rose by Tk 1 to Tk 2 a kg, and was selling for Tk 37 to Tk 40 a kg yesterday while the price of molasses rose by Tk5.

Demand for molasses increase during Ramadan as sherbets prepared with molasses are very popular among the Muslims who fast. Molasses were selling for Tk 45 to Tk50 a kg yesterday.

The prices of almost all kinds of fruits, demand for which also increases during Ramadan, have doubled this year compared to last year's.

68 killed

the island's north and east. Tens of

thousands have died on both sides in more than three decades of bloodshed

Fighting is now concentrated around the north as security forces move into rebel-held territory to dismantle the LTTE's northern stronghold. They ejected the guerrillas from theeast of the island in July 2007

Hasina

FROM PAGE 16 Earlier on August 28, an HC bench issued a ruling upon the government, asking it to explain within two weeks why initiation and continuation of the case filed by businessman Azam J Chowdhury should not be declared illegal. The ruling followed a writ petition by Hasina's counsels.

The defence counsels yesterday submitted a petition to the special court seeking adjournment of the case proceedings until hearing of the HC ruling.

Advocates Syed Rezaur Rahman and Sahara Khatun were on the defence while Syed Shamim Ahsan Habib was on the prosecution side.

The price of date, an essential iftar item, rose by Tk 20-50 per kg. Low quality dates, sold for Tk 50 per kg last year, were sold for Tk 80-100 per kg

The price of medium quality dates, sold for Tk 80-90 per kg last year, jumped to Tk 120 from Tk 160 per kg.

The price of a papaya rose to Tk 50-120 from Tk 30-80. The price of banana also increased by Tk 5-10 a dozen, sold for Tk 30-60 yesterday. The prices of apple, mango and

grape increased by Tk 20-100 per kg in Apple was sold for Tk 120-160 a kg while the price of mango was Tk 90-

180 per kg yesterday. Grape was sold forTk400-500 perkg. The price of a watermelon was

between Tk 120 and 200. The prices of battery chicken

increased by Tk 5 per kg, sold for Tk 120-130 while the price of free-range chicken went up by Tk5-10. The prices of beef and buffalo

meat rose by Tk 10 per kg, which were sold for Tk 200-210 and Tk 170-180 The price of mutton also increased

by Tk 10-20 per kg, sold for Tk 240-320 akgyesterday.

Although the prices of non-brand edible oil went down by Tk 12-20 in retail markets in the last 15 days, the prices of brand edible oil remained stable after its price went down by Tk Many consumers said although

the price of edible oil decreased by Tk 30 on the international market, its price went down slightly in the city

Meantime, the BDR-run fair price outlets remained open yesterday, a weekly holiday.

Under the TCB programme, sugar will be sold at Tk 30 per kg, chickpea at Tk 50 a kg, and onion at Tk 20 a kg. Each 2-litre container of soya bean oil will be sold for Tk 216, 5-litre container for Tk 540 and 8-litre container for Tk 864, said a TCB press release.

AL demands

Briefing newsmen, Ashraful said all

the cases against Sheikh Hasina will have to be withdrawn before the elections He said the ALWC thought that

the parliamentary polls would not be acceptable to the people as well as the international community under the state of emergency. "So, we ask the government to fully lift the state of emergency before the election."

As per the constitution and the roadmap, he said, the government and the Election Commission are bound to hold the national election first. "No election before the national election will be acceptable," he said.

Asked about the Election Commission's performance ahead of the national elections, he said. "The Election Commission's recent activities are making the country's people confused about the general The AL acting general secretary

also demanded immediate release of all AL leaders and withdrawal of the cases filed against them, including its General Secretary Abdul Jalil, presidium member Tofail Ahmed and

Ashraful also demanded the government take immediate steps to keep the prices of essentials within the buying capacity of the common people and smooth electricity supply

during Ramadan. He said they will form a human chain soon to press for the party's

Mohammedan

FROM PAGE 16

Emmanuelle, Maruf and Komol converted for Mohammedan to give them the season's first trophy and a cheque of Tk3 lakh. Runners-up and 7-time cham-

pions Abahani pocketed Tk one

Transfer order

Questions have been raised regarding the transfer order as there were no specific reasons or allegations against her to that end. She has rather disposed off quickly many cases including those against many high-profile graft suspects.

