EC to seek easing

delegates from across the country for

holding the national council, which

is not possible amid the state of

delegation, told reporters after the

Bangladesh (WP), Gonotontri

Party, and Samyabadi Dal also sat

with the EC separately yesterday

and demanded that the state of

emergency be lifted allowing polit-

ical parties to hold national coun-

cils in an atmosphere free of fear

and intimidation, for meeting the

will be difficult for them to hold

national councils now 'within such

a short time' before the election

which is tentatively planned for the

third week of December, and sug-

gested relaxing some criteria for

of all four political parties claimed

that the commission assured them

of considering their proposals for

relaxing the criteria for registra-

criteria, except the one that deals

with the panels of nominees,"

considering their objection, meet-

leaders said if the state of emer-

gency is relaxed, it will be easier for

them to hold the national council,

(EPR) that enforce the state of emer-

gency do not allow political parties to

hold meetings of over two hundred

issue a general instruction allowing

political parties to hold national

councils, the JP leaders suggested.

be held before upazila polls'.

elections together.

parliamentary poll.

for meeting those.

sionals and students.

considering their proposals.

with the political parties.

Bangladesh.

elections.

In that case, the government may

The other three dialoguing par-

ties demanded that the EC

announces a specific date for the

parliamentary election which 'must

They however proposed for

They also urged the EC not to

On upazila polls, the JP chief said

"We left the issue to the Election

WP suggested keeping some of

announcing the schedules for both

register religion based parties and

parties that had opposed the birth of

his party does not have any objection

if the upazila polls are held before the

Commission," Ershad said adding,

"Whenever they are held, Jatiya Party

is ready to participate in the upazila

the registration criteria suspend till

after the parliamentary poll, allowing

the political parties adequate time

It also proposed to cancel the

WP President Rashed Khan

"Some criteria for registration

On upazila polls, Menon said the

But a senior leader of JP said the

EC wants to take a decision after

finishing the round of discussions

EC is determined to hold upazila

polls before the parliamentary elec-

tion, although it is now worried due

to the ongoing flood situation in the

Lidless manhole

body after a more than 20-minute

Dhaka Medical College Hospital

lidless for about 25 days, and they

complained about it repeatedly

Police said the body was sent to

country, which is worsening.

FROM PAGE 16

only in vain.

morgue for autopsy.

search

Menon said the EC assured them of

might be relaxed or suspended,"

Menon told reporters after the talk.

criterion that imposes restriction on

The emergency powers rules

"We have no objection to the

The EC assured the JP leaders of

During the talks held in the EC

Emerging from the talks, leaders

The three parties however said it

criteria for registration.

the registration.

Ershad said

ing sources said.

the sources added.

people in open space.

The Workers Party of

emergency.

meeting.

Dhaka should ask

FROM PAGE 16

"A one metre rise will affect 13% of the agriculture land and 17% of the remaining land of the country as Bangladesh will be among the first countries to be affected by this change," he said.

In that case, Dr Atiq pointed out, rise and for howlong?" the sea will come within 60 to 100 km of the capital city and most of the southern areas of the country will go under water. Other countries like the Maldives would go totally underwa-

Dr Atiq also said that the loss from climate change would be higher than that estimated by the International Panel for Climate Change (IPCC).

The speakers at the dialogue also criticised the paper that is to be presented in the upcoming bilateral talks on climate change in UK, saying the paper was "limited towards effects on infrastructure" and was ' researchcentred' and not based on any field

levelworkorinformation. The talks are scheduled for September 10.

They stressed the need for the developed and developing countries' making a commitment to address the issue of climate change

Experts at the dialogue called on the government to formulate a coordinated policy to address the issue. They praised the government for allocation in this year's budget in this regard but pointed out that Bangladesh is not responsible for climate change, and countries causing the problem must take responsibility for their actions.

Funds for adaptation and research to combat the situation should come from the countries causing the damage, they said.

