FROM PAGE 1

investigation against him. Investigators in the UK believe the assets they have traced represent proceeds of crime and were laundered by Mosharraf and Bilquis.

They have gathered much information about transactions in accounts that the exminister's wife and son have with various banks in London.

Initially, the sleuths sought to identify whether the Mosharraf family own those in their names or those of third

They collected banking records from HSBC Bank plc with regard to Khandeker Hossain and Bilquis Hossain, at Hendon Central Branch, London, NW43JU.

Later, they had copies of documentation in relation to four accounts with HSBC Bank

Of those, account numbered 01340123(Sort Code 40-03-26) was Bilquis's and the one numbered 01349090 (Sort Code 40-03-26) was her son Khandeker Maruf Hossain's.

"We have established that they have two sons, Khandeker Maruf Hossain and Khandeker Mahbub Hossain, both of whom have the same initials as their father KMH," a source quoted British investigators as saying in a report he has come by of late.

Bilquis opened hers in 2003 with an initial credit of £1000. But soon, she had over £3.94 lakh deposited in her name.

"There was no account activity until May 27, 2003, the account received a credit of £394,202.20 from an as yet unidentified bank account, read the report.

The current balance in the account is zero as the money was withdrawn at different times. The last withdrawal was made on May 24, 2007, when £60,839.74 was remitted to Janata Bank in Dhaka.

In 2004, Bilquis purchased a house in Kent (59 Hilda Vale Road, Kent, BR6 7AW) at £209,000. Her son Maruf remitted £212,000 from his HSBC account to UK law firm TG

Baynes to fund the purchase. Contacted via phone. not know anything about the year. money laundering probe in the

He claimed the money his family has there is neither illegally earned nor laundered.

He said he and his wife had separate accounts with HSBC Bankt in London and a joint account with Lloyds.

Askedabouttheamountand source, he repeated what he said in the wealth statement to ACC.

About the house, he said, "I gave my wife the money to buy that house. Our son had nothing to do with the purchase."

He added that efforts are on to sell the house.

However, the UK investigators have discovered that Bilquis sold the house in 2007. One Mohammed Abdur Rahman Miah bought it for £210,000 which is around £60,000 less than the current market price.

In the statement to ACC, Mosharraf said the money he and his wife had as FDR with the Lloyds Bank would be brought back once it gets matured.

He also said necessary steps had been taken to bring all the money back to Bangladesh by selling the house.

But, on November 27 last year, in an affidavit to the Election Commission as a candidate in the ninth parliamentary election he stated her wife has a flat worth Tk 2.87 crore in the UK.

In the ACC statement, Mosharraf said he has wealth worth over Tk 2.28 crore at home. As his sources of assets, he mentioned business, agriculture, remuneration as lawmaker and minister, salary as a DU teacher etc.

His wife's wealth is worth over Tk 6.05 crore. She cited house rent, business, honorarium, apartment sale, fishery, remittance, return on bonds,

etcashersources of income. Bilquis was a housewife before she took over the business responsibilities of her husband who got too busy as a lawmaker and minister in 2001-

An ACC official told The Daily Star yesterday that the wealth they found to have been earned beyond Mosharraf's known sources of income does

not include assets abroad. A separate probe is on to find if he has any wealth stashed

overseas, he added. Explaining how they owned the property overseas, the couple told the ACC that they earned more than £100,000 by doing jobs during their stay in the UK between 1969 and 1975. Mosharraf went there for higher degree.

Before returning home, they invested the money with Lloyds TSB Offshore Private Banking at the Guereusey branch. They did members, they are suspected of | said. it for higher profit, read the statement.

The return on their investment accrued over 18 to 19 years. But as stock markets across the world began to crum-

account with the bank. The couple spent some of the money on their sons' study in the US and UK. They also opened a fixed deposit amounting to £250,000 in a joint account.

ble in 1992-93, they had the

money shifted to their main

They said they also bought a house at Kent for £210,000 so that their daughter Mahzebin Khandeker Mohua could study in the UKliving with her mother.