She was even dealing at least a dozen cases where many bigwigs, including ex-prime minister Khaleda Zia's adviser Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, are accused.

Shamsunnahar is to be replaced by Judge Jesmin Anwar, who is learned to be a relative of Law Adviser AF Hassan Ariff.

Sources say Shamsunnahar was transferred to the special court last year from a Narayanganj court and, according to rules, was supposed

Some law ministry officials however told The Daily Star it is not necessary to have any reason to transfer any judge at any moment, even if the three-year term is not

completed. Some officials of the ministry say there is nothing wrong with the transfer decision. But some sources in the judiciary allege the move is an attempt to accommo-

date the law adviser's relative. The law ministry first took the Kader, and ex-CBA leader Bakir initiative and issued an order to transfer Shamsunnahar to the Tangail district court and Jesmin an advice of the Supreme Court, it dealing such cases. reasoned.

Judge Shamsunnahar in some of cases also informed the governher judgments asked the Anti- ment offices concerned and the Corruption Commission (ACC) chairman to take effective action for a new judge to conduct the against the complainants and cases against such high-profile investigation officers, which figures, the sources add.

caused embarrassment and resentment among officials of the anti-graft body. However, following an applica-

tion from Judge Shamsunnahar with a request for not transferring her, the law ministry kept the order withheld till June.

On July 31, the law ministry again issued a stand-release order asking her to join the Tangail court on August 3.

Shamsunnahar repeatedly requested the law ministry to cancel the transfer order to let her work with the Special Court-4.

As a result, the law ministry again stayed the transfer order till tomorrow.

The sources say the order has not been cancelled, which means

she must join the Tangail court. Contacted yesterday, officials of the special court-4 and the law ministry did not agree to comment

Some of the cases still pending with the court were filed against the big fish like Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, ex-BNP ministers Mirza Abbas, Amanullah Aman, Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, ex-BNP MP MAH Selim, ex- Awami League state minister Obaidul

Hossain. Sources say Judge Shamsunnahar also informed the Anwar to the special court-4 in law ministry and the Supreme April. The decision was taken as per Court registrar that she has been

Different quarters involved with The sources add before April, the anti-corruption drive and graft judiciary that it would be difficult

BNP to contest

FROM PAGE 1

caretaker government about making delays in holding the elections. They said it would be tough to control people once they lose their patience.

The four party leaders cautioned the government against taking over or transferring power through the backdoor without holding elections which are scheduled for December.

They said this during a discussion, styled "Three decades of BNP. Shaheed Zia and Khaleda Zia", held as part of the three-day programme being observed by the BNP to mark its 30th founding anniversary.

The alliance leaders vowed to continue movement till their demands, including release of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and her son Tarique Rahman, are met.

"Trial of alleged corrupt political leaders under state of emergency and under special tribunal is farcical, we do not accept this trail but we will have nothing to say if the trials are held under the existing laws," the BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain said during a discussion held at Engineers Institute at the city's Ramna.

Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Muhammad Mojahid, Secretary General of a faction of Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) Abdul Latif Nezami, Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP) Secretary General Shamim Al Mamum, Khelafat Majlish Secretary General Abdul Kader, BNP standing committee members RA Gani, Tanvir Ahmed Siddique, M Shamsul Islam and BNP Vice-president MK Anwar also spoke among others.

"Do not make delays in holding the national elections, it would be impossible for you to control the people once they loose their patience," Delwarsaid.

"Holding of the national elections is the only way to save the country as well as the way to save yourselves [the caretaker government], "he added. "You [the caretaker government]

have taken the country 20 years back through your 18 months' rule,' Delwar said. Hinting at the caretaker government he said, "Do not plot any more conspiracies... hold a free and fair

election." "We will accept those who will win in that free and fair election and they will run the country," he said.

Delwar reiterated that they BNP-

led four party will take part in the elections if Khaleda Zia is freed. "We want to take part in the elections and the government sponsored dialogue under the leadership of free

Khaleda Zia, "he said. Delwar accused the government of maintaining "double standards" with BNP.

"The government has allowed different political leaders to have better treatment abroad but the government is barring Tarique from getting the same opportunity,' Delwar added. Jamaat Secretary General

Mojahid vowed to continue movement until their demands are fulfilled.

"We will make the government free Khaleda Zia and her son Tarique Rahman," he added.