The speakers also urged the industrially developed countries to introduce special quota for Bangladesh to help people migrate from the affected areas in accordance with existing international laws. Shahnaz Hague said that we must

overcome the fear of damage caused by climatic change and take effective steps to combatit.

Our real concern is whether human activities is harming the natural system, "she said.

It was revealed at the dialogue that fifty percent of Kutubdia Island has

BNP may skip

FROM PAGE 1 Quoting BNP standing committee

member Chowdhury Tanvir Ahmed Siddique, UNB reports that a five-member committee has been formed to make a decision on the dialogue issue.

The committee might sit today to review situation. BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain will announce the decision.

The EC has lately invited the BNP faction loyal to former prime minister Khaleda Zia for discussions on registration. The invitation marks an about-

face in the EC's stance on factional feuds in BNP. In its previous talks on electoral reforms, the commission invited the pro-reform BNP faction.

The dialogue that began yesterday has been arranged to resolve the differences with political parties about registration, which is now mandatory for participation in the general election.

Contacted, a high official of the commission said, "We are hopeful A that BNP will attend the dialogue." He added that they will be prepared for the meeting sched-

uled to begin at 2:00pm. Earlier on Friday, Delwar told reporters that they would decide on the talks today.

Talking to The Daily Star the same day, BNP Joint Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan said, "What's the good of joining the dialogue? We are asked to talk only on party registration, whereas we have many other issues to dis-

cuss." BNP Vice-president MK Anwar said he does not know whether his party will attend the dialogue or

not. BNP leaders have all along been saying they will not participate in any dialogue if the government does not release their chief and send her son Tarique Rahman

abroad for treatment. Tarique was released on bail on September 3.

Insiders say the party will not budge on its stance on talks if Khaleda is not freed on bail.

already gone under water. At the

Mominul Haque said, "What really matters is how much the sea level will

present rate of land erosion, both

Kutubdia and Bhola will go com-

pletely underwater in another 40 and

AL leaders

FROM PAGE 1

"Why should we attend their function where Jamaat leaders are also invited?" he asked to know. A party which demands the trial of

war criminals and speaks about fulfilling the dreams of Bangabandhu cannot sit with anti-liberation forces under any circumstances, the AL's Publicity Secretary Asaduzzaman Noorsaid

"Our party line is to not sit with Jamaat leaders at any level, so the (AL) leaders were wrong to join the iftar party," he said.

He said they have already requested the diplomatic offices in Dhaka not to invite AL leaders to any programmes where Jamaat leaders are also invited. Presidium member Suranjit

Sengupta said it is up to the diplomatic missions to decide whether to invite the AL and Jamaat leaders at the Dr MA Hassan, convenor of the

War Crimes Facts Finding Committee, said in a statement that some AL leaders and prominent personalities harmed the movement for trial of the war criminals by attending the iftar party with Jamaat leaders. Acting AL General Secretary Syed Ashraful Islam, meantime, said there

gious functions with Jamaat leaders. Talking to reporters at Zillur Rahman's residence, he asked journalists not to mix up politics and

is no problem with joining any reli-

Cox's Bazar

FROM PAGE 16 Association (BTPA) in a press release yesterday blamed the government and Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) for dropping of

Association's President Julius Chowdhury said the BPC's ignorance about the rules and regulations of the competition has led to the present situation. The tourism corporation unknowingly ran some promotional campaigns that are considered manipulation of vote.

The release said a roundtable on July 15 called for a policy to coordinate the promotional activities. But none of the authorities concerned paid any attention.

The government did not care about having a policy to organise the campaigns. Three days have passed since the dropping, but they have not taken any measures to stop unauthorised promotional activities and get the names back on the list," observed Julius.

There should have been separate sponsors for the three nominees of Bangladesh -- the Sundarbans, Cox's Bazar and the

Only Banglalink, a private mobile operator, has obtained licence from the organisers to run promotional campaign for Cox's Bazar. The activities to drum up support for the other two sites lacked coordination, said tourism sources.