Interestingly, the couple declares to ACC that they would accept whatever steps the National Board of Revenue (NBR) should take as per the

An NBR high official said such declaration might mean he had not mentioned some of his wealth in earlier tax returns.

He might be talking about his wealth abroad now to be spared prosecution. In that case, he had committed three offences--concealing information and income and evading tax, added the NBR official speaking to this correspondent in return for anonymity.

The ACC official who would not be identified talking about the issue also said that the ACC investigation found that his tax returns mention nothing about his assets abroad.

Mosharraf however claimed that he and his wife declared so because they do not know how the assets to be brought back would be treated in legal terms.

Once a teacher of geology at Dhaka University, he got involved in BNP politics during the rule of former president Ziaur Rahman.

He won parliamentary election from Comilla-1 constituency four times. In Khaleda Zia's government in 1991-96, he served as a minister first for home affairs and then for power, mineral and energy resources. He was at the helm of health ministry during the fourparty alliance rule in 2001-06.

He was arrested on March 7, 2007 by the army-led joint forces in anti-graft drive by the Mosharraf told The Daily Star on caretaker government. He came Saturday evening that he does out on bail in December last

Currently, he stands accused "The several cases PACE fried three cases against him on graft charges and NBR one for evading income tax of Tk 63.23 lakh between fiscal year 1996 and 2006. In fiscal year 2008-09, he paidTk2.82lakhinincometax.

In September last year, ACC pressed charges against him of amassing wealth worth over Tk 9.10 crore through illegal means and concealing information about assets worth over Tk 4.31

At first, he was found to have been possessing assets worth over Tk 13.86 crore beyond known sources of income. Later, he had over Tk 4.75 crore of the amount legalised under a provision by the caretaker government to allow whitening black money, said an ACC official.

Mosharraf's statement to ACC said his wife and son Maruf had Tk 6.62 lakh in a joint account at the principal branch of Pubali Bank.

The amount was described as "foreign currency earning"

between 2007 and 2008. The investigators in the UK found 19 Faber Gardens (Hendon, London, NW4 4NP) to be Bilquis's correspondence

address there. "This is a residential property owned by a Mr. Salimullah Shaikh, who is an accountant registered with the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales," a source

said quoting the UK report. The investigators also said they believe Bilquis has a brother named Abdur Rashid, who is in business with one Abdul Bashir Kaiser.

They are involved with the Bangladesh based Kaiser Trading Company Limited which is part of the Gumti Group of Companies. They both use 19 Faber Gardens, Hendon, London, NW4 \$NP as a UK correspondence address.

British investigators found that Rashid also has a Lloyds TSB Bank account in Guernsey. which has a balance of approximately £500,000, said the

sources. are reasonable grounds to halls. suspect that Khandeker Hossain and Bilquis Hossain have conspired to launder the proceeds of criminal activity, and that substantial amounts of

money are involved." Officials working in the antigraft drive said they have learned about many cases like and took control of it. Mosharraf's.

They believe a good number of Science & Technology of high profile graft suspects have huge sums in banks

abroad. Mostly former ministers and lawmakers of the BNP-led fourparty alliance and their family earning those from big government projects.

FROM PAGE 1

'remember' the amount he had brought back saying he needs to go through docu-

Asked why he had brought the money back, Mosharraf said. "I just thought to bring it back in the country. But since I was in jail, I sought help from the taskforces." The amount was brought in

two phases and deposited to Mosharraf's account, which is still frozen, at the corporate brunch of Janata Bank on Topkhana Road in the capital.

About Tk 82.61 lakh was deposited to the account against £60,839.74 on May 29, 2007 and about Tk 21.06 lakh against £15,442.33 on June 6,

Sources say the money was brought back as part of the caretaker government's attempt to bring back the money siphoned off by the high-profile graft suspects. It could recover Tk 1,219 crore from abroad and deposited in national coffer.

As Mosharraf was behind bars as a high-profile graftsuspect, the taskforces brought back the amount to have it deposited in the government exchequer at a later time, sources involved in the anti-corruption drive said.

