HC rejects Hasina's

Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh also submitted two separate petitions to an HC bench of Justice Mohammad Anwarul Haque and Justice Zubayer Rahaman Chowdhury yesterday seeking bail for her in the Niko graft case and the barge-mounted power plant graft case, both filed by the Anticorruption Commission (ACC).

The matters might come up on today's cause list of the HC bench for scheduling of hearings, he said.

The HC bench of Justice Sheikh Rezowan Ali and Justice Md Rais Uddin in its refusal to grant bail to Hasina, observed that the petitioner may seek bail after returning to the country and then the court will consider the petition.

It said the petition of Hasina argued that she should be granted bail for organising her party to contest in the general election, a line of reasoning which could not be considered in light of the law.

Reviewing a Supreme Court (SC) reference presented by the petitioner's counsels, the HC observed that the Appellate Division granted bail to Tarique Rahman and Sigma Huda on medical grounds since they were in custody, not on parole like Hasina.

The HC also said the Appellate Division guidelines in Moyezuddin Sikder case, that a court may grant bail in cases filed with mala fide intentions, is not applicable in the case against Sheikh Hasina at this stage.

Opposing Hasina's prayer for bail Mansur said her petition should not be entertained since she sought the bail for participating in the next general election.

He also argued she was released on parole on grounds of ill health on the basis of a medical report prepared in June this year, and an updated medical report must be scrutinised before considering her bail prayer.

AL undecided

The AL leaders however said they are thinking of holding yet another round of talks with the government after the Eid to resolve a few crucial issues including the lifting of the emergency rules.

BNP leaders meantime said they did not get any invitation to any state Eid functions as of yesterday.

"We've got invitations. But we've not yet decided whether to join the programmes or not, Al Presidenti member Suranjit Sengupta told The Daily Star.

He said the party wants to reach a consensus with the government on deferring elections to upazila parishad, lifting the state of emergency, withdrawing all 'false and fabricated' charges against AL President Sheikh Hasina and other party leaders at a post-Eid meeting in order to ensure a free and fair general election.

Motia Chowdhury, who also sits on the AL presidium, ruled out going to any state programmes on the Eid Day if Jamaat leaders are also invited there.

BNP leaders ASM Hannan Shah and Ruhul Kabir Rizvi said they did not receive invitations to any such receptions.

Defence counsel Rafique-ul Huq argued that an HC bench recently granted bail to Hasina on medical grounds in an extortion case filed by businessman Azam J Chowdhury, although she was

Her bail bond was submitted to the court through her lawyers and the court accepted it, added Rafique.

abroad at the time.

Rafique also argued that there is no legal bar on granting Hasina bail in the case on medical grounds, adding that the bail is needed for her to take part in politics and to participate in the next general

She cannot take part in politics if she is on parole, he said.

At one stage of the hearing, the court said there is no room in the law for entertaining bail petitions on political considerations.

On June 13 last year, Noor Ali, managing director of Unique Group of Companies, filed the case with Tejgaon police station, accusing Hasina and her two relatives of extorting Tk 5 crore from him for mediating a power plant deal between the Power Development Board and his firm in 1997.

The government on July 16 last year brought the case under the Emergency Power Rules (EPR) and a magistrate's court ordered on July 29 that Hasina be shown arrested in

Mad rush

Pinku, wishing to go to Manikganj, was found yelling in front of the information and complaints centre of Dhaka Bus Truck Owners Group at Gabtoli, saying Padma Line buses were charging Tk 80 for a ticket to Manikganj.

"Usually they charge Tk 30 but today it is being charged so high. This is unacceptable," he said.

Asked about the high fares, an employee of Padma Line said, "The government-fixed rate is Tk 60 and Tk 20 was extra for Eid."

All shopping arcades and markets were crowded mostly with women.