The BPC has all along been providing incomplete and wrong information. They in fact encouraged fake voting in their leaflets by asking people to cast votes using vote4bangladesh.com. Banglalink too did not clarify the terms and conditions of their promotion campaign, they added.

Parjatan Corporation has been assigned to campaign for Cox's Bazar, the Forest Department for Sundarbans and the shipping ministry for the Ganges.

But the BPC had been canvassing for both Cox's Bazar and Sundarbans as the other two government organs sat idle, added the

Besides, the release said websites like vote4bangladesh.com and pabna.info and pages on social networking website Facebook have been identified by the organisers as unauthorised promotion encouraging false voting.

The BTPA president said Akij Food and Beverage (Lemu) illegally used the organisers' logo in the campaign for Cox's Bazar. Only the license holders can use the logo.

Khaleda's bail

and Chittagong inland depots. The following day she was arrested at her cantonment resi-

Then on December 9 last year, the anti-graft body filed the Niko case against her and four others. The charge is abuse of power in awarding a gas exploration and extraction deal

to Canadian company Niko. On May 5, the ACC pressed charges in this case against 11 people. Besides Khaleda, former law minister Moudud Ahmed and former state minister for energy AKM Mosharraf Hossain are among the

charge-sheeted accused. In response to writ petitions filed by the former prime minister, the HC in July this year stayed the proceed-

It also ordered the government and the ACC to explain why the case

proceedings should not be quashed. The ACC filed the Barapukuria coalmine case against Khaleda and 15 others on February 26. The other accused include 10 former ministers

from BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami. In the case, the 16 are charged with causing a loss of over Tk 158.71 brought under the emergency power crore to the public exchequer by rules remain pending with the speawarding a Chinese company a production, management and corruption cases.

from BNP are M Saifur Rahman Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, M Shamsul Islam, MK Anwar, Aminul Haque, Altaf Hossain Choudhury and AKM Mosharraf Hossain, and from Jamaat are Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid and Motiur Rahman Nizami.

On July 3, the ACC filed another case against Khaleda, her elder son Tarique Rahman and five others on charges of embezzling over Tk 2.10

crore meant for Zia Orphanage Trust. Former BNP lawmaker Qazi Saleemul Huq Kamal, Sayeed Ahmed, Gias Uddin Ahmed, Sharfuddin Ahmed and Khaleda's nephew Mominur Rahman are the other accused.

The bench of Justice Sharif Uddin Chaklader and Justice Md Emdadul Haque Azad on August 26 granted ad interim bail to the BNP chairperson in the Zia Orphanage Trust case.

The same bench on August 28 granted her ad interim bail in

Barapukuria coal mine case. All four cases that were later cial courts set up to try high-profile

Flood feared

FROM PAGE 1

Our Kurigram correspondent reports: A total of 500 villages in nine upazilas have been inundated and about four lakh people have been marooned, the district flood control cell sources said.

T Aman and vegetables on 44,143 hectares of land have been damaged, local agriculture office

About 119 educational institutions remain closed in the district due to the flood, district primary education office sources said. Our staff correspondent from

Bogra adds: About 12,000 people were marooned at Chandanaish union of Shariakandi upazila as an embankment on the Jamuna river was breached by floodwater.

The Chandaish UP chairman said although about 335 families were given shelter in seven shelter centres, 400 families are living under the open sky on roads and embankments.

Our Tangail correspondent reports: Over a lakh people in Bhuapur, Kalihati, Nagarpur, Basail and Delduar were marooned following an increase in the water level of

the Jamuna and Dhaleswari rivers. Vehicular movement on Tangail-Aricha road through Elasin Ferry Ghat remained stalled as the ferry service has been suspended for the last three days due to floods.

Our Moulvibazar correspondent reports: Water levels of rivers and haors are increasing in the district due to continuous downpour. Water levels of the Monu, Dholai, Gopla, Fanai, and Juri rivers are rising sharply.