Mosharraf did not bring back other assets he owns in the UK, the sources add. He said the process has yet to be completed to bring back the assets he has in the UK.

Army gets down FROM PAGE 16

law enforcement agencies, sources in the EC Secretariat

Home Minister Sahara Khatun has said some 5,13,800 law enforcers, including 38,000 army troops, will be deployed across the country to ensure peaceful atmosphere during the upazila polls.

REPORTEDINFLUENCE **ONUPAZILA POLLS**

The EC has found that ruling party MPs are trying to influence the upazila parishad elections in many areas by carrying out electoral campaigns in favour of their candidates. But the commission is unable to take any action to prevent this because the electoral rules do not impose any restriction on MPs against campaigning for their party candidates.

"We cannot prevent lawmakers from campaigning for their candidates in the poll as there is no such restriction in the electoral laws on them," Election Commissioner Muhammed Sohul Hussain told reporters yesterday at his

He urged lawmakers not to make any pledge for development activities seeking vote for

their candidates. The EC yesterday sent a letter to the speaker informing him about violation of electoral code of conduct by AL lawmaker Abdul Quddus of Natore by taking 80 gold replicas of boat, AL election symbol, as gift and asking people to vote for the candidate of his choice if they want development of the area.

In the letter, the EC said his conduct is not acceptable to it when the whole nation is committed to establish good governance and build a country free from corruption.

The EC sent another letter to the Cabinet Division, informing it about violation of electoral code of conduct by Rajshahi City Corporation Mayor Khairuzzaman Liton for campaigning in favour of an upazila parishad candidate.

As per electoral rules, a mayor, who enjoys the status of a state minister, cannot campaign for any candidate.

BCL erases

FROM PAGE 16

Sylhet city unit of BNP took out a procession in the city yesterday afternoon protesting the changes of the names of the dormitories. The protesters held a brief rally at the Sylhet | falling. central Shaheed Minar.

foundations of the 3-storey buildings in 2005.

The BCL men, meanwhile, took control of the Surma and Protiva hostels of Sylhet Polytechnic Institute. BCL city and Madan Mohan college units helped the polytechnic The document read, "There | students in capturing those

> Principal of the institute admitted the fact and said he had informed the law enforcers of the incident. The BCL men ousted

> Jatiyatabadi Dal (JCD) activists from the dormitories of the Sylhet Agriculture University In the Shahjalal University

(SUST), BCL activists captured two dormitories. Activists of JCD fled the dorms. However, about a hundred Shibir men were still in the

dormitories, campus sources The incidents have happened over the past 3 days.

AL's crime dons

FROM PAGE 1 Shamim Hasnain stayed the 13 years' jail term of Iqbal and granted him bail for two

months. But the HC bench of Justice takeover. Muzammel Hossain and Justice Afzal Hossain Ahmed refused to entertain separate bail petitions submitted by Jatiya Party (Manju) Chairman Anwar Hossain Manju, former AL lawmakers Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Mokbul Hossain, Haji Selim and Mohammad Mohiuddin of

Munshiganj. However, the HC bench of Justice Syed AB Mahmudul Huq and Justice Mayeenul Islam Chowdhury later accepted for hearing the bail petitions of Manju, Mokbul and his son Masud Hossain, Selim and

Mohiuddin. The political figures were fugitive and convicted in separate cases filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) on different charges including amassing wealth illegally and hiding wealth information.

On August 26 last year, Manju was sentenced to 13 years' rigorous imprisonment (RI) by a special court for amass ing wealth illegally and concealing information in his wealth statement.

Earlier on June 10 last year he was sentenced to seven years' RI in a bribery case, while on May 18 he was given a sevenyear jail term in another bribery case. Besides, on June 26 in 2007, he was jailed for five years for possessing 21 bottles of alcohol at his Dhanmondi housein the capital

Sources say Manju has been jailed for total 28 years in four separate cases. He has filed four bail petitions in the four cases against him.