"Yes, I did shop earlier but still some more things have to be bought today," said Shawli, a college student. Heavy traffic was seen on the

city streets throughout the day vesterday even though a large number of people of the city had

Chauffeur Sahidul Islam, who drove his boss to work in Motijheel before 9:00am, said, "I was told to return to my boss's Dhanmondi home by 10:00am... it is 11:30am and I cannot even get out of

Hundreds of vehicles were stuck for hours in gridlocks in Motijheel

Similar traffic jams were also seen on streets in Sayadabad, Gulistan, Nayabazar, Laxmibazar, Banglabazar, Paltan, Kakrail, Malibagh, Moghbazar, Tejgaon, Shahbagh, Karwan Bazar, Farmgate, Shyamoli, Mirpur, Mohakhali and Rampura areas.

People claimed that there were fewer traffic policemen on duty vesterday.

Prices of bulk power

but the commission approved the announced new rate considering all factors involved, the chairman

The new rate will be effective for only those distribution companies who purchase power from PDB, he

According to the order read out by the BERC chairman, the new bulk rates have been fixed at Tk 2.41 per kilowatt for 132 KV distribution lines, and Tk 2.44 per kilowatt for 33 KVlines.

However, a special rate of Tk 2.30 per kilowatt has also been fixed for Rural Electrification Board

"The lower rate for REB has been fixed considering the socioeconomic condition of the rural people," the BERC order said.

BERC asked PDB to chalk out a Service Quality Programme, and to submit it to the commission by January 15, 2009.

The commission also asked PDB to formulate a five-year power plan by considering its demand forecast, and asked the board to submit the plan to BERC by February 01, 2009.

The plan must reflect PDB's production cost and the cost of procuring power generated by independent power plants and

rental power plants, the order said. It also directed PDB to assure the commission that the board has been maintaining an appropriate portfolio of generation assets in order to keep power generation cost effective.

BERC asked PDB to submit other related reports too, before suggesting further tariff hike. The commission also directed

the power board to realise all outstanding bills from consumers, so no outstanding bill can continue to stayunpaid beyond three months. PDB formally applied to BERC

to increase both bulk and retail power tariff on June 15 this year. at the airport. BERC held a mass hearing on Himu is accompanying Qader.

the issue where 20 representatives from organisations concerned and

other individuals participated. The commission took PDB's plea and the arguments of the representatives in consideration before taking the decision to hike bulk tariff.

BERC was established on March 13, 2003 through a legislative act. The commission became effective on April 27, 2004 with the appointment of its members, and has the mandate to regulate gas, electricity and petroleum products in the

Obaidul Qader

getting clearance from the govern-

"Immigration and intelligence officials obstructed him at the airport Saturday saying higher authorities placed restrictions on his leaving," the lawyer said in a press release.

The AL leader was forced to return to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) hospital after failing to board his flight Saturday.

Amin Uddin said they had applied to the home ministry on September 17 seeking permission to send Qader abroad for treatment. "We were verbally informed by the ministry that he could go abroad," the lawyer had said.

Qader has been suffering from a number of serious ailments including a neurological disease that causes muscle damage and weak-

He was released on bail from BSMMU on September 5 where he remained for treatment since his admission on July 22 this year.

AL Publicity Secretary Asaduzzaman Noor, Md Shahjahan, AKM Amin Uddin Hanif, Abdul Kader Mirza and Moni Chowdhury bid him farewell

Party official Tareque Shams

Lab test

FROM PAGE 1 for Eid vacations and BSTI is yet to complete its testing procedure. But the private laboratory Plasma Plus situated in city's Uttara has already done the testing.

The laboratory report was also sent to the Commerce Secretary Firoz Ahmed and a sample of the milk would be sent to the Science Laboratory today for confirmation of the test result, the BSTIDG said.

The commerce secretary Firoz Ahmed has also confirmed The Daily Star that presence of melamine was detected in a sample of one of the three Chinese brand baby milk products that were earlier being sold in the market.

"As the government testing laboratories are yet to confirm the presence of melamine in the milk, we cannot take any legal actions against the importers or the companies sellingthemilk," he said.

The commerce secretary also said that they have asked the Chittagong Customs House to provide complete information on when and what quantity of Yashili 2 brand was brought into the country.

The Institute of Public Health and Nutrition (IPHN) authorities also said that it would be possible to take legal actions against the importers of Yashili 2 after the tests are confirmed.