About 15,000 people in Bhukshimul, Joychandi, Jayfarnagar, West Juri, Dakshinbhag, Sujanagar, Bhatera, and Baramchal unions have been marooned.

CORRECTION: In the news item headlined "Thousands marooned as flood grips north" published in The Daily Star on August 31, it was mentioned that Teesta Barrage was damaged. Actually, a portion of the flood dyke of the barrage was damaged.

Journos barred

FROM PAGE 1

Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda on several occasions said presence of newsmen would reduce the possibility of any misunderstandings.

During the second round of electoral reform talks with political parties, he said he feared that closed-door meetings might trigger fishy things. He had also suggested that the caretaker government follow the EC's practice in its dialogue with political parties.

A good number of journalists and photojournalists from newspapers and satellite television channels yesterday morning thronged the EC Secretariat to cover the talks with political parties without knowing the restrictions imposed in this regard. And they entered the EC Secretariat conference room as talks with Workers Party of Bangladesh began at 10:30

But within a few minutes, Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hussain loudly asked the EC's public relations officer to ensure that no newsman stays in the conference room. Journalists then left the venue.

Political leaders present at the talks sought to know why newsmen were not allowed to be present.

"The Election Commission told us they want to discuss some issues frankly. So, journalists were not allowed this time," Workers Party leader Rashed Khan Menon told reporters later.

Ganotantri Party chief Nurul Islam said he also raised the issue with the EC and got a similar reply.

Tarique

FROM PAGE 1 Jubo Dal yesterday looked after the security of Tarique at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) Hospital where the ailing BNP leader has been receiving treat-

Several JCD leaders said they have been keeping a close eye on the entrance to Block-D at BSMMU hospital and controlling the entry

of visitors into Tarique's cabin. "He is relatively good today," Dr Idris Ali, under whose supervision Tarique is receiving treatment, told reporters yesterday.

When asked about Tarique's

process is underway. "Tarique's condition seems to have improved today," said Tarique's counsel barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia, who visited him at the

He hoped that BNP Chairperson and former premier Khaleda Zia would also be released soon through legal process.

BNP standing committee member Khandaker Mahbub Uddin Ahmad and Jubo Dal General Secretary and former BNP lawmaker Moazzem Hossain Alal along with other BNP leaders yesterday visited Tarique, released on bail on Wednesday.

tional prices. "The rice price decrease is unusual for this period of the year. It indicates that the large private stocks built over the past months are being released. This might continue over the coming weeks if

Ganotantri Party chief Nurul Islam said political parties seeking registration need adequate time to meet the criteria, as they will have to amend their constitutions by hold-

"They assured us that they will ing councils. manage the government's permis-He said they suggested relaxing sion for us to hold the national counthe criteria for registration for now, cil, if we can hold it in a month," and the commission assured them Ershad, the octogenarian former of considering their proposals. military dictator who led the JP

He said his party also opposed holding of upazila polls before the parliamentary election. The EC however did not talk to the media about the outcome of

the dialogues yesterday, neither

did it allow the media to be present

during the discussions. The EC opened the talks with political parties to reduce increasing differences between the two camps over the party registration issue, as the parties have been opposing the idea of completing the registration process before the upcoming parliamentary poll due

to 'a constraint of time'. Political parties willing to get registration with the EC must apply by October 15, after meeting the criteria including severing relations with front organisation of professionals and students, and with overseas chapters by amend-

ing the constitutions. The Communist Party of Bangladesh, Bikalpadhara Bangladesh, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Inu), and BNP are scheduled to have talks with the EC today.

FROM PAGE 16

Secretariat conference room, the JP The pair put on 60 to lift the visitors back into the match, but when the latter fell for 27 the rot set in again.

Medium pacer James Hopes (3-30) conceded 11 runs from his first over but bounced back to take the vital wicket of Al Hasan and then two more quick scalps as Bangladesh lost 5-21 to slump to 8-103 as all hope was lost.

Man-of-the-match Iqbal eventually fell for 63 from just 69 balls, holing out to Shane Watson (2-8) when he knew he was running out of partners.