Maya, former state minister for shipping, was jailed for 13 years for the same count of corruption on February 14 last

Mohiuddin was sentenced to 10 years' rigorous imprisonment and one year's simple imprisonment for the same offences on July 10 last year. He was jailed for eight years by a special court on August 7 last year for evading taxes.

Mokbul and Selim were also handed down different jail terms in separate graft cases.

Thailand

FROM PAGE 16 migrants when they tried to swim ashore the Andaman Islands from a drifting boat in the Indian sea. The rest of the 400 migrants were feared dead.

To clarify the issue, Thanchitt said "Thailand has always committed to maintaining its traditional adherence to humanitarian principles and the protection of human rights in employing measures to protect its borders at sea from various illegal activities, including illegal migration, in accordance with

its immigration laws." He said Thai authorities concerned would reassess the overall situation of illegal immigrants, taking into consideration relevant developments, including in the policy, due to the increasing urgency of this issue and the increasing

size of the problem. "We will also coordinate closely with the countries concerned and will also consider raising this issue in such for a as BIMSTEC," he said.

Thailand has always supported bilateral, regional and international cooperation to combat people smuggling and human trafficking, whether at sea or on land, the ambassador said and added that this must necessarily engage countries of origin, transit and destination.

BDR asked

FROM PAGE 16 and the country faced a serious

food crisis," he said.

The food minister said the people have started to hope for better days after the AL came to power again. The prices of food commodities have also started

Dr Razzak said local food The then finance minister | production has to be increased M Saifur Rahman laid the if the country faces food deficiency. Food has to be imported from neighbouring countries during the time of any food crisis so that people do not die of

starvation, he added. The minister went round the food transshipment yard and check-post area in the port. He laid emphasis on faster clearing of goods from the port and making the import and export more dynamic.

He gave assurance to build up Benapole as a modern port and directed to take stern action against theft of goods from the port.

Lawmaker from Jessore-1 Alhaj Sheikh Afil Uddin, Director of the Food Directorate Pius Costa, member (port) Fayezur Rahman Chowdhury Customs Commissioner Abdul Kafi, BDR Sector Commander Col Emdadul Haq, BDR Commanding Officer Lt Col Hafizur Rahman and Port Director Saiful Haque Khan were present.

jobseekers Sources say the convicted leaders, who were abroad since the 1/11 changeover, have

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Association of A lawyer says there is no legal bar for the law enforcers to proposed setting up of a bank for expatriates with the money of the Wage Earners' Welfare Advocate Syed Ahmed Raja said jobseekers abroad.

hearing of the bail petitions may passport fee for jobseekers Raja added he would move abroad and providing them the petition for bail to Maya before the bench of Justice Syed price.

AB Mahmudul Huq and Justice Mayeenul Islam Chowdhury. a meeting between its executive Meantime, rumours were body and Engineer Khandaker rife yesterday that AL leaders Mosharraf Hossain, minister of Abul Hasnat Abdullah and the labour and employment Shamim Osman might appear and expatriates' welfare and before the court for bail, but overseas employment minis-

Zia's birth

FROM PAGE 16 paid a glowing tribute to the founder of the party. "The success that Ziaur Rahman achieved in his short political career is a historical example and he is a leader to follow for his honesty and farsightedness," he said.

To mark the day, BNP and its associate organisations have drawn up weeklong programmes including discussion meetings, milad mahfils, drawing competitions, blood donation campaigns and photo exhibitions.

Leaders and workers of the party will place wreaths and offer special prayers at the grave of Ziaur Rahman at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar at 10:00am today The party flag is to be hoisted at the party's central office at Nayapaltan in the morning.

BNP high command urged all the district, city, upazila and ward units of the party to carry out the similar programmes.