The Chinese baby milk products Yashili 1, Yashili 2 and Sweet baby 2 had been sold in country's market without having any registration of the IPHN.

Earlier, at a press conference at the secretariat office, Health and Family Welfare Adviser Dr AMM Shawkat Ali said the government has taken steps to amend the breast milk substitute regulation of marketing ordinance 1984 to prevent the sale of hazardous contaminated or tainted milkin the market.

The government will also form a taskforce involving high ups from Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Commerce, Institute of Public Health and Nutrition (IPHN) and Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) to determine the what future steps need to be taken in the light of the situation that has emerged.

The taskforce will also recommendation on taking punitive actions against the importers, dealers and wholesalers involved in importing the contaminated milk from China.

Shawkat Ali said the proposed amendment of The Breast Milk Substitute (Regulation of Marketing Ordinance-1984) asks for five years jail and Tk 1 lakh fine as punishment for the offenders instead of the two years jail punishment recom

mended in it at present. The draft copy of the amendment will be submitted to the Ministry of Law and Justice for verification within two days and after vetting, the proposal will be placed before the council of advisers for its final

approval, he said. The adviser also informed the press that so far no child in the country has been found affected by consuming the powdered milk, but the government's efforts continue to find out if anyone has been affected

He also said that the government has imposed ban on sale three brands of powdered milk of as those may pose a threat to public health.

Shawkat Ali said he has instructed all the Deputy Commissioners (DCs) of the country to strengthen the vigilance of mobile courts to seize the banned powdered milk from local markets.

The government took action against sale of the imported Chinese milk after the international media reported that melamine had been found in milk powder being sold by some companies in China. Over 62,000 children have already fallen sick in China after consuming this

RMG workers

The workers set up a barricade on the highway around noon protesting against discrimination of factory authorities in providing Eid bonuses. When police rushed to the spot and tried to drive the agitating workers away, the workers engaged with the police.

Police charged truncheons on the demonstrating workers who retaliated with bamboo sticks and hurling brickbats. The clash left at least 20 people, including policemen and pedestrians, injured.

Witnesses said several hundred vehicles were stuck in queues that stretched well over nine kilometres due to the barricade on the high-

Garments, said, "According to the labour law, the factory authorities are not bound to pay Eid bonuses." Later, the factory authorities were, however, forced to pay

bonuses in full to all workers in

presence of police and members of other law enforcement agencies. Additional Superintendent of Police Masud Karim said, "After Sunday's demonstrations and the road blockade incident, the owner of Joya Garments had assured the workers of paying their bonuses

today [Monday]. But the authori-

ties paid bonuses in full to only half

the workers and only one third of

the bonuses to the other half." On Sunday, the workers staged demonstration inside their factory demanding their wages and festival bonuses. They first clashed with factory staffers and then attacked the Ansar camp inside the factory. At one stage, they took to the highway and set up barricades.

EC unable to enforce

FROM PAGE 1

Earlier in April last year, EC unveiled the proposed code of conduct with a set of stringent proposals aimed at reducing election expenditures and encouraging honest candidates.

It also held talks with the political parties twice seeking their opinions on the proposals. None of the political parties then opposed the proposed code of conduct. The proposed code was sup-

posed to be finalised in February this year according to the electoral roadmap which also stipulated that registration of parties will be completed in June. But EC yesterday got gazette

notification of the code of conduct with retrospective effect of September 18 and it will remain effective until publication of election results in official gazette. In efforts to free the polls from influence of black money, EC had

ment of the polls schedule. The codes of conduct in the previous parliamentary elections took effect with the announcement of election schedules.

planned to enforce the code of

conduct long before announce-

Registration of political parties parties.

before the national polls still remains uncertain as BNP and its allies are opposing it for being qualified to contest the upcoming

"The code of conduct took effect from September 18 according to the gazette notification. But we cannot ask political parties to abide by the rules since none of the parties has yet got registered, Election Commissioner Muhammed Sohul Hussain told The Daily Star.

conduct. "But it can be enforced properly from the next polls," he asserted. The EC still faces uncertainty over registration of political parties

He said this time it would be

difficult to implement the code of

sources in EC say. If BNP and its key allies, Jamaate-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote don't agree eventually with the registration, EC might have to face tremendous difficulties ahead of the polls.

before the December 18 polls,

If the registration is not completed, EC will have to amend the code of conduct, repealing the provision for registered political

SC without adequate

pending with the apex court. The HC in its judgment directed the government to reappoint 10 HC judges and declared illegal a part of the Supreme Judicial Commission Ordinance 2008 promulgated for appointing judges.