Jubo Dal, a BNP front organisation, yesterday boycotted the discussion protesting against the "autocratic activities" of a number of BNP leaders, a Jubo Dal leader told The Daily Star.

BNPANNIVERSARYOBSERVED Leaders and activists of BNP and its front organisations paid tribute to party's founder and late president Ziaur Rahman yesterday marking the 30th founding anniversary of the

Speaker barrister Jamiruddin Sircar and deputy speaker Akhter Hamid placed wreaths at the grave of Ziaur Rahman at Zia Udyan in the capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar at about 9:40am.

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain also placed floral wreaths at Zia's grave at around 10:45am.

A special prayer was offered, seeking salvation of the departed soul of the late BNP leader and peace and progress of the country.

BNP standing committee members RA Gani, Chowdhury Tanvir Ahmed Siddique, M Shamsul Islam, vice-presidents MK Anwar and Sarwari Rahman and senior party leaders Selima Rahman, and Nazrul Islam Khan, among others, were

BNP leaders Hannan Shah and Goyeshwar Chandra Roy also placed wreaths at Zia's grave.

BNP also hoisted the national and party flags atop all party offices in the A large number of BNP activists

thronged the Zia Udyan to pay tribute to the party's founder. Khandaker Delwar told reporters that his party will take part in the dialogue and contest the national

elections if Khaleda Zia is released.

deployed there to avert any untoward incident. This is the first time BNP is observing its founding anniversary without its chairperson.

Additional policemen were

Khaleda

FROM PAGE 1 Responding to another question, he

urged the political leaders to show their responsibility in creating a congenial atmosphere in the country for the sake of economic stability. "They (political leaders) have to

leave the hostile mentality," Zillur said when his attention was drawn to Awami League's opposition to the release of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and its Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman. About a question on the neutrality of the caretaker government, the

commerce advisor, also a spokes-

man for the interim government,

said, "We want to prove ourselves make the cylinders with iron or through our activities if we are deep tube-well pipes. neutral or not ... People will judge." "We want to move ahead on the basis of a comforted situation," the commerce adviser said.

Tarique's bail

FROM PAGE 1

principles earlier set by the Appellate Division regarding bail

During hearing, Salauddin said the HC orders should be put off to allow them enough time to file regular leave-to-appeal petitions.

The defence argued that the Appellate Division and the HC have ruled for bail after examining recommendations of a medical board and this court should not stay the orders.

Tarique was arrested by the joint forces on March 7 last year in an anti-graft drive by the military backed caretaker government.

Of the 13 cases against him, nine were filed by police and individuals on various charges including extortion, three by the ACC on charges of graft, and one by the National Board of Revenue (NBR) for tax evasion.

Ex-ambassador

FROM PAGE 16

the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, showing 30 people as prosecution witnesses.

The IO prayed for issuance of arrest warrant against Nazimullah and the court order to attach his properties, as he has been absconding since filing of the case.

In the charge sheet, the IO mentioned that Nazimullah had caused a loss of Tk 13,47,120 to the state exchequer through misuse of power and deception. The charge sheet was prepared

under sections 409 of the Penal Code and 5 (2) of the Corruption Prevention Act, 1947. On May 14 this year, ACC Deputy Director Abdullah Al Zahid

filed the case with Shahbagh Police Station. The complainant accused Nazimullah of irregularities in renting the ambassador's house,

corruption in purchasing furniture

for the abode and appointing gardeners. "Irregularities and corruption by Nazimullah caused a loss of Tk 21 lakh to the state exchequer," the complainant said, adding that the ambassador on different occasions purchased different items for personal use in Abu Dhabi drawing money from government funds

through illegal means. It was also mentioned in the FIR that Nazimullah shifted his residence in Abu Dhabi through misuse of power for his own benefit, causing loss to the state exchequer. He also appointed two gardeners at his residence resorting to corruption and irregularities.

The ACC on Sunday filed a graft case against the former ambassador on charges of embezzling Tk 65 lakh of government funds.

In the FIR, it was mentioned that Nazimullah was supposed to retire on February 9, 2003. But he remained in service for two more years until February 2005, giving false information and tampering with his SSC certificate.