Tigers

FROM PAGE 16 two wickets after having reduced the visitors to five wickets for just six runs. Earlier, Bangladesh defeated Sri Lanka by five wickets after they were shocked in the opener by Zimbabwe.

sen the same twelve that played the tri-series final with Mahbubul Alam and Enamul Haque missing out yet again. The African visitors have

The think-tank have cho-

had a decent start to their tour, ment to probe the incident of defeating Bangladesh in the opening match of the triseries but suffering a big In the last home series,

defeat to Sri Lanka. Bangladesh whitewashed Zimbabwe 5-0 in 2006 before winning 3-1 in Zimbabwe including an exciting onewicket win in the last game between the two sides. But overall, the visitors have a 19-15 advantage over the Tigers in all one-dayers.

CU unlocked

FROM PAGE 1 Chhatra League is the student wing of Awami League.

superintendent of police, said five platoons of police were deployed on the campus to maintain law and order. Earlier, CU Assistant Proctor

Anwar Hossain told The Daily Star that he telephoned Chhatra League leaders about unlocking the gates and the leaders assured him of not interfering.

Talking to The Daily Star Prof Alam said, "I was appointed by the government through a process and I will leave the post if the government wants.

Classes and examinations were not held yesterday but shuttle trains connecting the university with Chittagong city plied as usual carrying a handful of students.

Mohammad Ershad Hossain, general secretary of Chhatra League CU unit, told The Daily Star, "We are observing the situation. Our ultimatum will expire Monday noon and then we would announce our next course of action."

members of all student organisations in the university dormitories. But the incumbent VC is patronising the Islami Chhatra Shibir and it limits the opportunity for coexistence," he added. On Saturday, activists of

Islami Chhatra Shibir, the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, barred two Chhatra League activists from boarding at give loans to the landless and Hasan Cottage, a rented house in front of Shah Amanat Hall. The Shibir men also assaulted them and put the cottage under lock and key, sources said. Protesting the incident, the

windowpanes of the proctor

office and some chairs of the

Chittagong University Central

Students' Union (CUCSU)

Saturday morning.

Chhatra League men brought out a procession and locked all the faculties resulting an abrupt banks did not disburse any halt to the academic and administrative activities. BCL activists also laid siege to the VC's residence and issued a 48-hour ultimatum for his resignation. Agitating Chhatra League men also vandalised

to help overseas

International Recruiting Agencies (Baira) yesterday Fund to provide loans to

It also suggested reducing with air tickets at a reduced

Baira made the proposals at

The minister discussed various issues concerning the welfare of Bangladeshi workers abroad and floated the idea of forming welfare organisations by Bangladeshi migrants abroad.

The minister said the government will set up training institutes in every upazila to create skilled manpower and agreed to the Baira's proposal to continue operation of the National Skill Development Council formed by the caretaker government.

"Such a bank could give soft loans to aspirant migrants and upon their return, they could also take loans for various projects on the basis of their experience and skills," Baira President Ghulam Mustafa told the minister.

A committee could be formed to formulate a work plan for making the best use of Wage Earners' Welfare Fund, he

Baira also proposed increasing the recruiting agencies' charge to Tk 1,40,000 from Tk 84,000, saying that widespread competition among recruiting agencies of labour-exporting countries have resulted in an increase in migration costs.

Expressing concern that migrant workers are losing jobs in the United Arab Emirates and Malaysia because of global financial crisis, Ghulam Mustafa said the Bangladesh missions abroad should negotiate with the employers for arranging alternative jobs for

drowning of illegal Bangladeshi and Rohingya migrants in the Bay of Bengal and take stern actions against the syndicates involved in illegal migration. Officials of the expatriates welfare and overseas employment ministry and Bureau of

Baira requested the govern-

Manpower Employment and Training and Baira executive committee members, among others, were present.

Khaleda talks

FROM PAGE 1

"We discussed about our stance in the opening session of the parliament, particularly on the ordinance that might be brought before the parlia-Sharif Uddin, additiona ment for discussion," a BNP standing committee member present in the meeting told The Daily Star.

BNP standing committee member Mahbubuddin Ahmed and Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar gave their legal opinions during discussions on different ordinances in the meeting.