The attorney general's office, however, observes that the government could still appoint judges as per the chief justice's recommendations.

A deputy attorney general said, The government earlier appointed judges to the High Court although a case regarding recruitment of judges was pending with the Supreme Court.

"If new judges are not appointed soon, the crisis with pending cases will be very serious and the government will have to face it," he said, stressing that judges should be immediately appointed to the two divisions for quick disposal of the pending

Attorney General (AG) government is the authority to appoint judges to the apex court. It can appoint judges any time." He expressed hope that the vacant posts of judges in the Appellate and 2010.

HC divisions would be filled soon. Legal experts meanwhile stressed the need for appointing competent, honest and courageous judges to the two divisions.

Senior jurist and former Supreme Court Bar Association president barrister M Amir-U Islam said only increasing the umber of judges at the Appellate and HC divisions would not do the judiciary any good if the judges are not competent and honest.

"If incompetent judges are appointed, the number of pending cases would still increase causing suffering to litigants," he said. Renowned lawyer Dr Shahdeen

Malik said, "The present government--being not a political one--is expected to appoint competent and impartial judges soon. I hope that judges will not be appointed on political consideration.' Among the Appellate Division judges, Chief Justice MM Ruhul

Amin will retire on December 23 2009, Justice Md Joynul Abedin on January 1, 2010, Justice Md Tafazzal Islam on February 8, 2010, Justice Md Abdul Matin on February 26 2010, and Justice Mohammad Fazlul Karim on September 30

Eid tomorrow

FROM PAGE 1

district-level moon-sighting committees and the meteorological department.

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed in separate messages greeted the countrymen and the peoples of all Muslim nations on the occasion.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina have also felicitated the people on the occasion of the

Thousands of people have already left the capital to celebrate the Eid with their loved ones.

Launches, buses and trains leaving Dhaka for various destinations were less crowded in the last two days as people started leaving the capital since Thursday.

The Eid shoppers crowded into shopping centres and malls in the capital as well as elsewhere in the country to buy gifts, mainly clothing, for their near ones over the last few days The major Eid congregation will

be held at the National Eidgah on the High Court premises at 8:30 on the Eid day. The president, the CA and other

advisers, government high-ups and political leaders will say Eid prayers at the National Eidgah. Besides, Eid congregations will also be arranged at the Baitul

Mukarram National Mosque at 7:30, 8:30,9:30, 10:30, and 11:15am. The country's biggest Eid congregation with a likely turnout of around three lakh people will be held at Sholakhia Eidgah in

Necessary preparations have Uttam Prasad, a director of Joya | also been completed to hold the congregations at various places in the capital and other parts of the country. The president will exchange Eid

> greetings with people from all walks of life at Bangabhaban at 9:30am and the CA at the Pradhan Upadesta Bhaban at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar at 11:00am. BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will exchange Eid greetings at

Garden at 11:00am. The national flag will be hoisted atop government and nongovernment offices on the occasion. Main city streets will also be decorated with flags imprinted with 'Eid Mubarak' in Bengali and Arabic.

Ladies Club in the city's Eskatan

Eid will also be celebrated in Bangladesh missions abroad.

Special diets will be served in mine case. hospitals, jails, governmentowned children and shelter homes, socially handicapped and vaga-

bond welfare centres and shelter homes for the destitute.

The Shishu Park will remain open to underprivileged children on the Eid day. Cultural functions friendly football matches and Eid gatherings of children will also be held across the country. Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television as well as

private television channels and radio stations will broadcast special programmes on this occasion. Newspapers have also brought out special supplements today. Dhakabasi, a socio-cultural organisation, will bring out a

colourful procession from the Shishu Academy premises at 3:00pm on the second day of the

Zia orphanage probe report (memo of evidence) to the commission on September

ACC Director General (Admin) Col Hanif Iqbal at a routine press briefing yesterday confirmed getting the report.