Their cause was not helped by the fact that they without number 11 Shahadat Hossain, who picked up a hand injury in the field. Earlier, on a slow wicket that

suited the Bangladesh spinners, the tourists did well to restrict the home side after Australia won the toss and elected to bat. Mike Hussey again anchored the Australian effort with an

unbeaten 57 from 72 balls, while Cameron White added some late runs with 22 not out from 24. The Australians had looked set to fall well short of 200, until a late

flurry from the pair added 23 runs

from the last two overs. The bowlers were able to restrict the strokeplay of the normally aggressive Australians and were having front organisations of professuperbly backed by their fielders, with three run outs robbing the

home side of any momentum. Spinners Al Hasan (0-25 from 10 overs) and Abdur Razzak (1-22 from 10) both bowled superbly in

the conditions. Opener Watson (27), struggling captain Michael Clarke (25 from 66 balls) and middle order batsman David Hussey (11) were all run out, the latter two both by direct hits at the bowler's end as they attempted

quick singles. The home side went 27 overs without a boundary before Mike Hussey finally broke the drought in

the 42nd over. Bangladesh made two changes to their side for Saturday's match, with Mahmudullah and Farhad Reza replacing Mehrab Hossain inr and Nazmule Hossain.

Reza's introduction into the Locals said the manhole is attack for the first time in the series was successful, bowling opener Shaun Marsh (30), who had already been dropped, with his first ball.

Flood factor

Aman could be harvested because

of floods and cyclone Sidr. Ministry sources said one lakh hectare of arable land in 16 districts has been so far affected due to the current floods but the agriculture ministry is still not sure how much the floods would affect the crop's cultivation

Uttam Kumar Dev, head of research at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said the consequences of the current flood cannot be predicted yet since the picture of floods is still unclear. If the flood affects Aman planting, it will not be possible to meet

its production target, in which case the government will have to undertake strong rehabilitation programmes for Robi crops. The government Boro target for this fiscal year is 1.96 crore tonnes when with a bumper production the total output of the crop was 1.77

crore tonnes in the last season. In

FY2006-07, Boro production was 1.49 crore tonnes. The Fortnightly Foodgrain Outlook released on August 21 says, "Domestic prices of rice continued declining over the past two weeks, reflecting improved supply to markets in a context of good progress in Aus harvesting and Aman planting coupled with downward pressures on interna-

adds. "International prices of Thai 5 percent parboiled rice recorded a 4 percent decrease in the second week of August, whilst prices of Thai 100 percent parboiled have

Wholesalers at different markets in the capital said prices of rice have increased by Tk 10-20 per maund in wholesale markets yesterday as an immediate effect of the

ongoing floods. Rice prices also increased in other districts due to the flooding, they said.

Warning Centre, meanwhile, projected that the flood situation would improve in the next one or two days. "Due to the high price this year,

farmers have used very little amount of triple super phosphate (TSP) and muriate of potash fertilisers. Besides floods, this event would adversely affect rice production. So, it is very difficult to predict now how much the rice price will fall," CPD researcher Uttam Kumar Dev said.

Both sides have been accused of underreporting their own.

Only political refugees need registration

Says SQ Chy reaching Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Detained former premier Khaleda Zia's parliamentary adviser and BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury yesterday demanded recasting the Election Commission (EC) for a 'free, fair and credible general election.

"The EC now headed by ATM Shamsul Huda has failed to create a congenial atmosphere for a credible election with the participation of all political parties," he said while talking to journalists at his residence in the port city.

The BNP leader, who was released on bail from Kashimpur Jail in Gazipur on Friday, demanded scrapping of all election-related ordinances and said, "Political parties do not need registration, only political refugees need it."

He hoped that BNP chief Khaled Zia would be released soon through legal process.