Party's standing committee members M Shamsul Islam and Lt General (retd) Mahbubur Rahman, lawmaker Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain were present at the

meeting among others.

Give enough loan FROM PAGE 16 percent or Tk 4,228 crore in loans has already been distributed, according to the review

report Bangladesh Bank placed

in the meeting. The eight financial institu-"We want coexistence of | tions have disbursed Tk 3,335 crore or 45.49 percent of their portant and necessary but the "main enemy" of the South target of Tk 7,331 crore.

disbursed Tk 893 crore or 43.61

Private commercial banks

percent of their target of Tk 2,048 crore. Earlier, Bangladesh Bank asked the banks to provide loan facilities to the farmers against three-year-long revolving credit line. It also directed the banks to

sharecroppers. Yesterday's meeting was informed that 60,000 farmers have been given revolving credit line facility. However, no information was available on distribution of loan to share croppers. However, the five foreign

that do not disburse agricultural

loans and there is no legal bar to

making them disburse the

loans.

furious battles between Israeli agricultural loans and 12 private ground troops and Hamas commercial banks disbursed agricultural loans between Tk 1 militants. crore and Tk 3 crore each. Bangladesh Bank expressed dissatisfaction at this. Huda said in future target would be fixed for the banks

Hundreds feared

FROM PAGE 16 "We fear several hundred are still missing," coast guard commander SP Sharma told AFP. He said India had rescued

since the end of December. Those figures are in line with those of the Sunday Morning Post, a Hong Kong newspaper, which said it had compiled a toll of 538 missing or dead.

446 refugees from four boats

Sharma said the migrants said they had been arrested by Thai officials and set adrift without engines or navigational equipment. "Some survivors also said their boat was towed out to sea

by the Thai navy and given two

sacks of boiled rice and two

gallons of water before being abandoned in the middle of the sea," he said. The Bangkok Post newspaper on Sunday carried

accounts from survivors.

"We were tied up and put into a boat without an engine... we were then towed into the high seas by a motor boat and set adrift," a man named as Zaw Min told the

Thailand is facing a brutal separatist insurgency in the south of the country that has left more than 3,500 people dead in the last five years, and the government would be sensitive about any mass influx of migrants. But the Thai navy and other

denied the accusations. "Authorities followed the regular process when arresting the illegal migrants," navy spokesman Captain

government officials have

Prachachart Sirisawat told Yet mounting photographic evidence, and accounts from Western tourists who have recently visited the beautiful sun-dappled

islands on Thailand's Andaman coast, have sup-

ported the charges. Media reports have shown photographs of people on a beach with their hands

trussed above their heads. The United Nations refugee agency said it had contacted the Thai government when the allegations first

surfaced last week. "We requested the Thai government take all measures necessary to make sure the lives of the Rohingyas are not put at risk ... We have not had any response yet," said Kitty McKinsey, Asia Pacific spokes-

woman for the UNHCR. If the allegations turned out to be true, McKinsey said, Thailand "would be breaching the very basic human rights conventions -- the basic right to life, putting people's lives at risk by towing them out to

The Rohingya are stateless and face persecution from Myanmar's military regime, forcing thousands into rickety boats each year to try to escape poverty and oppression and head to Muslim-

majority Malaysia. David Mathieson, an expert on Myanmar with New York-based Human Rights Watch, said Thailand had for the past few years taken a harsh stance on Rohingya landing on its shores, in part because they wanted to discourage further migration of

the group through Thailand. There were also fears that some are mercenaries trying to join the separatist insurgency, although Mathieson said there was little evidence

to back up those claims. "These are really serious allegations that need to be investigated by the UN and the Thai government," he said.

Gaza truce

FROM PAGE 1 The Islamic Jihad's Daoud Shihab, says other, smaller, militant groups have also agreed to join the truce. There has been no immediate response from Israel.