The commission had sued Khaleda, Tarique and five other people on July 3 on charges of embezzling Tk 2.10 crore in the name of phoney Zia Orphanage

The commission will not divert its focus when there is enough evidence to prove the allegations, an ACC official requesting anonymity said on whether the watchdog would press charges against the accused in the event. The other accused in the case

Salimul Haque, Syed Ahmed alias Sayeed Ahmed, Gias Uddin Ahmed, Sharfuddin Ahmed and Khaleda's nephew Mominur Rahman. On implicating Kamaluddin Siddiqui, the ACC official said,

"When the prime minister stands

are former BNP lawmaker Kazi

accused of graft, it follows that her principal secretary had involvementinit." Awami Jubo League organised the Kamaluddin was not accused in discussion marking Hasina's 61st the first information report (FIR) because no enquiry was conducted

against him at the time, he said. Col Iqbal told the press briefing that the commission has decided in principle to soon approve charge sheets against Khaleda, her 10 added. cabinet members and five other people in the Barapukuria coal

The September 16 investigation report on the scam recommended bringing charges against them.

4 murdered in city in 20 hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least four people including a young girl were killed in the city in separate incidents in a span of 20 hours from Sunday afternoon to early hours of yesterday.

Of them, Pallabi police recov ered the body of an unidentified 20-year-old young girl from the Sagupta Housing where the body was lying on the edge of a road early in the morning yesterday.

Police suspect the girl was violated and later stabbed to death. In another incident, Ashulia

police recovered the body of a butcher from Baghbari bush yesterday morning. Police said the butcher identified as Rana, 22, was strangulated

to death by the unknown criminals. Rana's relatives said he had been missing from Jamgorah Bazar since Sunday. An unidentified youth aged

unknown criminals at 9:00pm on Sunday in yet another incident in the city's Nanda Lal Ghat Lane under Sutrapur. Meanwhile, the railway police recovered the body of another youth from a compartment of a

goods-laden train on Sunday

evening. He was strangulated to

Tarique

death, police said.

FROM PAGE 16

London on September 11 Khan said Tk 6.34 lakh from Khaleda Zia's personal account was sent to London for Tarique's treatment. "All medical expenditures will be borne by Begum Zia," he said.

Gen Moeen

FROM PAGE 16

fighters (FFs) at war-injued Freedom Fighters Rehabilitation Centre (WIFFRC) a Mohammadpur in the city. "It is a matter of humiliation for us that the condition of the FFs, who

fought for the country's independence, is miserable," he said. When the army chief inquired about their condition, the freedom fighters placed a three-point demand. The demands include their permanent rehabilitation in

the WIFFRC, regular allowance and introduction of rationing system. General Moeen gave a patient hearing to the FFs and assured them of resolving all problems. He urged the well-off people to come forward to help rehabilitate the war-injured

The army chief distributed Eig gifts among the families of the injured FFs. Earlier, General Moeen hosted a reception for a 40-member team of faculty members of various universities, who will leave for Saudi

Arabia under the initiative of the

army chief, at the army headquar-The delegation will visit King Khalid University, Nazran University and Jizan University in Saudi Arabia.

The army chief described the

delegation members as ambassa-

dors and urged them to make their

best efforts to uphold the country's image abroad. AL unhappy

FROM PAGE 1 "We did not expect it. We are sad and hurt. Sheikh Hasina should have

been granted bail," Zillur said. He said Hasina has been implicated in several cases on false charges

Islami Oikya Jote (OIJ), a compo-

nent of the AL-led grand alliance,

organised the discussion where leaders of other political parties including Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), Bikalpadhara Bangladesh and Jatiya Party were present. Zillur said the AL chief would

return home by mid-October. He said they have to continue their fight until democracy is restored fully in the country. The AL acting chief said they

believe in secular democracy and regard religion with utmost respect. Religion should not be mingled with politics, he added. IOJ Chairman Misbaur Rahman Chowdhury criticised some components of the 14-party combine with-

out mentioning any name for term

"Some of our friends think that if a

inghis party fundamentalist.