Agang of vegetable "thieves" gathers on the garbage lorry, top right, kept at the Karwan Bazar kitchen market in the early hours. Vegetables traders capture a number of them, top left, while they were stealing from a moving truck at Karwan Bazar around 3:00am. A child is beaten up after capture, bottom right. A number of the children buying chanachur with the money they got selling the stolen vegetables.

FROM PAGE 1

around, she claimed. Just the scavengers. Not like the other children - one would pause a minute before calling them 'thieves' -- who prowl the market by night, slash open sacks and take out whatever they can grab -- vegetables, onions, garlic -- you name it.

Shakil is not one of these 'thieves' -- their number might be 400 or even higher. But Nasima (not real name) is one for real. On Wednesday night, her luck was not that good -- she got caught while slashing open a gunnysack. She did not receive any beating.

But that did not mean she did not have to pay for her 'sins'. Several male hands groped for her body, molesting her. She did not protest. She just bore it. The faces of rickshaw-van-pullers and coolies looked grotesque in the shadows.

"Beasts! How happy they are to catch a girl thief!" she spitted on the ground in disgust as they let her go. From a rickety room atop a vegetable depot, a thin screaming voice came. A child was squealing

vegetables from a truck, the coolies "The vegetables trader is molesting the kid," one of them commented, pulling a blank look.

in terror. A 10-year-old boy was

being punished there for stealing

Though Shakil, Nasima and the unnamed 10-year-old boy are well aware of the hazards of life at Karwan Bazar, they won't quit this 'occupation'.

Karwan Bazar's midnight children

Of the 400 thieves, 80 percent are under 12 and 40 percent are girls. Most of them live on footpaths and slums in Mirpur, Kafrul, Tejgaon Railway Station, Begunbari and Tongi. Some of them are drug addicts and homeless people from different parts of Dhaka.

Most of the women and children were abandoned by their husbands and fathers. "My mother first sent us to pick

up vegetables three months ago after my father stopped looking after us," Shakil, a class IV student, said, adding he had to drop out from school as well. part-time domestic help, also picks

up vegetables in between her

duties. The father, Abul Hashem,

somewhere else. Two groups of vegetables thieves are active during transporting vegetables to the market in trucks from across the country, unloading those on rickshaw-vans ers," said an 11-year-old fairand taking those to the depots in complexioned girl from Pirerbagh between 10:00pm and 7:00am. One group cuts open the sacks and

steal, while the other steals vegetables from those sacks later. About 150 thieves involved in has to run the family of her mother

cutting sacks can take one to one and a half kilograms of vegetables at a time when the trucks wait in queue for unloading and rickshawvan-pullers remain busy with their "If caught, those who cut sacks receive severe beating," Parul, a female coolie who lives on the

footpath of Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, said, adding drug addicts from different parts of Dhaka and some sex workers are also involved While each of such thieves earns Tk 200-800 every night, members

of the other category, who are more

than 250 in number, earn Tk 50-200

each by selling their vegetables

later on the footpath or to the His mother Nazma Begum, a vegetables traders Mostly kids aged between 6-12 years and some aged drug addicts are involved in poking the cut sacks who drives a school van, lives to steal vegetables.

Most of such thieves are beaten several times a week and sexually assaulted sometimes. "They assault us on any minor

excuse. This bazaar is full of lech-

in Mirpur who was forced to steal-

ing, as her mother can't work for

40-year-old leader of thieves who is known as "Khukir Baap" (Khuki's father), told The Daily Star. There is another group like Shakil who pick up vegetables that

fell from vans while being carried

her waist problem. Losing her

father about three years back, she

coolies, rickshaw-van-pullers and

some adult male thieves mainly

sexually abuse the girls after catch-

ing them during the theft," Liton, a

"Apart from the traders, the

and younger brother.

to and from the depots. Apart from young kids, poor women aged above 25 and kids of 5-10 years are mostly involved in such picking.

Many of them pick up halfrotten vegetables from the dustbin, cut off the rotten parts and sell those to restaurants a to quote A Aklima Khatun, 30, of

Begunbari engaged three of her six offspring in stealing after her truck driver husband Emdad Mirdha died two years ago. "I have no alternative to engag-

ing my kids to stealing. They are too young for other kind of jobs," she said, waiting near the Janata Tower Tuesday night when her sons Shafiqul, 12, Deen Islam, 11, and Shawon, 10 were depositing the stolen vegetables to her.