Shihab told The Associated Press that the factions will jointly make a formal announcement later on Palestinian medics took advantage of the halt in Israel's

rush to areas which had been inaccessible due to furious fighting, pulling at least 95 bodies from the rubble, including those of several children. eight-year-old girl in the northern town of Beit Hanun and a 20-year-old man near the

deadliest offensive on Gaza to

southern town of Khan Yunis, the first deaths since the truce, attacks. medics said. major diplomatic push by Egypt to turn Israel's unilateral ceasefire into a lasting truce, with President Hosni Mubarak hosting leaders from Britain,

France, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Spain and Turkey. But officials said that the clashes did not necessarily mean a return to all-out fight-

"There will no doubt be isolated incidents," Israeli Infrastructure Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer said. "It will take two to three days for everything to end completely, for Hamas to understand that

we are now in a new scenario.' Gaza's Hamas rulers warned that they would not accept the presence of a single Israeli soldier in Gaza. "We have clearly said: if

Israeli troops remain in Gaza,

this will be a wide window for

the resistance against the

occupation," Osama Hamdan, the group's representative in Lebanon, said in an interview with Al-Jazeera television. Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas repeated his call for a complete withdrawal of all Israeli forces from Gaza and the re-opening of the enclave's border crossings,

insufficient." On the ground, as Hamas congratulated the Palestinians on "victory" from mosque loudspeakers, Gaza residents cautiously ventured out into the streets to survey the rubble that was once their homes.

"We congratulate all the

Palestinian people after the victory in the fight with the enemy," bellowed a voice from a Hamas mosque in central Gaza City. Meanwhile Yahia Karin, 54 surveyed the damage in Zeitun, his neighbourhood in

southern Gaza that was the

scene of some of the most

"Everything has been completely destroyed," he said looking at the charred pile of rubble on the spot where he once lived.

Egypt was hosting an internaafternoon attended by several Bangladesh.

European leaders and UN chief Ban Ki-moon. Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian president, said on Saturday his country "will continue its efforts as soon as there is a ceasefire to restore the truce and lift the blockade" imposed by Israel on crossing points into Gaza after Hamas seized power in the territory in

June 2007 Olmert announced late on Saturday that Israel was unilaterally silencing its guns after an unprecedented 22-day-long campaign in Gaza, which killed at least 1,300 people, including more than 400 children, wounded another 5,300, and Israeli troops shot dead an left large swathes of the terri-

tory in ruins. On the Israeli side three civilians and 10 soldiers were killed in combat and rocket

During the course of the The incidents come amid a war, schools, hospitals, UN compounds and thousands of homes all came under attack with the Palestinian Authority putting the cost of damage to infrastructure alone at 476 million dollars.

The halt to the violence

pledges from Washington and Cairo to help prevent arms smuggling into Gaza, a key demand to halt the fighting. The ceasefire comes less than a month before Israel holds elections when Olmert,

came after the Jewish state won

who formally resigned last autumn, is due to stand down. The premier, whose reputation was badly damaged by a 2006 war in Lebanon seen by many Israelis as a disaster, said the Gaza war had "strengthened the deterrence of the state of Israel in the face of all those

who threaten us.' (AFP, AP)

Hasina seeks FROM PAGE 1

saying Israel's truce was "im- stand on alleviating poverty,

Ambassador in Dhaka James F Moriarty called on the prime minister at her office in the morning. The prime minister informed the US envoy about

her government's strong

Asian region, and against terrorism. She also assured the envoy of investment-friendly envi-

ronment in Bangladesh. She also hailed the United States for sending poll monitoring team in December 29 election and for its interest in restoring democracy in Bangladesh.

Hasina and Moriarty discussed in details the issues of mutual interest and hoped that the existing friendly relations between the two countries will be strengthened further in the days to come. The US envoy also expressed interest in more investment from his country.

High Commissioner Douglas Foskett paid a farewell call on the prime minister at her office. The prime minister

Later, outgoing Australian

On the diplomatic front, thanked the Australian envoy for his country's cooperation tional summit on Sunday to the development of

Baira for bank

recently returned home follow-

ing the political government's

arrest the convicted leaders as

Counsel for the AL leaders

they were not granted bail.

beheld today.

they didn't show up.