party has an Islamic name, it is fun damentalist. But it is wrong," he said adding that they are fighting to build up a secular democratic country. People will not accept 'controlled democracy' in the country, he added JSD General Secretary Syed Zafar

Sazzad said the BNP-Jamaat coali-

tion is on the move to foil the upcom-

ing parliamentary election sensing

Earlier, AL presidium member Amir Hossain Amu at a discussion at the party's central office also accused the BNP-Jamaat alliance of hatching a plot to foil the upcoming parliamentary election.

birth anniversary with party presidium member Dr Mizanur Rahman in the chair. If the election is not held on December 18, the consequences would be serious for the country, he

the name of Islam.

Another presidium member Suranjit Sengupta said they would old offensive. contest the upcoming parliamentary The agency says it believes the election under Hasina's leadership. majority of those who have crossed Motia Chowdhury said Jamaat-einto Afghanistan will return home Islami has been misleading people in once the fighting stops.

Petition off HC

FROM PAGE 1 they will approach another bench to hear the petition after the Supreme Court divisions return from vacation on October 12.

On September 22, the bench fixed September 29 (yesterday) for hearing.

Former BNP state minister Abdul Mannan filed the petition on August 6, challenging the legality of the EC's gazette notification finalising fresh delineation of the constituencies. The following day an HC bench stayed the operation of the notification for three months.

Counsel for the EC Mahmudul Islam told the court that the petition should be settled quickly as it is a matter of national inter-

He said the commission wants the issue to be resolved as soon as possible since it will have to prepare constituency-wise voter lists required to announce the polls schedule.

Any delay in that regard could put the long-stalled general election in jeopardy, he added.

Petitioner's counsels Zainul Abedin and Nasiruddin Ahmed about 25 was shot dead by Asim told the court it is not possible for their seniors Khondker Mahbub Uddin Ahmed and TH Khan to attend hearing before the court reopens after vacation.

Khondker Mahbub Uddin is seriously ill while Khan is busy handling some other urgent matters, they added. The court said if both sides

agree it can fix any day between October 5 and 7 for hearing the petition. Zainul Abedin, also law secretary of BNP, at that time, said the

senior lawyers would not be able

to participate in arguments till

the end of the vacation at the

Then the bench removed the petition from the cause list.

EC's counsel Shahdeen Malik yesterday told The Daily Star that the commission will soon appeal

to the HC to vacate its order staying the gazette notification on constituency re-demarcation. He said he hopes the matter would be settled soon and the EC

would be able to announce the election schedule on time. Nasiruddin Ahmed Asim saidthey had sought deferment of the hearing as they believe adequate time should be allowed for argu-

ments since the issue is important from a constitutional point of view. Khondker Mahbub Uddin Ahmed was at the court, but did

not make any submissions due to illness, Asim said. TH Khan was not present for

his other commitments. Besides ordering the stay, the HC bench of Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Mashuque Hosain Ahmed on August 7 also directed the government and the commission to explain within two weeks why the gazette notification should not be

declared unconstitutional and In the petition, Abdul Mannan argued that article 122 of the constitution and the Electoral Roll (Amendment) Ordinance 2007 require the authorities to redraw constituencies before the

voter register is prepared. It is to allow people to know in advance for which constituency

they would register as voters. "But this Election Commission re-demarcated the constituencies when over 99 percent of voter listing was complete," the petitioner observed.

try to be optimistic, but at the rate the

cost of living is going up, I don't know

go in search of more passengers to try

and make just a little bit of money to

ing over him, his parting words are

Mujib left this correspondent to

Even with so much gloom loom-

He says, "My only sister has

what is going to happen."

at least be able to go home.

quite surprising.

Eid of a Mishuk

Tk 90 per litre from Tk 67 last year. Alongside the daily rent he pays to the owner of the three-wheeler has also gone up from Tk 250 to Tk 350. In addition the price of essentials has gone up to more than double of what

it used to be. Mujibur has to send home Tk 8,000 per month to support his extended family of seven.