Going, Going

Dr Reza Khan, a zoologist and environmentalist, said. It is also a nocturnal animal dwelling on the ground level in mixed evergreen forests, and would feed on underground worms and roots of plants. Badgers need wide areas for foraging. But as the lower tier of forests got thin, they also got exposed. The one in the picture was caught as a result of forest deple-

pened to its cubs or mate. Leopard cats (Pic No 2) also used to live in mixed evergreen and Sal forests. Today they are deemed extinct in Bangladesh. Sitesh claims somebody caught them and handed them to him. But Dr Khan suspects they were brought in from India.

tion and no one knows what hap-

Jungle cats (Pic No 1) are also rarely seen in the wild because of their rarity and also because of their ability to hide. These two cubs were captured in Sri Mongol. Civets (Pic No 5 & 6) live in the

middle tier of forests which is also in a sorry state in Bangladesh. They feed on geckos, worms and eggs. Today they are endangered due to forest depletion. Hornbills (Pic No 8) need tall trees for nesting. As such trees became a rarity, their number also dropped.

trees, their only refuge, can now be easily identified. Green pigeons (Pic No 7) are also a lost case in Bangladesh because of vanishing fig trees and hunting. These beautiful birds can hardly be seen in

And they can be easily located today

and caught, as the few remaining tall

the wild today in this country. Telenor warns

FROM PAGE 1

"In the conflict regarding the ownership of Grameenphone, Telenor disagrees with Muhammad Yunus that we have an agreement to sell our stake in the company to him," Telenor said in the statement.

It threatened that further disagreement on this issue would be dealt with in court. "We would like to emphasise that the shareholder agreement clearly states that any disagreements should be resolved through the Swedish courts, "Telenorsaid.

The Norwegian company, of which 54 percent stakes are owned by the Norwegian government, admitted to recent media findings of child labour and poor working conditions in GP distributorships.

But it stressed that Grameen Telecom and Bangladesh government have equal responsibility in resolving these matters. "Nobody can define themselves as

exempt from this responsibility. In this context, it is irrelevant whether you own 62% or 38% of a company. This responsibility starts by demonstrating a cooperative attitude," the Telenor statementsays.

Telenor also lashed out at Yunus statement, saying it felt that the two sides reached an amicable solution at two meetings preceding the release of thestatement

"It would have been reasonable to expect Professor Yunus to mention these accusations during our meeting earlier that day, particularly as the release of this statement had apparently already been planned prior to our meeting," the statement reads.

"Muhammad Yunus is a highly influential person in Bangladesh with extensive knowledge of the business sector in the country. Rather than attacking Telenor, we have urged Yunus to cooperate with us to address the unacceptable conditions as quickly as possible,"itadds. Telenor also said it agreed with

Yunus to further investigate the people responsible for GP's illegal Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) operations, for which the government fined it \$60

Tk 396cr gobbled FROM PAGE 1 bribe officials for new connections

The report said the company' 1990 deal with Karnaphuli Fertiliser Company Limited (Kafco) was uneven, making the BGCL to supply 60 mmcf of gas to Kafco daily at half the price of other industrial clients. It said stopping irregularities in providing new connections, keep-

ing an eye on illegal connections

and regular monitoring to bring possible because most journalists | down systems loss would help the company become more effective. TIB affiliate Shachetan Nagarik Committee (Sanak) helped prepare

Nuke suppliers

FROM PAGE 16

and sale of nuclear technology, reached consensus on a one-off waiver of its rules for India, which refuses to sign the Non-Proliferation

Treaty. "This is a historic moment for the Nuclear Suppliers Group, for India, for US-Indian relations, indeed India's relations with the rest of the world," acting US Undersecretary for Arms Control and International Security, John Rood, told reporters at the end of around 90 minutes of talks on Saturday.

"Today at the NSG, we have reached a landmark decision to allow for civil nuclear trade with India," Rood said.