Rivers continue

FROM PAGE 1

submerged due to heavy rain coupled with onrush of water from upstream.

A few thousand char dwellers of

35 chars have taken shelter on higher grounds and in schools and colleges as their homes have been washed away by the surging floodwater. Our Sirajganj correspondent,

citing Sirajganj District Flood Control room and Water Development Board sources, reports: About 1 lakh people in Kazipur, Sirajganj Sadar, Belkuchi, Shahzadpur and Chowhali upazilas are flood affected. They have taken shelter at different embankments and educational institutions.

Fish in around 400 ponds in Chalonbeel area were washed away causing a loss of about Tk 60 lakh,

official sources said. Our Gaibandha correspondent reports: Nearly 15 unions have been flood affected while Katlamari-Uria flood control

embankment has become weak Our correspondent in Sylhet reports: Erosion at the dyke of the Surma in Kanaighat upazila has taken a serious turn. Erosion on the Kushiyara in Zakiganj and

Mobile court

FROM PAGE 1

Representatives of Rupantarita Prakitik Gas Company Ltd (RPGCL) and CNG Filling Station and Conversion Owners' Association

Yesterday the mobile court factories now, Bangladesh Export conducted the drive against Processing Zone Authority human hauliers that ply on Gulistan-Judge Court and Gulistan-Newmarket routes. Officials of the directorate

found improper conversion kits and substandard cylinders being used in four human hauliers that could have caused cylinder explosions. The cylinders seemed to be cylinders for containing oxygen. Officials of the directorate also said a vested quarter is active in making and selling low-cost sub-

standard cylinders in the city. They

A good quality CNG cylinder costs Tk 40,000 but the substandard ones sell between Tk 10,000 and Tk 12,000

Beanibazar upazilas has already caused significant damage.

Our Faridpur correspondent reports: Around 15,000 people in Bhajandanga, Sadipur Gadadhardangi, Bilgajaria of Aliabad union became marooned by the swelling Padma. Charvadrasan union is also

flood affected. Faridpur-Charvadrasan road link has snapped as it went under kneedeep water at several places. A bridge at Mandertolakhal of Sadipur also went under water. Our Tangail correspondent reports: Over 30,000 people in 40 villages under Bhuapur, Kalihati,

to the swelling Jamuna and the Dhaleswari. Several cracks appeared on the 47km Bhuapur-Tarakandi Flood

Nagarpur, Delduar and Sadar

upazilas have been marooned due

Control Embankment. Our Netrakona correspondent reports: The overall flood situation of the district was improving yes-

following an understanding with Around 20 garments factories at

the DEPZ were closed for various periods following unrest among workers at different times in the last one year. Meanwhile, 151 garments factories and related units out of 7,500 across the country witnessed

labour unrest over the first eight

months of this year. Asked about closure of three (BEPZA) General Manager AZM Azizur Rahman said, "Owners have closed the factories to keep those safe and avert any untoward incidents. Before doing so, they had informed us." The general manager said,

"Workers go for work stoppages

and violent actions even on silly

grounds. And owners are forced to

close their factories to avert damage of valuables.' He went on, "We try to help resolve the problems concerning wages and other facilities of workers. But they appear reluctant to take our help.

He mentioned that there are 96

factories at the DEPZ. So, closure of long time. two or three units would not affect overall production that much.

National HR

FROM PAGE 1 judge from the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court to chair the selection committee. The other members of the committee would be the cabinet secretary, the attorney general, comptroller and auditor general, Public Service Commission chairman and the law

The NHRC will investigate

reports or complaints of human rights violations, negligence of human rights, and maintain the standards of prisons or correction facilities. It will mediate between disputing parties if necessary. The commission will also review the constitution and the

violation loopholes and if necessary suggest improvements to the government. The NHRC will also research and set out the implementation of international human rights covenants and whether local laws are

legal system to find human rights

consistent with international human rights agreements. All human rights NGOs and their operations will also be coordi-

nated by the NHRC. The commission, however, will not deal with matters regarding to the Ombudsman Act or to the jobs of any government employees working with tribunals set up under the Administrative Tribunal Act, 1980 and employees of constitutional bodies.

The commission was approved in principal by the cabinet last December after years of delay under the BNP-led coalition government.