"I live in a mess at Kachukhet

where my rent has gone up this year. I could buy coarse rice for Tk 14-15 per kilogram last year. The same rice now costs Tk35 akg," he says. The 38 year old man's voice

breaks down as he says, "I feel so

helpless and desperate, how am I going to survive?" Mujib is not alone in this city in his woes. Almost all people belonging to the marginal income group have similar such heart-rending stories to tell. Most families in this income

group will not be celebrating Eid this ear, but living through it only. Ramadan and its related increase n essentials have added to their

Mujib smiles, almost with sarcasm, as he recalls how he spent Eid last year, "I bought my mum a saree you know, and a salwar kamiz set for my only sister. I also bought new clothes for my brothers, my wife and

children.' "I am almost embarrassed to face them this year," he says as his face cringes in pain. Mujib is the eldest of four children. He quit his studies and started

working right after completing his

Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination when his father passed away suddenly. "The income from the little agricultural land we have is not adequate for my family's maintenance. wanted my younger brothers and sister to continue with their studies

so I took up their responsibilities myself," he said. "My youngest brother is studying for his graduation and bears his own

"Our eyes are now on my other

expenses by teaching young chil dren, "Mujib explained.

15 militants FROM PAGE 16 declined to estimate casualties

among civilians. The border zone is considered a likely hiding place for al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden. Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari said in remarks aired on

Sunday that he had no idea where bin Laden was. He also reiterated his appeal to US authorities to halt unilateral raids on militant targets in Pakistani territory, insisting Pakistani forces could be trusted to do the job. Meanwhile, the United Nations

fled to Afghanistan to avoid fighting between militants and Pakistan's military. The UN's refugee agency says nearly 4,000 Pakistani families have fled Pakistan's Bajur tribal agency

into Afghanistan's Kunar province.

says 20,000 Pakistani refugees have

Pakistan's military launched an offensive in Bajur, the most northerly of Pakistan's wild tribal regions, several of which have fallen largely under the control of militants opposed to the Afghan and Pakistani governments.

Tens of thousands of civilians have fled into other parts of Pakistan as a result of the 2-month

If the Shawal moon is sighted today, the Eid will be celebrated tomorrow causing problems for

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court will also remain open today

passed Higher Secondary Certificate examination this month with a GPA-5. Believe me, if I could save even a bit of money, I wouldn't spend it on Eid but to get her into a reputed university. She is a good student, and I want her future to be better than mine." 30 Tigers killed

in Lankan

ministry said yesterday.

AFP, AP, Colombo Tamil Tigers have suffered heavy losses in a major Sri Lankan government push into their northern fiefdom, with the latest clashes leaving 30 rebels dead, the defence

The ministry said 17 rebels were

killed in air and ground attacks

against the guerrilla's northern

capital of Kilinochchi on Sunday. The ministry said three soldiers also died in the fighting, while 80 were wounded. Troops also killed 11 rebels and lost one soldier during fighting elsewhere in the north on Sunday,

the ministry said, adding two more rebels died in the eastern town of There was no immediate comment from the Liberation Tigers of

Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

soldiers during a confrontation in the eastern coastal district of Batticaloa on Sunday The separatist rebels were pushed out of the east last summer, but

continue to infiltrate the area.

soldiers over the same period.

The pro-rebel Tamilnet website,

however, said the guerrillas killed six

combat since January, when Colombo pulled out of a Norwegianbrokered ceasefire. The defence ministry has

acknowledged the loss of 686 of its

some 7,013 rebels have been killed in

According to the government,

The tolls cannot be independently verified since the ministry blocks independent journalists from travelling to the front lines. The Tigers have been fighting for an independent homeland for the

thousands have died in the conflict. Earlier suspected Tamil separatists set off a bomb in a parking lot in Sri Lanka's capital Monday, woundingthree people.

Tamil minority since 1972. Tens of

Govt offices

FROM PAGE 1 this regard, today will be a normal

workday for government employ-

"A small number of employees will turn up today," said a home ministry official.

capital have already left.

the government employees who will come to offices today. However, most of the government employees working in the

brother who is going to complete his postgraduate degree very soon. Once he gets his degree and then a job, he will help me out,' he says adding, " I