"This is an important moment also for the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime," he added. "This is a critically important moment for meeting the energy

needs in India, and indeed dealing with the global need for clean and reliable energy supplies." NSG rules ban nuclear trading with India because it refuses to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty, having developed atomic bombs in secret and

conducted its first nuclear test in 1974. The United States wants a special waiver for India so it can share civilian nuclear technology with New

The United States argues the deal would bring India into the NPT fold

and help combat global warming by Man beaten

FROM PAGE 16 Ripon Sheikh, younger brother of the deceased, told The Daily Star that the family members of his brother were shifted to Ripon's house as the area they were living was flooded. Janu left for his own house after taking meal from Ripon's house at about 10:30pm, his brother added.

Officer-in-Charge of Badda Police Station Nizamuddin told The Daily Star that they were trying to detect the persons who beat up

allowing it to develop low-polluting nuclear energy.

Critics say the deal undermines international non-proliferation efforts and accuse the nuclear powers of pursuing commercial and political gains.

Indian Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon told reporters: "India welcomes the decision by the NSG to adjust its guidelines to enable full civil nuclear cooperation of its members with India.

New Delhi "regards this decision as an important step in the ongoing process of India and the international community resuming cooperation in civil nuclear energy as a contribution to global energy security and for meeting the challenge of climate change and sustainable

development in India," he said. It was the second time in two weeks that the NSG had met to try and agree on a change in its rules and was characterised by hard-nosed

bargaining on both sides. Three countries in particular --Austria, Ireland and New Zealand -had been holding out for a clear-cut commitment on India's part to refrain

from nuclear weapons testing. And after 17 hours of talks on Friday, a compromise was reached Saturday that was acceptable for the three hardliners.

FROM PAGE 16 departments.

Meanwhile, the Tac is scheduled to hear pleas of 15 clemency seekers today. They include employees and officials from Titas Gas and sub-registrars.

The commission heard the pleas of seven individuals on Monday, the opening day of hearing, four on Tuesday, six on Wednesday and eight on Thursday.

It has so far received applications from 199 corrupt people seeking clemency on surrender of their ill-gotten wealth. No politician has so far applied to the Tac seeking clemency.

Zardari sweeps

FROM PAGE 1

power after Musharraf's nearly nine-year rule, which was marked by militancy and economic turmoil. Security was tight as secret voting began shortly after 10:00 am (0400 GMT) and ended at 3:00 pm in

Rampant militancy was underscored in the northwestern city of Peshawar, where voting was taking place, as a suicide car-bomber rammed a police checkpost killing 16 people and wounding more than Nearly 1,200 people have been

Musharraf's support for the United Tensions rose further this week after a failed assassination attempt on Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, whose car was hit by sniper

due to fears of attempts being made on his life. His wife was killed in a gun-and-suicide attack at a campaign rally last December. Voting in Peshawar was briefly interrupted as a 5.6-magnitude

prompting lawmakers to flee out-

challenges as president. Pakistan's economy is backsliding with high inflation and a volatile political situation contributing to a 40 percent fall on the stock market since January, in a country already

reliant on foreign aid. The election also came amid mounting international concern about the stability of Pakistan, which under Musharraf backed the United States after the September 11 attacks in 2001, and in its subsequent inva-

Billions of dollars of aid flowed to Islamabad in return. However, the American military

contends Pakistan's tribal areas have become a safe haven for al-Qaeda and Taliban militants to use as a launch pad for attacks on international soldiers based across the Afghan border. As co-chairman of the PPP,

Zardari already heads a fragile coalition government which, although still in office, recently lost the backing of Sharif's party. He now gains wide powers, including the right to dismiss gov-

ernments and appoint leaders of the military, which has ruled Pakistan for half of its 61-year existence. Zardari, once dubbed "Mr Ten Percent," has spent a total of 11 years in jail on charges ranging from corruption to murder. An amnesty

signed by Musharraf cleared him of all corruption charges last year.

Rab website FROM PAGE 16 Azad also claimed their operation and normal functioning were not hampered as their operational information is not provided there.

"Only our general information is

given on the website," he added. Earlier on Friday, Rab Director General (DG) Hassan Mahmood Khandkar said they were trying to know who was behind it. "We don't know who did it. Until we find it out, we are not sure whether it is done out of fun or a criminal act."