Criminals

FROM PAGE 16 Later, the criminals entered the

house breaking a window and killed Ruhul in front of his family members. The criminals left the scene

firing several blank shots and

blasting four hand bombs.

Police arrested four people Awami league (AL) leader Abdul Malek, Azizul Islam, Naharun Islam and Tozam -- for interrogation. Sources said Dukhu Bahini

might be behind the killings as the victims' family and Dukhu, an accused in at least 20 cases, have been engaged in a dispute for a mentioned the names of five party A case was filed with Gangni leaders as masterminds behind the Police Station.

bomb attack.

Five killed

Witnesses quoted by police said the vehicle's roof and sides were ripped open by the force of the explosion. "It was so powerful that the blast

decapitated a civilian," said regional

army spokesman Major Armand

Four people were killed on the spot, while the fifth victim died in hospital of injuries sustained in the explosion, police said. Rico said troops had been sent to

the area to set up roadblocks along

possible escape routes in a bid to catch the culprits. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the incident. Officials had warned the public to brace for possible attacks by

Muslim separatist rebels, who are on the run from a military offensive on Mindanao. The renegade guerrillas from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) are responsible for a wave of deadly attacks this month on Mindanao. More than 100 rebels as

well as more than 40 civilians and

soldiers have been killed. The clashes have put on hold peace talks between the government of President Gloria Arroyo

Manjurul Imam

FROM PAGE 16 Khulna City AL, was killed in a bomb attack on August 25, 2003 in front of his residence in Khulna.

Islam, later succumbed to their wounds at hospital. Imam's youngest son Abdullah Harun Jami filed a first information report (FIR) with Khulna Police Station on August 28 the same year.

DB inspector Shajahan

Howlader submitted the charge

sheet to the court on March 11, 2004

His assistant advocate Bijon

Bihari, who was with him on a rick-

shaw and rickshaw puller Sayedul

against four extremists Shukur Gazi, Ganesh Banerjee, Ripon and Imam Sarder, Later, Imam Sarder was killed in a shootout in 2005. The court, however, ordered for further investigation following an appeal by the prosecution lawyer.

Another DB inspector Akram

Hossain included the name of extremist Shahadat in the supplementary charge sheet submitted to the court on February 24 this year. The third charge sheet in the case

was submitted to the court on June 12 this year. The court ordered for reinvestigation after Rumi, the eldest son of the slain AL leader, in his deposition

the past month to 29 percent, erasing most of the bounce he received from reshuffling his cabinet a month ago.

and the MILF, which recently

warned that the upsurge in vio-

lence could lead to a full-blown war

in the mainly Roman Catholic

at the possibility the attack could

have been carried out by a Muslim

Police said they were also looking

crime group known as the Al-Khobar gang as the bus firm, Metro Shuttle, had apparently received threats. The gang is composed mostly of

foreign Muslim rebels and preys on businesses in the south. A Metro Shuttle official said last month that the gang had demanded 50,000 pesos (about 1,000 dollars) a

month in extortion money, threat-

ening attacks if it was not paid.

country

Japan PM FROM PAGE 16 Fukuda did not immediately speak of new elections, opening the way for a new leadership election within the ruling party. General elections must

The likely front-runner to take

over the post is Taro Aso, a former

be held by September next year.

foreign minister who is known for being both more charismatic and more conservative than the 72-yearold Fukuda. Fukuda said he made the decision in light of the tense situation in parliament. The opposition Democratic

"The Democratic Party has tried to stall every bill so it has taken a long time to implement any policies. For the sake of the Japanese people, this should not be repeated," Fukuda said. Fukuda's Liberal Democratic

Party won control of one house last

year and has aggressively fought

Party (LDP) has been in power for all but 10 months since its creation in 1955. Fukuda did not have to call elections until September next year. The opposition has vowed to wrest political control in the next election. Fukuda took office nearly a year ago in hopes of reviving the LDP, but he faced an uproar for introducing a hugely unpopular medical coverage plan that raises costs for many elderly people. Fukuda on Friday unveiled a 11.7-

stimulus package, although some economists doubted it would give a long-term boost to the economy. A poll out earlier Monday said that his government's approval rating had slumped nine points in

trillion-yen (107-billion-dollar)

The poll tipped Aso as the most Fukuda.

popular candidate to replace

to serve there for three years. on the issue, terming it "sensitive".