On access to www.rab.gov.bd,

the website, on Friday it read: "Hacked by Shahee_Mirza". However, no content appeared on the website yesterday.

The hacker wrote, "You do not know what the cyber security is or how to protect yourself" "Listen, hackers are not criminals. They are 10 times better than

your experts. We are genius beyond

FROM PAGE 1

to stop Benazir from going back to Pakistan because he never wanted to lose her. In one of the conversations in September 2007 in Dubai, Zardari begged Benazir to delay her return just for the sake of her children who could not afford to lose their mother but Benazirwas determined to come back. Young Bakhtawar is a witness of that historical conversation. "Yes, my

Pakistan. My father was sure that

enemies of PPP will definitely target

my father because she already spent

in Dubai. Her father tried his level best

ten years in exile and she wanted to come back before the election. She had a debate with my father but she won the debate with strong arguments," Bakhtawar said. Bakhtawar is sharp and intelligent like her mother. She was born in 1990 when her mother was the prime minister. Now she is learning politics from her father who is the new president of Pakistan. She is staying with her father these days and witnessing the whole political exercise for the

election of the new president. She is

lucky as well as unlucky because her family paid a heavy price of politics. She was a few months old when her father was arrested in 1990. He was released in 1992. Zardari was Benazir by removing Musharraf," he arrested again in 1996 and released in 2005. Bilawal, Bakhtawar and Assefa spent their childhood without father and they finally lost their mother on December 27th 2007. Bakhtawar is 18-year-old and out of these 18 years her father spent 11 years in prison. After the presidential election she will

studies. She is waiting for the oath taking of her father as the president of Pakistan. She thinks that oath taking of her father as the president will not only be a change of the face but it will be a beginning for the change of the whole system.

of us wrote some points of an agenda of PPP after coming to power, the first point was to remove Musharraf," she my mother but she never listened to said. Bakhtawar said her mother lost half trust with Musharraf after the bomb blasts in her rally on October 18, 2007 in Karachi and rest of the trust was lost after the imposition of emergency on November 3, 2007. Benazir was sure that Musharraf cannot contribute in resolving the ongoing

> problems and must be removed. Zardari confirmed that Benazir planned in December 2007 to remove Musharraf. "Bakhtawar found a paper from the purse of her mother and it was clearly written on the paper that removal of Musharraf will be the top priority of PPP after coming to power and we implemented the plan of

container management at Dhaka

ings of Gatco and Niko cases.

maintenance contract through abuse of power.

The accused former ministers

He, however, did not elaborate on Tarique's condition. treatment abroad, he said the

hospital yesterday.

"There is no crisis in BNP. Our party is as strong as it was in the past," Khandaker Mahbub said claiming that there is no faction in BNP

positive domestic and international prospects are confirmed," it

been steadily decreasing since July," it says.

The Flood Forecasting and

Tamil Tigers

are banned from the war zone. exaggerating enemy casualties and the report.

the two chambers of parliament and four provincial assemblies.

killed in bombings and suicide attacks across Pakistan in the past year, in unrest seen as a backlash by militants angry at former president

fire as it drove to meet him at an airport on Wednesday. Zardari had already moved house

> earthquake shook parts of Pakistan and neighbouring Afghanistan,

Zardari will now face a series of

sion of Afghanistan. your imagination." Change in presidency

Bakhtawar revealed that change of the president was a top priority of her late mother. "After a few days of the assassination of our mother, I was just checking her purse and I found a father begged to my mother many paper from her purse. The late mother times that she should not return to

> problems in Pakistan, she was infact of the view that Musharraf is part of

Bakhtawar is also aware that a big

test of her father will be started after becoming the president of Pakistan. She said, "There are big challenges and big problems. I am sure my father will try to raise new hopes in the hearts and minds of my generation for a go back to Dubai for completing her better and prosperous Pakistan."